

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

**"Praise Him with Instruments" The Successful Implementation of Orchestral Ensembles in
the Modern Contemporary Worship Service**

A Thesis Submitted to
The Faculty of the School of Music
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Doctor of Worship Studies

By

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DOCTOR OF WORSHIP STUDIES THESIS DEFENSE DECISION

The committee has rendered the following decision concerning the defense for

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on the Thesis,

“Praise Him With Instruments” The Successful Implementation of Orchestral Ensembles in the
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as submitted on April 7, 2023:

- a. X Full approval to proceed with no revisions. The document should be prepared for submission to the Jerry Falwell Library.

- b. _____ Provisional approval pending cited revisions. The student must resubmit the project with cited revisions according to the established timeline.

- c. _____ Redirection of project. The student is being redirected to take MUSC/WRSP 889 again, as minor revisions will not meet the expectations for the research project.

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Abstract

Despite the high demand for contemporary worship musicians to lead contemporary worship services, there remain classically trained orchestral musicians who desire to worship God with their instruments. Biblical evidence reveals, God, who highly values diversity and creativity, desires these traits in worship. Likewise, this evidence suggests God accepts and is pleased with all who offer Him true worship, regardless of their instrument. As such, there must be ways to accept these classically trained orchestral musicians into contemporary worship contexts and utilize them to enhance worship. Based on biblical evidence, industry resources, and music education materials, this qualitative study identifies the challenges facing the successful utilization of an orchestral ensemble within a contemporary worship setting in a typical modern evangelical worship service and identifies potential solutions to these challenges. The study will identify the benefits of successfully utilizing an orchestral ensemble in contemporary worship contexts. This study identifies that the most significant challenges facing the successful utilization of an orchestral ensemble in a contemporary worship context are the availability of classically trained musicians, the availability of contemporary orchestrations of praise and worship songs, space limitations, and the ability to improvise from a chord chart amongst classically trained musicians. This study also identifies the most significant benefits of utilizing an orchestral ensemble in a contemporary worship context as increased diversity in worship, broader appeal to congregants, and greater depth and breadth of sonic possibilities in worship. Since contemporary worship continues to grow in demand, and orchestral musicians continue to desire to offer their gifts to God in worship, this study will aid others in discovering new, creative ways to utilize orchestral ensembles in their contemporary worship contexts.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to all the fine people and musicians who served in the LRMC Sanctuary Orchestra from 2020-2023. You were the inspiration for this study, and you have taught me so much over the course of its completion. I pray you have been blessed even a measure of the number of blessings you have bestowed.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

Contemporary worship has predominantly been the product of contemporary musicians, those playing guitars, keyboards, and drums.¹ These highly skilled musicians are likelier to have been self-taught, YouTube learners, or products of commercial music departments than to have studied the classical technique in a traditional music department or conservatory. This type of training should in no way diminish their gifts, their need within the field, or their calling. However, it is significant in the local church that those who have classically studied an orchestral instruments, such as classical strings, brass, and woodwinds, find few contemporary worship contexts where they may utilize their gifts.² These musicians are more likely to end up relegated to traditional worship contexts utilizing hymns and classical music in worship.³ This unnecessary dichotomy only perpetuates and deepens existing divisions within the body of Christ based primarily on musical taste and preference.

Contemporary worship continues to grow in utilization and popularity, even outside the confines of the church. From its earliest days in Australia and on the United States West Coast, contemporary worship songwriters have utilized everything at their disposal to produce God-glorifying worship music. Standard practice has frequently included using or sampling sounds produced by an orchestral ensemble.⁴ With the advent of digital technologies,

¹ Adam Perez, *Beyond the Guitar: The Keyboard as a Lens into the History of Contemporary Praise and Worship*, *The Hymn*; Boston, Vol. 70, Iss. 2, (Spring 2019).

² David Wallace, *The Eclectic Violist: The Contemporary Worship Violist*, *Journal of the American Viola Society*; Provo, UT, Vol. 29, Iss. 1, (Spring 2013).

³ Timothy Lee Bandy, *The Developing Role of the Instrumental Ministry at Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville, Alabama*, Dissertation at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021.

⁴ Don Cusic, *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music: Pop, Rock, and Worship*, (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press, 2010), 32.

however, the local church is more likely to reproduce these orchestral ensemble sounds with the aid of a Loop or backing track. There is nothing inherently wrong with using such technology, but such practices have at least some inherent downsides. Namely, eliminating the possibility of the flexibility of musical expression and taking away opportunities for live orchestral instrumentalists to offer their gifts in worship.

