

SOUND ADVICE

HEAR THIS!

EACH ISSUE JMC ACADEMY WEIGHS IN WITH SOME HELPFUL TIPS FOR PLAYERS AND MUSIC PROFESSIONALS TO LOOKING TO TAKE THEIR CRAFT TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

LIVE SOUND TIPS


For any young guitarist, whether you are a classical player, a folk player, or a fully-fledged metal maestro, there is one main vision for all... To play on stage in front of a major audience! For this reason, it is important to understand the role of the Live Sound Engineer, and how this role impacts sound truly delivered on stage.

The live sound role can be broken up into two main areas, Front of House mixing (FOH), and Foldback/Monitor mixing. Let's explore these roles.

The Front of House mix engineer is responsible for the delivery of sound throughout the venue, to the patrons and paying customers. It is their job to make sure the band sounds amazing as it comes through the main speakers. To do this, the FOH engineer needs to have an excellent understanding of the instruments on stage, as well as the technical knowledge of microphone placement, and most importantly an

understanding of mixing consoles and signal flow. There is a lot that happens behind the scenes to ensure a smooth delivery for the band on stage. An excellent understanding of room acoustics and sound properties is also required, as every live music venue will differ in its shape and size, so being able to remove problematic frequencies within the space, or "tuning the room" will ensure that the band can play at any volume and not have any feedback issues. An ear for detail is also required to make sure there is an even balance of instruments and vocals, better known as a well balanced mix.

The Foldback/Monitor engineer shares the same amount of technical skills and knowledge, but their role differs slightly. The main objective for the foldback engineer is to ensure that the musicians on stage can clearly hear themselves and the other instruments whilst performing. A foldback speaker, or "wedge" is placed in front of each musician on stage, and the foldback engineer is in charge of directing specific audio signals (with the use of a mixing console) to each wedge based on the request of the musician. For example, the rhythm guitarist may request to hear more drum signal in their foldback wedge as it will help them keep more consistent time and rhythm. If the musicians can hear more of what they require, then their performance is going to be a lot more solid, ultimately giving the FOH the opportunity to present a clean and well balanced mix.

Live sound engineers are the secret weapon to any live music event... Keep this in mind. 

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GUITARIST TO WATCH



KENNY GRIFFITHS

CURRENTLY PLAYING WITH:
The Mission In Motion.

USUALLY FOUND PLAYING:
On the road around Australia.

YEARS ON THE FRETBOARD:
14 Years.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR PLAYING STYLE?

My playing style has changed drastically over the years. I starting out learning classically which enabled the smooth transition into a prog rock style of playing. From there I started to follow the more rock and pop punk styles which enabled me

to sing more in the music that I was playing. Basically from there every band I played guitar in I have always sung along with the music so I'm more of a rhythmic player now.

FIRST AXE:

My first 'proper' electric guitar was an ugly Onyx dark blue sparkled strat. I wanted to start bringing it to school for the in-class lessons instead of using the acoustics they supplied. I was a very average player at the time but I was so keen to get an electric. I bought the shittiest looking second hand job from my local music shop - I didn't want to be the only guy in class with a cool electric but no idea how to play it. I have no idea where it ended up.

CURRENT AXE:

Pratley Session SC Pro.

RIG/PEDALS:

Orange TH30 and/or Marshall JCM900 with a Vintage Marshall

cab. In addition, I run single EQ, delay, reverb and poly tuner pedals through my chain.

SECRET WEAPON:

Boss EQ20 pedal. It works so well with my current rig and gives it the tone and bottom end I need. It also acts as a great booster when you only have the option of two channels on the head.

FAVOURITE GUITARIST OF ALL TIME:

When my older brother introduced me to the Chilli Peppers with *Blood Sugar Sex Magic* I was at a very influential age. I would have to say that John Frusciante's input on that album was probably the biggest inspiration for me to eventually pick up the guitar - he would definitely be at the top of the list.

FAVOURITE CURRENT LOCAL PLAYER:

Michael Barrett from Melbourne band Closure In Moscow. He absolutely rips.

GUITARIST TO WATCH



LUKE O'FARRELL

CURRENTLY PLAYING WITH:
The Laurels.

YEARS ON THE FRETBOARD:

17. I got my first proper guitar when I was eight years old - although my Dad claims that when I was four, I rammed a ukulele through his stereo speakers while watching Hendrix at Monterey. Does that count?

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR PLAYING STYLE?

Deliberately clumsy. I'm not a very technical player - it's more about capturing notes and warping them. There's a lot of controlled feedback and vibrato, I guess it borders on white noise. I have permanent tinnitus.

FIRST AXE:

Tyco Hot Lixx. Not really a guitar in the traditional sense, it was a toy one that I got as a kid. It had controls for tempo, overdrive, chorus, pitch bending, and 8 tone buttons that made some gritty digital sounds. I wish I still had it, I imagine I could have put it to good use now I know about circuit bending.

CURRENT AXE:

Fender Jaguar and Jazzmaster.

RIG/PEDALS:

Fender Bassman 52 RI and an various delays (DD20, DL4 etc), samplers (SP404SX), fuzzes (Tym Fuzz Munchkin!) and overdrives (Okko Twin Sonic). Our sound guy, Toby Baldwin, is currently building a frequency altering pedal called the Funcrusher Plus - and I get to use the prototype! He says it's a "CEM3320 based VCF 12/24dB/octave LP/BP/HP - based on the datasheet circuit, tweaked for high frequency cutoff. The microprocessor is for the inbuilt 7-shape LFO with sample/hold and slew." I don't know what that means, but I know it'll sound awesome.

SECRET WEAPON:

Conor Hannan (bass). He fills out all the notes that the guitarists should be playing. He is the lifeblood of The Laurels!

FAVOURITE GUITARISTS:

Jimi Hendrix, Kevin Shields, Graham Coxon:-

FAVOURITE LOCAL PLAYERS:

John Duncan (Silver Moon), Patch Free (East River) and Chris Colla (Whores).