



Drums, Percussion & Bass Guitars in Worship

Bringing the joy of your instrument into worship

January 16, 2015 – Bethel College

Ben Runkel

Runkel.ben@gmail.com

www.benrunkel.com

*Sing Joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him. Praise the lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre. Sing to him a new song; **play skillfully**, and shout for joy.”*

Psalm 33:1-3

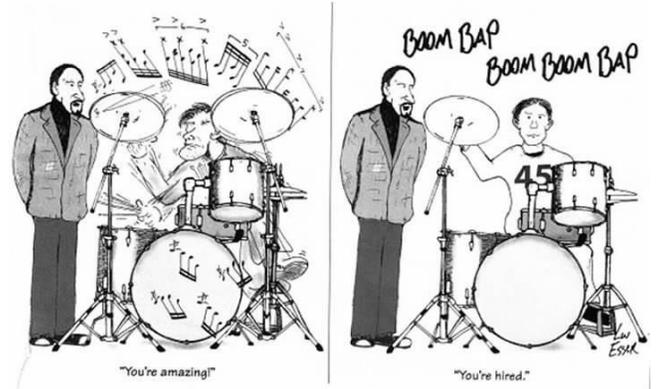
What is it about music that makes you “shout for joy?” Have you lost that joy somehow? What are some ways you can push yourself on your instrument in order to give God all the glory? He certainly deserves our absolute best!

Possible topics for discussion: Please look these over at the beginning of the session and start thinking about ones that you may want to know a little more about.

1. Your role as a drummer or bass player in a worship band – Who’s in control? How can you serve the worship leader, the song, the congregation, and ultimately God?
2. Approach to getting a good sound out of your instrument - The physical and technological aspects
3. Drum tuning – head selection and achieving the right sound
4. Technique – ways to improve through exercises and various resources
5. Effective practice and preparation techniques – Preparing for rehearsals and Sunday morning services
6. Playing (and locking in!) with a click track – Metronome fun!
7. Syncing up the drums and bass – Who listens to who?
8. Auxiliary Percussion – Creativity for acoustic venues
9. Playing as a “Dynamic Musician” – Are you a “drummer,” or are you a musician?
10. Other – What would you like to see discussed? What is a challenge you or your team is facing right now?

1. Your role as a drummer or bass player in a worship band

- Groove, tempo, transitions, leadership, the ability to be led, dynamics, energy, harmonic foundation, etc...
- Less is more! Lay down a solid groove with a good feel. There will be key moments where you can shine.
- There's something about a groove with a good feel that will bring people to worship in different (most likely positive!) ways
- It's vital to the flow of a song to catch signals and cues from the worship leader. The drummer ultimately has the power to change the form of the song at any moment...use it wisely 😊
- Play and lead with confidence!



2. Approach to getting a good sound out of your instrument

- My approach to good sound vs. the sound technician's approach to good sound. Communication is key!
- Keep your equipment in good shape – new heads (batter and resonant), new strings
- Acoustic drums are very *physical*, and every kit requires a certain touch and approach to produce the desired and appropriate sound.
- How you play can depend on the size/type of room, equipment available, and climate of the service: You always want to match the tone of the environment around you!
- For drummers: beating spots on all of the drums – aim for dead-center of the toms!
- Ties in heavily with technique!

3. Drum tuning

- Head selection needs to be appropriate for the style of music and desired sound.
- Have a simple, quick method, and avoid the temptation to overthink it
- To muffle or not to muffle?...That is the question! Both options can achieve a quality sound, but you need to be in communication with the sound technician on what kind of sound you are wanting out of your drums.
- www.evansdrumheads.com is a fantastic resource

4. Technique

- In many cases, drummers and bassists in worship bands may not have received curricular/formal training on their instrument
- Invest in the gift God has given you: This means time, money, and dedicated practice on your instrument.
- Private lessons with a quality instructor
- This may mean working harder to fix bad habits. Just remember that God deserves our best!
- Scales, arpeggios, and fills for bass players
- Rudiments, stick control, and coordination for drummers
- Please see the appendix for a few rhythmic and drumming exercises
- www.vicfirth.com and www.drumeo.com are fantastic resources for drummers

5. Effective practice and preparation techniques

- We have a big job and responsibility as worship team members! It's important to remember that as you prepare your music; Do you your homework.
- Different people prepare in different ways: do what works for you! – Early morning, late night, listen to recordings, play along with tracks, etc.
- See the chart of “We Will Not Be Shaken” for an example of cues and notes on a drum chart

“The better you know your instrument the less you have to concentrate on it. The more you practice to get the basics right the less you have to think about it. You want to free up your mind to focus on God and where the worship leader is leading; it enables you and releases you to fully worship.”

- Andy Harrison, Drummer for Planetshakers

6. Playing with a click track

- Typically the drummer's responsibility to operate and set all the tempos
- Tightens up the entire band and makes transitions into songs much more solid and confident
- Practice with a metronome AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE!
- Have some “metronome fun” by changing the note values and taking some beats away
- Make an informed decision of where the click sits in your monitor mix
- Your goal should be to “bury” the metronome
- Lots of great smartphone apps out there. I recommend “Tempo” by Frozen Ape.

7. Syncing up the drums and bass

- Drummer and bassist need to be like glue
- Bass player locks into the kick drum
- Eye contact and a clear line of sight on stage are key
- Each musician should have the other musician pretty hot in their mix
- Great opportunity to get to know your bass players and drummers if you don't already!
- Play with multiple bassists/drummers and begin to learn everyone's playing. With enough time playing together you will soon be able to finish each other's "musical sentences."

8. Auxiliary Percussion

- This can be a wonderful addition to any service or special venue. It can be a single percussionist for an acoustic set, or a percussionist in addition to the drum set player in a larger service.
- These instruments still need to be played **MUSICALLY!**
- Get creative with your setups and make it unique to you
- Small toys (various shakers, chimes, sound effects) can add a lot of color
- Having proper hand drum technique is very important in order to avoid injury; do your research and find out what techniques are appropriate for each instrument.

9. Playing as a dynamic musician

- Often there is a negative connotation that goes with the word "Drummer." It's important to remember that we are all "Musicians!"
- Today's contemporary Christian music is **FULL** of dynamics!
- The drummer and bassist are responsible for creating the dynamics and building appropriately.
- Varied dynamics will enhance the form of the song and give it more emotion
- Use your instrument's different characteristics to aid your use of dynamics ie: different registers of the bass, different sized cymbals