While musical worship requires nothing except the hearts of those worshipping in Spirit and truth, those objective musical qualities undoubtedly enhance worship and accomplish the church's goals and missions. If worshipers did not desire live musical worship, music streaming services would have replaced worship leaders long ago. While the Covid-19 virus has drastically hastened the utilization of live-streamed services, millions of worshipers continue to congregate weekly to participate in live worship with live preaching and live worship music. Orchestral ensembles, however, continue to shrink or be primarily left out of this equation of live contemporary worship.⁵

Modern scholarship is limited in research on using orchestral ensembles in contemporary worship contexts. However, industry evidence suggests that there remains a desire for these sonorities to be present in contemporary worship settings and that orchestral musicians desire to contribute to such worship.⁶ Likewise, scripture suggests, if not commands, the use of instruments in worship (Psalm 43, 81, 98, 149, 150).⁷ While the specifics of these scriptures, and

⁵ Marius E. Marton, *Worship Music in the 21st Century: Selecting Proper Music for Worship in Regard to Lyrics, Instrumentation, and Rhythm*, (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2015), 42.

⁶ Charlotte Kroeker, *The Sounds of our Offerings: Achieving Excellence in Church Music*, (Herndon, VA: Alban, 2011), 155.

⁷ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the Christian Standard Bible (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017).

their accurate interpretation within the context of modern worship, are potentially up for debate, the diversity of sounds God finds pleasing is undeniable.

Statement of the Problem

Implementing an orchestral ensemble of any considerable size is a monumental undertaking from organizational, economic, musical, technological, training, and logistics standpoints. Players of a certain skill level must be identified and hired. Budgets must be constructed, balanced, and maintained. Sound systems must be in place to accommodate the increase in inputs. Room for equipment, players, instruments, chairs, and music stands must be available. The need for competent staff to lead a diverse array of players from varied backgrounds, styles, and levels of training also requires consideration. Effective and efficient communication also becomes paramount as the number of musicians increases.^{8 9} The above issues all account for the difficulties with which professional orchestras around the globe operate. It only stands to reason that churches would also face similar issues.

Churches located in communities with a solid collegiate instrumental music education department may find more skilled players than churches located in smaller, rural communities with little access to post-secondary music training. Employing even a moderate-sized orchestra during fall and spring semesters and high holiday seasons such as Advent and Lent can cost upwards of \$40,000, plus the cost of music and equipment. To maintain balance with other instruments and voices, some orchestral instruments, such as strings and winds, must be

⁸ Brian Barber Dille, "Vibrant Symphony Orchestras: A Policy Analytic Perspective." Order No. 10300570, The Pardee RAND Graduate School, 2016. In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

⁹ Mauskapf, Michael G. Mauskapf, "Enduring Crisis, Ensuring Survival: Artistry, Economics, and the American Symphony Orchestra." Order No. 3519659, University of Michigan, 2012. In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

amplified with microphones through the P.A. system. These microphones, cables, and expansions of sound systems cost money and require a skilled technician to place, run, and maintain. As modern contemporary worship has grown in popularity, the space requirements necessary to accomplish this style have shrunk, and so have the worship stages or platforms on which they reside. A moderate-sized 25-30 piece orchestra, with stands and instruments, can ideally occupy as much as 646 sq. ft. Training programs for modern worship leaders largely revolve around the relative mastery of an instrument typically used in modern contemporary worship. Few balanced worship leader training programs include the education necessary to lead an orchestral ensemble effectively. On the other hand, conservatories and traditional music departments likely lack the theological equipping and training necessary to lead a music ministry effectively. This dichotomy leaves a relatively shallow pool of qualified leaders for churches that employ orchestral ensembles.

While there is a rich repertoire of traditional and classical orchestral music, the repertoire for contemporary worship songs with published orchestral accompaniments is significantly more limited. In recent history, publishers such as PraiseCharts and arrangers such as Dan Galbraith have sought to close this gap. However, most of these scores are considered arrangements, not transcriptions, and can deviate from original recordings to the point where it can be difficult to utilize them in conjunction with a contemporary band and singers. On the other hand, a modern contemporary worship band is more likely to improvise its unique part with the aid of a chord chart or number chart utilizing the Nashville Number System. While some classically trained players might possess this ability, such training typically finds itself in jazz education, a style to which not every orchestral instrument lends itself.

Each of the above aspects represents a significant challenge to utilizing an orchestral ensemble in a modern contemporary worship service. These challenges must be strategically, thoughtfully, and prayerfully approached before implementation can even receive consideration as a viable option. Unfortunately, not every church will find this path acceptable or responsible for their worship.

Statement of the Purpose

This qualitative study aims to identify which of the above issues are most prohibitive to the successful implementation of orchestral ensembles in a typical modern contemporary worship setting. As the study identifies these issues, it also identifies practical solutions to overcoming said issues. In addition, this study identifies the primary benefits of utilizing an orchestral ensemble in a contemporary worship context.

