CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

MORE THAN A SONG

Leading the Worship Team

You thrill me, Lord, with all You have done for me!
I sing for joy because of what You have done.
—Psalm 92:4 (NLT)

FLOW, RIVER, FLOW

Imagine the concluding scene of an epic movie spectacular set in the ancient city of Jerusalem. Underneath the city runs a network of channels, known as the waters of Siloam, that supplies water to the city. In a splendid vision, Ezekiel pictures this water emanating from within God’s house—the high and holy Temple (47:1–9). Its torrent flows east, and as he is led in measured intervals, the waters rise to Ezekiel’s ankles, to his knees, to his waist, until he is taken up and can no longer walk in the rushing current.

But there’s more! The camera follows the river as it gushes out into the arid, waterless Jordan Valley to the east. The water brings life to everything along its path, including the salty abyss of the Dead Sea. What were once lifeless waters miraculously appear fresh. In the Hebrew, they “are healed.” The dramatic scenario closes with a voice exuberantly proclaiming, “It will come about that every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes, will live” (Ezekiel 47:9a, NAS, emphasis added).1

In Chapter Eighteen, we learn how to:
• design a playlist
• prepare the music and “layer” arrangements
• create seamless transitions
• prepare effective praise band rehearsals
The psalmist prophetically alluded to these life-giving waters when he wrote, “There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God” (Psalm 46:4). It is a timeless analogy, this ever-flowing river of God, in the Holy Spirit, that washes over our souls with cleansing and refreshment. When Jesus spoke of the Spirit, He said, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water’ ” (John 7:37–38, NAS).

The Sunday-to-Sunday goal of the worship team leader is to find and follow that river. Salvation Army poet laureate Albert Orsborn may have summed it up best when he wrote:

Light, life and love are in
that healing fountain,
All I require to cleanse me
and restore…
From a hill I know,
Healing waters flow;
O rise, Immanuel’s tide,
And my soul overflow!

ANOTHER SUNDAY . . . ON OUR TOES

In Chapter One we began by contrasting the minstrel-performer with the minister-priest. The first minstrel scene gives the impression that God—the host—was unavailable. But God, in fact, is omnipresent and always available. For some of us, it takes time to learn to embrace this ready access to the Holy Spirit. It is the posture of artist-musicians that makes the difference, as they leave themselves open to a connection to the eternal. Like Moses, we choose not to move without a sense of God’s presence (Exodus 33:15).

Following the river

As in our story about Ezekiel, the Scriptures eloquently picture the presence of the Holy Spirit as a river of living water flowing from the throne of God (Revelation 22:1–2). Bob Sorge suggests that the worship leader’s responsibility is twofold. First, “the leader must keep his toes at the edge of the river, ever attentive to the direction that the water is flowing.” On occasion the Holy Spirit may gently chide us, saying, “This song is great, but it is not the direction I am going this morning.” The leader needs to be ever listening, while remaining humble, discerning, and flexible.

While...staying tuned into the congregation

At the same time, Sorge reminds us, the worship leader needs to be tuned in to the congregation. If they are not following your lead, then you must ask what you can do to help them move in the direction you sense the Spirit is going. More often than not, this is not done by stirring up the singing, but rather a quieting in prayer, until you sense the congregation has been ushered into the flow of the river. Prayer before rehearsals and services helps keep the leader in tune with the Spirit’s direction. Be prepared for occasional surprises from the Holy Spirit, who likes to keep us on our toes.
WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS?

Let’s use our cinematic imaginations again and flash back to an earlier vision of Ezekiel (1:15–21). From a distance, we see a creature with what appears to be a high–rimmed wheel full of eyes around it. As the camera closes in, there are actually a pair of wheels, seemingly interconnected to the other, each on a different axis. We discover that one wheel intersects the other at right angles, yet is linked and miraculously led by astounding–looking creatures. With the wheels ready to go in any direction, in an instant these creatures rise to fly in concert, and are they fast! The spirit of these living creatures seems to control this odd assemblage of wheels. With the camera surveying the vast scene, a voice declares, “Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels” (Ezekiel 1:20).

One Quarterback

Learning to follow the promptings of the real worship leader—the Holy Spirit—does not dismiss or diminish the importance of having a lead worshiper. All the jokes about how committees do not function with real lucidity apply here. There are occasions when a song emanates from the pianist, the podium, or even from within the congregation. But on the whole, worship teams function best under one person—someone gifted in helping us travel together. This lead worshiper is seeking the Spirit for a sense of direction. This is where another Sunday begins, with the leader in prayer during the week in advance. This can be a “full–time job” as the Spirit may speak at anytime as we “work away at this ministry” (Philippians 3:3, The Message).

PRAYING A PLAYLIST

Preparation of the heart

Someone once remarked to the pilot of a record–setting supersonic jet, “You must take the most frightful risks.” His immediate response was, “The one thing to be quite sure of in my job is to see to it that I never take any risks!” This sound judgment can be amply applied to the high–risk calling of worship–leading. Let’s look at ways to reduce the margin of error on Sunday mornings and yet allow a free flow of expression within the worshiping body.

Philippians 3:3 reminds us that we “worship by the Spirit.” Eugene Peterson paraphrases it this way: “The real believers are the ones that the Spirit of God leads to work away at this ministry, filling the air with Christ’s praise as we do it.” Paul goes even further when he says, “We couldn’t carry this off by our own efforts, and we know it” (Philippians 3:4). This knowledge can be a tremendous release to the lead worshiper. We are reminded that we cannot make worship happen in our own strength, no matter how terrific our plan, credentials, experience or practice. Matt Redman says, “The Holy Spirit will always take us deeper.”

