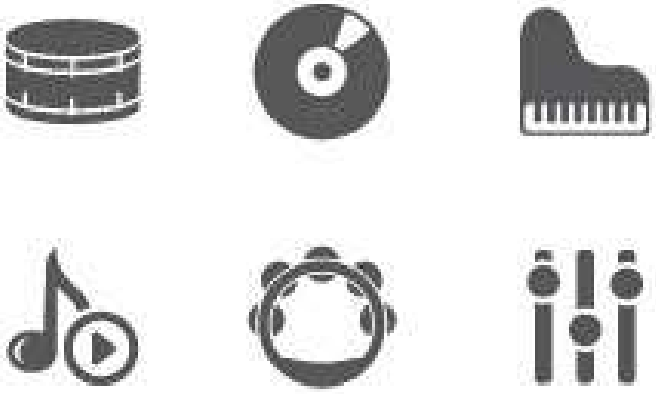
THE WORSHIP MUSICIAN



10 Reasons Why Rehearsals Are Important

Jon Skaggs

THE WORSHIP MUSICIAN



Ebook Series

Basics and Core Essentials

Approaching Your Instrument Professionally

10 Reasons Why Rehearsals Are Important

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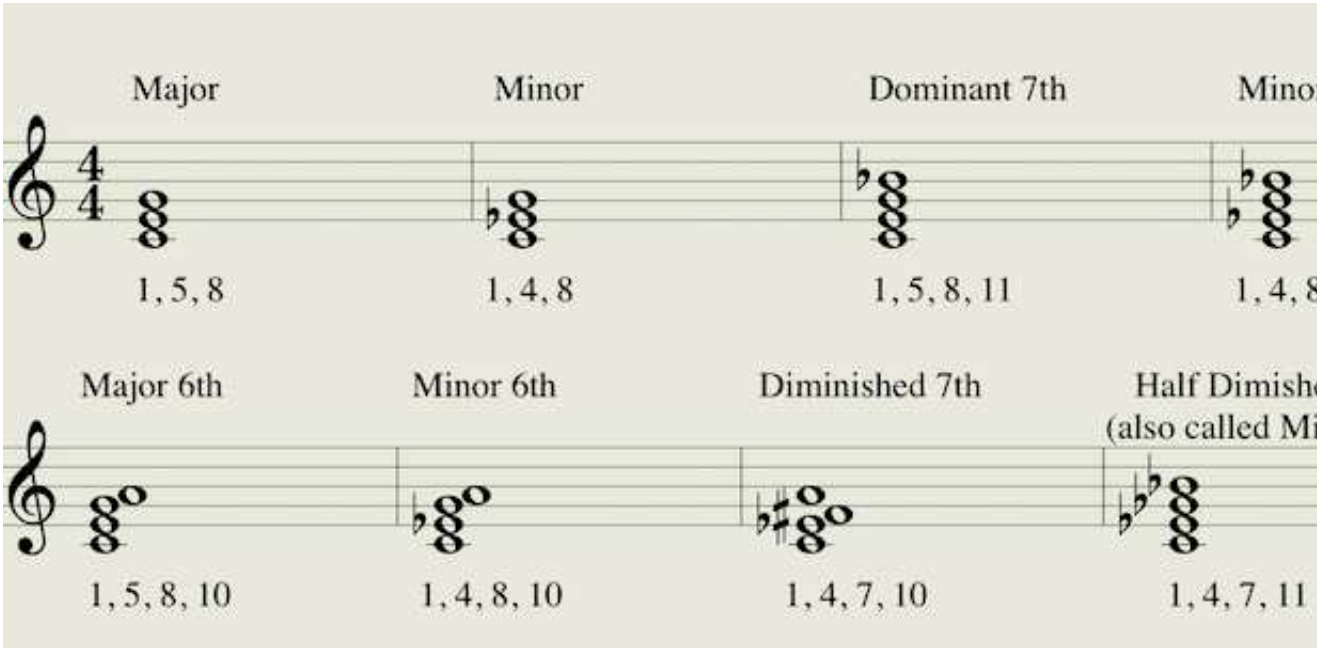
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Reason 1: Rehearsals Are Important For You.

