

# Music Ministry

## Definition:

Music ministry is one of the most powerful tools we can use to praise God and to reach a non-Christian world.

There are three basic uses of music:

1. Entertainment
2. Communicating a message
3. Praise and worship

These three types of music are equally valid in their own world. Confusion happens when one uses one type of music for another purpose.

## Entertainment:

The entertainment industry has exploited music for amusement. Millions of dollars are spent on tours, CD's and music related products. There is a definite place for entertainment music from a Christian perspective. In other words, music that is there to please, entertain, and for the pure enjoyment of music while not crossing moral boundaries. Some concerts are purely for entertainment - unfortunately many artists embrace an entertainment form of performance, yet profess to be in "ministry." This is misleading, since it creates false expectations, and in essence cheapens the name of God, as its used as a source of amusement, not true respect and honor.

## Communicating a message:

Paul admonishes us to *"Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."* Ephesians 5:19-20. Spiritual songs are songs communicating spiritual truth. These songs can be used to express what sometimes cannot be communicated with words alone. Music expresses more than a sermon or testimony can. Music breaks down walls and communicates truth. These songs can be directed toward the audience, or to God, just as the Psalms are often written directly to God as a cry from the heart in distress, or as a testimony to God's truth.

## Praise and Worship:

Music, in the Bible, is used most often for praise. Praise is music directly sung to God for His greatness. We rarely truly enter into worship, as we often are more focused on singing for our own entertainment, rather than singing directly to God.

## Why Use Music?

Here's a couple quick reasons:

1. Music speaks what words alone cannot.

2. Music grabs attention and brings people together
3. Music can create a mood to facilitate the spoken word
4. Music is the universal language of our culture. To speak to this culture, speak in music.
5. Memory is increased by the use of music.
6. A message can be heard many times in music without becoming old, whereas listening to a sermon would get old quickly.
7. Music is a gift from God, therefore to not use it would be a waste of God given ability.
8. Music is used in the Bible.

### Concert Ministry:

The goals of a concert ministry can be one of two things, or a combination of both:

1. **To entertain the audience.**
2. **To feed the audience spiritually.**

Your goals will determine how you construct your concerts. If it is merely entertainment, your job is to "wow" the audience and show off to them in some way. This may be through personal interaction so they love you for your personality, it may be through your superior musicianship, or it may be through special effects and tricks.

If your goal is to feed them spiritually, you must structure everything around a specific message you are trying to relate. While it is not imperative that every song revolve around one theme, it is often best if you do structure your concert around one overall theme.

Concerts typically run a somewhat traditional structure.

1. **Exciting the audience** - the first few songs are usually there to get the audience excited, standing up, and connecting with you as a performer. While this may seem self-centered (and it can be) it is also very important. Your first 30 seconds on stage will determine how easily you will relate to the audience for the rest of the program. Also, hitting a concert right on gives your audience a feeling of comfort knowing that the performer is confident. Often amateur performers will start with talking, and will appear unsure of themselves, which makes the audience uncomfortable and doesn't facilitate communication.
2. **Introduction** - after a song or two, the performer will usually greet the audience, introduce themselves or the concert, or in some way talk with the audience, creating a bridge from the performer as a performer to the performer as a friend. This also increases the energy.

3. **Middle Stage** -- The next few songs may be more medium styled or varying. They are not as important to be high energy. This is going into the meat of the concert.
4. **Honesty** - After the audience is thoughtally with the performer, the performer will often slow things down, doing perhaps an acoustic set. This is when they will often talk more at length and present a message they may be trying to convey. This is when a lot of ministry time is done. Sometimes it may end in a call, sometimes it may be a silent commitment, maybe a prayer time to a slow song, etc. Don't try to push an altar call. Many performers feel compelled to have altar calls, yet it is not necessary unless you are feeling drawn by the Spirit to have a call, it fits with your message, or just seems imperative. Don't feel like you have to. If you do have a call, make is specific. Nothing is worse than being confused as to what you're being asked to commit to. Especially for Christians, its very strange for general altar calls because they're not sure if they're being asked if they love God, or if they have major sin to confess.
5. **Building it back up** - After this time the next few songs will usually bring the energy level back up. This is when the really upbeat songs are back, the show stoppers, etc.
6. **The Ending** - The ending is one of the most important moments of the concert. What you do at the ending time is up to you and what you want to convey. Traditionally, you build up to one of your biggest songs (showstopper), and go all out. However, you may want to end very calmly or smoothly in commitment. Steven Curtis Chapman did this on his Heaven in the Real World tour. He got his audience singing the chorus to the song Heaven in the Real World, and walked off stage, and the house lights came up (signifying that there was no encore), and that was the end, and the audience left not as much thinking about Chapman as the message of Heaven in the real world.