Scripture consistently references a wide array of instruments in worship and frequently commands their use. Genesis 4 mentions a worshiper named Jubal and identifies him as "the first of all who play the lyre and the flute." David, perhaps the most famous of all biblical musicians, is mentioned in the context of instrumental worship numerous times through the Chronicles and the books of the prophet Samuel. 2 Samuel 6:5 records a jubilant time of worship as "David and the whole house of Israel were dancing before the Lord with all kinds of fir wood instruments, lyres, harps, tambourines, sistrums, and cymbals." 1 Chronicles 25:6-7 identifies 288 Levitical instrumentalists who were in the employ of the Temple. At the opening of the first Temple in 2 Chronicles 5, a vast instrumental ensemble, along with singers, is described: "the Levitical singers dressed in fine linen and carrying cymbals, harps, and lyres were standing east of the altar, and with them were 120 priests blowing trumpets (v. 12). David, inspired by the Holy Spirit, often provides descriptions of his psalms written for instrumental ensembles. Psalms 4, 6,

54, 55, 61, 67, and 76 are all scored for an unnumbered ensemble of stringed instruments. Psalms 5, 8, 81, and 84 also mention the use of specific instruments in their headings. Perhaps no Psalm is as synonymous with instrumental worship as the finale to the book: Psalm 150. This great Psalm of praise lists no less than seven separate instruments, in four separate instrument families, all commanded to play in praise of God: "Praise him with the blast of a (1) ram's horn; praise him with (2) harp and (3) lyre. Praise him with (4) tambourine and dance; praise him with (5) strings and (6) flute. Praise him with (7) resounding cymbals; praise him with clashing cymbals (v. 3-5, numbers added for emphasis).

This study investigates and identifies problems and solutions to fulfilling this biblical mandate.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study will be of interest to church leadership, music leadership, congregants, and musicians alike. Music, perhaps more than any other expression of worship, can center people in the presence of God for worship. Speaking on this unique power, Roby writes, "The texts and meanings those musical expressions carry will shape and form us in our theology and faith more powerfully than other kinds of content we employ."¹⁰ As such, it is the responsibility of musical and pastoral leadership to consider all how musical worship might be enhanced.

The research presented here provides a comprehensive, practical approach to implementing orchestral ensembles. While the contextual focus here is that of typical modern contemporary worship, the content will also be of significant interest to those operating in

¹⁰ Andrew Roby, "Worshipful Singing: Four Roles of Song in Worship." *The Choral Journal* 57, no. 3 (October 2016).

traditional and classical worship contexts, as the information herein, particularly that regarding budgeting, organization, and logistics, is universal to all orchestral ensemble applications within the church.

This study will also prove beneficial for those not involved in musical leadership, as it provides a detailed but concise description of many aspects of practical music ministry. Congregants with little knowledge of what is required to operate a music ministry will find this research enlightening and helpful in understanding the workings of the local church and its music-making. According to Ming, this increased understanding may also increase involvement and satisfaction among church members.¹¹ Improved involvement and satisfaction among congregants may also increase the likelihood of musical participation and financial support for the local church's music ministry.

This study addresses a gap in the existing literature as it combines research from many different areas within the broad fields of music and church organization and focuses them on a topic that has been previously unexplored in academic literature. The aim is for this study to not only educate but also inspire church leaders, both musical and pastoral, to consider ways in which their music ministries might be expanded and enhanced by the inclusion of orchestral ensembles in their contemporary worship services.

Research Questions and Sub-Questions

Research Question One: What are the challenges to successfully utilizing an orchestral ensemble in a contemporary worship setting of a typical modern evangelical worship service?

¹¹ Herman S. Ming "Servant Leadership and its Effect on Church Organization." Order No. 3169049, Walden University, 2005.

Sub-Question: What are practical solutions to the challenges of successfully utilizing an orchestral ensemble in a contemporary worship setting of a typical modern evangelical worship service?

Research Question Two: What are the most significant benefits of successfully utilizing an orchestral ensemble in a contemporary worship setting of a typical modern evangelical worship service?

The following hypothesis may answer Research Question One:

Hypothesis One: Challenges to successfully utilizing an orchestral ensemble in a contemporary worship setting of a typical modern evangelical worship service can include the availability of classically trained musicians, the availability of contemporary orchestrations of praise and worship songs, space limitations, improvisation ability, and financial resources.

The following hypothesis may answer Sub-Question One:

Practical solutions to the challenges of successfully utilizing an orchestral ensemble in a contemporary worship setting of a typical modern evangelical worship service include training and equipping multi-generational congregants, utilizing website resources combined with strategic and selective editing, and using audio technology for a given worship context.

Historically, the availability of musicians shapes the music in worship. Old Testament worship chronicles the use of various instruments which would have been readily available to the Israelite people. Western worship in the Renaissance era was restricted to voices, early keyboard instruments, and early string instruments. The effects of industrialization and improved world travel continued to increase the availability of instruments throughout the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, and as instruments became more readily available, so did their utilization in sacred

music.¹² Widespread secondary and post-secondary music education also makes musicians more readily available than at any other point in history. However, those churches isolated from secondary and post-secondary music education programs may still find players scarce.