Feel for the set

Rehearsal is important to you because you need to get the feel of the other musicians, the feel of tempo, and possible key changes. There's also plenty of changes to starts, stops, and breaks. There will also be the element of just getting the feel of the music and feeling comfortable with it. But more importantly, a rehearsal is paramount for the worship leader to get an overall feel for the flow of the set.





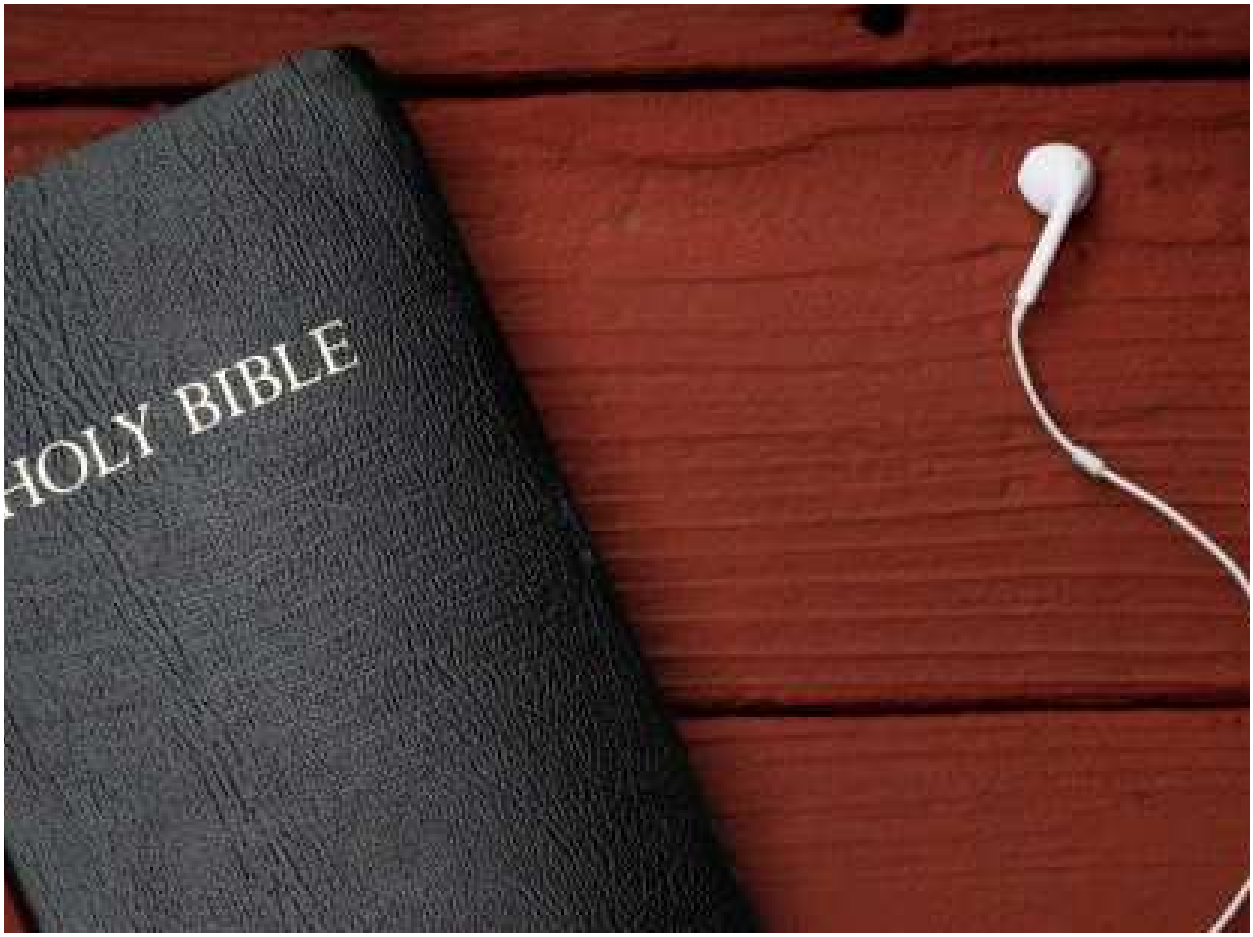
Charts

Rehearsal with the worship team is important to give you the time you need to feel comfortable with the music set given to you. Some people make detailed charts to help them memorize the material or their given charts to read for your worship set. These particular approaches take some time to work out because the arrangements usually change. So you'll have to have your pencil ready to mark up the chart you've written out. You'll need the patience it takes to make the correct marks where they need to go. Nonetheless, it's important that rehearsal happens for you to get your hands, thoughts, and eyes lined up to your charts if you use them.

