

Woking All Winners Sound Facilities

Updated for 2009

Introduction

The sound facilities in the Rhoda McGaw can be daunting for a new comer to festival stage sound. Indeed the equipment available is of a professional standard and can be configured in a variety of different ways depending upon the needs of its users.

For the festival we try to set up the sound facilities to provide both flexibility and ease of use for groups coming in. Not an easy task!

Sound Sources

Starting at the beginning, the theatre is equipped with the following sound sources:

- a) Mini Disk player
- b) CD player
- c) 2 Microphones on leads and stands

The Mini Disc and CD player are of professional quality and reside in the sound box at the back of the auditorium along side the lighting desk. This provides for both a good view of the stage and clear audio feedback of approximately what the audience are hearing. I say approximate because there is still some difference between what the audience hears and what the sound operator hears.

There is various input points for microphone around the stage as well as a collection of leads so there should not be a problem wherever you need to locate a mic. There are also a collection of stands. Please let us know if you intend to use these.

Sound Mixing Desk

These sound sources are all brought together onto the mixing desk. The mixing desk is a 12 channel Spirit Live 4 desk and is also located in the sound box. It is from within the sound box that the sound operator controls the playing of recorded sounds from CD or Mini Disk, or the capture of live sounds from either of the 2 microphones, combines them together and decides where the sounds will be transferred to, i.e. the Output.

Output

For output the sound can be directed to a combination of 4 speakers. Two of these speakers are located Front of House just in front of the main tabs and 2 located normally at the rear of the stage. However, as the 2 onstage speakers are on long leads so they may be moved to practically anywhere on stage to help simulate sound coming from a particular part of the set.

We may also be able to rig up to 2 additional speakers in the roof of the auditorium and independently output to these. However, please be sure to ask for these at producers meeting so we can ask the Theatre staff to make them available.

Figure 1 gives a diagrammatic representation of the sound system, while Figure 2 gives a diagrammatic representation of the mixing desk as set up for Festival.

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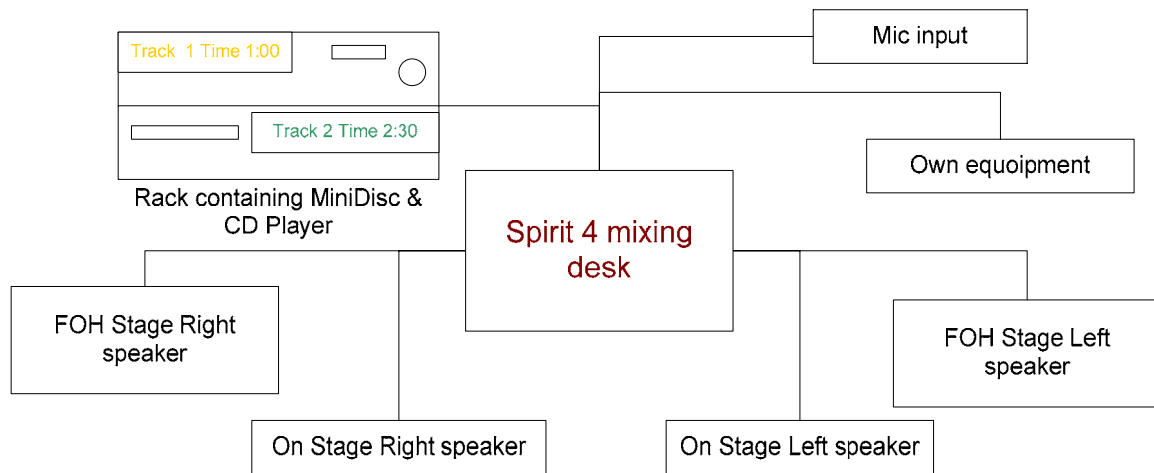


Figure 1 - Block Diagram of Sound Facilities

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Advice, Producers Meeting and Technical Rehearsal time

We expect each group to supply their sound operator and to operate from within the control room at the back of the auditorium. However the festival stage crew are available to provide advice and guidance on using the equipment in advance of the festival. This can be either at producers meeting or, by arrangement by phone or email. If you have particular sound requirements then please ask and seek this advice – even if you're only thinking of doing something, we'd rather be prepared and not use than disappoint you on the day.

During technical rehearsals the Festival stage crew will be available to instruct sound operators on the use of the equipment and once again offer advice and guidance as well as assist in the setting of any specialist equipment.

We strongly recommend that you run your sound effects and set your sound levels during your stage time. Take particular note of the following:

- a) Familiarisation with the equipments operations.
- b) Voice over's, where actors are expected to talk over sound passages.
- c) Quick changes, where there may be the requirement to change CD or mini disk quickly between sound effects.
- d) Singing passages where actors are required to sing along with pre-recorded music.
- e) Any use of microphones.

Operation

On performance night your operator should come up to the sound box during the allotted setting time and cue up any opening tracks.

When the festival crew have clearance from Front of House indicating the audience are in and seated then control of the sound equipment will be handed over to the participating group's sound operator.

Operation of the sound system will usually entail the following process for CD or Mini Disk input:

- 1) Select CD or Mini Disk track required with the deck in pause mode
- 2) Set predefined level for CD or Mini Disk source on input channels
- 3) Start track playing
- 4) Increase volume for either FOH (Yellow Sliders) and/or On Stage speakers (red sliders) as required

This should all have been practiced during technical rehearsal time.

Other points to note

Own Equipment

If a group wants to use their own equipment, it should have either Phono plugs or ¼" mono jack plugs to connect into the mixer line inputs and 3 pin XLR for mic inputs.

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This equipment will generally be brought onto the mixer on one of the spare sets of channels between 3 and 7 shown in Figure 2 by the white sliders.

On performance nights any additional equipment used must be set within the time allotted for set setting and striking as if it were part of your set.

There is a wide range of other settings for each channel on the mixer and it will be the individual groups' responsibility to ensure that the channel any additional equipment is plugged into is set according to their needs. No guarantee is made that the channel used will not also be used by another group for something completely different. Therefore – NOTE THE SETTINGS.

Additional Equipment Available

Both hand held and lapel radio microphones can be provided but there will be an additional charge. These work off 9volt batteries and while we do our best to provide rehearsal batteries we expect individual groups to provide performance batteries.

Please enquire with the Festival Stage Director or the Festival Sound Engineer.

Additional Speakers

Additional speakers can be rigged and positioned in the gantry of the auditorium and fed off the desk. However, this can only be done if we know beforehand and we agree.

Signal Processor

The theatre is equipped with a Midi Verb4 signal processor which can be configured to provide a range of effects if required. Once again seek advice.

Specific settings of Mixer

The Spirit 4 does have various equaliser and tone controls available. In order to provide a consistent sound quality for all groups these are set to know levels for Mini Disk, CD and Mic inputs. If different settings are required for a piece of equipment then the Festival Stage Crew will move the equipment on the mixer and individual groups may then adjust settings to suit their requirements. As in using your own equipment no guarantee is made that the channel used will not also be used by another group for something completely different. Therefore – NOTE THE SETTINGS.

FAQ

The MD deck will be set to Auto Pause which means it will pause at the end of each track.

If you want more information then please ask.

Phil Vale
Festival Sound Engineer