As contemporary worship music has contemporary instruments as its core sonority, orchestrations of these songs directly from the songwriter are not always guaranteed. While orchestrations through companies such as Praise Charts are becoming more accessible, this branch of the industry still lags behind the leading edge.¹³ In cases where orchestrations are unavailable, utilization of orchestral ensembles remains a possibility but requires more specialized skills, such as improvising one's part from a basic chord chart. Garcia II describes one such situation: "Orchestral parts were unavailable for the selected hymnal; therefore, the players had to write their parts for the hymns to be played the following week. Smith stated that it was necessary for the players to learn to transpose their parts."¹⁴ This skill is often more at home in jazz training than traditional classical training; thus, not all classically trained musicians receive this training.¹⁵ There are also inherent space requirements in hosting an orchestral ensemble of considerable size. As modern contemporary worship spaces often have designs to meet the needs of the modern contemporary worship band, many simply do not have access to the requisite space necessary to utilize more than a few additional players.

¹² Elwyn A. Wienandt, *Choral Music of the Church*, (New York: The Free Press, 1965).

¹³ Phillip Carl Posey, *Instruments and Voices in Contemporary Christian Worship*, Dissertation at University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1974.

¹⁴ Manuel Garcia II, *The Role of Music Education in the First Baptist Church of Panama City, Florida (1979-2009)*, Dissertation at Boston University, 2013.

¹⁵ C. Michael Palmer, *Instrumental Jazz Improvisation Development: Characteristics of Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced Improvisers*, *Journal of Research in Music Education*, Vol. 64, Iss. 3, (Oct. 2016).

The following hypothesis may answer Research Question Two:

Hypothesis Two: The most significant benefits to successfully utilizing an orchestral ensemble in a contemporary worship setting of a typical modern evangelical worship service include increased diversity in worship, broader appeal to congregants, and greater depth and breadth of sonic possibilities in worship.

While many worshipers prefer a wholly contemporary or entirely traditional worship context, many contemporary worshipers still appreciate certain aspects of more traditional contexts. This preference may be especially true of older contemporary worshipers who grew up with traditional worship but have developed a preference for contemporary worship later in life. For such worshipers, the presence of an orchestral ensemble may be sufficient to bridge that gap.¹⁶ In addition, an orchestral ensemble brings diversity to those leading worship that is impossible to achieve with typical contemporary worship instruments alone. A live Orchestral ensemble's sonic breadth and depth are not reproducible otherwise. Modern synthesizers and computers may be able to sample from these orchestral sources, but there is an apparent gap between these synthesized sounds and the acoustic sounds produced live by an orchestral ensemble.

As informed by the work of John Creswell and J. Creswell on research methods, this study utilizes a qualitative methodology to gather data on the challenges worship leaders face in implementing and successfully utilizing an orchestral ensemble in a typical modern contemporary evangelical worship setting.¹⁷ Likewise, this study uses a methodological approach to gather phenomenological data on the benefits of orchestral ensemble utilization in a typical

¹⁶ Walters, Michael. *Can't Wait for Sunday*. (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2006).

¹⁷ Creswell, John W., and J. David Creswell. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 5th ed. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc., 2018.

modern contemporary evangelical worship setting. This combined data will inform potential practical solutions to said challenges in a way that opens additional opportunities to worship leaders.

Definition of Terms

Contemporary worship and orchestral ensembles, as core concepts of this study, serve as a unique, if somewhat unexpected, crossroads from whence to study musical worship. It is important to note that the advocacy for orchestral ensemble use in contemporary worship in no way detracts from the role and necessity of existing contemporary instruments. On the contrary, adding an orchestral ensemble complements contemporary instruments, just as contemporary instruments complement the orchestra. As Faulkner states, "It is safe to say that elements of today's popular music will eventually reconcile themselves with more conservative style traits, and that future musical styles will be all the richer for it, including styles of church music."¹⁸

Contemporary worship has developed a unique identity, and those who prefer this style identify with it strongly.¹⁹ It is critical to consider; however, there is a need to establish a working definition of the style in real, objective terms. First, there is an inherent inadequacy in the term contemporary. Contemporary is an adjective of chronologic nature. It denotes and describes time but only does so relative to something else. Contemporary is only valuable for drawing a contrast to that which came before. This term may have been helpful in the early days of contemporary worship when contemporary starkly contrasted with traditional worship

¹⁸ Quentin Faulkner, *Straight Talk About Traditional Versus Contemporary Christian Music*, *The American Organist*; New York, Vol. 40, Iss. 6, (June 2006).

¹⁹ Lester Seigel, *Traditional and Contemporary Music for Worship: A New Paradigm*, *The American Organist*; New York, Vol. 41, Iss. 1, (January 2007).

utilizing hymns and classical music. Today, though, we use the same term to describe the earliest works of Darlene Zschech and the newest ones of Bethel and Elevation; these examples represent two distinctly different styles.

