How the Fairmont Breakers Became One of Rolling Stone's Picks for the Best Hotel Music Programming in America

In April 2026, Rolling Stone published a feature highlighting how "Hotels today have the opportunity to be living cultural spaces, not just places to sleep, but places where people gather, discover, and connect. Guests leave not just remembering where they stayed, but what they experienced."

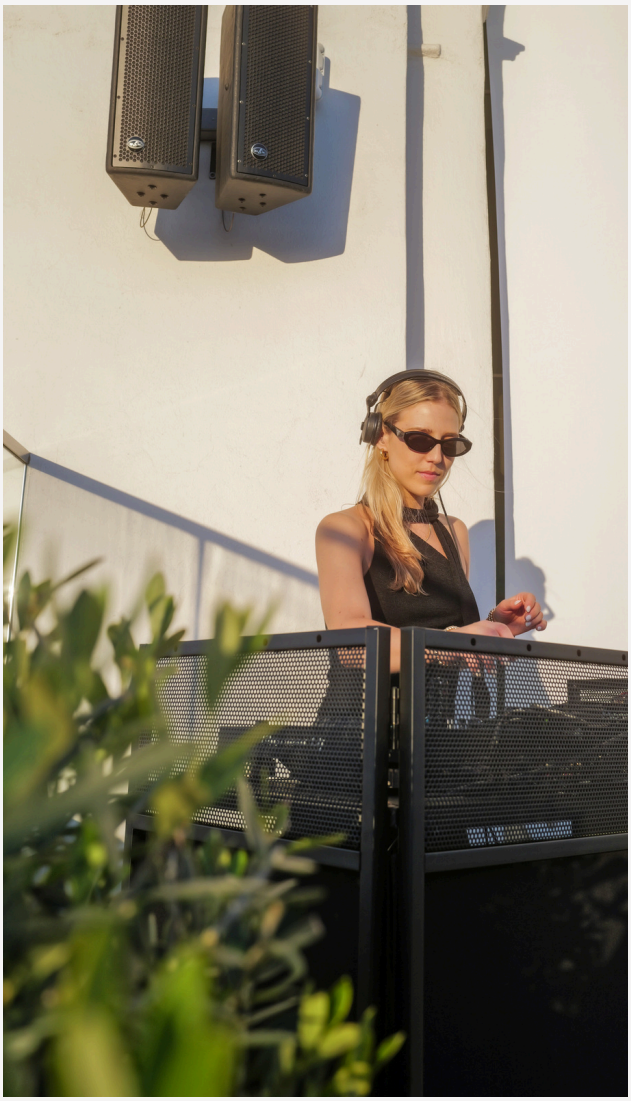
These hotels made the cut because their music programming is better than anyone else in the country. One of the seven properties listed was the Fairmont Breakers Long Beach- a restored 1920s Art Deco landmark celebrating its hundredth year, recognized specifically for the live music running through its outlets.

We program that music. So forgive us if this one's a little personal.

A building that set the bar

The Breakers isn't a blank canvas**.** Orchestras played its rooftop Sky Room during the hotel's Hollywood heyday; Elizabeth Taylor spent a wedding night there, and Clark Gable and Rita Hayworth were regulars. When the property reopened after its restoration, the question wasn't whether music belonged in the building. The building already answered that. The question was whether modern programming could live up to its hundred plus year history.

That history raises the stakes in a way operators should appreciate. Generic background entertainment in a room like that doesn't just fall flat. It actively undercuts the story the property is selling. Every outlet needed programming that sounded like it had always been there.



