

# Instrumentalists in Worship: What We Expect

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## Everyone

### Be a Servant

The #1 way to lead is to serve. This is not just an action but a state-of-mind - a perspective on our place and our roles. A humble heart is one capable of leading with confidence but also capable of being a team-player and a small part in the bigger picture.

### You are a Tour Guide

We are tour guides on a journey of worship. When our church gathers to worship Jesus, they are gathering together to be lead into God's very presence - His throne room. Don't take this lightly. Where we are leading our church is onto Holy ground, please treat it as such. Everyone's getting on the tour bus with a different attitude, with different stories, with different opinions and perspectives. We can't please everyone but we can certainly point everyone to look out the window and see Jesus!

### Come Prepared

It is expected that when you come to rehearsal you are coming fully rehearsed and prepared on your own time. (We have a document of guidelines for preparing to serve that you can review upon request.) Bottom line: rehearsal is not the place or time to learn a song for the first time. Rehearsal is when we come together with everything we've already rehearsed and prepared and make it BLEND together into one beautiful sound.

### Simplify - Do NOT Overplay

Some of you are skilled in music beyond the level required for the style of Contemporary Worship music we play at CFC. I've seen over-skilled musicians become bored in worship settings and boredom manifests itself in two ways:

- 1.) **Boredom = Overplaying.** Over-complicating the music is the first sign to me that you are bored. If you feel the impulse to bring the music up to your level (i.e. - adding arpeggios, scales, licks, dynamics, parts, etc.) every chance you get, please don't. In many cases peppering the music with more notes is only adding noise to the art, not beauty. Contemporary music as we perform it in church is intended to have space, leaving room for the heart to breathe, the mind to think and the spirit to live. Teach yourself to find beauty in simplicity.

- 2.) **Boredom = Bad Attitude.** The other area boredom manifests itself is in your heart. You may tend to speak yourself and your skill up and put the music down - insulting it as "beneath you". We do not tolerate these attitudes on our team. Music is a spiritual language and our interpretation of art is subjective. However, if we believe in a God that is at work through His Holy Spirit then these songs that we sing and proclaim together as a church are anointed. Let us treat the art with the respect and dignity it deserves.

The important takeaway here is that worship is not about YOU. It is not about your preferences and your skill level and your decades of experience. Worship is about submission and sacrifice. How well you play isn't only measured by your musicianship, but also by your understanding of spiritual humility.

A helpful acronym to remember is **KISS. Keep It Simple, Stupid.**

## Chord Charts

It's absolutely crucial that you know how to read a chord chart and how to take notations for your instrument as changes in arrangements arise during rehearsals. You should also understand the terminology used in this style of popular music. The Nashville Number System is one we reference frequently so please become familiar with it. We have cheat sheets available to help you learn the language.

## Take Initiative

Don't know how to play your part? There are tons of free resources online for a lot of the songs we play in church. A simple youtube search will go a long way to help teach you a part that you might be stuck on. Take initiative to do some research on your own.

# Drummers

If the band is a bus, then the drummer is the bus driver. The drummer plays a crucial role in driving where the song is going, both rhythmically and dynamically. If you are a drummer at CFC, we expect a baseline of these skills every week that you serve on our team.

## 5 Basics and Standards:

1. **Click:** Lock in confidently to a click track (we use one every week).
2. **Beat:** Understand (and be able to play) basic beat patterns and different time signatures.
3. **Dynamics:** Know how a song rises and falls dynamically and how to use the drums as a tool to lead and enhance that momentum. Also, be predictable. This means being obvious about where the song is going and it also means playing the same thing live as was practiced during rehearsal.
4. **Replication precedes Creativity:** Show a propensity to replicate parts first before creating your own. After replication, add your own personality with tasteful parts in small and simple ways.
5. **Practice:** Practice on a real drum kit (before team rehearsal). Remember your parts and arrangement changes from rehearsal to weekend services. Take notes. Listen back to the rehearsal recording and make adjustments.

# Bass Players

Bassists are the glue holding the band together. The bassist holds the keys to the musical integrity of the band. You are at the foundation of the music and the main link between the melodic and percussive elements of the band. Overplaying as a bass player can change the musical structure of a song, undermine the integrity of the music and muddy up the mix in a distracting way.

If you are a bassist at CFC we expect a baseline (no pun intended) of these skills every week that you serve on our team.

## 5 Basics and Standards:

1. **Dynamics:** The bass player has a crucial role in controlling the energy level of the music. Know how to build and transition between dynamic levels.
2. **Rhythm:** The bass and drums make up the "rhythm section" of the band. Be able to lock in with the kick drum when appropriate. Understanding various beats and rhythms will keep everything tight.

