

Worship Team Training - Archives



About the Author: Branon Dempsey is the Clinic Director and founder of [Worship Team Training](http://www.worshipteamtraining.com) – For His Music Clinics: a ministry for local church worship ministries. Branon is a Worship Leader, Clinician and CCLI, BMI Singer/Song Writer in Cypress, TX. He is also a Managing Editor and Contributing writer in the Praise and Worship Arena involving national music and publication companies. Visit Branon and Sign-up for a Newsletter on www.worshipteamtraining.com or email him at branon@worshipteamtraining.com

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Jan ARCHIVED ARTICLES

1.30.08

Posted Response

Ok you - out there - are you ready for this one? Here's a response from the previous topic: Describe the importance of staying "centered" while leading worship.

Toby Baxley, in a coffee shop from Lindale, TX writes:

"Leading worship has been over-romanticized to the point that we expect it to be a completely sublime experience, where we as leaders are transported from our solid human form into a vapor floating around in the heavenly places, only to condense back into solid form after "worship" is over; metaphorically speaking, of course. While that might happen sometimes, more often, it is like spinning plates while riding a unicycle. We're usually just trying to keep our balance while keeping all of the elements of worship from crashing to the floor.

Obviously, the larger a program gets, the more elements we have to complicate the worship experience: Congregation, pastor, tech, singers, choir, band, banners, dancers, etc., etc. On top of all this, we still have to be sensitive to God and the movement of the Holy Spirit or we'll miss the point altogether. With all of these things going on, the natural tendency is to let our focus shift each time something happens that requires our attention: a singer or player is out of tune, the drummer is rushing, or the graphics person is on the wrong slide. A former pastor of mine once said, "No matter how hard we try to keep him out, Murphy always finds a way show up."

Not all complications are bad, however. There can be some exceptional musical, visual, or even technical moments that, if we're not careful, can also distract our focus from the sublime worship experience we desire.

In my experience, there is no way to avoid being distracted by elements that vie for our attention. After all, we are human beings entrusted with divine responsibility. In order to stay "centered", however, we must understand that leading worship is a service unto the Lord and the needs of the corporate body are more important than our own worship experience, and that when we step out on the stage (however large or small the stage is)

to lead, we're not leading into uncharted territory. The weekly service should not be our first and last encounter with God for the week. Our daily time in personal worship should be the map we use to lead the people of God to the throne of God. When that personal time is lacking, we can easily find ourselves groping around in the dark, looking for the door to the throne room, all the while tripping over the trappings of worship, but not really worshipping.

Obviously, we have all experienced those times when God has blessed our worship in spite of our lack of preparation. However, we should try to err on the side of preparation, both musically and spiritually, as if it were possible to err in that direction. Our attitude should be like that of David when he said, "I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." (2 Sam 24:24)"

Great word Toby! Thank you for sharing your experiences and insights in what it truly means to stay centered as we lead the praise and worship of our Lord.

Anyother thoughts from those of you out there? We've heard from a worship leader, how about hearing from a pastor in regards of the importance of staying centered in leading worship? Email them here to post on the blog: branon@forhismusic.com

1.28.08

More Topic Questions

Re-post: Here is another question to pick your brain. Send me your thoughts and they will happily be posted for others to view and participate. Here we go:

- leading worship comes with its complexities, as a leader your priorities are: focusing Almighty God, congregation, the band, the singers, the A/V, watching time, your pastor(s) and the movement of the Holy Spirit. At which points does your focus shift and what keeps you centered?

Share your thoughts to: branon@forhismusic.com

1.24.08

Ask A Topic Response

Hey fellow readers, thank you for checking out the blog on Ask A Topic. Here is a question and my response to Gina, a worship leader in PA. Thank you Gina for your question, here is the dialogue:

"I am a newly appointed Worship Leader at a small church in PA. I have no formal training in playing music or singing. I have sang individually and in groups for years in our local church. I currently lead worship on a learn-as-you-go basis. Our musicians consist of a piano player, organ player %26 drummer. God's anointing prevails each time, but I feel we need to expand our knowledge and abilities for the work of his

kingdom in worship. What would you suggest for us to start with? It all seems a little overwhelming as I read through everything. Thank you for your help."

