**No Drums, No Problem – Mixing a Stripped-Down Band**

**By Chris Huff**

I scanned the band roster for the upcoming practice and didn’t see a drummer listed. Maybe Erik or Jason forgot to note it. We have plenty of drummers so it was probably an oversight, right?

Every single drummer was working or on vacation. A number of musicians were on vacation due to this time of year when the schools are on “Fall Break.”

That was the bad news.

The good news is the band was going all acoustic.

The line up:

2 acoustic guitars

1 upright acoustic bass

1 piano

1 keyboard (ok, not entirely an acoustic set)

1 percussionist

And 3 vocalists

I changed up my mixing strategy because we didn’t have a drummer, a key component to our regular sound. I did, however, follow my normal basic mixing process. My mindset was simple, don’t let people notice the missing drums but instead focus on the acoustic nature of the band.

Here’s what I did.

Identified the rhythm instruments, as these would need to be prominent. Definitely the two acoustic guitars.

Identified what could own the low end. This was a mix between the keyboard used for pads and the upright bass. I chose to give prominence to the bass and only pulled in enough of the keys to round out what was needed.

Identified the melody instrument. Without a lead guitar, it’s was the role of the piano.

Identified any outstanding song particulars, to make sure they would stand out. For example, a guitar or piano hook.

This strategy worked well and I was very happy with the mix. But, there were a few other things I did in light of having both an acoustic set and in light of the composition of the band.

I respected the unique sound of each rhythm acoustic guitar. One guitar was bright and the other quite warm and lacking the brightness. Instead of trying to make one sound like the other, I got the best sound from each and blended accordingly. This enabled me to get a bigger “fuller” sound coming from the stage.

With an acoustic set, I wanted all instruments to fill out the mix and stand out in just the right way. For example, I used the percussion in much the same space as the snare might sit.

Finally, I pushed vocals a little louder. I like them tighter to my instruments in my normal mix but a bit louder in an acoustic mix. Also, this is where I want the vocal harmonies to stand out.

In the end, I was very happy with the mix and rather glad we went without the drums for a day. No drums, no electric guitar, no lead guitar, no problem.

This isn’t to say every time you’re without a drummer that the band should go all acoustic. However, take a few moments and consider how you’d change your mix to make up for missing instruments.

<https://www.behindthemixer.com/mixing-no-drums-acoustic-band/>

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This article may not be written by an Apostolic author, but it contains many excellent principles and concepts that can be adapted to most churches. As the old saying goes, “Eat the meat. Throw away the bones.”