Further complicating, many traditional worship services now utilize early "contemporary" worship music.²⁰ It becomes clear that traditional and contemporary, even as adjectives describing worship styles, are inadequate in and of themselves. This study will focus on modern contemporary evangelical worship music for these reasons. Specifically, examples of popularly utilized worship songs from the past 15 years, according to CCLI, will be considered.

Likewise, the concept of an orchestral ensemble requires some level of concreteness. The simplest definition of ensemble implies plurality; however, it does little to provide quantitative measurement beyond that. An orchestral ensemble could just as quickly describe a pair of classical string, brass, woodwind, or percussion players as a full symphonic orchestra. This study seeks to include the two previous examples and every quantity, size, and instrumental makeup in between. This inclusivity provides flexibility and accessibility to churches of all sizes, budgets, locations, and cultural makeups.

Additional concepts considered and analyzed are orchestral composing and arranging, improvisational techniques, audio engineering, finance, and marketing. While little research exists on orchestral ensembles in modern contemporary worship music, methodological and pedagogical materials are abundant on each of the above concepts. Although written within the context of jazz ensembles, Sussman and Abene's work is one such valuable resource.²¹

²⁰ Robert E. Webber, *Praise and Worship Music: From Its Origins to Contemporary Use*, Pastoral Music, Vol. 27, Iss. 3, (02/2003).

²¹ Richard Sussman, and Michael Cary Abene, *Jazz Composition and Arranging in the Digital Age*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Combining and cohesive implementation of these varied concepts make this study unique and vital.

Summary

Existing research from music education, worship studies, audio engineering, and finance has been gathered and examined for informative details, ideologies, methodologies, and pedagogical applications to answer the proposed research questions via the outlined research method and approach. The gathered sources are helpful for their implications on the unique, combined concept of the presence of an orchestral ensemble in the context of a typical modern contemporary worship setting. Secondary and post-secondary music education textbooks, books on worship, scholarly journals, theses, dissertations, and musical scores from both fields will be analyzed and transcribed through the unique lens of these combined fields of study.

This study's sincere hope and goal is to show that while specific challenges exist in implementing and utilizing an orchestral ensemble in a typical modern contemporary evangelical worship context, there are practical solutions to overcoming these challenges. This study also hopes to show that the qualitative benefits of enhancing contemporary worship by utilizing an orchestral ensemble far exceed the challenges.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This study investigates three primary categories of literature: Biblical presuppositions, work from the field of worship and work from the field of music education. Biblical presuppositions serve as the foundation for all topics related to worship and, therefore, must first receive primary consideration. Works from the field of worship were investigated, first, for existing studies related to instrumental worship and, second, for studies of worship methodology in the modern evangelical church. Lastly, works from music education, specifically on the topics of instrumental arranging, orchestrating, and improvisation, are investigated as a way of offering solutions to the posed research questions. Each category builds on the other, progressing from theology to methodology in pursuit of practical resources for those faced with similar issues.

Biblical Presuppositions

As the foundational historical, methodological, and theological resource on the subject of worship, God's Word must first receive consideration for its instruction and precepts on the matter. We worship God with a theology based on Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman "But an hour is coming, and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit in and in truth. Yes, the Father wants such people to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth" (John 4:23-24). Therefore, matters of location, style, and language have little to do with worship being acceptable and pleasing to God. However, from scripture, we can glean evidence of God's nature, which informs our nature and thus informs ways in which we may naturally and appropriately offer praise and worship to our God.

What follows are a series of biblical presuppositions that inform and undergird this study's hypotheses. Scripture references from the Old and New Testaments receive consideration

to illustrate theological and methodological aspects of worship which apply to modern evangelical worship.

Psalms

The Psalms, which served as the hymnbook of Israel, provide us with a rich source of texts on worship and some details of the methodology of the worship of the people of God. The Psalms alone mention musical worship well over 230 times when considering terms such as praise, singing, and instruments. The Psalm itself contains many of these references, identifying the ensemble intended (i.e., Psalm 4: For the choir director; on stringed instruments, Psalm 5: For the choir director; for flute accompaniment, Psalm 6: For the choir director; with stringed instruments, upon an eight-string lyre.). Elsewhere in the Old Testament, we see similar instructions. The closing hymn of Habakkuk 3 is clearly labeled "For the choir director: On stringed instruments" (Habakkuk 3:19). Specific to this study, these instructions imply not only instrumental worship but the communal worship of both corporate voices (choir) and instruments. Psalm 150 alone commands the use of no less than seven different musical instruments in praising God, not to mention the use of dance. (v. 4)

