



# Live Audio: The Art of Mixing a Show

*By Dave Swallow*

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A practical hands on 'in the trenches' guide to mixing and live sound from an author who has a lot of experience in the field.

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## **Live Audio: The Art of Mixing a Show** By Dave Swallow Bibliography

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A Letter from Dave Swallow, Author of *Live Audio*



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### 10 Smashing Suggestions for a Stellar Show

#### Stay Calm

The absolute key to any successful show is to be calm. It's easy in an unpredictable environment to worry about what's going to happen, but ultimately if you worry about it, you're not focusing on your job.

#### Confident

Part of being able to stay calm is to have confidence. Have the confidence that the band and the room sound as best as you can before the show starts, and have confidence in your own abilities no matter who is looking over your shoulder.

#### Communication

A vital part of your whole day revolves around communication. If it breaks down everyone will be in trouble. Make sure if something is running behind, you let the people in charge know. If something isn't right with the sound on stage, say something.

#### Know Your Equipment

It's rather important that you know the sound of the equipment that you are carrying with you. It doesn't

matter if you just have a guitar amp in a trailer or a full PA system in the back of a truck; if you don't know what it is suppose to sound like, how are you going to know when it doesn't sound right?

#### Vocal Mic

If you aren't able to carry anything else, make sure you carry your own vocal mic. This is the sound you are use to, and most importantly the sound the singer is use to. Having something that is the same every night is important for the psychology of a singer. I know it sounds small, but it makes a difference. If the band is confident, then they give the performance they need to, which gives the audience what they want. The audience can then give to the band the reaction they band needs. It's one big cycle!

#### One Step Ahead

Always think about what is coming up. Make sure your effects are set before you need them, and that you have your finger on the fader before the guitar solo starts.

#### Leave Yourself Somewhere to Go

Always leave headroom and space in the mix to push the sound just that little bit further. This is a live environment; you never know when you'll need it.

#### Get off Center

It is so important to hear the room from somewhere else. You become EQ deaf if you stand in one place for too long. The constant movement between little EQ and phase changes in the room will keep your ears more sensitive.

#### Under-Compress

This might sound silly, but when you over compress, no matter how controlled you think the sound is, you are sucking the dynamics out of the mix. The audience become use to the constant level and that becomes boring. Keeping dynamics in your mix makes it sound live, and interesting.

#### Keep it Simple

I need to say no more.

#### From the Back Cover

A live sound engineer's world revolves around the venue. Whether you find yourself working in a cozy club or an expansive concert arena, every location has challenges. It takes more than plugging in a few amplifiers and turning up the volume full blast to get the job done. Experience and ingenuity are needed to ensure that the band's sound is always at its best. *Live Audio* is a practical, hands-on, in the trenches guide to mixing and live sound from an author with years of professional experience. Combining a lively writing style and real world examples with essential details covering the technical and practical aspects of working a live show, *Live Audio* gives you a real-world look into working a live venue. Learn the technical, practical, and political aspects of the job& \*Choosing the right equipment \*Being creative with the tools you are given \*Letting your mixes become more instinctual \*Understand the important elements of live mixing \*Working with the band

#### About the Author

Mixing Engineer, Live and Studio Audio Engineer, Tour Manager, Tour Consultant Toured Extensively in Europe, North America, South America, Japan Mixed & Supervised countless sessions including: Itunes, Aol, Yahoo, BBC, B-side cuts... Live TV appearances include: Jay Leno, Saturday Night Live, Dave Letterman, Austin City Limits, Conan O'Brien, Regis & Kelly, VH1, Later with Jools Holland, Brit Awards,

Live at Abbey Road, BBC One Sessions, Parkinson, Friday Night Project, Album Chart Show, E4, Taratata, New Pop, Jonathan Ross, Alan Carr, Top of The Pops, CD:UK, T4, Davina, Mobo Awards

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#### **Carolyn Franklin:**

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