

Ernest Tubb Record Shop

Redefining Sound on Lower Broadway, Nashville

Ernest Tubb Record Shop embraced its historic Broadway space, using Yamaha and NEXO speakers to craft vibrant, balanced sound that highlights every note and elevates the entire musical experience.



Where Nashville's Heritage Meets High Fidelity

Nashville has always been the heartbeat of American music - a city where every street, stage, and honky-tonk pulses with rhythm and melody. In recent years, it has evolved into a creative hub for artists across genres. Lower Broadway, known for its energy and glorious chaos, offered the perfect stage for the Ernest Tubb Record Shop to reimagine what a live music experience could be.

The mission was clear: create an audio environment that honors Nashville's heritage while delivering a modern, high-fidelity experience that keeps patrons engaged and comfortable. To meet this vision, Black Box AVS was responsible for the design, engineering, and implementation of a complete AV system, delivering a solution tailored to the venue's unique architectural and operational requirements.

Martin Lawrence, owner of Black Box AVS explained, "The project required more than an audio upgrade. Black Box AVS was tasked with creating a cohesive technology ecosystem that supported live music, venue operations, guest experience, networking, lighting control, and long-term serviceability. Beyond audio, Black Box AVS designed and implemented the venue's technology backbone, including network infrastructure, wireless connectivity, centralized control systems, equipment rack systems, and integrated lighting control."

The Acoustic Reality

The building posed a classic Broadway challenge: long and narrow, with exposed brick walls and wood floors throughout. Heavy acoustic treatment wasn't an option, so the team relied on coverage, delay zones, and precise tuning. "It's a long skinny building, all brick, both sides, and just wood floors," Lawrence explained. "The goal was simple in concept but demanding in execution: deliver consistent SPL from front to back while preserving the twang of a steel guitar, the resonance of an upright bass, and the delicate textures of acoustic sets. In a city where every note tells a story, balance wasn't optional - it was essential."

System Architecture: Precision Meets Performance

The backbone of the system is a series of Yamaha CZR loudspeakers, chosen for clarity, punch, and musical fidelity. "The CZRs really let every instrument breathe," Lawrence said. "You hear the subtle harmonics in a steel guitar, the snap of an upright bass, and the shimmer of acoustic strings - all without cranking the volume."

The CZRs' wide dynamic range remains articulate even at high SPLs, so audiences hear music - not just volume - a critical distinction in a city steeped in live music tradition.

Front fills maintain clarity for the first rows, while the compact footprint preserves





sightlines and the venue's open feel. Control moved to iPads linked to centralized racks in an AV closet, enabling full FOH and lighting control without traditional booths. Chauvet fixtures, Luminaire software, and Visual Productions cores integrated dynamic lighting into the same interface. Robust NETGEAR switches and RUCKUS access points ensured reliable connectivity across four floors, with Middle Atlantic racks and Panduit cable management keeping the system clean and serviceable.

NEXO ePS Series loudspeakers round out the system with high-output, full-range performance, combining precise coverage, selectable HF directivity, and a compact, flexible set of mounting options that make them easy to deploy throughout the space.

Optimizing for Impact

Every decision focused on maximizing sonic impact while working within the budget. When stage layouts changed mid-project, mains were upsized to 15-inch drivers, yet the sonic character remained clear and detailed thanks to the CZR's first-rate sound quality. "Even with changes, the system adapts beautifully. You still hear the full range of the music - there's depth, clarity, and punch across the room." Patrons experience consistent, high-fidelity sound on every floor, from rooftop bar to vinyl shop. "The CZRs don't just blast sound; they create an experience," he said.

The Sonic Payoff

The results were immediate. Patrons could hear instruments with clarity, not just volume. "People say it sounds great. It's not super loud - you actually hear the individual instruments," Lawrence said. This project represented more than a technical upgrade; it signaled a cultural shift.

"It's helping start that shift from bars putting in systems that are just the cheapest and the loudest to something that's different - building a system from the ground up that makes the user experience enjoyable," he explained. The venue now encourages audiences to linger, soak in the music, and fully appreciate every performance.



Sound First, Always

In Nashville, where music flows through every street and stage, sound quality must always take center stage.

The Ernest Tubb Record Shop proves that meticulous engineering, intelligent system design, and thoughtful resource use can transform a venue into a truly immersive sonic experience while honoring the city's rich musical heritage. "At the end of the day, that's the goal - building a spot I'd want to take friends to when they come to town," Lawrence said.

Here, loud is no longer the measure of a great performance; every note, every strum, and every vocal nuance is delivered with clarity and presence - letting the music live and breathe just as it was meant to.