Also of note is the addition of identifying "tunes" in some of the Psalms, which implies the shared, common knowledge of specific musical figures among the Israelites. Psalm 46 is set to *Alamothe*, while Psalms 57, 58, and 59 are each set to *Al-tashheth*. We might relate this practice to modern publications which identify a "hymn tune" or "chorale tune" that might be well known amongst musicians or worshipers. For example, like many other hymnals, the United Methodist Hymnal possesses an Index of Tune Names that a worshiper might recognize and utilize without the skill or ability to read notated music.²² The inclusion of such instructions in

²² *The United Methodist Hymnal*, (Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1995), 931.

the psalms suggests, as its inclusion in modern hymnals also suggests, the existence of a certain amount of aural tradition amongst worshipers. The existence of aural traditions within ancient Israel, as well as the existence of aural traditions amongst modern worshipers, becomes crucial as we consider the improvisational potential of instrumentalists in worship. From the instructions in the psalms, equated with modern-day practices, we can deduce that instrumentalists of ancient Israel would have had some amount of aural competency and likely would have had the ability to perform specific "tunes" from aural memory without the aid of any form of notated music.

Further support for the aural nature of the Psalms comes from the fact that we have no extant forms of musical notation from ancient Israel, but we have incredibly reliable forms of written communication, including the lyrics of no less than 150 ancient Israelite songs of worship.

Furthermore, scriptures such as Matthew 26, Mark 14, Ephesians 5, and Colossians 3 all suggest the utilization of aurally transmitted "Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs" (Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16) that were in everyday use in Rome to Asia Minor during the First Century A.D. This assertion does not suggest that notated music may not have existed, as not all Psalms have labels attached. The suggestion is that, much like modern musical practices, worship utilized a combination of learning, notated music, and aurally transmitted music.

The Psalms also suggest a wide array of diversity in themes, both musical and literal, in worship. While many of the Psalms can be categorized simply as songs of praise (i.e., Psalms 25, 29, 34, 89, 95-101, and 150, to name a few), others fall under categories such as Psalms of imprecation, or curses on one's enemies (Psalms 7, 35, 55, 58, 59, 69, 79, 83, 109, and 137). Other hymns are prophetic, such as Psalm 22, which prophecies the cross of Jesus to come. Others still utilize literary devices, such as Psalm 119's acrostic form, to provide accessibility and memorability to its readers then and now. Such diversity in forms and types of Psalms,

inspired by the Holy Spirit and utilized by God's chosen people, implies a certain amount of diversity and creativity in the one who inspired them. If we apply that same diversity and creativity in all aspects of musical worship, both then and now, we find ourselves open to an incredible array of musical possibilities that may extend far beyond what some worshipers have experienced.

Genesis-Ruth

Beyond the Psalms, musical acts of worship are mentioned well over 1,100 times throughout scripture, mainly in the Old Testament. As early as Genesis chapter 4, we see the beginning of instruments in musical worship with the ministry of "Jubal; he was the first of all who play the lyre and the flute." (v. 21) Some versions render "lyre and the flute" as "stringed instruments and pipes." Giving a much broader context to this seemingly innocuous statement. Marton supports this view of Genesis 4 when he writes "Music played an important role in the history of the Israelites throughout the Old Testament. Its existence and use is evident from the book of Genesis when the father of musicians, Jubal, is mentioned (Gen. 4:21)"²³ Also of significance is that this passage is in the context of other necessary aspects of life, such as providing food, materials, and tools. Artistic, specifically musical, expression is listed, not separately from other societally necessary trades and vocations, but right alongside them. At the end of chapter 4, we also see another easily overlooked scripture. "A son was born to Seth also, and he named him Enosh. At that time, people began to call on the name of the Lord." While there is no indication as to why people began "to call on the name of the Lord" at this time, we must conclude that the information is nonetheless significant and may infer a turning of hearts to

²³ Marius E. Marton, *Worship Music in the 21st Century: Selecting Proper Music for Worship in Regards to Lyrics, Instrumentation, and Rhythm*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015).

God along with the advent of a new emphasis on the worship of God. Combining the two is a logical conclusion as more people begin to worship God and as instruments become available.

Post-flood, we see the mention of instruments in Genesis 31:27: "Why did you secretly flee from me, deceive me, and not tell me? I would have sent you away with joy and singing, with tambourines and lyres." While the context of these instruments is not worship, it is significant that they, as well as their everyday use in society, still exist past the cataclysmic destruction of the world by flood. Whether pre-flood instruments survived or new, post-war instruments were built after the flood is not mentioned and is somewhat irrelevant. More significant is their existence and use.

In Exodus 15, Moses and later his sister Miriam sing a "psalm" to God in worship for their deliverance across the Red Sea. Significant to Miriam's song is the inclusion of its musical instruments: "Then the prophetess Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women came out following her with tambourines and dancing. Miriam sang to them: Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted; he has thrown the horse and its rider into the sea" (v. 20-21). While there is no mention of the use of musical instruments between Genesis 31 and Exodus 15, the existence of instruments after the deliverance from Egypt suggests the existence of instruments during the Egyptian captivity of the nation of Israel.

