Jack Hepburn

Hands on Project

During my live sound experience in the Old Main room at the Bone Center, I engaged in several different tasks. To begin, we started off by unloading equipment off in the event room and began setting up 4 individual speakers and a subwoofer (2 mains in front, sub in front, 2 mains in back). The mains were set up so the performances could be played back in stereo across the system. Next, we focused on cable management and routing the output connections to the proper loudspeakers and routing the inputs from DI boxes to the interface we were using. In addition to routing and communicating each cables' destination to the FOH mixer, we focused on safety and taping down cables so no one would trip on them.

The most interesting part of the experience for me was seeing the inputs and outputs working in the software that we were using to mix the event with. I found it very intuitive and understood what was going on with the program even though I had never used it before. It made me feel like I knew what I was doing and showed me that the experience I have with non-live sound translates directly into live sound.

The most challenging part was the lack of labelling we had for the inputs into the DI boxes. Even though it wasn't a big deal in the end, it would have been extremely helpful and made the process for me much more efficient. Another challenge we faced was trying to get one of the performers Ableton instance to output through their Apollo interface to a DI box we had set up. The solution was simple, but it showed me that having experience with a variety of different DAWs is very beneficial to have.

Something I learned from this experience is that as important it is to have a good team to get the sound system sounding good and mixed properly, it is equally as important to have properly produced and mixed content from the performers themselves. Poorly mixed content won't sound good no matter how well set up and calibrated the system is. I always felt this way, but this experience confirmed my theory because I have never worked in a live setting like this.

A direct connection to class material was when the first performer was singing into the microphone and there was a proximity effect happening to his vocal. Tony corrected this by adding a high-pass filter, cutting the problematic low-frequency boost.

The overall experience was very clear, and I felt engaged and involved throughout the entirety of the event. There isn't much I have questions about regarding the event and setup we did but I did wonder whether there was a hard limiter engaged for the main outputs because I heard them clip pretty hard for a moment when one of the performers' signals got hot.

Overall, I enjoyed being able to apply some of my previous skills to a live-sound application while listening to some of the cool projects people around ISU have been working on.