We cannot make worship happen in our own strength, no matter how terrific our plan, credentials, experience or practice.
On the other hand, accepting a position of dependence raises the risk level! We are forced to listen with regularity to the faintest whisper of His voice. Ken Gire likens it to a dance, as we follow the Spirit’s lead, step by step, and for which we may not know the ending. Such “weakness and dependence,” Oswald Chambers once said, “will always be an occasion for the Spirit of God to manifest His power.”

Beyond the Top Five
We are hard pressed to imagine the Holy Spirit as the real worship leader if we routinely string together songs limited to a Top Five list. Even more inadequate is an “in the Spirit” mode, which somehow commends a lack of forethought. Scripture instructs us that everything in worship should be done in “a fitting and orderly way” (1 Cor. 14:40). Your officer–pastor can be found daily seeking something in his or her devotions to bring to the people. He may opt to work from the lectionary, which demands time in various Scriptures, studying passages that may be unfamiliar ground. She may seek to center her thoughts on a theme, season, or book of the Bible. All of these avenues bring depth, structure, and beauty to the worship experience. In tandem with the Spirit, the worship leader can piggyback off these initiatives.

CREATING THE PLAYLIST
In a practical sense, the goal for the worship band rehearsal is to have a Holy Spirit-crafted playlist ready that is Holy Spirit–crafted for that Sunday. Let’s consider some steps to make this happen. Since the bandmaster or songster leader would have similar questions, request that the meeting planner send out an email of the suggested program outline early in the week. This will give you an opportunity to fill in your titles and even make suggestions to improve the flow of the meeting:

- Find out if there is a sermon topic or theme emphasis for the service. Are any related congregational songs suggested by the meeting planner? Any interaction with other music groups (for instance, by using Hallelujah Chorus or Scripture–Based Songs arrangements)?

- Find out where your musical offerings are being slotted and the time allotted. To aim for the seamless transitions we considered in the Keyboard Worship Chapter Seventeen (pp. 357–358), take note of what comes before and after each item.

- Ascertain what personnel are available for that Sunday. Confirm rehearsal and sound check times.

- Schedule a block of time, well in advance of your worship team rehearsal, to:
  1. choose songs
  2. locate the required music and/or charts
  3. decide how to “arrange” the songs
  4. lay out a rehearsal plan

In Chapter Twenty-Three we will talk about strategically thinking through a series of weeks at one sitting, especially relating to a sermon series or a season, such as Advent.
or Lent. Once in the cycle, it doesn't hurt to prepare something extra, or get a week ahead in your preparation, especially in a region where inclement weather can cause the cancellation of rehearsals.

Three test questions

“What songs will help us enter into a spirit of worship?”

There are several schools of thought on creating a worship package or set. The primary question is, “What songs will help us enter into a spirit of worship?” Folks, both young and old, can be quick to pass judgment on our choice of songs, as the writer of this letter demonstrates:

“I am no music scholar, but I feel I know appropriate church music when I hear it. Last Sunday’s new hymn—if you call it that—sounded like a sentimental love ballad one would expect to hear crooned in a bar. If you insist on exposing us to rubbish like this—in God’s house—don’t be surprised if many of the faithful look for a new place to worship. The hymns we grew up with are all we need.” From a letter written in 1863 regarding a new hymn called “Just As I Am.”

There are times when the congregation can be wooed into a contemplative mood by music played at a slow or medium tempo, and soft or moderate volume. At the other extreme, a higher decibel level and faster tempos can jumpstart an up-tempo celebratory mood. A strong topical emphasis calls for a more reflective approach that focuses on the power of strong lyrics.

When grouping songs, it is common to use several in the same tempo and then carefully transition to another mode. Avoid alternating between fast and slow songs, which tends to feel choppy. Shun too many slow songs in a row or overdoing cute songs. Begin in familiar territory, even in a low key as voices “wake up.” Rarely commence your set with a new song. If you do, introduce an accessible section, like the chorus, and then cycle back to the verses, connected by the now-familiar chorus.

“What do we want folks to think about today?”

The jumpstart entrance into worship often primarily touches our right-brained emotions. John 4 teaches us that we must “worship in spirit and in truth,” requiring a reaching across to the thought process on the left side of our brain. A second approach follows a central theme, by asking, “What do we want folks to think about today?” This could relate to the meeting theme, but as Dave Williamson says, “That can be overkill. God is so much more diverse, and the needed expression of the people broader, than theming the entire service allows.” Even after consulting with the speaker of the day, a thematically related songlist may not emerge, but perhaps there is one song that can be identified to close your set that can act as a springboard for the message.

**THEME: God’s Guidance and Care**
1. Come, Thou Fount
2. In His Time
3. The Power of Your Love

**THEME: Hunger for God**
1. Be Thou My Vision
2. Open Our Eyes
3. As The Deer
At other times, the worship leader can be guided by the Holy Spirit to songs that follow a logical thought process, often moving from the Outer Court (singing about God) into the Inner Court (responding to God’s presence) or even the most intimate Holy Place (songs about what God has done). As we see in this example from Dave Williamson, choosing to transition to the chorus first, rather than the verse, can open up possibilities:

“The ending lyric of “Days of Elijah” is “out of Zion’s hill salvation comes.” Ask yourself, “What thought that opens the next song builds on that ending thought?” You come up with “Mighty to Save,” chorus first, which begins by saying, “Savior, you can move the mountain/My God is mighty to save …” Then from the last lines of “Mighty” which go, “You rose and conquered the grave, Jesus conquered the grave”… we decide to move further into the inner court with “Your grace is enough,” which begins by saying, “Great is Your faithfulness, O God… so remember Your children … Your grace is enough.”… To conclude, we want to move into a song that goes deeper, yet still relates in some cognitive way. We choose “Shout to the Lord,” which begins, “My Jesus, my Savior, Lord there is none like You.”

