

W o r s h i p M u s i c M i n i s t r y T R A I N I N G C O U R S E

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Keyboard Basics

Keyboards in a Worship Team

Whether you are a worship leader or simply play on a worship team, you need to understand the role of a keyboardist.

Premise

- ◇ Prearranged piano scores are intended for solo playing.
- ◇ In a band setting you cannot just play the notes off the page.
- ◇ The best way to play is by the chords. You can use the notes for ideas of what to play, but chords allow you flexibility to change your part to match the arrangement.
- ◇ The accompanist's job is to follow; same with band members. This gives the leader freedom.

Practical tips

- ◇ Clearly identify the parts of the song (Verse, Chorus, Bridge, etc) so you can easily follow the leader.
- ◇ Keep a pad under your piano sound (unless there is another keyboardist playing a pad).
- ◇ Your job is to fill in the holes (between songs)
- ◇ There are differences between a pianist and a keyboardist
 - ◇ In a band setting we usually need a variety of sounds
 - ◇ Electric guitarist realize that tone is a huge part of being good; keyboardists need to realize this too.
- ◇ Think of yourself as a texture instrument
- ◇ Learn to think like an arranger (What does this song need?)
- ◇ Use sheet protectors so you can flip pages easily and keep the music going - it's your job.
- ◇ Know how to vamp or hover during prayers or other 'open' times in worship.
 - ◇ The ||: I | IV :|| progression is an easy way to 'hang'.
- ◇ Have your bread & butter sounds handy; organize them.
- ◇ Don't play too much
 - ◇ Keyboardists can do it all ... at the same time. Resist; leave room for others.
- ◇ Be careful when using sounds that are not 'keyboard type' sounds. They can sound unnatural. If possible substitute the same line w/ a 'keyboard type' sound (Piano, organ, keyboard, synth instead of violin, clarinet, etc.)

Sounds

- ◇ Pianos (Mellow & Bright) (*The 'Cut-off' setting in a synth effects this*)
- ◇ Keyboards
 - ◇ Wurlitzers
 - ◇ Rhodes (Gritty & Glassy)
- ◇ Piano layers (layering sounds can use up your synth's polyphony and cause notes to drop out. Be aware of what your synth can handle.)
 - ◇ Piano & Strings
 - ◇ Piano & Pads
 - ◇ Piano & Rhodes
- ◇ Pads
 - ◇ Complex morphing

- ◇ Vanilla
- ◇ Sounds with attack
- ◇ Strings
- ◇ Brass
- ◇ Organs
- ◇ Natural lead instruments (Flute, sax, ethnic, etc.)
- ◇ Synth lead (moog)
- ◇ Drums & Percussion (Drum loops, marimba, log drum, etc)

Choosing a keyboard

- ◇ Identify how the synth will be used and what functions are important to you.
- ◇ There are other factors that can be considered, but these are the main points.
 - ◇ Sound
 - ◇ Quality
 - ◇ Expandability
 - ◇ Touch/action of the keys ('weighted' or 'synth' action)
 - ◇ Number of keys (61, 76, or 88).
 - ◇ Weight (weighted action makes the keyboard much heavier to carry).
 - ◇ Polyphony (64 minimum)
 - ◇ User friendly interface
 - ◇ Large Screen
 - ◇ Real time control (Knobs, buttons, sliders & ribbons)
 - ◇ Tone (cutoff, EQ, FX, tempo, etc)
 - ◇ Individual volumes for layered parts
 - ◇ Arpeggiator
 - ◇ Storage Medium (floppy, SmartMedia, CF, SCSI, USB, etc.)
 - ◇ Sampler
- ◇ Get a good case if you're going to be moving they keyboard around. Some cases are available with wheels. Hard cases give better protection, but are heavier. There are some well padded soft side cases that do a good job.