In Numbers, the trumpet sound is associated with gathering together people and sounding an alarm for battle and use in offerings. Interestingly, God defines different techniques, differentiating between the trumpet sound for gathering, the trumpet sound for battle, and the trumpet sound for sacrifice.

"The Lord spoke to Moses: "Make two trumpets of hammered silver to summon the community and have the camps set out. When both are sounded in long blasts, the entire community is to gather before you at the entrance to the tent of meeting. However, if one is

sounded, only the leaders, the head of Israel's clans, are to gather before you. When you sound short blasts, the camps pitched on the east are to set out. When you sound short blasts a second time the camps pitched on the south are to set out. Short blasts are to be sounded for them to set out. When calling the assembly together, you are to sound long blasts, not short ones. The sons of Aaron, the priests, are to sound the trumpets. Your use of these is a permanent statute throughout your generations. When you enter into battle in your land against an adversary who is attacking you, sound short blasts on the trumpets, and you will be remembered before the Lord your God and be saved from your enemies. You are to sound the trumpets over your burnt offerings and your fellowship sacrifices and on your joyous occasions, your appointed festivals, and then beginning of each of your months. They will serve as a reminder for you before your God: I am the Lord your God" (Numbers 10:1-10).

What is consistent in these techniques and their meanings is that the trumpet sound is a reminder for the Israelites as to what God has done for them, what they are to do in light of God's works, and what God will do for them in the future.

Instruments are not mentioned again as a tool of worship until Joshua takes over the leadership of the Israelites. Israel not only used instruments as tools of worship but, under God's command, used instruments for war:

"Have seven priests carry seven ram's-horn trumpets in front of the ark. However, on the seventh day, march around the city seven times while the priests blow the ram's horns. When there is a prolonged blast of the horn and you hear its sound, have all the troops give a mighty shout. Then the city wall will collapse, and the troops will advance, each man straight ahead" (Joshua 6:4-5).

Joshua and the Israelites carried out God's orders, and the great fortified city of Jericho was sacked, not with instruments of war but with instruments of worship. In Judges 11, Jephthah's daughter greets him with "tambourines and dancing" upon his return from the war against the Ammonites. (v. 32-34)

David

1 Samuel brings us perhaps the most famous biblical musician, David. David's musical skill initially brought him to the forefront of Israelite politics and power.

"Now the Spirit of the Lord had left Saul, and an evil spirit sent from the Lord began to torment him, so Saul's servants said to him, 'you see that an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. Let our Lord command your servants here in your presence to look for someone who knows how to play the lyre. Whenever the evil Spirit from God comes on you, that person can play the lyre, and you will feel better.' Then Saul commanded his servants, 'Find me someone who plays well and bring him to me.' One of the young men answered, 'I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the lyre. He is also a valiant man, a warrior, eloquent, handsome, and the Lord is with him'" (1 Samuel 16:14-18).

Saul brought David into the court because of David's skillful playing of the lyre. "Whenever the spirit from God came on Saul, David would pick up his lyre and play, and Saul would then be relieved, feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him" (v. 23). From this point, we see David's role as a warrior, in the slaying of Goliath, and the continued use of instruments in celebration: "As the troops were coming back when David was returning from killing the Philistine, the women came out from all the cities of Israel to meet King Saul, singing and dancing with tambourines, with shouts of joy, and with three-stringed instruments. As they danced, the women sang: Saul has killed his thousands, but David his tens of thousands" (1 Samuel 18:6-7). The dancing and singing of David's victories are also known to the enemies of Israel, as referenced by the servants of King Achish of Gath in chapter 21, verse 11, and chapter 29, verse 5. The very next day, we see David "playing the lyre as usual" (v. 10) when Saul attempts to kill David. Saul makes a similar attempt while David plays the lyre in chapter 19, verse 10. While the record clearly shows the importance of David's skill on the lyre in his rise to prominence, it does little to provide us with musical details. As Marton writes: "Unfortunately, there is no musical notation preserved from this time, so we do not know what the melody or music sounded like when David played the lyre."²⁴

²⁴ Marius E. Marton, *Worship Music in the 21st Century: Selecting Proper Music for Worship in Regards to Lyrics, Instrumentation, and Rhythm*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015).

It is important to note here that the books of First and Second Chronicles cover the same chronological period as those of First and Second Samuel and First and Second Kings. The differences between the books, their authors, audience, and perspective are well outside the scope of this study. However, the books of Chronicles do provide us with some amount of musical detail, whereas the books of Kings might be vaguer. In 1 Chronicles 6:31-46, we have a roster of musicians who served before the Ark of the Covenant from the time David brought the Temple back until the building of the Temple. Only Heman, the singer (v. 33), is listed with his specific musical role. It is clear from the text that these musicians were of the priestly tribe of Levi. 1 Chronicles 9:33 describes the living arrangements for the Levites: "The singers, the heads of the Levite families, stayed in the temple chambers and were exempt from other tasks because they were on duty day and night."