Who are we singing to?
A third approach asks, “Who are we singing to?” Hymns really were conceived as sung prayers, which explains the concluding intoned “Amen.” Prayers sung up to God are regarded as vertical worship. One group of vertical hymns thanks and adores God as the Almighty. Hymns like Holy, Holy, Holy, A Mighty Fortress, and Lord, I Lift Your Name on High fit this category. Other hymns or songs are addressed to God, but they are asking God to do something like, Teach Me How to Love Thee, or Change My Heart, O God. Songs that encourage or admonish others (or ourselves) are identified as horizontal, because rather than declaring something up to God, they state something about God out to the people. It is common to sing two vertical uplifting songs and then one to encourage others to respond to God.

This “set” begins with adoration (sung vertically to God), asks God for something (sung vertically to God) and closes by encouraging others (sung horizontally to the people).

From Vertical to Horizontal
1. Lord, I Lift Your Name
2. Change My Heart, Oh God
3. Soon and Very Soon

Who singing to?
adoration to God
petition God
sung to people
A similar approach follows the ACTS acronym (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication). It commences with vertical adoration, moves to a song of confession, followed by a song of encouragement and thanks, and closes with a song asking God to do something on behalf of others.

**ACTS**
1. *Holy, Holy, Holy* (adoration)
2. *Create in Me a Clean Heart* (confession)
3. *Give Thanks* (thanksgiving)
4. *Shine, Jesus Shine* (supplication)

**Message**
- God is majestic and powerful
- Jesus forgives me, even when I fail
- I praise God for what He has done in my life
- Prayer to enlarge the body of Christ

The flow of a worship song set often downshifts from a brisk tempo through a moderate song, closing with a slow, meditative offering. To move the worshiper’s attention away from what can become routine, the opposite may also prove effective, where a quiet start unfolds toward a climactic portrait of the unfathomable depth of God’s love.

**From Quiet to Climax**
1. *His Eye is On the Sparrow*
2. *God Will Make a Way*
3. *'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus*
4. *Oh for a Thousand Tongues*

**Subliminal Message**
- God watches over His children
- God can be trusted, even when life hurts
- God can bring good out of bad
- God is big and powerful

**Aids for song selection**
While some meeting themes suggest numerous song options, other themes prove difficult in locating just the right song. To aid song selection, some song leaders create their own computer databases with quick access to lists of songs sorted by theme, key, tempo, Scripture reference, and even service placement (opening song, reflection, closing song, offertory, prayer, and the like).

A subscription to a song service also permits various themes, Scripture, key, and/or word searches. The most recent *Salvation Army Piano Tune Book* includes chord symbols (with capo), as well as associated song texts to a majority of the songs. Our songbook includes alphabetical, topical, Scripture, metrical and word search indexes, which are also available as a computer searchable format for handy research.

The worship leader should constantly search for fresh contemporary music. This listening should be eclectic and go beyond the current popularity of a top five list of choruses, which can become stale offerings because of what Bob Sorge calls overfamiliarity or overkill. Look at choruses by Salvationists or local writers. Search the internet or take suggestions from members of your congregation and worship team. It can be helpful to ask the congregation what their favorites are. We serve the service and our congregation when we put our own personal taste aside, and choose songs that foster a connection with the congregation on any given Sunday.

**SCRIPTURE INDEX**

| 1 SAMUEL   | 3:9  | 775 |
| 1 KINGS    | 8:12-53 | 822 |
| 2 KINGS    | 19:15 | 134 |

**THEMATIC INDEX**

- *God – Majesty and Power* 6, 376, 573

Become friends with Scripture, topical, and word search indexes in the Salvation Army Song Book and other hymnals to aid in devising worship playlists.

**CAPO (term) \`kæ - pɔ\** A device which looks across a fret of the guitar, stopping all strings at the desired fret, thereby raising the pitch by a number of half steps without requiring a change in fingering by the player. Capo 2(C) means the capo is placed on the second fret, and the guitarist plays the alternative (usually more accessible) chords indicated in parentheses. (More on capo in Chapter Nineteen–p. 413).

**Capo 2(C)**
- **C**
- **G**
- **A**

- **Moderato**
  - **4**
  - **76**

1. Think about how you currently choose songs for Sunday worship. Are you in a rut, reusing the same old top five list? Are you able to link your song list to...
meeting or sermon content? Reflecting on the story that opened this chapter, do you ever experience “the river”?

2. Do you ever receive prompts from the Holy Spirit prior to Sunday, or in the moment during worship? Or does your mind wander, causing you to miss the “flow of the Spirit”?

3. Survey the worship songs that you have been using against the three test questions. How do you think you could fine-tune your selections and their strategic placement to better serve the service?

**LOCATING THE MUSIC AND WORDS**

Music and words in print form exist in most churches in hymnals or song collections. Many of these compilations include chord symbols with capo, including the latest Salvation Army Piano Tune Book. More recent popular songs and choruses are published in songbook collections. Choral publishers produce arrangements of praise choruses and hymn settings designed for congregational use with praise team, choir, and supporting instrumental resources.

