Drums In Worship

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One of the things that we've talked about in the Heart and Skill worship training events Vineyard Music hosts in the UK is the fact that the technical or musical ability of our worship teams has an impact on the accessibility of our worship. When we lead worship we want as many people as possible to be able to worship. For this to happen people must feel safe with the music we're playing – whatever the style it's in.

Drummers And Muppets

So, here we are talking about drums in worship. Why, you may ask, should there even be room for drums within a worship setting? To many, drums and percussion are noisy extravagances that have become a barrier to worship. The traditional view of a drummer, I would suggest, is someone who listens to very loud music, who drools, who can't play any other instrument and is given a pair of sticks because he has a van big enough to carry all the gear, much like Animal from The Muppets. However, there is more to Animal than meets the eye.

He can certainly impress with his technique, time keeping and groove. But Animal also provides much in the way of inspiration. Just look at the guy! Sitting there with an inane grin on his face, just waiting to explode if given the nod. But until then, he holds everything in, practicing great restraint, never too loud and never getting in the way, in essence providing the rhythmic framework for the rest of the band.

Through all of this, Animal shows that he is on his way to fulfilling his calling. Animal was created to be the backbone for The Muppets Band, and as drummers we need to look to fulfill the same role within the worship band. Animal spent time developing his technique, time keeping and groove and is able to inspire us through his joy and anticipation of making music. He doesn't get in the way and he knows his role within the band.

But more than playing for a Muppet band, we play for God. We need to reflect the heartbeat of God through our playing. When we play we can either get in the way or pave the way for God to meet with His people. Practice restraint, sensitivity and humility through your playing and know that God loves those mystery grooves as you look to fulfill your calling.

Some Quick Tips For Drummers

So, in view of all this here are four handy tips with which to engage your brain.

– Put your drums on a non-slip surface! There's nothing worse than trying to stop your bass drum from pushing the worship leader out of the way...trust me, it really wouldn't be for the best, okay! If you need to, get your own carpet. Learn the melody and words of the songs you are playing. Without knowing the intent of the song you won't be able to fully engage with it and convey the meaning through your playing.

– Have the music in front of you and even try singing the song as you play – great for all you budding Phil Collins' out there.

– Practice the things you cannot do! So often I fall back on the things that I find comfortable to play, even when practicing, when in order to develop I need to practice those things I cannot do. I think that's why it's called practice!

– Be inspired by the players out there, you know, the ones we really like listening to but can easily write off because they're not playing in church. It all boils down to being prepared to give of the best of ourselves in whatever situation we find ourselves in.

If we can be prepared with a good knowledge of our instrument combined with playing it, we can be ready to convey our heart of worship through the meaning in the songs. Go on, push the boat out, make a fool of yourself behind closed doors, you may even find yourself being asked to lead at times. Then what, prophetic drumming?

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