



# TUNING IN TO THE POWER OF SOUND

*With over a decade's experience in designing audio for live events, especially when it comes mega concerts and even more mega weddings in India, **Vishrut V. Joshi** is a sonic savant. In PALM Expo Magazine's 'Professional Focus' feature, Joshi opens up on an array of topics vital to the field of sound engineering – from the booming pro audio rental market for weddings in India and how he keeps reinventing the wheel as a live sound engineer to the importance of choosing the right gear for an event, and more.*

***Vishrut V. Joshi, Head, Operations, MEGA SOUND INDIA and Audio Designer, speaks on the creativity, the challenges, and the changing landscape of the live sound industry in India***

**C**all it serendipity. **Vishrut V. Joshi**, who now has 12+ years of experience as a live sound engineer, never set out in the professional world with the intention of venturing into live sound engineering. He shares, "I started off really into Pyrotechnics, but the opportunities for that were limited in India, and my family wasn't keen on moving abroad. Then, I noticed these big shows with cool lights, loud music, and pyrotechnics. The deep, booming sounds fascinated me, and I dreamt of diving into the world of sound. Since my pyrotechnics plan wasn't panning out, I shifted my focus to live sound. I attended small local shows in Udaipur. I connected with **Sid-**



**dharth Chauhan**, Director of **MEGA SOUND**, who let me join some gigs. The moment he played music on a line array, I felt the power of sound, and that sealed the deal for me. Because of him and his guidance, today I can see all those dreams come true that I once saw while sitting idle and watching shows on TV. That curiosity led me into this industry, and here I am, over a decade later, still loving every bit of it!"

Joshi recalls the names of some of the biggest artists and projects he has worked for throughout his career, "I've had the honor of contributing to a wide array of events, ranging from significant government projects to lavish royal weddings and vibrant festivals. My expertise spans across festival concerts, events, and tours, with a particular emphasis on crafting exceptional audio experiences for prestigious occasions. Within my portfolio, some stand-out events include managing the audio for PM Modi's speeches, playing a role in the G-20 Summit, overseeing audio arrangements for esteemed corporate gatherings, and spearheading the audio design for the Khelo India Opening Ceremony in 2023. I've been part of international tours, such as Alan Walker's India tour, and have handled audio design for high-profile Bollywood weddings, including those of Nick Jonas and Priyanka Chopra. More recently, I had the privilege of designing audio for Parineeti Chopra's wedding. A defining moment in my career was curating the audio design for Beyoncé's performance at a private wedding celebration in India. This remains a cherished memory and underscores the calibre of events I'm fortunate to be involved in."

Elaborating more on the share of sound rental market for weddings in India, Joshi states, Weddings in India are not just events; they are grand celebrations spanning multiple days, where families come together to create lasting memories. The Indian wedding market comes with a penchant for extravagant spending. Families often go all out, bringing in renowned Bollywood singers or even international artists and DJs to add that extra flair to their celebrations. In this vibrant wedding landscape, sound plays a pivotal role, and the demand for top-notch sound systems and technical expertise is substantial. Sound is an integral part of creating the perfect ambiance for these special occasions, making the wedding rental market a crucial component of the thriving live sound industry in India."

## What Makes A Successful Live Sound Engineer – How Does A Successful Live Sound Engineer Design A Successful Live Sound Event?

Keeping the live sound market insights aside, does the profession of live sound engineering become stagnant after a while? Joshi disagrees, "Every day as a Live Sound Engineer is a journey that begins long before the first note is played. It starts with designing the audio experience on software, envisioning how each element will come together to create magic. I plan meticulously, thinking about the inventory needed to bring that vision to life. Choosing the right gear is like selecting the instruments for a symphony. I carefully curate the inventory, considering the venue size, acoustics, and the unique requirements of the event. It's a crucial step to ensure we have the perfect tools for the job."

Joshi adds, "Then comes the hands-on part – rigging. It's not just about hanging speakers; it's about transforming a space into a sonic canvas. I work with the team to set up the rigging, making sure every speaker is securely in place. Rigging is like setting the stage for the audio performance; it's the foundation on which the entire show rests. After the rigging is done, it's onto sound design and calibration during the soundcheck. I meticulously fine-tune the system to ensure the sound is not just heard but experienced. The mix is adjusted on the fly during the event, considering the nuances of each performance and the unique aspects of the venue."

Joshi concludes, "Throughout the day, I work closely with the team, solving technical issues, and ensuring everything runs smoothly. After the last note fades away, we pack up, dismantle the setup, and reflect on a day filled with creating memorable audio experiences. Each day is a mix of creative design, technical precision, teamwork, and the thrill of live performances. It's a dynamic journey that I love being a part of from the initial software design to the final encore."