True Worship

The heart of worship. This is not just a clever saying and it wasn't just the chorus of a favorite song written a decade ago. This is actually what you are creating, pursuing, and teaching as you play your instrument in a worship service. Rehearsal is most important for a worship musician in this regard. Pursuing the heart of worship is the same as pursuing the heart of God. This is important even if none of the other musicians around you are in the same mindset.





Conclusion

Rehearsals can be frustrating, time consuming, and tough to navigate in some circumstances. Just remember that you are there for a greater purpose. Medidate on Phillipians 2:3-8 before rehearsal. Pray for undertanding of a difficult part, to listen to the other musicians and leaders. Pray for your worship leader and his calling to lead the people of God, the lost, those on stage, in true worship.

Dress Rehearsal

Have you ever heard of this? Well it's kind of what you do when you show up for rehearsals anyway. But just in case you don't know what a true dress rehearsal is. It's not really for musicians, but for your tech and production team. A true rehearsal is for production, light, and video heavy performances. In the church setting, this would mainly apply to those churches who use giant screens and lighting systems. The dress rehearsal allows video and lighting techs the chance to see what colors the band and praise team are wearing and lets them adjust color schemes and camera angles. What you wear does in fact have a bearing for these types of production elements. Lighting will not want too much light on brighter clothing and will want to brighten up darker clothing. But this dress rehearsal is important for the "behind the scenes" people of your church. So when you're told to stand on x and you see a few different lighting schemes shine over you. You'll know that your tech team is at work rehearsing in their own way.





FOH Sound

You might be told to put your amp in the baptistry. Or you might be told to play with hot rods and brushes instead of sticks. Whatever the case, this is important for your FOH (Front of House) soundman and monitor engineer. Your soundman needs rehearsal also. It's a great time for them to create settings, pre-sets, adjust compression for different singers, label channels, test cables, reduce or add acoustic panels around drums, and test the pastor's mic. All these are important for the upcoming weekend services.

Lighting

Lighting techs at your church need rehearsals as well. Programming a lighting scheme takes a run through the set to determine the mood of certain songs. It also takes a little practice to hit certain schemes at certain points in the set. A lighting tech will program a lighting scheme to coincide with much of the music. They'll also practice hitting marks where certain musicians or people will stand and coordinate a lighting scheme accordingly.



Monitors

A lot of monitor setups are completely different in church settings. Some churches have the Aviom personal mixers, stage left/right monitor consoles, or run monitors from the FOH console. Whatever the situation is, there has to be a time to "dial in" the right monitor mix. Some don't need a rehearsal for this, but it's recommended that you do. The Aviom personal mixers will require a monitor or FOH console to provide you with a mix of instruments to work with from your monitor sends. Also, the monitor engineer will need to set an optimal gain structure from his console to give you ample headroom for your Aviom volume controls. Monitor mixes are essential to running a great rehearsal and need rehearsal to dial in a successful worship service.



Conclusion

Every tech at your church will have a reason to need a rehearsal. It's important for them and you to get the sound(s) you need from them and vice versa. Your tech team works hard behind the scenes to deliver the word of God. Be kind and respectful to them as they perform a sometimes thankless and grueling job.

