

The Problem

Worship leaders always sing and most play a melodic instrument like keyboard or guitar. Conveying musical ideas to other musicians comes naturally. For example, a 'C' chord functions the same regardless of the instrument playing it. Guitar, bass, keyboard, even woodwinds and brass instruments, can find their place in it, along with the other various chords that make up our worship music.

And all the familiar language of harmonic music breaks down when it comes to communicating with drummers. Drummers do not speak in terms of chords or melodic lines. They do not occupy the same sonic place as other harmonic instruments. Yet no one can deny how powerful (or problematic!) drums can be to musical worship. However primitive an instrument, drums seem to use a language all their own. And communicating ideas to them is often accompanied with anxiety for worship leaders of every proficiency. So how exactly can you express musical ideas you're not even sure how to verbalize them?

The Solution

First things first - why are we here?

Let's consider a few things...

Confidence in our callings

You are their college, their teacher. Teach with grace that will not intimidate them. Even if you don't have all the knowledge, God has already provided for you everything you need to lead these people.

Know this is your role. Be decisive. *You* hold the sticks.

Redefine Greatness

Great drummers aren't always those amazing technicians with inhuman capabilities. They are those who can execute the right idea at the right time. They only occasionally need guidance. And when guided you must, they will do everything they can to understand your idea first. They will not challenge it, shoot it down, etc. They are quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger. Great drummers are mature.

Winning the Mind Game

The drummer can be just as frightened as you are.

Appreciate their gift and the talent God has given them. You don't have to prove anything.

Learning the language

Your voice.

Describe what you need to get done

Use trigger words

- Soft(er)
- Loud(er)
- Release
- Diamond
- Toms
- March
- Power
- Space-y
- More Guts/Power (Crescendo)
- Air
- Ethereal
- Light
- Fade in/out
- Endings
 - o Fade out
 - o Stay open
 - o Trash can
 - o Slow Down
- Hand signals
- Lope versus Loop

Three-layers

- Time signature (4/4, 6/8, 12/8)
- HH, SD, BD
- Four-on-the-floor

Read the Road Map together

- Intro, Verse, Chorus, Turnaround, Bridge, Solo, Out
- Listen with them
- The drummer must handle the scene changes
- Be familiar with the recordings and make them available
- Drummer must be flexible with structure; edit on the fly