These are geneal models of concerts. If you are performing your own, its good to follow a basic model like this until you become familiar and comfortable on stage, then you can begin expiramenting with your own style. Remember, you need to have a reason for *everything* you do. Don't simply do something because your audience will be effected. It will impact the feel and dynamic of your show. On the other hand, don't be afraid to be spontaneous. Too scripted a feel makes a show stifled.

At some time in your show it is a very good idea to create a time of interaction with the audience. This may be bringing people on stage, taking requests, going into the audience, or whatever. This simply builds more of a bond between you and your audience, making them more ready to listen to what you want to say.

#### Performance Basics:

Your audience is made up of people, not objects to manipulate. Perform to the audience. Perform to them as people. Make eye contact. Continually pray that God show you what they need to hear. This will help keep your performances authentic, and not merely a show repeated 80 times.

### **How to make people happy:**

One of the most important people in your life is your sound man. Be nice to him/her. They can make or break you. If you are at the mercy of a church's sound person, don't assume they know or don't know anything when you come in. You'll figure it out soon enough. Give them what they need and give them some basic instructions. If they know a lot about sound they'll be cool with it. If they don't, they'll probably be defensive. Good luck. Tell them what you need, but be respectful. They live in this church and know the dynamics and peculiarities of their sound system. Ask for God's wisdom in working with them.

Here are a few basics on sound:

1. **Mic use** - Be nice to your microphones. They probably (hopefully!) cost at least \$100. Treat them as such.
  - a. **NEVER BLOW INTO THEM** (the humidity in your breath can cause rust on the membrane that translates your sound into vibrations)
  - b. **NEVER TAP OR BANG ON THE MIC** (its kinda like dropping the mic - sudden strong shock to a sensitive piece of equipment, plus it makes loud noises and makes you look unprofessional.
  - c. **NEVER SAY "IS THIS ON?"** If it is, you look stupid. If its not, you look stupid. Talk into it, whatever. If the sound person knows what he's doing, he'll get it on. If he doesn't, it's not going to help much!
2. **Monitors** - Monitors are nice. Don't abuse them. Use them to let you know what you're singing and what the key parts of your accompaniment are. If the sound man can turn off the main speakers and hear fine with just your monitor, **IT'S TOO LOUD!!!!** Use them sparingly. Plus, if they're too loud, you can't hear your audience.
3. **Signal Flow** - Here's how to look intelligent. Sound is very logical - in's go into out's. The sound comes out of your voice, into the microphone, out of the microphone, into the cable, out of the cable into the mixer, out of the mixer into the amplifier, out of the amplifier into the cable, out of the cable into the speakers. It's all very logical.
4. **Have a servant's heart** - the sound guy is a minister just like you. Don't assume he/she is there to be your slave. Be a servant!

### **How to make a concert series:**

If you are wanting to start a series of concerts in your town, here's a few things to consider:

1. **Location** - Finding a good location is imperative. Having a consistent place where people know there will be concerts increases your audience size.
2. **Audience** - Who do you want to minister to? Concerts for teens and concerts for senior citizens are quite different!
3. **Advertising** - Advertising is everything. Make trades with radio stations - let them come out and promote themselves at your event (put one of their DJ's on stage during intermission, have a booth, etc.) and they may give you free or reduced advertising. Get your youth group involved in promoting it, putting out flyers, etc.
4. **Venue** - Depending on your location, there will be a lot of details you'll need to work out with the venue - security, parking, ticket takers, etc. Some places you can use volunteers, and some require you to use their people. Make sure you know the details before signing anything.
5. **Production meetings** - Before the event have at least one, if not several, production meetings with all major team players. Walk through the concert and make sure everyone has their roles taken care of.
6. **Sound System/Lighting** - Make sure you have adequate sound and lighting for your performer and the venue. Check the contract the performer has sent you. Make sure it's all in order. Don't skimp on it, and don't use the guy in church who has always run the church sound system and thinks he knows everything about sound. He probably doesn't.
7. **Courtesy People** - assign someone to work with the artist upon their arrival, to pick them up at the airport and taken care of. The better you treat them, the better their concert will be. Do nice things, like get them bottled water (I know, you're used to your water, but it probably tastes weird to everyone else!).
8. **Follow-up** - Figure out what you want to do for follow up. Do you want to somehow tie this into your church, a future event, whatever?
9. **Figure out what you're doing** - Decide what your purpose in the concert is, then you can choose an artist who meets those goals in entertainment, ministry, praise, etc. Listen to CD's. Go to other concerts. Find out what works for you, and more importantly, your audience.

God bless you as you use music for Him!!!