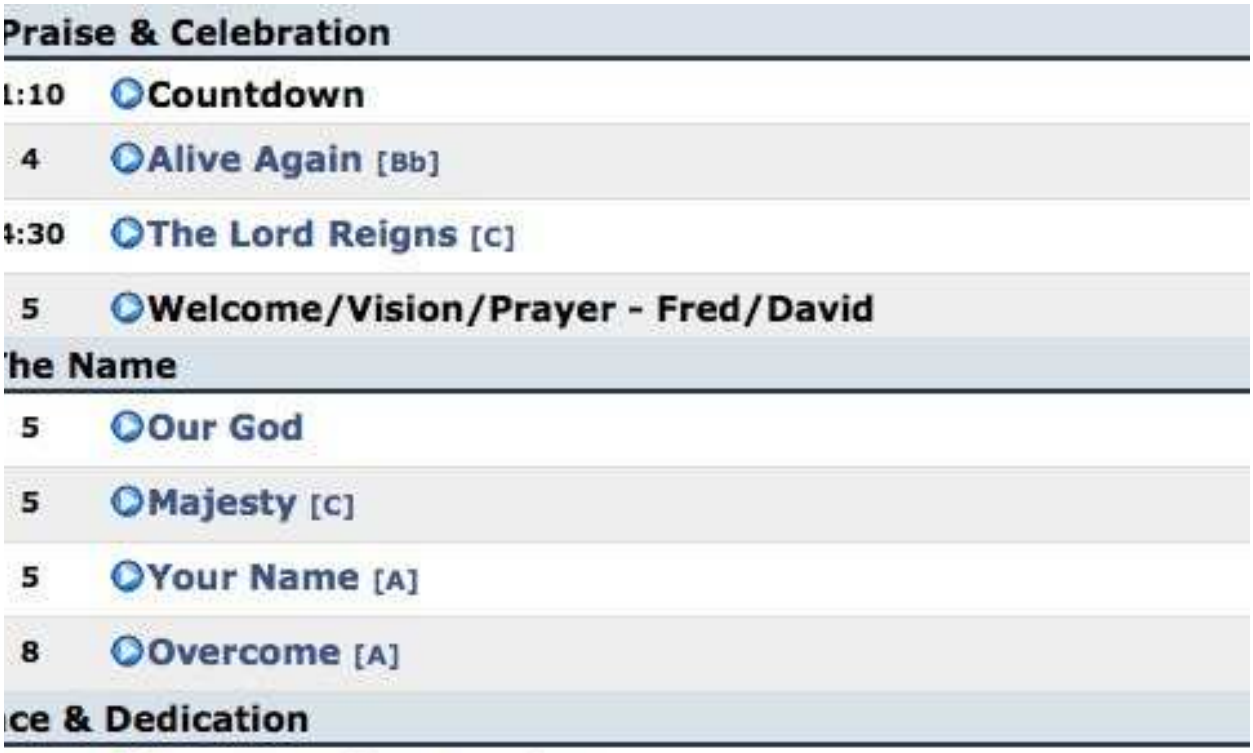


Playing with Tracks

A lot of churches have gone to implementing tracks in the worship service. Using tracks requires a significant amount of prep time to pull off. The person preparing the tracks will often need to work out any kinks with each track. This usually depends on the type of program running the tracks and the reliance on a person to trigger them.

Tracks take time to implement and take many hours of rehearsal to work out. The person triggering the track will need rehearsal to trigger a track at the appropriate time before and after each song.





Transition between songs

If you are or you aren't playing with tracks. There will still need to be enough preparation time to determine how you end a song and make a transition to the next one. There are different ways of making transitions smoother from song to song. A rehearsal can also go a lot faster if you implement the points below.

- If you are a worship leader and use planning center. Make sure and outline what you'd like to happen in between songs. For example, let the drummer know to start the metronome setting or track on the downbeat of the last hit of the song. Maybe tell the guitarist to start strumming the intro chords as soon as the drummer has triggered the next metronome setting, track, or clicked off the song.
- In rehearsal, make sure to work together on transitions. The worship leader may have already worked these out. Again, tracks or no tracks determine transition times. It takes some rehearsing to get the timing of this right.
- Avoiding long awkward transitions takes most of the rehearsal time to work out the kinks. It's important to work these out. Long awkward transitions can be avoided by clear communication and adequate rehearsal.

The rehearsal is very important with song transitions. Whatever holds your songs up in transitions can be avoided with the right amount of prep time.