Use of printed music saves time, especially in getting singers to agree on what alto and baritone notes are to be sung. Reference to a printed page also can quickly settle matters of correct rhythm and note values. If a printed copy has been purchased for each member of your team, you may elect to copy the song being used. It is highly recommended to enlarge it to fill the entire page. (Refer to Chapter Five, p. 111, regarding

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**Bless His Holy Name**

*Words and Music by Andrae Crouch*

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proper copyright practices.) Beware of the "plain Jane" chords given in some pop collections, which may have been watered down. Quick reference to a printed keyboard part can clarify the proper chords and bass line.

**Chord charts**
An unhappy task before my weekly junior band rehearsal used to be picking up what was left behind from Sunday service; photocopied pages of lyrics with minimal chord symbols that had seemingly blown off the stands onto the stage floor. In some places, these chord chart sheets now seem to be ubiquitous because they are easily accessed online. In this format, chord symbols are indicated where the chords change above the typed lyrics. In Chapter Nineteen, we will consider ways to elaborate on these simplified chords.

One recommendation is to put the chord chart pages in three ring binders, perhaps in plastic covers. Titles can be arranged alphabetically with dividers. Pages can be pulled for the rehearsal or Sunday but then returned to their proper place to be used again in the future. Another option is for the leader to collect the song parts, by title, into a single clear plastic sleeve. Catalog the sets of sleeves alphabetically. Each week before rehearsal or the sound check, the worship leader pulls the pages of chord charts needed from the sleeved sets and puts them in the worship band's binders in the order required. More and more folks are moving these pages into their electronic devices and, with the swipe of their fingers, move on to the next tune.

**Lead sheets**
Like words-only songbooks and projected lyrics, approximations of tunes abound. A more beneficial solution is the use of lead sheets. These combine a single staff melody line with lyrics and letter chord symbols placed directly above the note where the chord should change, thus the designation by jazz and commercial artists as "chord changes." Chord placement over the exact notation of the melody, as found in most contemporary collections and hymnals, is certainly more secure than the printed-out chord charts where the chords are approximated above the words.

Players will best equip themselves by learning to read the notes and rhythm of the melody and also securing knowledge of how to construct the corresponding chords. In situations where the guitar is the lead instrument for worship, you may wish to refer to websites which have downloadable songs in lead sheet format. These are produced with guitar players in mind. The chords have been simplified without compromising the harmonic integrity of the hymn, yet are updated enough to sound contemporary.

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**Love Round**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead Sheet</th>
<th>Love Round</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="https://example.com/love_round.png" alt="Love Round" /></td>
<td>Love, love, love, love; The gospel in one word is love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="https://example.com/love_round.png" alt="Love Round" /></td>
<td>Love your neighbor as your brother, love, love, love.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Choral octavos designed for congregational use, occasionally include a bulletin–size insert with a single line melody with the lyrics printed on the back cover of the octavo, with permission to reprint in the church bulletin. This practice has long been used in the Anglican Church for congregational responses. Photocopying for congregational use is covered under your CCLI license, so delight your congregation with a notated version of a new chorus. More folks can follow a musical line than you may imagine.

The publisher hereby grants permission to reprint the material within the box for congregational participation provided that a sufficient quantity of copies of the entire anthem has been purchased for the musicians. The music is to be reproduced with the title and all credits including the copyright notice.

We Are An Offering

Words and Music by Dwight Liles

We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you, we are an offering; Lord, use our voices, Lord, use our hands, Lord, use our lives, they are yours, we are an offering, We are an offering.

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254 Our God reigns, 793
Isaiah 52:7-10 Irregular

HOW lovely on the mountains are the feet of him
Who brings good news, good news,
Proclaiming peace, announcing news of happiness,
Our God reigns, our God reigns.

Our God reigns, our God reigns,
Our God reigns, our God reigns.

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Words only

The Salvation Army follows in the tradition of some denominations that print words only songbooks. With the exceptions of some incidental music-and-words collections, Salvationists are accustomed to sorting out the tune by ear with just the words in front of them. The advantage of holding a book over a projected lyric is being able to follow the flow of the lyric, which often follows a story or line of doctrinal truth. Sharing a book with the person singing next to you can help folks feel more a part of the community of worshipers. Large print editions are helpful for those with vision weakness.

The projected image, on the other hand, aids singing by focusing the congregation’s attention out of the copy upward and provides the freedom to clap or lift hands in worship. In many cases there is easy access to song lyrics via the internet. For corps with limited resources, many publishers now include the tracks and visuals, including lyrics already cued, and prepared in a visually appealing digital format.

ARRANGING THE PLAYLIST

Earlier we considered three test questions in approaching our playlists. How we decide to arrange the songs in our song–set can emphasize the best of each of these possibilities:

Test Question #1:
“What songs can help us enter into a spirit of worship?” Establish a mood or atmosphere.
Test Question #2:  
“What do we want folks to think about today?” Emphasize the lyrical content.

Test Question #3:  
“Who are we singing to?” Balance vertical—to God—worship with the horizontal—to the people.

Layering  
To have all your forces “full out” on all verses of a hymn or song will not only discourage the congregation from participating, but will negate the opportunity to set a mood as you journey through the story of the words. As a fundamental principle, verses should not exceed 85% volume, with the chorus or refrain sung at near 100%.* In today’s contemporary music recording scene, the producer sitting next to the engineer often assumes the role of arranger, without manuscript paper, by giving arranging suggestions from the sound booth. The producer may make suggestions as to song layout and reinforce the shape of that layout by creating “layers” after the fact in the cutting room as a track is edited.

