

Backing Vocals & In-Ears

Colleen Bleazard **harmonyinworship**
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Tips for Backing Vocals

1. You're there to support the lead singer.
 - A. Blend – with each other and behind the lead vocal. Don't try to out-sing.
 - B. Know their style of leading. Watch them and be responsible.
 - C. Read moments really well. For example: entries, phrasing, vocal sets, etc. Use a "ghosting" technique and follow them closely behind. Wherever they go, you are right there.
 - D. Support & cushion the sound vocally. Give warmth to the tone by using various resonances within your body.
2. The drive of the sound comes from the lead vocals; but the strength and warmth comes from the backing vocalists.
3. Know your own voice well and be vocally consistent. Avoid drastic changes in tone colour and don't attempt to perform beyond your abilities.
4. Hold the microphone correctly, either right in front of your mouth when singing, or in front of the body when not singing – using it as a barrier from the noise of the band to avoid "spillage." This is when your microphone picks up the sound of the band. Spillage affects other BVs.
5. Warm up your voice before sound check and sing exactly the same way as you would in performance. If you don't, your EQ will be set at a wrong level during the sound check and it will be harder to correct this when in performance.

Tips for In-Ear Monitors

In-ear monitors are a great alternative to using floor monitors – especially in larger venues, or with larger bands. They not only reduce the possibility of feedback; they also allow the performer to hear with less sound interference in order to perform to the best of your abilities. Here are some helpful tips on how to maximise your use of in-ear monitors:

1. It is a good idea to have the MD & some sort of click track/snare & hats in your monitors.
2. Have your lead musical rhythm instrument in your mix to help you hear the groove. As an example, this could be acoustic guitar, piano, or rhythm electric guitar.
3. If you are lucky enough to have your own individual mix, do not have all instruments at equal volume. It is better to have a few instruments in the mix instead of all.
4. Use in-ears in both ears! With both in-ears you get a better blend.
 - A. Do NOT only use one in-ear, or you may miss critical information and potentially cause ear damage.
 - B. Most vocalists have a bad tendency to raise the volume level in their pack to compensate for lack of stereo volume. Utilising both in-ears allows you to keep your volume level lower, whilst still hearing what you need to hear.
 - C. Should you want/need to hear more of the atmosphere – ask your sound tech to put more in your mix.

5. Have the lead singer a little higher in your mix than you. Add a couple of other BVs/choir lower in your mix to aid in vocal blend.
6. Go for clarity instead of warmth in the monitors. This makes it easier to identify faults for correction.
7. Secure your in ears to avoid having them fall out during the set. If your in-ears have one, slide the grip at back of head right up tightly, as the in-ears will stay in better. You can also use clear/skin toned medical tape to secure wires to the back of your ears if necessary.
8. Squash the in-ear foams down and push into ears before they expand, as this will help to keep them in.
9. Should you desire a better fit, you can purchase your own custom moulds for your in-ears.