Reason 4: Rehearsals make you better at playing with a live band.

When I first started playing drums. I played to my favorite songs in the garage. When I played in my first band. I noticed a complete difference. There is no greater feeling and no greater challenge than playing with a live band. I learned that rehearsal was more than just getting better at playing the drums. Rehearsal was for getting better at playing with a band.

There is a definite chemistry you develop over time with your band members or worship leader. This can definitely be the case in worship music. It can often be more challenging because of the amount of players you have on rotation. Rehearsal is what helps develop and maintain that chemistry with each player in a worship service.

Worship leaders often choose weekend players on this certain criteria. There is a definite amount of thought into who has the best chemistry with each other and who does not. This does depend on the size of a worship team rotation. Some worship leaders will never have a chance to think through band chemistry because of the mere size of their church. But if you're a mega church worship leader. You will have to think through band chemistry a lot. Some worship leaders have the luxury of having Band A, B, or C. If this tends to be your situation, rehearsals can be very important to determine this.

Playing live with a worship band is also different from playing live with a rock band (or whatever genre you play in). A worship band takes a different approach. This approach is a more personal and meaningful one because of the focus of the music. You have to learn the music and live chemistry just as much as you need to approach God in the responsibility of leading worship. If you take this approach, your worship leader will appreciate you far more than learning a tricky fill or scale. You will also be more prepared to be patient and have a correct attitude if there are musicians less skilled than you.



Reason 5: Rehearsals are important for learning how to be flexible.

Learning a new song by ourselves or with others can often test our patience. A rehearsal is the best place to understand our limits of flexibility and how to adjust our attitude if we become impatient.

I was once told by music mentor of mine to "Always value freedom and flexibility". What did he mean by that? It was simple. He was implying that we're not the only ones playing the music. There's always an instance for us to learn from the challenge of playing with advanced or beginning musicians.

Flexibility as a musician starts with your view of God in general. Your relationship with Jesus Christ permeates in the difficulties that can result in rehearsals. Sometimes a musician takes a while to get the song or part right. Maybe the worship leader wants to change the arrangement you heard on the mp3. Perhaps you're told to play whole notes instead of soloing over an instrumental section. In whatever role you take on in your worship band. Remember that you're not the sole musician playing in the group.

Valuing flexibility will take your determination to be patient.

Valuing flexibility will take an attitude correction when you or someone else can't get a part quite right.

The mind of Christ was rooted in this value of temperance. Christ had to deal with the extremes of every personality and dealt with them graciously.

Rehearsals will teach you flexibility and it's a great place for you to practice it. Be humble.

Meditate on **Philippians 2:3-8** before rehearsal

3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others
above yourselves, **4** not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests
of the others.
5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:
6 Who, being in very nature[a] God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
7 rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature[b] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
8 And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

Reason 6: Rehearsing is for muscle memory.

Rehearsal is more than just remembering how to play a part. It's for your muscle memory as well. So what is muscle memory? Here's the description you get if you google it.

Muscle memory has been used to describe the observation that various **muscle**-related tasks seem to be easier to perform after previous practice, even if the task has not been performed for a while. It is as if the **muscles** “remember”.

The citation above describes playing an instrument, learning lyrics, or memorizing a vocal part perfectly. It's almost as if muscle memory was coined to describe what learning any musical instrument or part truly is.

Rehearsals with other musicians are important for this type of memory. It will challenge your ability to remember your parts in a live setting where variables might occur. The variables being tempo fluctuations, mistakes, part changes, or key changes.

As a musician or a worship leader in the worship service. Your muscle memory will be what will guide your fingers to the right chords or part. It's a wonderful thing that God created within each one of us.

Try and stay away from the music as much as possible while you rehearse. Remember that each one of us has this ability for our muscles to remember our respective parts through adequate rehearsal. This discipline is what we build and exercise as musicians.



Reason 7: Rehearsals are important for understanding music's role in worship.

As a young Christian, I always heard that music is but one of the many forms of worship. That perplexed me at first because I didn't understand the true nature of worship. It only occurred to me after reading the words of Jesus in John - Chapter 4, that I began to understand that worship to God was multi faceted in the Christian's life. Read John 4:19-24 below.

