

stow instrument cases here

standing room for vocalists

standing room for instruments

bass amp

monitor

lead mics for round robin

small loudspeaker

PA Head:

PA notes

open access to mixer

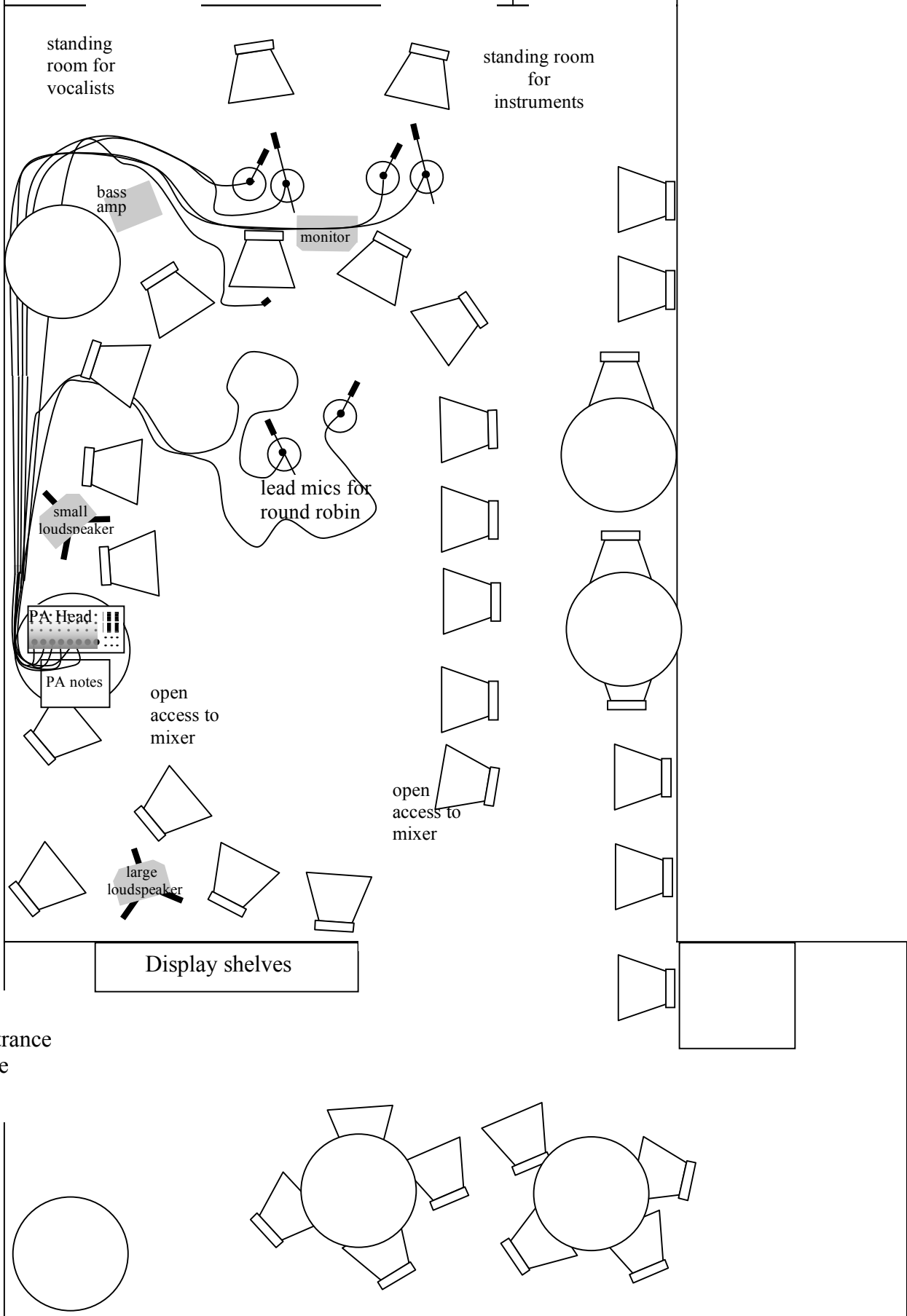
open access to mixer

large loudspeaker

Display shelves

Entrance here

Tip Jar



## Notes regarding setup at Magic Bean.

### I. The PA and speakers

- A) Place main loudspeaker where the person at the mixing board can hear it without leaving the mixing board.
- 1) Locate the PA head on a table that is NOT placed behind the main speaker.
  - 2) To minimize feedback issues, locate the PA as far away from the stage as the cables comfortably allow. We don't have a "snake" to allow us to set the PA far enough for optimal use, but careful routing and selection of cables (not all are the same length) will allow the PA to be far enough away to work.
- B) Two main speakers are required for the Bean.
- 1) The stage-monitor-sized loudspeaker is fine for the space close to the stage (i.e., in the front of house).
  - 2) The front-of-house loudspeaker should be positioned so it allows the PA operator to hear the mix.
  - 3) The larger main loudspeaker should be located to project across the shelf unit into to the back of the house.
- C) Pole mounting of main loudspeakers:
- 1) Pole mount the front-of-house main speaker high enough to not injure the ears of musicians seated nearby.
  - 2) Pole mount the back-of-house larger mainspeaker high enough so the sound can clear the shelf unit, to allow sound to project to the back of the house.
- D) A stage monitor on the floor facing the stage is needed for musicians at the open mics to hear themselves. To prevent feedback, it should be placed as far away from the microphones as possible yet still in the stage area.

### II. The PA and mics

- A) Two sets of mics (one instrument and one vocal) are needed for the open mic.  
They plug into channel strips 1, 2, 3, 4. on the mixing board.  
Keep the order of pairing of vocal-instrument, vocal-instrument, vocal-instrument consistent where possible.  
The cables to those mics are routed to minimize any foot traffic.  
*These channels are set to "Mute" (volume all the way down) during the round robins.*
- B) One movable vocal mic is used during the round robin, for the lead vocalist.  
The cable to that mic runs directly from the PA out to the center of the floor  
The movable vocal mic plugs into channel strip 5.
- C) One extra mic is connected to channel strip 6 to accommodate trio performances at the open mic. In that event, the vocal mic and the extra mic are relocated to the stage area for the open mic session.  
*This channel is set to "Mute" during the round robins.*
- D) A harmonica mic, or other audio source gets plugged into channel strip 7. If for some reason OTSMA's submixer needs to be used (e.g., keyboard, finger-style guitar, etc., the harmonica mic or other source gets plugged into that, and channels 7 and 8 are used as described in the document regarding use of the submixer.  
