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Drama Director

Job Description

Purpose: Assist the Minister of Music in coordinating musical events, Celebration Pageants and special projects.

Assigned Tasks

1. Work with Music Pastor on developing the script and running order, offering input and ideas for songs, narrations, etc.).
2. Determine date and time for auditions and performances.
3. Submit date, time and rehearsal rooms needed to facility coordinator for approval.
4. Create bulletin and pulpit announcements for auditions and submit to Music Pastor and Advertising Department of the church. All announcements must be submitted 2 weeks prior to the date you want it announced.
5. Meet with the Music Pastor, Assistants, and choreographers to discuss program and individual responsibilities to help develop rehearsal schedule.
6. Clear all rehearsals and schedules with the Music Department.
7. Determine audition needs: registration cards, commitment information, program dates and times, all cast meeting date, personal information cards with contact information. (In order to avoid problems later, make any special requirements known at this time (ie: if wearing glasses and having a physical impairment is an issue for the program or a song...now is the time to tell them!)
8. Coordinate with the Music Pastor a date and time for the Production meeting with all leaders (choreographers, props, technical, backstage, costumes, and make-up personnel.)
9. Coordinate all childcare needs for rehearsals and performances with the appropriate individuals.
10. Give cast list (all cast names and “parts”) to Music Administrator (i.e., secretary)
11. Once parts have been chosen, oversee an “All Cast Meeting”...distribute CDs, cast lists and rehearsal schedules at this time.
12. Cast list, rehearsal schedule, and all participants are to be posted on the Website.
13. Oversee Choreographers and progress of rehearsals. (Each choreographer should have an assistant that can take their rehearsal in case of an emergency. Our preference is that NO rehearsal is cancelled as we must be respectful of everyone’s time and sacrifice; however, the drama director may cancel rehearsals, with ample notice, if he determines no further rehearsal is necessary.)

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14. Contact (or assign the task) for ensuring that all special parts are filled, especially if we need to go “outside the church” to “hire” them, (such as dancers, soloists or military personnel for our Patriotic events.)
 15. Follow-up with technical director, backstage manager, props manager (props and stage decor,) costume director, make-up/hair coordinators and facilities manager to make sure every part of the program is progressing as needed.
 16. Keep Music Pastor, Administrator and associates informed of all changes in the program.
 17. Keep all files on computer for easy reference (during your absence).
 18. Oversee that everyone gets fitted for their costumes **early** in the rehearsal process as designated by the costumer. Require that your choreographers work with the costumer to do fittings before, after, or even during a rehearsal. Perhaps lengthen one rehearsal and personally take the whole team to the costume department. Leaving it up to each individual causes great delays.
 19. Handle all cast and leadership communications, questions and issues. Remember: not everyone has email and **MUST** be called if changes to the schedule are made...no exceptions!
 - 20.** Make sure all pertinent information for the printed program (Acknowledgements, cast, directors, etc..) is directed to the print department.
 - 21.** Create bulletin and pulpit announcements for each production respectively.
 22. Make sure all dressing rooms and make-up rooms are adequately furnished with tables, screens (if needed), mirrors, etc., as requested by the leaders.
 23. Make sure program “running orders” and room signs are posted in the back hall on Tuesday of dress rehearsal/performance week.
 24. Encourage spiritual growth as well as technical preparation for the program.
 25. Encourage the cast to invite those who need the Lord to come to the program ...they are the best recruiters!
 26. Dress rehearsals...work with the Music Pastor to determine any last minute changes to routines, stage, props, costumes, etc..
 27. Be prepared to give pep talks and devotional encouragement prior to each event.
 28. Send a “thank you” email to everyone who participated and write a thank you card to your leaders.
 29. Be the team’s **BEST** recruiter!

Working Relationships

1. The Drama Director is accountable to the Minister of Music, and works closely with the Administrative Assistant, and Volunteers.
2. The Drama Director must maintain a positive working relationship with all staff members, volunteers, and musicians.

Confessions of a Sound Technician

By Josh Wilson

Technology plays a crucial role in the modern worship service. The worship team and tech team must forge an alliance to create an exciting worship experience. When the technology is not working properly it can be a major hindrance or distraction from worship. There is an old joke that says “when Lucifer fell out heaven, he landed in the choir.” This too can be said about the sound system. It seems like there are always demons wreaking havoc on church’s sound and other technical systems. Here are a few thoughts on how to exorcise those demons from your church’s technical needs.

Mixing sound in a worship service is not an easy task. When working with technology, there are countless variables that could inhibit the worship experience, not to mention the “human” element. When you combine technology, musicians, and artistic personalities, there are a myriad of catastrophes just waiting to happen!

My goal is to work **WITH** the worship pastor/musicians and not against them! In most cases, there seems to be an unwritten rule that says the sound guy and worship team are on different teams. The sound guy should be an important part of the worship team, not just the guy sitting in the sound booth across the room. We are all **ONE** team.

Communication

It is crucial that the worship team/leader and sound technician communicate well. Talk with the worship pastor prior to every service. Whether in a service planning meeting or one on one discussion prior to the service, communicating with him can eliminate confusion and ensure everyone is on the same page. Extra things can come up, (usually just before the service begins) that can cause a huge mess if you are not prepared for it. During pre-service rehearsal, constantly communicate with the band about their monitor needs. This can be done directly with individual musicians, or some teams prefer to do this through the band leader/worship pastor. Making sure the musicians can hear what they need to on stage is an extremely important part the overall mix. Since it is critical for musicians to hear each other so they can blend and stay together, effective communication with the worship team will help keep the “machine” running smooth.