The woman said to Jesus, *“I see that you’re a prophet! Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain. But you Jews say that people must worship in Jerusalem.” Jesus told her, “Believe me. A time is coming when you Samaritans won’t be worshiping the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. You don’t know what you’re worshiping. We ⌊Jews⌋ know what we’re worshiping, because salvation comes from the Jews. Indeed, the time is coming, and it is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. The Father is looking for people like that to worship him. God is a spirit. Those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:19-24 GW)*

In that passage of scripture, I don't hear Jesus referring to worship the Father in Spirit and Truth with music anywhere. In fact, the only time we hear worship to God in the musical sense is in the Psalms and various inferences within the New Testament where disciples gathered and sang songs of worship to God. There's also instances of Peter and Paul singing songs of worship while imprisoned.

The worship of God is multi-faceted. Music is very important facet in worship because it's easy for everyone to understand. Worship music is poetic, melodic, harmonic, and reflective. Music moves us to feel and to express what our emotions or feelings can't express any other way. This is why understanding music's role in worship is so important for the worship musician. You are playing a part in the worshiper's communication to God. You are helping the worshiper express feelings and emotions that only music can evoke.

Human beings are created to worship. That's why we all worship something either by an obsession or craving. This central part of our spiritual existence has to be pointed to God in order to function properly. If our worship is directed anywhere else, then we are committing idolotry.

This is why music in worship is essential. It helps us discern our inner turmoils, grumblings, joys, failures, and passions. We are moved by the Holy Spirit through music's powerful and persuasive force to recognize the grace of Jesus Christ in all things we can't normally express. You as a worship musician have an important role in pointing the worshiper's heart towards the truth. As far as any other role beyond that? That's not your duty. Your job is to point the way through music and the Holy Spirit will do the rest. Each worshiper has their own set of circumstances they are bringing to the church sanctuary that day. God has led them there to experience the truth and deal with their heart in a specific way. Your job is to be an excellent worship musician and to fulfill your instrument's role in worship.

Reason 8: Rehearsals are important for your pastor.

A rehearsal is not only for musicians and getting music right. It's also for your pastors and church staff.

For instance, there might or might not be a lot of breaks in your particular worship set. Whatever the case, your pastor will be preparing his length of content around the worship set time. Transitions, breaks, and song lengths are essential for this.

This is why programs such as Planning Center have become such an asset to worship set planning. A Pastor can see how much time or discern what kind of content will be most useful within the time they have. Though time can be seen irrelevant for some pastors. Most churches are relegated by time constraints if their venue is a video campus. To make these types of venues as time friendly as possible. Many churches rehearse the order 2-3 times according to a planning center primer.

Rehearsal is a whole church process. It is a process that is very important for your attention to transitions and tempo of songs. All of these minute details go into how a pastor can structure his sermons and discussion. Rehearsals are important for these details to come into place.





Rolland R. Reece explained rehearsing his sermon in a 1988 article.

> *"Rehearsing enables a preacher to hear if the sermon "hangs together." Does it move forward sensibly and come to a logical conclusion? The eye and mind can convince a speaker that what is written down (manuscript, outline, notes) will be easily communicated to the listener. But when the voice is added and the focus shifts from the written word to attentive faces, that clear line of thought may evaporate as the morning mist. Hearing your own voice "make sense" is also a great confidence builder. The more confident you become, the more easily you speak. The more easily you speak, the less effort the congregation employs in "pulling you through" the sermon, and the more available thought they can give to the content of your message. Rehearsing exposes grammatical errors. Verb tenses have a way of changing in mid-paragraph and pronouns from one person to another in mid-sentence. Up to this point in your preparation, you may have been looking for these errors. Now they will be coming to you through your hearing. Practicing your sermon aloud to an imaginary congregation will make you less dependent on your written preparation. As a consequence you will be able to give your listeners increasing eye contact. Though my aunt's minister regularly produced carefully-crafted sermons, she was angry with him because he always read them. "I wish he would just talk to us once," she groused. "I get tired of looking at the top of his head." After rehearsing your sermon four to six times, you will appear to be speaking more spontaneously. The less your eyes and mind are dependent on your manuscript, the more free you become to engage the congregation. Your freedom in delivery will enable the worshippers to focus on what you are saying, not on how you say it."*

Reason 9: Rehearsals are important for becoming a better chart reader.