3. **Scales:** Knowing scales is crucial to understanding the bass's role in a team. Runs, chord inversions, transposition, and the number system are just a few areas heavily based on scales.
4. **Good Tone:** First and foremost, great musicianship is the basis of great tone. With that being said, it is important to know your instrument and your gear. Bases and pedals are versatile instruments, so be sure to know what they can do and how to use them wisely.
5. **Good Listening:** Listen to how you fit with the musicians around you. Always know what the kick drum is doing. Learn where the line is between filling space and overplaying.

*Hint: The drummer should be your best friend.*

## Electric Guitar Players

The electric guitar (and often keyboard/synth) is what enhances the music taking it to a whole new level. Electric Guitar provides the spice/seasoning/texture in the musical makeup of the songs. If the drums and bass are the burger patty and bun, the electric guitar is that delicious dry rub. In many ways your instrument gets the most attention instrumentally in the mix and you make the sound of the band sonically epic. The electric guitar sits on top of most every other instrument in a mix except maybe the piano/keyboards at times. You can create mood and emotion through ambience, through three simple notes strung together tastefully, through dynamic swells or through not playing anything at all.

If you are an electric guitarist at CFC we expect a baseline of these skills every week that you serve on our team.

### 5 Basics and Standards:

1. **Color & Texture:** As stated above, the Electric Guitar has a huge impact on the mood of the music - adding color and texture. Don't be afraid to be aggressive with adding ambience to the sound - this is where you can let creativity shine. You should know how to play every major scale in every key (bonus: every minor scale, too) and be able to understand and execute chord inversions and voicings with ease.
2. **Rhythm & Time:** Be comfortable with a click and stay in time. Know how each part fits in with the timing of the song. If you're playing driving 8ths or 16ths try hard to stay in time with the click.
3. **Tone & Balance:** Know your gear. Musicianship is the foundation of great tone, but pedals have the ability to add an endless amount of variety to your sound and impacts the dynamics of the music. We encourage everyone to play through and learn how to play through pedal boards including your typical chain of 1st and 2nd stage Overdrive, Volume Pedal, Delay and finally Reverb. We have a pedal board at the church that everyone is encouraged to use regularly and learn on.

4. **Creativity & Control:** Develop an ear to replicate the music as recorded by the original artist first. Using that as a starting point, create tasteful additions to those parts on your own in subtle ways. Be sure not to overplay in the process. Three notes strung together tastefully and with patience and awareness are better than 8 notes spanning octaves played poorly in a busy fashion.
5. **Humility:** Electric players often become the focal point of the music, but be sure to remember why you're on the team. Be willing to give up the leads and solos - play with humility. Playing too much is distracting to not just those of us in the band, but also everyone we are trying to lead. There is a lot of wisdom and musical maturity in simplicity.

## Keyboard/Piano Players

The keyboard/piano is the workhorse of the music. The mule that carries the load. Your instrument fills the most space in the mix and you help bridge the gap of where the low end of the mix lives (the bass and some of the percussion) to the high end of the mix lives (the acoustic and electric guitars). Your instrument requires a huge amount of awareness as well as a healthy dose of self-control (those fingers want to dance, don't they?).

If you are a keyboardist/pianist at CFC we expect a baseline of these skills every week that you serve on our team.

### 5 Basics and Standards:

1. **Tone:** Don't forget that you are both a piano AND a keys player. Being aware of both of these roles is important in complementing the team and service well. Stretch yourself to appreciate and learn the role of not just a piano in a song but the many other sounds a keyboard/synth can make and how all of those different tones can add flare, texture and color to a mix.
2. **Gear:** Gear is the biggest tool in the tone arsenal. Mastering gear for keys is a huge step towards advancing yourself in worship music. As we introduce MainStage to our setup, it will be important that you develop confidence in experimenting with and playing new sounds.
3. **Listening & Awareness:** Keys players are the first line of attack against silence when silence is not what we're trying to achieve. It's expected that the keys will be the glue that ties the worship set together as we flow from song to song. Be aware not just of the music but more importantly how the Holy Spirit is at work in the room itself. If there's time of meditation or prayer, fill that space with pads or keys in a simple yet profound way. Just like Electric Guitars, 3 notes played tastefully or simple block

chord whole notes can fill a lot of space and create a large amount of mood and color.

4. **Intermediate vs. Advanced** - An **intermediate player** on our team can play piano and basic pads and learn parts from tutorials including important lead lines.

Intermediate players also can handle basic transitions from song to song or parts of services and can sense and respond to emotions and flow in the moment.

**Advanced players** can consistently play chords and lead lines together, have a basic working knowledge of MainStage, can handle key changes on the fly (without the transpose button), and understand how to use effects on site. **At all levels**, keyboard players should be able to lock in with the click and stay in time. This is a foundational and basic skill to achieve before adding notes, color and/or arpeggios to a song. The busier you get with your parts the more likely you are to fall out of time.

5. **Humility:** Keyboard players can really stick out in a mix both in good and bad ways. Play with humility and simplicity. Playing too much is distracting to not just those of us in the band, but also everyone we are trying to lead. There is a lot of wisdom and musical maturity in simplicity.