Recording layers in the studio  
The term layers being used in the context of a worship team is not to be confused with the layers we used for analysis in the Score Study, Bandmaster, and Songster Leader Chapters. In the case of the worship band using a click track, the drum track is considered the first layer, then the bass, then usually the guitar, keyboard, and finally, the voices and horns. Recordings are often made through this process of overdubbing one track layer over another.  
An alternate method has each instrumentalist and vocalist in separate booths or rooms. This prevents any bleed between the recorded track layers, giving the engineer an independently recorded track layer for each musician. The group can then record all parts at the same time through the use of headphones or monitors, giving the arranger–producer and the mixing engineer the option to highlight, reduce, or eliminate certain vocal or instrumental layers in the final mix.

Build verse by verse  
When presenting a hymn with four verses, a way of avoiding monotony is to mix and match your vocalists, varying the voices by verse. One approach would be to commence with a soloist to gently introduce the hymn in a quiet mood. For verse two, invite the congregation to join, with perhaps a male and female duet leading. Verse three can build a little with all men singing the melody with the congregation, and harmony from the women of the team. The final full–out verse has the praise team singers in four part harmony and the congregation continuing on the melody. This well thought–out progression, if fully rehearsed, would bring dynamics and vitality to what could have been a flat sing through a worthy hymn.

Painting the lyrics  
Not all hymns or gospel songs build verse by verse to climactic conclusion. Take some clues from your careful review of the text. For example, the third verse of How Great Thou Art (“And when I think that God, His Son not sparing…” suggests a quieter, even slower tempo than the first two verses. As one leads into verse four (“When Christ shall come…” the tempo picks up slightly in the first half, but when
we hit the line “Then I shall bow in humble adoration” the music should regress to the quieter, more reverent tone. Then during the last line a drum or cymbal roll builds to the triumphant final refrain. *O Boundless Salvation* is similar, where after the bold opening verse, subsequent verses, like verse two, are more somber (“My sins they are many…”).

**Shifts to minor mode**

Another way to create texture and interest in the journey of a hymn text is to shift harmonically to the minor mode while maintaining the original melody. Chords of the relative minor work well on the third verse of *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty* to reflect “tempests of … warfare … raging.” The relative minor also works well on selected verses of *Be Thou My Vision*. In Chapter Seventeen (p. 369), we discussed ennobling a final verse by modulating up a key while slowing to a stately tempo.  

**Layering in the band**

We can apply the same principles of layering to the supporting instrumentalists in the worship band to create interest, just as an arranger would with an ensemble. The introductory bars and verse one can be presented as simple block chords from the keyboard. As we transition into verse two, the bass and drums join softly. Drums assume a fuller role, as guitars enter for verse three and then a more active keyboard (or even full band) is added for the final climactic verse.

**Listening for your part**

Stories are told of African Salvationist musicians who travel miles to hear a performance. They often listen differently than a Western Salvationist does. They tune in intentionally on their part, hoping to reproduce it from memory when they get home! In a similar manner, we can train ourselves as leaders and players to listen and watch for the subtle, but effective ways that professional players nuance their music. When listening to an orchestration, ask: How much and what percussion is there on the first verse? When do the back–up vocals come in? Ask how the verses are differentiated from one another. Importantly, consider how the orchestration dictates the emotional tone of the offering. Listening outside our musical comfort zone will spawn many lessons. Consider looking into African styles like Highlife from Ghana or Township Jazz from South Africa to add rhythmic excitement to arrangements. Latino/Cuban rhythms are foundational to modern popular music and well worth the study.
A skilled arranger makes sure every instrument rightfully has its time and place to play. The bass player functionally underpins the singing, not unlike the 32-foot organ pipe, sometimes moving through passing notes, rather than remaining embedded on the root. He may move into his upper register, leaving the “bottom” empty. Drummers sometimes circle on the cymbals or with brushes, play exclusively on the high-hat, resort to cymbal rolls, or judiciously use the rim. Guitarists can vary strums or pick simple lines. Many of the concepts previously considered in elaborating on the Piano Tune Book (see Chapter Seventeen, pp. 360–363) can be useful to the keyboard player, such as reducing chords to the very minimum or varying inversions, registers, and arpeggiation. All instrumentalists can benefit from a reminder that an ensemble’s clarity and conciseness are usually products of fewer notes and yes, less volume. Less really is more!

**INSTRUMENTAL TECHNIQUES**

To help vary arrangements from verse to verse:

**Guitar**
1. Finger pick
2. Soft strum with thumb
3. Strum softly with pick, add strokes
4. Full strum

**Drums**
1. Simple kick with light rim shot
2. Alternate kick with hi-hat
3. Kick, sub snare, hi-hat
4. Same, add rolls and crash cymbals

**Keys**
1. Sustain chords half to full measure
2. Move chords to different inversions
3. Broken chords on quarter/eighth notes

**Bass**
1. Stay on root
2. Add passing tones
3. Patterns in high register
riff (term) \(\text{ rif }\) In jazz or rock, a short melodic motive often repeated over changing harmonies. It may be presented as accompaniment or as melody, or sometimes in call-and-response fashion.

