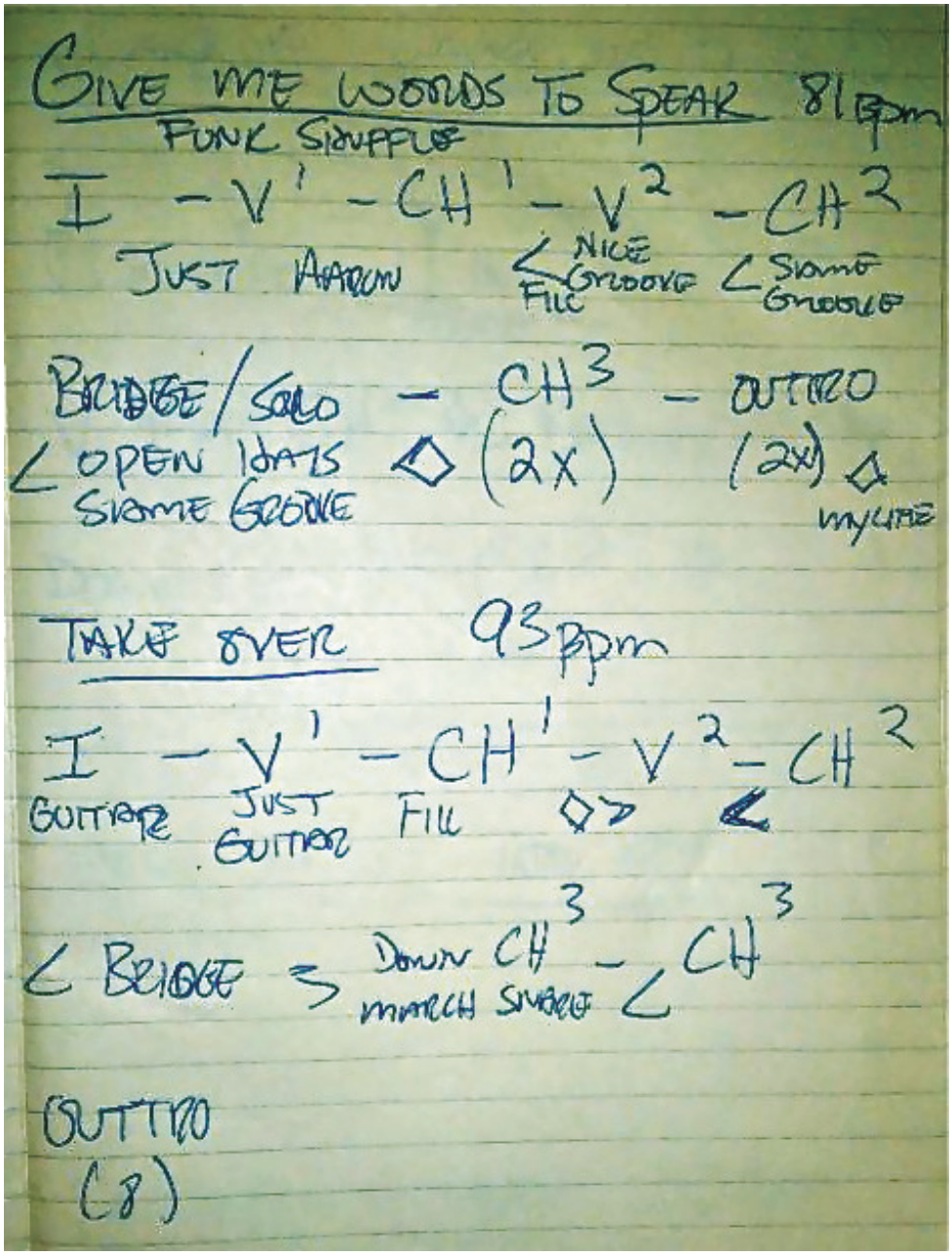
Chapter 2: Listening and Charting

Listen to the given songs as much as you can. If possible, you need to memorize the material. In today's world of mobile technology, you're given the opportunity to listen to your music anywhere and any time. You can download the songs from email on your iPhone, Android, or Blackberry and listen to them at work, on the road, or at home. Use whatever method of listening is best for you. It should be in a manner where you recognize the nuances of the drum part, song arrangement, and obvious drum hits and pushes in each song. Most importantly, **key in on time signature, groove, tempo, hits, stops, pushes, and starts.** A great way to memorize these nuances, if a chart is not provided, is for you to make your own chart.

Two of the most challenging listening and charting gigs of my life were the mega churches where I played very often in Dallas, Texas. The challenge was that they were both very different in format and chart styles. Prestonwood Baptist Church was more of an adult, contemporary choir, and track heavy format. I would always have a music stand full of charts falling all over the place; a full plate of keeping a large orchestra, band, and choir all in sync, all while playing with tracks and charts. **Memorization was the key because of the amount of music with tracks.** Charts were provided and I marked them to remind me of the stops, tempo changes, as well as the beginnings and endings. It was an interesting gig that always kept me on my toes for three years.