*The volume settings on harmonica or instrument mics should be carefully watched during the round robin.*
- E) If the submixer is not used, channel strip 8 is available for an instrument or line-level input, or for a mic'd amp used by a finger-style guitarist (the person with the amp supplies his or her own amp, mic and cable).

### III. Sound check

- A) Sound check as usual. That means everyone is quiet. No noodling. Everyone is attuned to the needs of the sound crew. The event manager sees to it that everyone facilitates the soundcheck.
- B) All mics (open mic sets, round robin vocal mic, harmonica mic, and extra mic) should be sound-checked before the round robin session starts, to enable a smooth transition, prevent late discovery of cable issues, etc.
- C) Under most circumstances the mic gain setting may be set at unity gain, to get the general level right for that channel. From then on, the gain knob can be left alone (unless feedback becomes an issue). Volume to the main loudspeakers and to the stage monitors is adjusted with different knobs (see the document on using the PA mixer).
- D) Use the mute switches on each channel strip to mute mics not needed during the respective sessions. That way you can leave the sound-checked gain and volume settings alone. Normally that means: during round robins mute channels 1-4, 6 and mute 7 and/or 8 if they are not used. During the open mic session, mute channels 5-8, unless used.

E) The various volume settings must be adjusted dynamically as the event progresses, to accommodate different instruments, instrumentalists, vocalists, leads on breaks, etc.

1) If the overall volumes and channel-strip gain settings are set correctly during the initial sound check, most of these dynamic adjustments will be made to the main and monitor volume knobs on the individual channel strips.

2) The initial sound check will NOT suffice at the Magic Bean. It is necessary to do ongoing sound checks that allow front of house and back of house to continue to hear music both hear the music. As people arrive, each body adds an obstruction to the sound waves, and each conversation adds background noise. A full house at the Magic Bean is acoustically very different from the acoustics of the house during the initial sound check.

3) The ongoing sound checks can be greatly facilitated if a second person assists the PA operator, using hand signals to communicate from the back of the house indicate the need for greater or lower volumes.

4) We may not want to project all the way into the conference room at the far back. As the crowd grows, it becomes increasingly difficult to project the sound that far, and efforts to do so may result in overly loud conditions closer to the main speakers and feedback issues.