**OPUS ONE RIFF LINES**

Moderately, with a beat \( \dot{\text{d}} = 120 \)

1st time: \( G / Bb / A m / E / \)
2nd time: \( C / / / / / / \)
3rd time: \( A / / D / / \)

1st time: \( D / / / / / \)
2nd time: \( C / / / / / \)
3rd time: \( A / / D / / \)

G: C: G: G: G:

Opus One (Sy Oliver & Sid Garza) © 1986 Embassy Music

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**Coloring the music**

Worship leader Steve Kranz likens shaping a musical space to painting a canvas. A painter would never paint every color on every inch of a canvas, resulting in an indiscernible mess. Constant playing at full throttle forces the congregation to switch off. Convince the worship team that taking a rest doesn’t make their role less important, but rather, their re-entry highlights their importance.\(^4\) If there are two guitarists, one should play higher on the neck so as not to infringe on the musical space of the other. If a song is guitar-driven, then the keyboardist takes a backseat. Conversely, if a piece is piano-based, then the guitarist should be less rhythmic and limit her offerings to lead or fill riffs.

**CREATING SEAMLESS TRANSITIONS**

The well-known brass band composer, Eric Ball, often said that the most difficult bits of music to create were the transitions between songs in a selection. He further suggested that a well-written transition plays itself while one not so well conceived will require much rehearsal. As the church moves toward a more production-minded worship experience, creating exceptional, even seamless transitions, is a no less formidable challenge. The alternatives are the near silent dead-spots, while the congregation watches for what seems like an eternity as the worship band shuffles through their pages. Abrupt, choppy changes in tempo and volume, complete with the unintentional choreography of lively head-bobbing and arm-waving, can leave a congregation with a sense of whiplash. Music theorists teach us that the most effective key change or modulation is imperceptible. So it is with transitions between songs. A few simple principles can apply.\(^5\)

**Style, key, and theme in tempo**

It should be fairly easy to negotiate between a pair of same-tempo tunes sung back to back, especially without a key change. To make a quick transition, the song leader can talk over/introduce the next song as the first song concludes (and the corresponding visual slide comes up at the same time). The seam will be less apparent if the songs are thematically linked, for instance, *How Great Is Our God* transitioning into *How Great Thou Art*. You do yourself a favor when you can link two songs in the same time signature and tempo, such as *Great is the Lord* and *He is Exalted*, both in 6/8 time.

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Hear demonstrations of these transitions in the Chapter Eighteen online folder.
Sometimes lyrics of songs fit the theme so well that mixing meter is unavoidable. Working transitions from 4/4 time to 3/4 and back requires careful forethought. A switch to triple meter songs (in 3/4 and 6/8) often causes the music to lose energy, but can aid the transition to a slower song. Remember that people are reluctant to clap to waltz rhythms. Another option is to convert the 3/4 to 4/4 time. *Be Thou My Vision*, originally in 3/4 time, is often rendered in 4/4 utilizing an altered dotted rhythm:

"Be Thou My Vision"
in 4/4 time

E

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart.

This Arrangement Copyright © 1997, Kingsway's Thankyou Music

**Modulation**

To keep interest, it is advantageous to change key—what musicians call modulation—after two songs. The move toward a new key (with your transition talk—over) makes the changeover to a new song apparent. Some principles of modulation were introduced in Chapter Seventeen (pp. 368–371), with quick reference modulation guides found in the Appendix 18.1. Here is a chord chart example of a modulatory transition moving out of *We’ll Understand It Better By and By* (in the key of G) into *When We All Get To Heaven* (in C). Notice how as the modulation measures take place, the worship leader ceases to sing, but rather gives the congregation introductory cues about the song to follow.

The other option that can create interest is to modulate up a half or whole step for the final verse of a song and set up the transition to the key for the next song. On-the-spot modulation is mostly a matter of practice. The leader can, however, ensure success by marking the new transposed chord symbols right on the music sheets prior to rehearsal. There are several ways to modulate:

- **ALPHABETICALLY**—One can modulate by *moving up by half step*: a D chord becomes an Eb, Eb becomes E, E becomes F, and G becomes Ab. Or **moving up by whole step**: C becomes D, or F becomes G. Observing the natural half steps, where the black keys are missing, to make a whole step modulation: Bb becomes C, and E becomes F#.

**Modulating by HALF steps**

\[
\begin{array}{ccccccc}
& D & E & Bb & Eb & E & F & G & Ab \\
\text{HALF step UP} & \text{HALF step UP} & \text{HALF step UP} & \text{HALF step UP} & \text{HALF step UP} \\
\end{array}
\]

**Modulating by WHOLE steps**

\[
\begin{array}{ccccccc}
& C & D & F & G & Bb & C & E & F# \\
\text{WHOLE step UP} & \text{WHOLE step UP} & \text{WHOLE step UP} & \text{WHOLE step UP} & \text{WHOLE step UP} \\
\end{array}
\]

**CAUTION**

The worship leader needs to recognize the limitations of the musicians in that some may struggle to play in more difficult keys (guitarists). For example, flat keys are difficult for less experienced guitarists. Not all will be able to modulate without written-out chords/parts.
**NUMERICALLY**—For instance, the C, dm, F, and G chords in the key of C are based on the scale tones I, ii, IV, and V (the lowercase Roman numerals indicate a minor chord). The I, ii, IV, and V chords transposed *up one whole step* into the key of D, would be D, Em, G, and A.

![Chord Diagram](image)

**ELECTRONICALLY**—Many keyboards have transpose functions, which move the key *up or down by half steps* (1 takes the piano pitch up by one half step; 2 up a whole step; –1 down a half step, –3 down three half steps). In the next chapter (pp. 413), we will learn how the guitarist capo performs a similar chord–transposing function.

