



De's Dazzles – what is load-in and a sound check?

At a recent concert, someone asked me what time do I get to the building for a 7 pm show? 6 pm? Uff, nope, far from it!

For a typical concert with a band of 3 to 6 members, the band will arrive mid-afternoon. The more people in the band, the longer it takes, so the earlier they arrive. So, for this example we will say there are 5 people and they are arriving at 3 pm. Upon arrival at the opera house, the team lead will take a general tour with our tech Andrew or myself. During this walk through they are shown the bathrooms, dressing rooms, stage, elevator, easiest ways to get to the stage and basic layout of plug-ins, etc. Meanwhile the band members are unpacking their gear from the vehicle to the sidewalk.

About 3:20, the leader returns to the band and gives them basic directions. I am always amazed how bands work together and communicate effectively, how each person has specific jobs, how each guitar case has a specific location in the trailer and so forth. There is a gigantic difference in the local bar bands and the professional performers in this area!! Anyway, about 4 pm all the gear is in the building, clothes in dressing rooms, restrooms and drinks done!

Now like a well-oiled machine, each band member sets up his/her instrument. The percussionist is always the last person done, but the others all have jobs to do. No one stands around! One person may be talking photos to promote on Facebook, another is talking to Andrew about the instrumental mix, another may set up the merchandise table, tuning guitars and so forth.

About 5 pm they are ready to start the sound check. Yes, we hear a lot of 1-2-3-check as each person speaks into the microphone, checking to make sure they work the first time around and then doing it again and again until the balance is even. You don't want one person louder than another. Then you check to make sure all the instruments are coming through the sound system. Finally, you can play about 8 bars of a song. Then you repeat the process until it sounds correct! The professionals are selling a unique "sound" and are very precise on what they want!

About 6 pm, they are ready to eat our homemade supper and change into their performing clothes! Ready to go at 7 pm. Occasionally, they leave their pants at the last place and run to Walmart so they all can have matching black pants! Or other calamity! Then Supper is after the show. All in a day's work! Check, Check, 1, 2, 3.

De Heaton, 8/1/22