



ASHLY GETS INTO THE PUNCH BOWL!

PORTLAND, OREGON – Punch Bowl Social is a unique entertainment concept that got its start in Denver, Colorado and is steadily making its way to a city near you. The second and most recent Punch Bowl Social occupies 32,000 square-feet on the top floor of Pioneer Place Mall in downtown Portland. Within that space, patrons can bowl, sing karaoke, shoot pool, throw darts, play Ping-Pong, shoot marbles, play board games, rock '80s video games, and more. Of course, Punch Bowl Social patrons can also grab a drink (often literally from a punchbowl) or dine on delicious, creative fare. The idea, of course, is that in the age of big screen TVs, the human animal still craves connection, and games and music have provided the context of that connection for millennia. To keep the music engaging, Denver-based A/V integration firm PRIME used Ashly Audio processing at both locations.

“Punch Bowl Social proved to be a far greater success in Denver than the owners had dared hope for,” said Robert Higdon, owner of PRIME. “The Denver location is expansive, but still considerably smaller than the new Portland location. In Denver, we used a single Ashly ne24.24M to do all system routing and conditioning for the powered speaker over the bowling lanes. The owners were so pleased with Higdon’s solution that they hired PRIME to design and install the system at the new Portland location.

One of the new features at Portland is a pair of karaoke rooms that groups can rent for private parties. A single Ashly ne24.24M outfitted with sixteen inputs and eight outputs raises their sound quality far beyond the standalone karaoke systems that bars typically employ. Four wireless microphones per room allow group performances in combination with a cloud-based karaoke server. An effects processor provides the professional polish that takes ace karaoke stars to the next level – and softens the rough edges of newbies. Powered loudspeakers provide robust output, and users can dial in appropriate volumes for the music, their voices, and the effects from an Ashly FR-8 wall-mounted remote control. Because the FR-8 provides a simple slider for each function, users can operate it successfully with zero training.



The main sound reinforcement system at Portland's Punch Bowl Social uses a separate Ashly ne24.24M. Inputs include five cable boxes, a Blu-ray player, two DJ inputs (one per each side of the building), a jukebox, a paging server, and an Apple Airport Express that can stream digital music and the like. Powered loudspeakers and subwoofers populate twelve output zones logically divided by amusement type. A Crestron® control system paired with an Apple® iPad® mobile pro app provides input selection and volume control. The control features a schematic of Punch Bowl Social from above. Users tap the section they want to control and make the necessary adjustments.

“For every project I’m involved in, I try to give the end user the best sound quality possible,” said Higdon. “I always use Ashly processing, and I carefully tune each zone at commissioning. Sound quality is evident to me because I work with sound for a living, but sound quality is just as important for patrons who aren’t audio professionals. For them, it’s a subconscious thing. If the sound quality is lacking or, worse, annoying, they’ll want to leave. That, of course, is the last thing the owners want. But a well-tuned system is fantastic. My favorite thing to do when a job is finished and open is to go back and watch people enjoying it. I see them singing along, bopping their heads. That’s almost payment enough for me.” Higdon will be accompanying the Punch Bowl Social enterprise as it heads to Austin in a few months.