**LOUD and Fast to Soft and Slow**

Sudden changes in volume and tempo are more difficult for the congregation to negotiate. When moving from an up–tempo, celebratory tune into a slow, reflective song, you can talk your way gradually from a loud, quick demonstrative voice down to a hushed, more settled tone. Your instrumentalists hopefully are in sync with your transition, both in tempo and dynamics. This settling down will be more apparent if you ask the standing congregation to sit. Many worship leaders will initiate applause for the Lord, especially after a bright song. The gradual *diminuendo* in the applause can help downshift your *segue* to a slower, softer offering. Sometimes an instrumental tag can be very effective to initiate the transition or conclude a set.

**Soft and Slow to LOUD and Fast**

Naturally, the reverse effect, moving in stages from soft and slow to loud and fast can be realized in a similar fashion. Some song leaders end a softer tune with spoken prayer, and gradually bring the enthusiasm in their voices up as the music swells behind them. When moving into a quick tempo, a call for clapping helps build energy. Clapping at too quick a clip (from 132 bpm and faster) generally will not sustain itself, as folks won’t clap for too long. Some think the limit is four minutes. In the same vein, avoid treating the congregation like popcorn by starting and stopping, clapping or getting up and down, and up and down again. There is great value in allowing your congregation space for reflective contemplation with only a quiet musical backdrop or no music at all. Use members of your team to share a testimony or a Scripture verse with only the sparsest of instrumental underscore.

—C. Randall Bradley

"Music entices us to participate, and music is winsome and welcoming. When we sing with others, we are vulnerable, and vulnerability creates trust."

1. Create several worship–set playlists, considering flow, content, and emotion. Design and practice seamless transitions through effective key and tempo changes.

2. Schematically layer some of the songs selected above, being sure your “arrangement” is appropriate and practical.
THE WORSHIP LEADER’S REHEARSAL PREP

Like many conductors and teachers, most worship team leaders intuitively pattern their rehearsals after the groups and leaders they themselves played or sang under. Not surprisingly, they often fall back on the same playlists they grew up with. This is not always a matter of the proverbial “how we always do it” syndrome. Suddenly thrust into leadership, the newly drafted quarterback has never had to ask how this team is going to be ready for Sunday’s game. It is not just “another Sunday.” Each Sunday has its unique challenges and the weekly rehearsal is the sole opportunity to prepare the team logistically, musically and spiritually. Having worked this far on your game plan, you now have:

- designed a playlist and reviewed it with the pastor/meeting planner
- prepared the copies
- settled on the “arrangements” and transitions for each song in the set

Now you, like a coach, need to have a strategy to communicate and rehearse all of your best intentions for Sunday morning.\(^7\)

A “prepared” playlist

First and foremost, pray for each member of the team, for yourself in leadership, and for a clear vision of what needs to be done in this rehearsal. Bob Sorge defines worship leading as “taking your private cry and making it public.”\(^8\) The “hireling” who is just doing a job (as described in John 10:13), does not abandon his heart to God before the people. Your team members and congregation will respond to authenticity and vulnerability, but it all begins with prayer.

Prepare the playlist chart and organize it for all to see!

The successful rehearsal is about making music with a minimum of talk. The playlist should indicate for all of your musicians the introductions, the song and verse order, transitions, and concluding tags. An alternative is to indicate this information directly on the chord sheets or music. An example of a shorthand roadmap might be:

I  V1  C  V2  B  C  T

Marks save time

If there are key changes, notate the modulation segue and the new chord changes above the original chords. This will save valuable rehearsal time. Clearly describe your vocal and instrumental layers by verse for each song, noting which team member(s) will transition between songs with Scripture or prayer. Encourage members to mark their own cues during rehearsal. Indicate the call time for the sound check and specifically when in the service the group comes on.
Set high expectations

The prepared playlist will help facilitate a productive rehearsal. Beyond saving valuable minutes of rehearsal, the prepared playlist and music placed on the stands set a high expectation for Sunday. Each team member sees the work that has to be accomplished within the prescribed rehearsal window. This prepared playlist is also of infinite value to the sound person to mark up as his or her tech sheet. Avoid asking the soundperson to “fly blind.” Instead give him or her opportunity to better anticipate the layers of the arrangements or moments of transition. Remember that the sound engineer and media person are an integral part of the worship team. They should be engaged, as much as the singers and players, in all aspects of the preparation of the playlist for Sunday worship.¹⁹

Know your stuff!

One maxim has a leader spending two hours in preparation to every hour of actual rehearsal. This sounds like a lot, but time given to ongoing preparation as you approach rehearsal adds up quickly. Here are the steps taken by the worship leader before rehearsal:

- Prayerfully choose the appropriate music for the service.
- Locate the music, words, and chords.
- Work out transitions and mark accordingly.
- Write out any additional vocal and instrumental parts.

Once this preparation has taken place, the real “study” begins.

The same point we made in Chapter Eleven (From Score Reading to Score Study, pp. 231–232) of folks re-reading scores over and over, and never getting to score study, applies here. As a well-prepared music director, play through any transitions and modulations, knowing them so well that you can teach them succinctly. Be intentional on what will happen between verses, between songs, at key changes, and who will speak between songs. Establish tempos for yourself that are not so slow that the tempo drags, and yet not so fast that the congregation can’t fit in the lyrics.