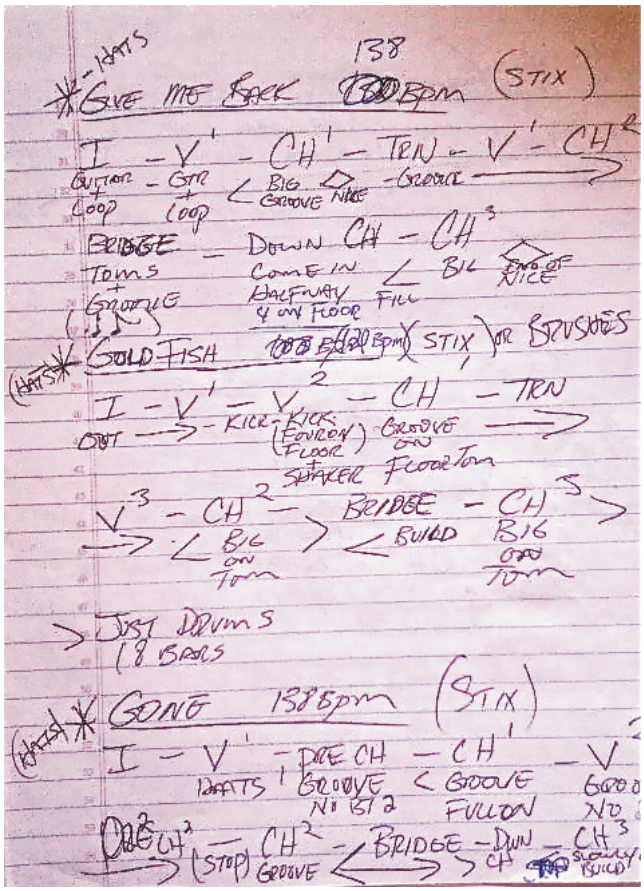
Charting: The memorization process is greatly enhanced by hand charting out the songs in a way I'll illustrate here. If you have charts provided then use them as a guide and feel free to mark. You are not always given the luxury of charts. I believe charts help considerably in memorizing music in your set list. Take a look at the following chart I created for an Aaron Shust song:



Aaron Shust Chart

The chart below is for an artist, Kina Grannis, that I had a call to play for at the last minute. There were three rehearsals for two sold out shows at The Highline Ballroom in New York City. I had to learn about 15 to 16 songs in the midst of producing a record. Knowing I had little time to prepare and there was so much material, I charted out the songs in the order of how I downloaded them because there wasn't a set list available. I would spend a solid day with the artist I was producing and after finishing with them I'd spend the rest of the evening studying and charting the songs.

In my gathering process I found out from the bass player that the former drummer had no sense of time and did not even come prepared for the gig. I knew this information would come in handy as I prepared and charted. When I walked into the first rehearsal, everyone was very impressed with how I knew the tempos and arrangements so well. The performance commenced in New York City, and it was a success! I programmed and memorized the set, resulting in a happy artist and a successful show.



Kina Grannis Chart / KinaGrannis.com

Dissecting the Charts

Let’s now dissect the charts. What did I key in to help me memorize the songs and guide me through the preparation process and upcoming rehearsal?

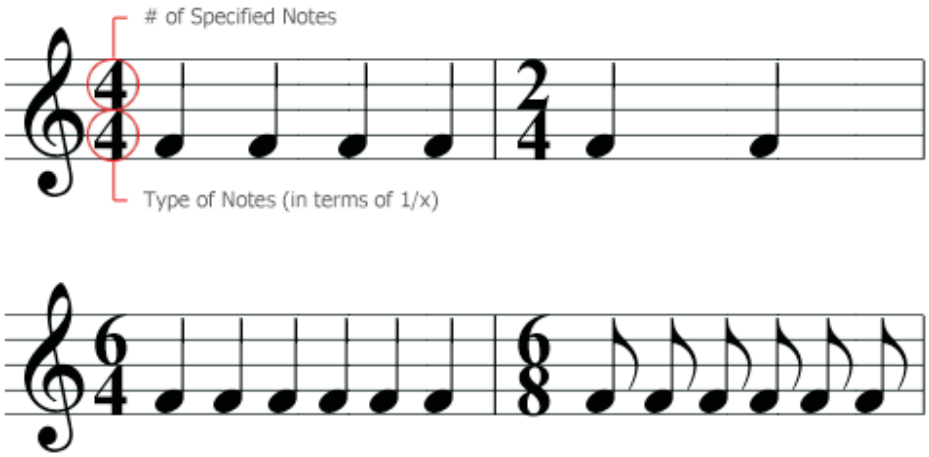
Tempos: The tempo is commonly known as beats per minute (BPM). We measure our heart rates in the same way. Tempo is a very central part of music. Quite frankly, **it's the drummer's job to maintain tempo for the whole band.** I almost always play with a metronome or a click track live. One of the first things I ask a new artist I am playing with is if he or she is comfortable playing with a metronome or a click track. When I listen to a new song, I lock in a tempo with my metronome and make the marking of the BPM on my chart for reference.



BOSS Metronome

Time Signature: The time signature of a song is how it's counted in each bar or measure and what distinguishes the note value. The most common time signature in modern music is known as common time or 4/4 time. The 4/4 time is four beats per measure, and the quarter note value is one beat. When you count 1, 2, 3, 4, this means you are counting in quarter notes, which is the note value of 1 beat. In 4/4 time, four-quarter notes equal 1 bar or measure. Two bars equal 8 beats or quarter notes. You also have sixty-fourth notes, thirty-second notes,

sixteenth notes, eighth notes, half notes, and whole notes. All of them have different note values. In 4/4 time, it cannot exceed four beats to equal a bar or measure. The same thing applies to another very common time signature in modern music, that is the 6/8 time. The eighth note gets the beat because of the bottom number being 8 and there are six eighth notes to make up a full measure.



Arrangements: Memorizing an arrangement is a key to learning any song. Within each arrangement, **we also memorize entrances, grooves, stops, holds, pushes, and endings in any given song arrangement.** Every song may or may not have the same structure but it's pretty safe to always listen to a modern song and know there are the same parameters involved. It's up to me to know what to fill in those given parameters. But for your future reference, key in to the pretty typical song structure described in the next chapter. I use this formula often when I have little time to prepare. It's a pretty typical popular song arrangement.