If your church reads music charts, then you understand the challenge as a beginning chart reader. Music charts are used by most but not all churches. It is a call on the worship leader's behalf. They are usually used if the worship team is larger in size or has intricate music arrangements. I personally see their benefit and see where they can become a crutch.

The type of music charts I'm referring to is pictured below.

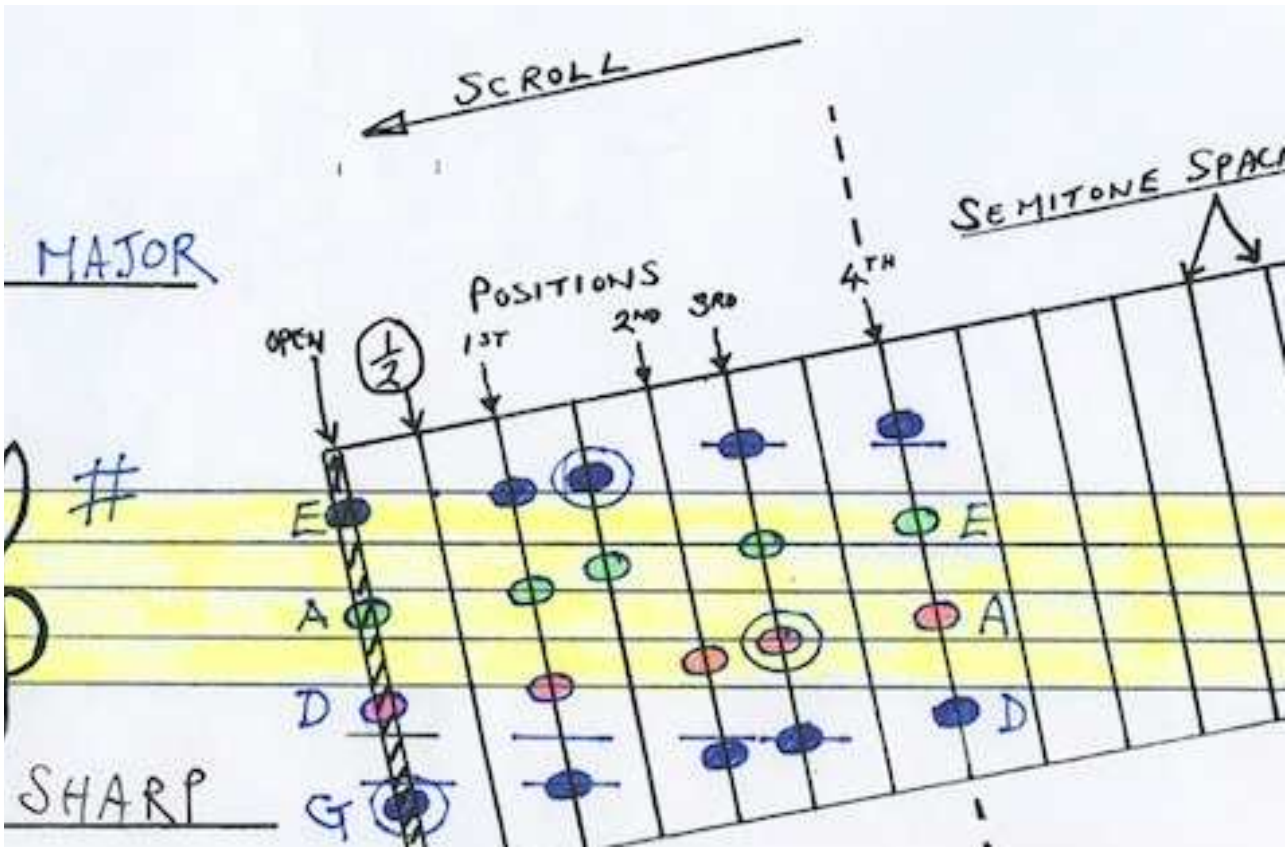


The benefit of chart reading for your worship team is good in many ways. For instance, when your team reads music charts you're all seeing the same road map. It can help rehearsals go faster if everyone learns how to read the same piece of music. You will tend to move in the same direction with the addition of charts. Communication tends to be easier and your musicians seem to know where they're at in the song.