Invisibility

When a microphone feeds back in the middle of service, everyone notices. But, when the mix is great, nobody notices. It is the goal of the audio technician (“sound guy”) to be invisible. The sound should not be a distraction during the worship experience; that is my goal.

Develop Thick Skin

Get used to it: everyone will judge the sound! Just like art, sound is subjective and everyone has an opinion. Not everyone is going to agree on what sounds good or not. You need to remember to have thick skin. But also have a soft heart—be gracious to people with comments but know you can’t listen to them—only your Pastor!

I strive to listen to the music objectively and not subjectively. I play guitar and my personal preference would be a guitar driven mix. Others love drums, and focus more on tweaking the kick drum sound instead of the whole mix. Ideally the sound guy should listen to the mix from a very neutral point of view. I cannot mix for what I think it should sound like, which usually means mixing on the “conservative side.” Yes, you want to hear the guitar in the mix, but you don’t want it to be so overbearing that it distracts from the overall worship experience.

People are quick to complain about too much volume. I have never received comments about the sound not being loud enough! So, here again, I lean towards the conservative side—no extreme volumes—no matter how great the band may be!

In the American culture it is very rare to sing as a group in public. Aside from worship, there really are only a few occasions where people sing together; the “National Anthem,” Karaoke, “Happy Birthday,” “Take Me Out to the Ballgame,” and the occasional “He’s a Jolly Good Fellow.” In a worship service, people are singing all around you. Keep in mind that this can be a part of the overall mix. Hearing people around you singing to God is a powerful part of a worship experience.

Use Your Ears!

Don’t just trust the meters! God blessed humans with fairly sensitive hearing. The ear’s natural reaction to sound that is too loud is to tell the brain “it hurts.” We have all been uniquely created with built-in sound pressure mechanism (i.e., dB meter.) Train your ears to pick out sounds/frequencies/voices that aren’t pleasant. Adjust accordingly. This training will take a lifetime to master! Constantly analyze the mix. Once the rehearsal or sound check is over doesn’t mean you can’t touch the board. As you listen, think about each component individually to determine if your mix needs to be changed. Are the drums too loud? Can you hear the vocals well? Singers in general have a tendency to “take it easy” during the rehearsal and then increase their volume or energy once the service has begun. That is why it is necessary to constantly analyze the mix. At the same time, experimenting with the mix during a service can be dangerous to your job security. The rehearsal is the time to find limitations. It is much better to find out what you can “get away with” during the rehearsal instead of during the service.

Be Prepared

The key to success is being prepared for the unexpected—anticipate instead of react. Most of the time, a sound guy is playing catch-up. The sound guy reacts to what has already happened on stage. If a soloist starts out too loud, the sound guy reacts and turns him or her down. This can be totally obvious and quite unprofessional. Get to know your team members (know which soloists tend to sing loud, etc.) and their tendencies so you can adjust the board beforehand. Many times I see who is singing on the worship team and adjust before any notes are sung. Anticipate upcoming solos, breakdowns, musical part changes, even going from praise into more quiet worship.

Invest in Good Equipment and Acoustical Treatment

The sound system is only as good as the room. Take a multi-million dollar sound system and put it in a room with poor acoustics and it still won't sound great. But, you can take a descent sound system and put it in an acoustically treated room and it can sound like you invested millions! I'm not saying the room is more important than the sound system, but there are certain things that can be done in any given room to upgrade the overall sound quality. Sound baffles, heavy drapes, non-parallel walls, and thick padded chairs are a few things that can improve the sound of a room. The truth is the more things there are in the room to absorb the sound and not reflect it, the better the sound will be. One of the best sound absorbers of course is large masses of people. The more people there are in the room the less the sound can reflect off the hard surfaces.

What equipment do I need? Do I need an analog or a digital soundboard? How can I have a great sound system on a restricted budget? There are thousands of pieces of equipment on the market, and purchasing the right equipment can be an overwhelming task. Here are a few tips on how to figure out what equipment is necessary for your sound needs...

Choosing between an analog or digital sound board~

The basic difference between an analog and digital soundboard is the way the sound is processed. An analog board sees and manipulates sound electronically. A digital board sees and manipulates sound as computer information. Think of a digital soundboard as a computer. Being a computer has both advantages and disadvantages. Digital soundboards are very flexible. For example: in the analog world, each knob, slider or button has one function. In the digital world each knob, slider or button can have multiple functions depending on the channel, mode or preference assigned to it. This allows the board to have multiple configurations and uses for different sound needs.

Since a digital board is a computer, there are a number of computer-like operations that the board can perform. Just like a computer, digital soundboards can be upgraded. The operating software can be updated to fix 'bugs,' or enhance features. Some digital boards allow you to add special features or 3rd party plug-ins.

Digital soundboards have an internal memory and or a removable memory card, which allows you to save settings or parameters. This can allow you to have recallable parameters for individual microphones or instruments or even different worship groups. For example: Kathi sings a solo every few weeks during our main worship services. I can save Kathi's specific gain, EQ, monitor, compressor, and effect settings in the internal memory of the digital board. Then every time Kathi sings I can recall all of her unique settings.

As another example: our main worship services consist of a 20-piece orchestra, 10 person vocal team, and 80 member choir, whereas our Sunday night service consists of a six instrument, four vocal cutting edge worship band. The board settings are drastically different between the two worship services. Yet with the recallable features of the digital