Is passion enough to test the waters of live sound engineering? Joshi believes that while passion and curiosity is vital to thrive in the profession, live sound engineering is a job that demands much more. He states, "Being a top-

notch live sound engineer means you're a tech whiz who pays attention to all the small things and can solve problems like a pro. You've got to handle pressure without breaking a sweat, especially when things don't go as planned during live shows. Talking and working well with musicians, event organizers, and your crew is a must. You've got this passion for music and sound, always staying in the loop with the latest tech trends. What sets you apart is your creativity – you can turn all those tech gadgets into an awesome sound experience that really wows the crowd. It's a cool and dynamic job that's all about making music sound fantastic live!"

In live sound engineering, Joshi mentions, there exists certain non-negotiable factors that uplift a live event and turn it into a success story. He explains, "There are crucial factors that I hold as non-negotiable. First and foremost is safety – the well-being of everyone involved is my utmost priority. This involves meticulous equipment setup, secure rigging, and strict adherence to safety protocols to create a secure environment for both the crew and the audience. Equally important is the quality of services. Every element, from vocals to instruments, must be of the highest quality to captivate and immerse the audience in the sonic journey."

Joshi goes on, "Reliability of equipment is a linchpin. Rigorous checks, regular maintenance, and having backup systems in place are vital to ensure a seamless performance. This proactive approach minimizes technical glitches and allows for swift solutions in case of any unexpected issues. Working with perfection is ingrained in my approach. Attention to detail, precision in sound tuning, and an unwavering commitment to achieving sonic excellence are non-negotiable. This extends to meticulous planning, venue reconnaissance, and adapting to the unique acoustic challenges of each performance space."

Creativity doesn't exist without challenges. But when it comes to delivering an impeccable live musical experience, Joshi remains undeterred by obstacles – "There are certain things I never compromise on to make sure the event goes smoothly. deliveries, quality of services, and safety comes first – I follow strict rules, secure all equipment properly, and plan for different weather conditions to keep everyone safe. Knowing the equipment inside out is crucial – I regularly check and maintain everything, and I always have backup plans in case something goes wrong. This mix of safety, quality, and adaptability is what sets the stage for a successful live performance."

No live event can be successful without the right equipment in place. Joshi knows his equipment like the back of his hand, and relies on select gear to ensure a smooth, seamless live sonic delivery. "When it comes to creating a great Audio design, I use a mix of fancy tech and trusting my ears. I really like using digital desks, especially the DiGiCo and Yamaha console, because it gives me the control I need for a balanced sound. To make sure everything sounds just right, I use heat maps generated by software, but my ears are my main guide. I'm also a big fan of the L-Acoustics system because it makes the sound experience amazing for both the performers and the audience. In my toolkit, I always have reliable calibration microphones like the iSEMcon, which help me measure and fine-tune the sound. Audio designing for me, is about Creating unforgettable sonic experiences which blends with cool tech with a good ear for detail."

## The Booming Landscape of Live Sound In India

When asked if the live sound industry in India is seeing a boom in recent times, Joshi affirms, "Absolutely, yes! The live sound scene in India is getting bigger and better over time. We now have major festivals happening, where people from all around come to enjoy music and good vibes. Famous headliner artists are touring India, bringing awesome performances to fans. The government is also backing big projects, adding to the excitement. India has become a hotspot for destination weddings, and these special occasions need top-notch sound quality to make them truly memorable. With all these fantastic events and a growing love for live music, it's clear that the live sound industry in India is booming and creating unforgettable moments for everyone involved!"

Is the much-evident boom a result of ever-evolving trends and technologies dominating the live sound industry in the last five years? Joshi echoes the speculation and confirms, "Over the past five years, the live sound industry in India has witnessed transformative moments that have reshaped the landscape. One significant shift has been the infusion of new technologies into the industry. With a heightened awareness of the importance of precise sound

quality in concerts, there has been a notable embrace of advanced audio solutions. Artists alike are now experiencing spatial audio through innovative technologies like Klange, contributing to a more immersive and engaging live music experience.”

Joshi continues, “The scale of audio production has expanded exceptionally. The industry has witnessed remarkable growth, indicating a broader acceptance of the integral role that top-notch sound plays in the overall success of live events. I foresee a galore of marvelous technological advancements and trend-setting practices that are poised to elevate the field of live sound engineering in India to newer, better heights.”

Joshi expounds enthusiastically, “Exciting changes are on the horizon for live sound in India! One significant shift is that we’ll be treated to more immersive sounds at concerts, thanks to cutting-edge technologies like L-acoustics LISA and Klange for in-ear spatial mixing. This promises to make the music experience feel more real and thrilling. The tech world is also introducing strong audio networks, making it easier for different sound equipment to communicate seamlessly. Additionally, with advancements in radio frequency (RF) technology, wireless will become even more reliable and efficient. There’s also a special focus on ensuring we can handle big events with lots of people without compromising the awesome sound quality. Get ready for a wave of cool tech that’s going to elevate the sound experience at concerts in India to a whole new level!”

