



Charity Christmas Lunch at The Savoy

In December 2014 a leading youth charity that gives young people aged between 14 and 24 a chance to fulfil their potential and develop essential life and work skills, held their annual Christmas lunch at The Savoy Hotel in London.

The event was organised to give the charity an opportunity to thank 150 of their corporate and private benefactors for their support and donations over the previous year. The guests were treated to a festive afternoon of lunch and live entertainment with celebrity guest appearances including, amongst others, Jonathan Ross (compering) and Bill Bailey. There was also a silent auction held to raise funds for the charity.

As the chosen Event Production company, AP Events was responsible for all aspects of the Audio Visual equipment for the room, including sound systems, lighting, 60" and 50" screens and teleprompters as well as specifying and integrating a workable solution for the silent auction.

Challenges and considerations:

In deciding on the ideal set up for this event, we had to take a number of unique factors into consideration.

The Savoy has a rich history dating back to 1889 and lunch was held in the iconic Lancaster Ballroom, which has been described as one of the most stylish venues in London. With its high ceilings, gilt chandeliers and mirrors, we were keen to ensure that any equipment we brought in did not detract from the beauty of the room itself.

We also needed a stage large enough to accommodate not just the guest speakers and performers (some of whom were to be on stage at the same time) but also various instruments and a 60" screen.

For the silent auction, it was necessary for us to come up with and integrate a solution that would allow real time bidding by guests in the room.

Access to the venue for set up and de-rig was also very limited as the event was held during The Savoy's peak Christmas period. Despite the fact that we had a 45 minute strike window to clear our equipment from the room at the end of the lunch, it was still imperative that guests were not aware of any work going on in the background whilst they were still in the ballroom.

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What we did:

In order to address the challenge of achieving an AV installation that didn't clash with the ballroom, we discounted the traditional black AV kit and opted instead for more discreet white lighting poles and boxes. We also decided that our control desk, positioned at the rear of the room would have a cream coloured surround to ensure that it blended into the background.

The ballroom's existing stage was extended to accommodate the extra requirements and weight whilst still allowing the performers and presenters to face the guests.

For the silent auction, we considered a number of different software options before deciding on iBid as an out of the box solution that met all of our requirements.

It was all hands on deck on the day to ensure that set up was done within the timeframe allowed. After the event, the team worked to planned and precise timings so as to complete the de-rig well within the allotted 45 minutes, allowing the room to be set up for the next event.

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