Where music charts seem to be a heavy crutch is the dependence upon them. Therefore, the dependence on them tends to take away from stage presence, improvisation, and often times your own personal worship through the music you're leading.

Music charts tend to be most useful in rehearsals. They are like I said earlier, a "road map". This road map is good for one of the earlier points I've talked about in this ebook called Muscle Memory. We tend to remember what we see and communicate from our eyes to our hands, feet, and voice. Through rehearsal, we can train our eyes to teach our hands, feet, and voice what the notes are doing. The notes on a page are a good reference to what we are we recalling from memory. If you don't think of yourself as having a great musical memory, then read music charts for a couple of months. You will be astonished to find how good your memory can recall notes on a page and relay it to your hands, feet, and voice.

Learning to read music is a gift as a musician. It's like learning a second language. If you scoff at reading music charts then you might be missing out on one of life's most incredible ways to communicate sound.



Reason 10: Rehearsals are important for your Worship Leader and for learning how to follow.

There is no better time for a worship leader to prepare with their respective worship musicians than rehearsal. Rehearsals can be long and tedious or fast and organized. A lot of that depends on the preparedness of the worship musician and how well you follow your worship leader.

Every worship leader has a style. It's important that a worship musician adhere to that style and do their best to adhere and follow. Rehearsal will be a great place to learn your worship leader's style. Some worship leaders are great at communicating this style through their actions on stage, whether it be by hand signals or a custom style between musician and worship leader.

Communication is key between worship leader and musicians because worship music can be very spontaneous (If you're not using tracks). The eyes and certain subtle hand motions can be very important tools for communication on stage. Rehearsal is a great time to create the habit of this type of communication. This communication has to be learned in a more spontaneous worship style.

As a worship musician, please take the time to work out communication between you and your worship leader. Sometimes these motions can involve some of the following things.

1) The guitar up and down motion (signaling a stop or ending)
2) The behind the back fist (signaling a stop or ending)
3) The head nod (signaling an entrance, build, or stop/ending)
4) The foot stomp (build or more energy)
5) The turn around and face the musicians and smile (Means you're doing your job)

Rehearsal is for understanding these signals and their meaning. There's also room to grow in the communication style you and your worship team ultimately decide on.





Conclusion:

This topic is something that most musicians skim over because rehearsals are something that most musicians dread. It's understandable that some may feel this way. Some rehearsals can drag on and have no direction of purpose whatsoever. Here are a few ways to stay on task and have a productive rehearsal.

1) If you're a worship leader or music director. Outline your rehearsal with start times and time to spend on what songs. Focus on your most difficult songs but abandon them and return if they take too much time.
2) Start on time! Even if you have musicians that are late. Rehearsals should always start on time.
3) Make sure to work out sound and technical issues after rehearsal. If there is a technical issue then let your tech team work on it while you rehearse acoustically. There's always a way to move forward and not waste time.
4) Sectionals are a great way to work on difficult parts for an individual instrument. This is especially great for vocal teams. Sectionals should be seperate from main rehearsals because of their individual focus. Try scheduling sectionals before main rehearsals on another night or on the same night as your main rehearsal.
5) Start or end rehearsals with prayer. The focus should be on the true purpose for worship. If God is not consulted on this then it's just a concert. If you're a worship leader, make it a point to focus in your team on the worship of God in spirit in truth. This will put you and your team in the mindset of true worship of our Lord and saviour, Jesus Christ.

We have a large responsibility as worship leaders and worship musicians. Make it a point to stay focused in the word of God as much as you focus on your instrument. God is to be praised with our talents. He created us to be at our best in them and have the correct attitude while doing it.

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http://worshiptraining.com

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For more info on the author visit
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