Joshi agrees that the live music industry in India is benefitting by leaps and bounds due to the skyrocketing demand for live experiences, “The momentum of music festivals in India is remarkable, reflecting a thriving live event industry. While profitability is undoubtedly a crucial aspect, India’s focus should extend beyond just financial gains. The nation is making significant strides in handling large-scale audio production, ensuring top-notch quality and unforgettable experiences for fans. Looking ahead, there’s great potential for India to become a major touring destination for international headliner artists. By prioritizing quality and service, profits become a natural byproduct. It’s an exciting time for the live event industry in India, and the key is to channel this momentum into creating unparalleled events that resonate with audiences both locally and globally.”

It’s not just live music concerts that are amassing a growing significance in India’s live sound industry. Weddings, too, have metamorphosed into nothing short of a cinematic production, enveloped in feet-thumping sonic atmosphere and illuminated with lights galore. Joshi weights in, “Great Indian Weddings’ are still very much a thing, and they’ve even bounced back

stronger after the tough two-year COVID lockdown. At first, people were a bit careful with smaller gatherings and fewer guests. But as things opened up, the scale of weddings didn’t shrink – if anything, it got even bigger. People realized how important it is to celebrate life, and that feeling translated into more elaborate and exciting weddings. While guest lists might be a bit shorter for safety, the overall grandness of these celebrations, with famous artists and all the bells and whistles, is still very prevalent. So, the joy of big Indian weddings is alive and well!”

The live sound industry is only going to continue to blossom, as Joshi asserts, “I see the rental market in India moving towards a tech-savvy future. With the surge in large-scale events and the growing demand for top-notch audio production, rental companies are investing heavily in cutting-edge gear. Collaborations between companies to handle extensive audio requirements are on the rise, showcasing a collective effort to meet the demands of these events. The rapid adoption of new technologies is impressive, and even major manufacturers are recognizing India as a significant market for their products. The influx of major festivals approaching India underscores the country’s capacity to manage the same level of scale seen globally. It’s an exciting time for the industry, with innovation and collaboration driving the live sound rental market towards a more advanced and dynamic future.”

### Advice For Aspirational Live Sound Engineers

With a metamorphosis looming on the horizon for the live sound landscape in India, Joshi has a piece of advice for aspiring live sound engineers – “My advice is to embrace a combination of technical expertise, adaptability, and a relentless passion for music. First and foremost, invest time in mastering the technical aspects of sound engineering, from understanding different audio equipment to honing your skills in sound design, systems, mixing, and troubleshooting. Stay updated on industry trends and emerging technologies. Adaptability is key in the dynamic world of live performances – be ready to think on your feet, handle unexpected challenges. Cultivate a keen ear for detail and a profound appreciation for the nuances of different instruments and voices. Networking within the industry is invaluable; establish connections with musicians, fellow engineers, and other professionals. Finally, never underestimate the power of hands-on experience – seek opportunities to work on a variety of live events to build your confidence and refine your craft. Passion is the driving force behind any successful career, so stay passionate about creating the best possible sonic experience for both performers and audiences alike and give audience a great time.”

## TOP 50 PRODUCTS & TECHNOLOGY

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### Yamaha STAGEPAS 200

With clear quality sound and mixing capability that exceeds expectations, the STAGEPAS 200 is a one of the most premium portable PA systems that sets benchmark in its performance. The STAGEPAS 200 offers all the connectivity, performance functions, and mixing capability users would ever need for small-scale duo or trio performances— all packed into a compact 300 mm cube-style cabinet. Equipped with a digital mixer that can be controlled remotely for up to 5 channels, 3 mic preamps, and a comprehensive range of practical functions, the STAGEPAS 200 is the ideal compact all-in-one PA system. The STAGEPAS 200 comes in two models— one with a high-capacity lithium-ion battery, the other compatible with optional batteries, giving the user the flexibility to capture the audience’s attention in any environment— from street/stage performances, to events, parties, and even speeches.



### ZSOUND VCX

ZSOUND VCX is a large-scale, four-amp, three-way line array system with Neodymium high-sensitivity driver and large stroke LF driver. The ZSOUND VCX is a powerful dual 14-inch 3-way 4-amp line array speaker system. This system features two 14-inch LF components, four 7-inch MF components, and three 3-inch HF components, delivering outstanding sound quality and coverage with a nominal coverage of 80 degrees (H) adjustable. The ZSOUND VCX delivers maximum headroom and a large stroke LF driver, ensuring that the low frequency is extended. The presettable angle on the ground is adjustable with a manual hoister in the air, making it an ideal choice for large-scale events, touring performances, stadium, and theatre installation. With a weight of 77 kg, this line array speaker system is built to withstand the rigors of professional use and delivers SPL peaks of 135/141 dB for HF, 131/137 dB for MF, and 125/131 dB for both LF(L) and LF(R).

