

Aviom Monitor Mixing System By Mitch Bohannon

See if this scenario sounds familiar to you... Your church has a contemporary service with a full band. You're using wedge monitors utilizing one, two, or even three channels for your monitors. Everyone on stage is trying to listen to themselves and, even though you turn "OFF" the drums in monitor #2, the instrumentalists listening to monitor #2 still say that the drums are too loud. So, you turn down the drums in monitor #1 just a bit and now your drummer says he can't hear himself. Wow! Just writing this again, I can feel the tension!! Possibly, your story would sound more like this... a worship service that is transitioning to a more contemporary style and you have many church members saying that the music is just "too loud"... and, even if you totally "kill" the mains, what is heard from your monitors is still too loud! What do you do? We all know that if you can't hear yourself well – you simply can't play or sing well and you certainly can't blend with the rest of the band! I've surely been there!

Traveling to several conferences across the country I've seen the Aviom system being used on stage. I always had the mindset that this was something just "out of my league" – too expensive – don't even get your hopes up! NOT SO!! Stay with me here... I was finally encouraged (prodded) enough by my drummer (go figure!) to look into the Aviom Pro16 Monitor Mixing System and found it to be much more affordable than I ever thought. I presented a proposal to my pastor, Randy, and we set an "in the near future" date on that purchase. Meanwhile, Randy went to a pastor's conference in Dallas and sat right in front of a band using the Aviom system. Immediately noticing the difference in noise level (not) spilling out to the audience, he called me from the conference and left word for me to "get it now!"

So, I think you understand my situation... we had a whole bunch of noise on the stage and each player or vocalist heard a whole bunch of nothing! I could hear my drummer, but he couldn't hear himself and the drums were too loud for the keyboard and piano... the list goes on.

I studied the Aviom Monitor Mixing System online (www.aviom.com). There are fantastic diagrams that explain the different system setups you can use. I ordered the Aviom input module (AN-16/i) and through it I can send 16 signals to the stage via ONE (1) Cat-5e cable. At the stage, I have the Aviom A-Net Distributor (A-16D) that sends signal to eight (8) Personal Mixers (A-16II). The A-16D also sends *power* to those eight mixers. To get to the far side of the stage, I've "daisy-chained" two more Personal Mixers. Because they are not directly connected to the distributor, they simply need to be connected to a separate AC power source.

The installation took just two and a half hours on a Saturday morning and that included setting up all of the Personal Mixers! This is very much a "plug and play" system. I connected each channel with a ¼" TRS cable from the "direct out" on the sound board into the AN-16/i. Each of those channels is individually controllable on each person's Personal Mixer. You have personal control of volume, pan (L/R) and mute of each individual channel. Once you get your mix how you like it, you can save it. So, if there are different individuals playing for another service, the same Personal Mixer can be used without having to continually reset it!

There are several ways to listen to the A-16II. All of my instrumentalists chose to listen with earbuds. Other options would be headphones, a powered wedge (monitor), or a wireless in-ear system. I made a temporary label strip to identify the 16 channels until we have them right where we want them. This makes it easy to quickly control specific channels.

Upon installation, my first thought was to leave the previous monitors until we were comfortable with the new Aviom system. No question about it! Just minutes after installing the system, I removed the previous wedges from the stage! I was totally confident that there would be NO growing pains with this system change! And what a transformation! The stage looks clean and clear. It's been 3 weeks since our system was installed and there have been absolutely NO problems, each instrument has easily adapted to the new setup. Sound-check basically seems a thing of the past! The soundmen can level the sound for the house while we practice! Some feedback from the band:

“I play the soprano sax with the praise team. Before we started using the Aviom system, I heard only the guitar, the drums and the bass, but with the Aviom system I can hear every member on the stage, plus, it helps me hear when I am out of tune. Using the system couldn't be any easier. All I had to do was choose who I needed to hear and turn the knob. After I set everything the way I wanted, I saved it and it was still the exact way I had it the next time we played!” – Trent Gault

“OK, now from the drummer's viewpoint. I'm sure you know the problems we were having. How can you play when you can't hear yourself or the rest of the music clearly? You can't! I know you've said this before... “I need more drums” or, “I need more guitar.” (Notice I never said “less” of anything!) But with the Aviom System you can mix your own sound that *only you* hear. You can even adjust the mix while playing! Now I can hear everything I need at a level that feels comfortable -every hi-hat strike, ride cymbal ting, and kick drum punch! It really frees me up to play with the creativity and expression that the Lord deserves!” – Al Cogbill (Minister of Percussion)

Bottom line... If you ever have volume problems or difficulty in getting a good sound level for the stage... Get the system! Spending money is a hurdle for every church; however, this system will enhance your band's ability to actually *play* as a band so much that it is definitely worth going for! The congregation is more comfortable hearing only what they are *supposed* to hear and with much more clarity! Besides, it's totally expandable. You can purchase enough to get sound to the instruments that have the most difficulty hearing and then add to the system later or let some players share a wedge controlled by an A-16II (Personal Mixer). Adding this system has been a great blessing to our Worship Ministry!