THE
ESSENTIALS
IN WORSHIP
TOOLKIT



AN EPIC FORMULA
FOR MAKING A BAND SOUND GREAT

worshiptraining

INTRODUCTION

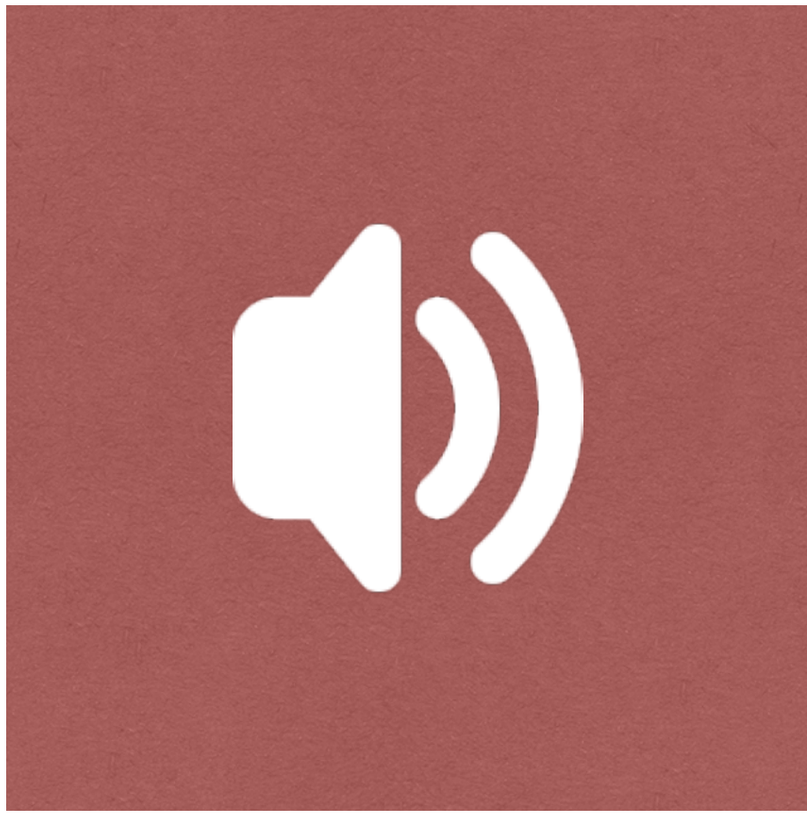
How do we arrange a large band?

No matter our sound – whether we have a hard rock, a soft rock, a gospel or a liturgical type of sound – we have to start with some basic principles when we're thinking about arranging a large band.

Using these 5 ingredients, you'll have an epic formula for making your band sound great.

INTRODUCTION

1. Establish your sound.
2. Layer from the ground up.
3. Communicate roles.
4. Start from rhythm.
5. Build with taste.



INGREDIENT 1 - ESTABLISH YOUR SOUND

Establish your sound.

What sound are you after? What are you looking to be able to create? You have to start with basic principles when it comes to making this sound work.

Some congregations want the ability to create different types of sounds to serve their diverse community. These sounds can be expressed with different instruments, different singers, or different kinds of bands. These are all elements that need to be in place for you to achieve varieties of sound.

Understanding what instrumentation and abilities you have available to you is the first step in making your band sound great.

INGREDIENT 2 - LAYER FROM THE GROUND UP

Layer from the ground up.

All arrangements start with ‘the groove’ – the bass drum and the bass guitar. These instruments interact, lock together a rhythmic foundation, and bring the groove to life. Everything else can be layered on top. If this is “off,” then the whole band will be off. Take the time to make sure the groove is solid with the bass and drums.

Once the ground level is strong, you can work on inside rhythms. These sounds fill gaps with more frequent repetitions, and are brought to life by instruments like the hi-hat and acoustic guitar. Next, add in other instrumentation, like a keyboard. Watch out for similar patterns of rhythm among the instruments – everyone must stick to their roles to create breathing room in the music.

All instrumentation, whether you’re in a musical trio or an orchestra of 50, must add up to one –this is the Fraction Principle. For example, If you’ve got 7 instruments, each player can only have 1/7 of the sound. If your musicians take on more than their designated amount, the music becomes irritating and overbearing.

INGREDIENT 3 - COMMUNICATE ROLES

Communicate roles within the band.

You've got your groove instruments. You've got your inside rhythm instruments. You've got the mid-range sound of keyboard and guitar. How do you create a beautiful musical space with everyone in their roles? First, teach your team that silence is just as important to the music as playing; it's okay to ease off playing if it benefits the overall sound.

Stress blend. You don't want it to sound like four different vocalists at four different microphones – the vibrato begins to warble all over the place. Put your musicians in a circle with the goal of 'buzz' – the sound of one beautiful voice.

Having this smooth texture allows your team to support the lead vocalist and match what the worship leader is doing in his/her rhythms. That buzz can then be translated into harmonizing, with that same intent of mimicking a unified voice.

INGREDIENT 4 - START FROM RHYTHM

Start from rhythm.

If something starts to feel out of place in your rehearsal, scale back to the drums and bass. Then, all your musicians to enter and engage with the rhythm, to connect with the groove again.

Often, the groove is where the issue lies. The other instruments cannot find their place if the groove – the foundation – is weak. Having started from the rhythm, you're then in the position to build a great sound with your band.

INGREDIENT 5 - BUILD WITH TASTE

Build with taste.

When you add in more symphonic instruments, choral voices, and other instrumentation, you have to be increasingly sensitive to the Fraction Principle. Your sound should add up to one fluid, spacious sound.

Encourage your musicians to ask themselves if they should "lay out," (i.e. not play) rather than always assuming they should join in. "What can I add that would serve the song the most?" is the question many musicians never ask.

Serving the song may be asking 12 musicians to hold back. It's the nature of music – it thrives on space.

ACTION STEPS

> Use these tools to make your band sound great.

When you're arranging a large band, the song is king – whatever it takes to embellish it, to beautify it, to musically communicate its message and connect your congregation…is the win.

If there's a problem, strip the music back to the rhythm, and rebuild from there. Each musician needs to master their own part, and this may translate into separate rehearsals, playing in a different frequency range, or holding back altogether. It may also help to break up your rehearsal time into groups of musicians, so troublesome areas can be tackled before hitting the stage.

Bless you as you make your band sound great!

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