One hotel, three rooms, three completely different briefs

What Rolling Stone picked up on and what we think is the actual lesson here, is that the Breakers doesn't have "a music program." It has several, **each built for a specific room.**

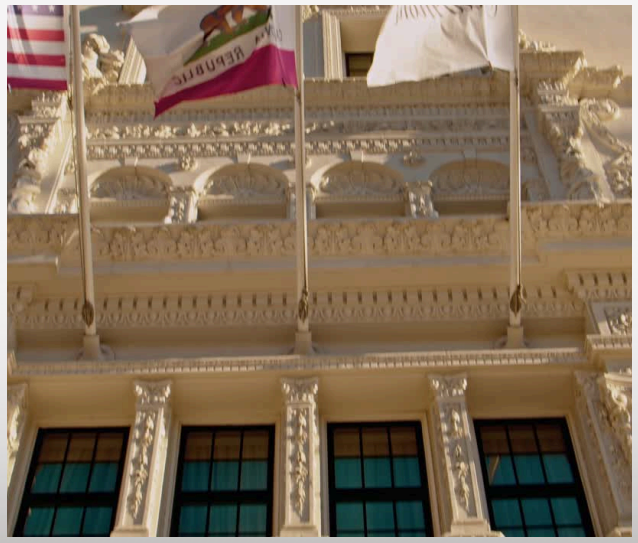
GigFinesse builds and runs live music programs for hotels and hospitality groups nationwide, from single-outlet lounges to full-property curation. If your space has a story worth soundtracking, let's get started!

Alter Ego is the hidden lounge tucked behind the main lobby, styled as a speakeasy and rooted in the building's jazz history. The programming leans into that identity rather than around it: Latin Jazz Fridays anchor the week, and a recurring series brings jazz musicians and trios from Long Beach State's music program into the room for jam sessions that feel closer to a living-room hang than a hotel gig. Booking for Alter Ego means finding players who understand a small room — musicians who can read a quiet Tuesday differently than a packed Friday.

HALO, the rooftop bar, runs a rotating weekend DJ lineup built around sunset hours and a view of the harbor. Different energy, different talent pool, different success metrics. A DJ who kills at HALO would be wildly wrong for Alter Ego, and that's the point.

Hotel as a whole, throughout the year, the property introduces seasonally specific music and activations. Our team takes the guesswork out of these projects for the F&B teams. From Christmas Eve in the lobby to lounge performers in the Sky Room, executing specialty activations has never been more seamless or impactful.

This is what we mean by outlet-specific curation. The lazy version of hotel music is one playlist, or one "house musician," stretched across every space. The version that gets national press treats each room as its own venue with **its own identity, audience, and acoustic reality.**



What it takes behind the curtain

Curation gets the credit; coordination does the work. Running multiple distinct programs in one property means 15+ shows per month across 2+ outlets - each with its own confirmation chain, sound requirements, artist payments, and backup plan. The hotel's team focuses on guests. Ours handles sourcing from the Long Beach and greater LA talent pool, scheduling, day-of logistics, and the unglamorous reality that somebody, inevitably will get sick on a Friday afternoon or have a family emergency. These are all pain points that onsite teams no longer have to handle.

Curated lineups aren't limited to just the most prominent artists in an area. Highlighting emerging talent in the community is also a priority for this property. The CSULB series isn't a charity line item- it's a pipeline. The hotel gets young, hungry, genuinely local talent; the musicians get a professional room and a built-in audience early in their careers. The neighborhood shows up because their people are on the bill. National music press notices things like that, because it's the difference between a hotel that books music and a hotel that belongs to its city's scene.

The takeaway for hotel operators

The Breakers result isn't magic and it isn't budget. Rolling Stone's list included properties at very different price points. The pattern across all seven was the same: programming with a specific point of view, matched to the space, sustained consistently enough that guests can plan around it.

If you operate a hotel and you're evaluating live music, the questions that matter are the ones the Breakers have answered. Does each outlet have its own programming identity, or one across the property? Is the talent genuinely a fit, or is it "I know a guy"? And is the operation behind it durable enough to run every week without your F&B director moonlighting as a talent buyer?

Get those right and the **music stops being a line item and becomes an amenity**-one that elevates your guest experience and sets you apart from every other hotel in the market.