THE
ESSENTIALS
IN WORSHIP
TOOLKIT

5 TIPS
FOR REHEARSING GREAT WORSHIP SONG OUTROS

worshiptraining

INTRODUCTION

How do we rehearse song outros?

Song outros provide transitions for your worship set, as they are the finish of a song that anticipates the beginning of the next.

Outros are crucial for maintaining an atmosphere of worship for your congregation as the set progresses song to song.

Here are five tips for rehearsing the “tail” of your worship songs – the outros.

INTRODUCTION

1. Decide how the song will end.
2. Clarify the progression.
3. Practice the finish.
4. Loop the outro.
5. Work the transition.

TIP 1 - DECIDE HOW THE SONG WILL END

Decide how you will wrap up the song.

First of all, we need to decide how the song we are currently doing will actually end. Is the song going to finish abruptly, right at the end of a big a cappella chorus? Is it going to have a full stop as a band? Is it going to have a splashy stop with the cymbals rumbling over top of a cacophony of applause and cheering in the congregation? Is it going to sweetly finish on a chord with the pads transitioning to the next song?

Make the decision, as there are many options for concluding the song, and practice an ending. If you don't like it, or how the band does it, you can always switch it up later.

TIP 2 - CLARIFY THE PROGRESSION

Clarify the progression.

What do you want the musicians to do? They'll be wondering, and they'll do what they've heard before, or what they'd like to do, unless you tell them.

What should they be playing when you get to the end of the song? Do they go back to the vamp – that two or four-chord phrase that keeps repeating to take you in or out of a song? Or do they drop out completely? When should the drop out happen? This is all very important to clarify.

Try experimenting with your musicians. Tell them to drop out on a specific bar just to try it out, and then explain your plan for the ending as they do. Then, decide. This gives confidence to your band and puts everyone on the same page.

TIP 3 - PRACTICE THE FINISH

Practice the big finish.

Many leaders (and bands) spend much more time practicing the intro to a song rather than focusing the outro and working on how they'll transition into the next song. Practice that finish over and over.

Here's one worship leader's method:

"I turn my microphone and monitor toward the band – I find this works for rehearsing outros, intros, and full songs alike – and talk them through the song as we go along. This way, everyone's on the same page as they read my body and facial language. When I turn around, they 'get it.'"

TIP 4 - LOOP THE OUTDO

Loop the outro.

Have the band play the outro over and over. Finish the song, and then go back into the last few bars. Keep looping those bars. Continue this practice until the outro starts to settle in the musicians.

If your rehearsal is mid-week, your band may have forgotten how the outro was originally practiced by the time Sunday comes around. If you loop the outro over and over in your mid-week rehearsal, your band will come with a little stronger frame of reference for how the song is supposed to end on Sunday.

TIP 5 - WORK THE TRANSITION

Work the transition.

How the song ends has everything to do with how the next song begins. Practice the tail end of the song as it moves into the top of the next. This is also called “tail and top” practicing.

Understanding how “top and tail” practicing affects your worship set is the key to creating smooth transitions in all your sets. Practice your transitions between songs. Take the time, and you won’t regret it.

If time is short in a rehearsal, go right to the top and tail transitions. The song will probably play itself, and you’ll be glad you tightened up the outros and intros.

ACTION STEPS

> Try at least one idea for the next time you meet.

Decide how your song is going to end, and relay this information clearly to your band members. If your musicians are confident in what they will be playing, it will make your transition much stronger and smoother.

Practice your outro repeatedly, and then connect it to the beginning of the next song. Give your musicians a strong sense for how the song is going to end, and how the next one is going to begin.

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