Looking for the “trouble”

In your study, make note of any tricky spots or vocal harmonies where you can anticipate rhythmic or pitch problems. Spend time with the lyrics, identifying any pronunciation that you may need to clarify. Mark understandable phonetics on the vocal copies before rehearsal to avoid time-consuming discussion. Plan to rehearse these potential problem areas before running the song. Get close to the meaning of the words. 1 Corinthians 14:15 (KJV) instructs us to “sing with the spirit, but with the understanding also.” Often a line or two from the lyrics can form the basis for a devotional reflection, taking your group deeper into the songs.
Testing the flow

A wise worship leader will play through the full set to confirm the transitions and balance of flow between the songs while timing the package as a whole. Be sure the set starts and links to the next portion of the service appropriately. For instance, one would bring the music down for the pastoral prayer or end on the upside to segue to a congregational greeting. Adjustments are more easily made to the playlist before rehearsal than when in the spotlight of rehearsal (sometimes lightheartedly known as “the heat of the battle”).

Remember on Sunday to limit your talking and leave the sermonizing for the speaker of the day. An overextended “worship set” disrupts the flow of a meeting by stealing from the speaker’s time. Conversely, if the Holy Spirit is moving, an altar response may call for the worship leader to extend the time in singing. In Africa, the speaker simply approaches the podium, pauses a moment and then motions down with his hands and the singing subsides. Respect for the officer as head and authority should never be violated. Learn to look and give each other cues so as to always be working together sensitively.
Your Rehearsal Plan—An Arch

On the rehearsal day, the leader will arrive and set up early to allow time to greet members, and do a mini–sound check on the system, instruments, and lights. Readiness with marked copies, physical setup, and welcoming enthusiasm will set the stage for a productive rehearsal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review song</th>
<th>Try new tune</th>
<th>Water break</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Next hard work song</td>
<td>Devotions &amp; prayer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then medium difficult tune</td>
<td>Talk through transitions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open with familiar easy song</td>
<td>Run Sunday’s set/Benediction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Short yardage
Avoid starting by rehearsing the playlist in order. Go for “short yardage” by opening rehearsal with something easy or familiar that requires little explanation or rehearsal. Folks may have rushed through traffic after a full day at school or work and need an easy entry into music–making. Moving on to a more difficult tune, be proactive with explaining or “checking” any trouble or transitions before playing down the tune. Some worship team leaders create teachable moments from within the playlist, allowing time for ongoing music education, such as instruction in music–reading.

The “hard work”
The “hard work,” or newest song, should come either third or fourth, when folks are warmed up and concentration is highest. Work the nitty–gritty notes here and then try some new material or gradually review more accessible songs. Great gospel singers value singing with an acoustic piano or guitar unplugged, as we say, to build confidence in tuning, blend, and part learning.

Walk through Sunday
Before a break, allow time for prayer and devotions. During the break, remind vocalists to hydrate, drinking room temperature water while avoiding sweet, carbonated drinks! After the break, talk and “walk” through the transitions for this Sunday’s set, then run Sunday’s list from top to bottom without stopping. Finish with any schedule reminders. Leave the music in order for Sunday. Give a sincere thank you and close with a benediction. Some groups personalize the conclusion of rehearsal with a sung benediction or prayer chorus used solely for rehearsals.

1. Evaluate the congregational response to a playlist from a recent Sunday. Consider which songs went over well (sung with gusto) and which didn’t (stopped singing or confused). Ask yourself which songs bear repeating. If a song didn’t go so well this time, consider trying it again with another approach. Importantly, ask if there was a genuine connection with the congregation.
2. Next, evaluate the same set from the perspective of the worship band. Consider how the set flowed, using the criteria discussed above. Were the transitions smooth within the set, as well as coming on and going off the stage? Make note of any musical or technical improvements that could be made.

3. Take some time to actively listen “outside the box” to live performances, on the radio selections, online options, or recordings. Listen for individual instrumental techniques, as well as ways that arrangements have been layered.

4. Did someone say practice? Set aside time for you, the leader, to practice making seamless transitions and smooth modulations in a variety of keys.

**Worship Team Resources**

**Helps for Worship Team Leaders**

- *Exploring Worship* – A Practical Guide to Praise & Worship, Bob Sorge (Oasis House)
- *Extravagant Worship*, Darlene Zschech (Bethany House)
- *Five Keys to Engaging Worship*, John Chisum (Engage Press)
- *God’s Singers*, Dave Williamson (in:cite media)
- *The Complete Worship Leader*, Kevin Navarro (Baker Book House)
- *The Heart of Worship Files*, Matt Redman, ed. (Regal Books)
- *The Praise and Worship Team Instant Tune-Up*, Douglas and Tami Flather (Zondervan)
- *The Unquenchable Worshipper: Coming Back to the Heart of Worship*, Matt Redman (Regal Books)
- *The Worshiping Artist: Equipping You and Your Ministry Team to Lead Others in Worship*, Rory Noland (Zondervan)
- *To Know You More: Cultivating the Heart of the Worship Leader*, Andy Park (Intervarsity Press)
- *Worship Matters*, Bob Kauflin (Crossway Books)

**Resources for Congregational Praise and Worship**

- *Cantos de Alabanza y Adoración/Songs of Praise and Adoration*, Bilingual Hymnal/
  Spanish and English side-by-side (Editorial Mundo Hispano)
- *Praise Hymns and Choruses*, (Maranatha! Music)
- *Songs of Fellowship*, Volumes 1 & 2 (Kingsway Press)
- *The Celebration Hymnal*, Word and Integrity Music

**Combining Rhythm Section with Brass Ensemble/Band**

- *Hallelujah Choruses* (The Salvation Army USA Central Territory), available for rhythm section with punch brass (three parts) or brass ensemble/band in five part format.

Dear Friends,

OK, so we’ve got a playlist and a rehearsal plan. It’s time to go beyond the lead sheets, mikes, and cables, and worship the Lord with our music...in Chapter Nineteen, just ahead...