Gina: Thanks for your topic-in-question. Expanding your knowledge and increasing your expertise is always a great thing. While we seek God to add to our worship teams, we have a responsibility to grow in our skills. Many people get trapped-up in the idea of the "bigger-is-better" mentality. Some think that if you have a large number of people on stage, this in some way equates your success rate = false. The concept of bigger = success can tear-down rather than to build up, as often people make comparisons of music ministries to their own. I have found (as well as many others) that sometimes "bigger" can mean bigger problems.

When you read through Gen 6, Ex. 3, Jud. 7 and Mark 4 to name a few, you will find that limited men and resources were few to accomplish a great task. Sure, it is ideal to have a full band with all the bells and whistles, but within the listed Scriptures, they were only successful through one source: The Holy Spirit.

You said that you have a piano, organ and 26% drummer (hope the rest of him is ok!). You actually have a great genesis for a band. You're pianist is your greatest asset here, because he/she can cover many parts at one time: rhythm, bass line, chords and melody. Actually, the piano is the most universal and versatile instrument, along with the acoustic guitar coming in 2nd place. Stick with your strengths. Make the most of your limitations by the songs and worship flow you choose. Avoid using "big sounding" songs as they may tend to appear empty with out the other needed parts. Use songs and styles that your piano can cover easily and use your organ and drums to accent and punctuate rather than to drive. Also, pick music accordingly to who will be present on your weekend. Songs are mainly composed for a main instrument to carry the tune; pick songs that your pianist can easily interpret. In your case, let's say you choose to have a cool guitar-driven song, but all you have is a pianist. If your pianist is not capable of interpreting the guitar-driven song on piano, it is better not to do the song. As your working with volunteers and not professionals, your music sets need to be comfortable and tenacious. However, if your pianist and considerably skilled, the song could work depending on their approach and what sounds good to you.

The next needed instrument to add would be an acoustic guitar. This person does not have to be a "lead" rock and roll guitar player, just someone who has a good ear, timing, strumming and chord quality. This person can work with the pianist in holding the rhythm and team together. Next, add the commitment level of your drummer or locate another one to help fill in the gaps. Afterwards, add a bass player. Your team will grow as you pray, water and tend the soil of your team. Also, like a farmer of crops, be patient. God will honor your efforts and faithfulness in the small according to His grace. Our first priority is serving our congregations is providing consistent and quality music for worship. Our instruments are only tools not the objective of our worship. The team will grow as a result of care and nurturing to your ministry. Hope this helps – and I pray the best for you and your team!

Thanks again Gina!

Keep the thoughts and topics coming everyone. What issue/topic is on your mind that relates to your local worship ministry?

1.17.08 7:35am

Thank You & Ask A Topic

Thank you readers out there for hanging out on the Clinic site and reading the articles. The response is great! Thanks for the comments, contacts and emails. The Clinics are here to serve you in attempts to help serve your congregations in worship.

We want to hear from you for a topic choice that identifies your current needs, concerns and discussions that relate to your worship team/band and A/V ministries. Select a topic/dialogue such as:

- you and your worship band: questions, issues, ideas?
- the role of the vocalist
- the relationship with your sound engineer
- relationship between you, your team members, your worship pastor and/or senior pastor
- the concern of the traditional keyboardist moving to contemporary music
- changing worship formats in your local church
- other thoughts?

Write us and share your current scenarios, as your comments and topics will be posted; let's learn together that will build up and edify our ministries. Thank you again for dialing in on the site; you are the ministry as to why the Clinics exist. Let me know what's on your mind at: branon@forhismusic.com

1.17.08 7:15am

Technologies For Worship Magazine

Thank you to the Editorial Team at Technologies For Worship Magazine! Yesterday, we had an article release to appear in their bi-weekly Newsletter. In the next few weeks we will be tag teaming together for some more topics and info-writings for your reading pleasure. The Clinics are glad to partner with TFWM to help empower the local church for ministry!

TFWM is a magazine and online resource committed to serve Worship A/V ministries, teams and churches. They combine many knowledge base articles and support helps for ministries involving technologies in leading worship. Much more, they also provide solutions, tips and links for novice, intermediate and advanced users. No matter if you are a pastor, sound engineer or the average Joe, TFWM had something for everyone to increase your aptitude in technology to benefit your church and ministry. Check them out at: <http://www.tfwm.com/>