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Live Music

Guide to Upgrading the Audio-Visual System in Your Small Live Music Venue

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As a small venue owner, providing an exceptional audio-visual experience is crucial to attract and retain patrons in today's competitive market. Since COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis, guests have become increasingly discerning about where they spend their money. Upgrading your AV system can ensure your venue stands out and keeps guests coming back. This guide outlines key considerations and specifications for enhancing your AV system.

Why Upgrade Your AV System?

Enhanced Guest Experience: Clear, balanced sound and engaging visuals create a memorable experience.
Versatility: Cater to both live music and DJ sets with ease.
Compliance: Adhere to local noise ordinances to avoid fines and complaints.
Futureproofing: Invest in a system that can evolve with changing technology and entertainment trends.

Venue Overview and Current Setup
Be specific so the AV company can quickly establish what you need. For example, here's what a current overview of your set-up could look like.

- **Capacity:** 100-150 people
- **Layout:** Combined pub and live music space
- **Current System:** Basic PA system and limited DJ setup

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Speakers:

Main PA Speakers: Opt for high-quality, full-range speakers. Line-array systems are recommended for even sound distribution.

Subwoofers: Essential for delivering deep bass, especially for DJ sets.

Monitors: Provide musicians with stage monitors for accurate sound.

Zoning: Implement zone control to balance sound between the stage and pub areas.

Amplifiers:

Ensure amplifiers are properly matched to your speakers for optimal performance.

Mixing Consoles:

Live Music: Digital mixing console with multiple inputs, onboard effects, and scene recall.

DJ Sets: DJ mixer with dual inputs, crossfaders, and effects controls. Switching Mechanism: A simple system to switch between live music and DJ setups.

Microphones and DI Boxes:

- Invest in a variety of wired and wireless microphones for different needs.
- Use active and passive DI boxes for instrument inputs.

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Noise Control

Acoustic Treatment:

- Install soundproofing panels and bass traps to reduce noise spillage.
- Use acoustic curtains or barriers around the stage.
- Add carpeting and other sound-absorbing materials in the pub area.

Noise Limiting:

- Install a noise limiter to comply with local noise ordinances.
- Use decibel meters to monitor sound levels in real-time.

Visual System

Projectors and Screens:

- High-resolution projectors and retractable screens for visual displays.
- Strategically place multiple screens for optimal visibility.

Lighting:

- Include stage lighting such as PAR cans, moving heads, and LED strips.
- Use a DMX control system for programmable lighting effects.
- Install ambient lighting in the pub area to set the mood.

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Connectivity and Integration

Cabling and Power:
- Use high-quality audio and power cables to prevent interference.
- Implement secure and concealed cable management for a clean look.

Networking:
- Ensure a robust Wi-Fi system to support wireless audio and lighting controls.
- Integrate with your existing IT infrastructure for streaming and remote control.

System Control and User Interface

Central Control Unit:
- Provide a touchscreen interface for controlling audio, lighting, and visuals.
- Set up preset configurations for different event types (live music, DJ sets, ambient background music).

Training and Support:
- Offer comprehensive training for staff on the new system.
- Arrange for ongoing technical support and maintenance services.

Considerations for Future Upgrades

Modularity: Choose components that allow for easy upgrades and additions.
Scalability: Ensure the system can handle increased capacity or additional functionality in the future.

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Assessment: Conduct a thorough assessment of your venue with the AV design company.

Design Proposal: Review and finalize the AV system design based on the specifications.

Installation: Schedule installation during off-hours to minimize disruption.

Testing and Calibration: Thoroughly test and calibrate the system for optimal performance.

Staff Training: Provide hands-on training for all relevant staff members.

By following these guidelines, you can create a versatile, high-quality audio-visual system that enhances the experience for your patrons and performers alike, while complying with noise regulations and maintaining ease of use for your staff. Investing in your AV system is an investment in your venue's future, ensuring you remain a top choice for live entertainment in increasingly competitive local hospitality markets.

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Case Studies

The Quays.

Venue
Pub

Location
Dublin

Product
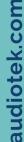
Based on the old tradition of 'craig agus ceoil' (fun and music), The Quays features live music three times a day.

Audiotek designed and supplied a fully integrated house audio and control system that blows the bands away – and the punters too.

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Killarney Grand.

Venue

Pub

Location

Killarney

Product

L-Acoustics
QSC Q-SYS

Renowned for its traditional live music and top DJ appearances seven nights a week, the Killarney Grand needed a sound system to cover both bar and nightclub areas of the hotel.

Modelled using L'Acoustics' soundvision and installed by Kevin O'Sullivan, the audio system of ARCS WIDE and ARCS FOCUS loudspeakers, together with SB18 and SB28 subwoofers and coaxial peripheral speaker systems, reaches every corner of the venue.

Full redundant processing and networking by QSC Q-SYS along with remote monitoring by Audiotek ensures that the system can be fully relied on every night of the year.

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