**Using Multitracks With Your Worship Team**

**By Mark Cole**

A – BENEFITS OF MULTITRACKS

1. PLAYING TO A CLICK WILL TIGHTEN UP YOUR WORSHIP TEAM

Playing with a click gives everyone on the worship team a better sense of time. It will be challenging for some at the beginning, but it actually becomes quite freeing as everyone rises in their level of playing. After playing with a click for a while, most musicians feel very comfortable with it.

2. MULTITRACKS IN WORSHIP WILL ENHANCE OVERALL SOUND

One powerful aspect of MultiTracks is that they are able to fill out the overall sound of your worship team. A typical worship team may have four to ten live musicians. With multitracks you are able to add four or more additional instruments to the overall mix.

For example, in addition to your live instruments (e.g., keys, drums, electric guitar, acoustic guitar, bass guitar, etc.) the sound is complemented with pre-recorded tracks that might include additional percussion tracks, keyboard pads, electric guitar parts, acoustic guitar parts, piano, organ, mandolin, etc. The additional parts do not feel out of place but enhance the overall mix.

3. MUSICAL ARRANGEMENTS ARE INTENTIONAL AND REPRODUCIBLE

When playing along with MultiTracks in worship, a “guide” voice lets the musician know (one bar ahead of time) when a given section of a song is about to be played: intro, verse, chorus, bridge, etc. The worship team members follow their chart as well as listen to the guide voice. This guide factor adds another level of direction within the arrangement of a given song.

In addition, the worship leader does not have to re-create an arrangement each time a given song is played – it is laid out through the multitrack arrangement. However, there is still flexibility within this structure. There are ways to alter the purchased multitrack arrangement for a given song, and there is always room for spontaneity after the MultiTracks have stopped.

4. KEY PARTS FOR SONGS ARE NOT LOST DUE TO LACK OF SKILL OR PERSONNEL

Some songs have a signature part during the intro section or after the chorus. However, not all worship teams are able to perform those parts in church. A worship team may not have a musician skilled enough on the electric guitar or piano to play those signature parts. Or, if the talent is there, sometimes team members have scheduling conflicts.

As a leader, what do you do at that point? Still, in another scenario, a team may have a player who is skilled enough to play the part, but he or she didn’t have time to rehearse at home. With MultiTracks, those scenarios do not have to keep you from executing those key parts within a song.

For a team without the skill, the track itself can capture that signature part. If a key member is on vacation the week a worship leader has chosen to play a certain song, the track can fill the part for that Sunday. If the key musician didn’t learn the part, he or she can learn it by playing along to the track during rehearsal and then double it during the service.

(revised and adapted from churchtechtoday.com)

B – FIVE THINGS YOU NEED TO RUN MULTITRACKS

1. CONTENT – MultiTracks, CustomMix, Playback Rentals, Custom tracks

2. PLAYBACK DEVICE – iPhone or iPad running Playback (used iPad Air/32GB) or a Computer with a DAW i.e. Ableton, Logic Pro X etc.

3. AUDIO OUTPUT DEVICE – Headphone jack from the iPhone/iPad or an Audio Interface

4. CONTROL DEVICE – Finger tapping the play button/hitting the space bar or MIDI Controller

5. MONITORING DEVICE – In Ear Monitors, Headphone Amplifier or Personal Monitor System

Personal recommendations: Shure SE215-CL In-ear Monitor (approx. $125 – amazon.ca) or MEE audio Sport-Fi M6 Noise Isolating In-Ear Headphones (approx. $25 – amazon.ca)

C – HOW TO INTRODUCE YOUR TEAM TO MULTITRACKS

Explain the benefits of clicks and tracks

Start using in-ears and put away the floor monitors

Get the band and singers used to playing with clicks

Optional: start using an in-ear live music director

Allow them to practise using clicks at home (Rehearsal Mix)

Use the tracks in rehearsal until the team is ready for live

D – MY PERSONAL SYSTEM FOR MULTITRACKS AND REHEARSALS

Pray and pick songs based on the Top Songs from PlanningCenter.com

Write custom SAT charts for all songs (or buy from praisecharts.com or Multitrack song chart). Note: I only add one new song every 3-4 weeks.

Send the service order with links to the charts, transposed recordings on Monday for the Thursday rehearsal.

Attach special notes for keys, lead guitar, lead vocal and harmonies.

Encourage and expect all players and singers to come to the rehearsal with their parts learned.

Download all songs (in any key) onto iPad running PLAYBACK. Edit form and transitions.

Personally practice and review all tracks.

Take out instruments from PLAYBACK mix that are playing live

Rehearse Thursday night and fine tune the vocals and the band

I have the bass player run the tracks from the iPad on Sunday (they only have to touch the iPad twice)

Here’s a recent comment from Facebook:

“Having left a “big church” to go to a “mid-sized church” that was struggling with musicians, I was distinctly and poignantly reminded about how using Multitracks can utterly transformed one’s worship ministry in only 6 months.

If you’re still on the fence about taking this gigantic leap in doing worship ministry, I hope this nudges you in the right direction.

Thanks for a great article, Mark Cole! (Phil Spoelstra)

<http://www.markcole.ca/using-multitracks-with-your-worship-team/>

The above article, “Using Multitracks With Your Worship Team,” was written by Mark Cole.

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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.”