G) Unless you know exactly where feedback is coming from (e.g., you have your hands on a knob and caused the feedback as you were bringing up the gain or volume on a particular channel strip), clamp down on feedback as quickly as possible by immediately dropping the volume knobs on the amp, not on the individual channel strips. Then figure out what to do as you bring things back up. Feedback sometimes comes from mics that are aimed at reflective surfaces, which may include instruments, floors, walls, etc. Repositioning mics relative to those surfaces can solve some feedback problems without requiring a drop in speaker volumes.

#### IV. Working Notes Kept by the Soundboard Manager

A) As cables are connected, the PA manager keeps a written list of what goes where. An example of what might be sketched out by the person running the sound board is here, in Table 1:

**Table 1.**

Channel 1	Channel 2	Channel 3	Channel 4	Channel 5	Channel 6	Channel 7	Channel 8
Open mic Vocal 1	Open mic Instrument 1	Open mic Vocal 2	Open mic Instrument 2	Round Robin Vocal	Extra mic	Instrument Harmonica	Instrument Bass
				Moveable mic		e.g., Randy	e.g., Pappy
Mute during round robin.	Mute during round robin.	Mute during round robin.	Mute during round robin.	Adjust during round robin. Mute during open mic session unless used.	Mute during round robin. Mute during open mic session unless used.	Adjust during round robin. Mute during open mic session unless used.	Adjust during round robin. Mute during open mic session unless used.
Gain at Unity	Gain at +2 db	Gain at Unity	Gain at +3 db	Gain at Unity	Gain at Unity	Gain at -2 db	Gain at Unity
Main at +2 db	Main at +4 db	Main at +2 db	Main at +3 db	Main at +2 db	Main at +2 db	Main at +2 db	Main at -2 db
Monitor at +2	Monitor at +4	Monitor at +2	Monitor at +3	Monitor at +2	Monitor at +2	Monitor at U	Monitor at U
Main amp knob set to Unity							
Monitor amp knob set to -2 db							

B) It can be helpful to keep additional notes regarding who (or which instrument) is at which mic, so as the PA manager mixes the open mic session he/she can quickly match a person or instrument to a channel strip.

C) It can be helpful to keep additional notes regarding settings for the mute switches, and for the gain knobs, the main volume, the monitor volume on each channel strip.

D) It can be helpful to keep additional notes regarding settings for the gain knobs (which control the preamps), as well as for the main volume knob, and the monitor volume knob on each channel strip.

E) It can be helpful to keep additional notes regarding settings for the main and monitor knobs on the output end of the PA (by the EQ sliders).

F) As mentioned above, in **section III.E** these settings will be changed dynamically during the event.

## **V. Chair setup**

- A) When setting up chairs, the circle should be designed in anticipation of late arrivals, rather than requiring a lot of moving around later as people trickle in.
- B) The circle of musicians should begin forming nearest the open mic stage, to face out towards the audience. If the crew is small, that seating will optimize the audience experience. As additional musicians arrive and must be seated along the long rows, they will inevitably be facing each other rather than out towards the audience.
- C) Even if it gets crowded, the circle should nevertheless allow ready access to the person running the PA, so that person can move around the room freely to check sound levels, without obstruction.
- D) This also means allowing access to the center of the circle from the rest of the restaurant.
- E) We must to be aware to leave a safe path open to the restrooms.

## **VI. Round robin etiquette**

- A) The usual round robin etiquette always applies.
- B) Most importantly when so many are gathered, instrumentalists must leave space for the lead instrument on breaks (whose name or instrument is called out by the vocalist), because only the vocals and the harmonica will be mic'd.
- C) Even though the vocalist is mic'd at the Magic Bean, instruments should still not step on them.

## **VII. Managing the open mic process**

- A) As musicians arrive, those who wish to take part in the open mic should sign in on the list.
- B) As the time approaches 7:45, the person managing the open mic checks the list.
- C) The list closes out as determined by the open mic manager, and may close when filled, or there may be a last call for participants around 7:45.
- D) As the time approaches 7:45, if the list is not already too long, the open mic manager may issue a last call for additional musicians.
- E) The expectation is that everyone on the list will get at least one song, which total should add up to approximately one hour (give or take a few minutes).
- F) Duets may or may not get two songs, trios may or may not get three, as time allows (but if they do so, then they may not get separate solos).
- G) Trios should anticipate their combos and inform the person running the PA prior to beginning the open mic session, so extra mics can be repositioned and the stage arranged to accommodate three musicians.
- H) If time allows, some may have the opportunity for a second solo, etc. or we return early to the round robin.