In 2 Samuel 2:17-27, David pens a lament entitled Song of the Bow upon hearing of the death of King Saul and his son Jonathan and orders the lament be taught to all of Judah. While the record does not explicitly indicate, given David's instrumental skills, it is not unreasonable to suspect that instruments would have accompanied the Song of the Bow. Likewise, David's lament over the death of Abner in Chapter 3, verses 31-34, may have involved instrumental accompaniment. In Chapter 6, verse 5, David makes his first attempt to move the ark of the covenant back to Jerusalem, and a great scene of instrumental worship ensues: "David and the whole house of Israel were dancing before the Lord with all kinds of fir wood instruments, lyres, harps, tambourines, sistrums, and cymbals." 1 Chronicles 13:8 also records this first attempt to retrieve the ark with its accompanying music. A few verses later, David makes his second attempt to relocate the ark, and again we see David and all of Israel worshiping with dance, shouts, and the ram's horn (v. 14-16). David's wife Michal saw David dancing and was ashamed

of his behavior. In response, David speaks of his willingness to "dance before the Lord, and I will dishonor myself and humble myself even more" (v. 21-22). Of course, David's words would also apply to all kinds of worship. 1 Chronicles 15:16-29 provides far greater detail of the musical organization of the bringing of the Ark into Jerusalem:

"Then David told the leaders of the Levites to appoint their relatives as singers and to have them raise their voices with joy accompanied by musical instruments – harps, lyres, and cymbals. So the Levites appointed Heman son of Joel; from his relatives, Asaph son of Berechiah; and from their relatives the Merarites, Ethan son of Kushaiah. With them were their relatives second in rank: Zechariah, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, and the gatekeepers Obed-edom and Jeiel. The singers Heman, Asaph, and Ethan were to sound the bronze cymbals; Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah, and Benaiah were to play harps according to Alamoth and Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom, Jeiel, and Azaziah were to lead the music with lyres according to the Sheminith. Chenaniah, the leader of the Levites in music, was to direct the music because he was skillful. Berechiah and Elkanah were to be gatekeepers for the ark. The priests, Shebaniah, Joshophat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah, and Elizer, were to blow trumpets before the ark of God. Obed-edom and Jehiah were also to be gatekeepers for the ark. Because God helped the Levites who were carrying the ark of the covenant of the Lord, with God's help, they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams. Now David was dressed in a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites who were carrying the ark, as well as the singers and Chananiah, the music leader of the singers. David also wore a linen ephod. So all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouts, the sound of the ram's horn, trumpets, and cymbals, and the playing of harps and lyres. As the ark of the covenant of the Lord was entering the city of David, Saul's daughter Michal looked down from the window and saw King David leaping and dancing, and she despised him in her heart" (1 Chronicles 15:16-29).

1 Chronicles 16:4-6 again lists musicians who were "...to be ministers before the ark of the Lord, to celebrate the Lord God of Israel, and to give thanks and praise to him." The same musicians listed above in bringing the ark are listed again here as those who played harps and Lyres, sounded cymbals, and blew trumpets "regularly before the ark of the covenant of God." What follows in vs. 8-36 is a great psalm of thanksgiving which, according to v. 7, was written for Asaph and his relatives (the musicians). Chapter 16 concludes with another listing of the

roster of musicians who regularly play before God. 1 Chronicles 23:5 provides an exact number of musicians from among the Levites that were to be musicians: "...Four thousand are to praise the Lord with the instruments that I have made for worship." 1 Chronicles 25 is yet another detailed, albeit smaller, roster of Levitical musicians in David's employ. "David and the officers of the army also set apart some of the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, who were to prophesy accompanied by Lyres, harps, and cymbals" (v. 1). Verse 3 lists the sons of Jeduthun who were to be "prophesying to the accompaniment of lyres, giving thanks and praise to the Lord." Verse 6-8 gives some idea of the hierarchy of authority within these ranks: "All these men were under their own fathers' authority for the music in the Lord's Temple, with cymbals, harps, and lyres for the service of God's Temple. Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman were under the king's authority. They numbered 288 together with their relatives, who were all trained and skillful in music for the Lord. They cast lots for their duties, young and old, teacher and pupil."

The Ram's Horn

Many times in the Old Testament, we see the ram's horn used for military and political purposes. In Chapter 15, verse 10, we see Absalom planning the use of the ram's horn as a sign of military strength, and in chapter 18, verse 16, we see Joab use the ram's horn to call off the pursuit of Absalom's forces upon his death in the oak tree. Again the ram's horn is used for military purposes when Sheba and Israel revolt against David and Judah in chapter 20, verse 1. In chapter 20, verse 22, Joab blows the ram's horn once Sheba's head is thrown over the wall of Abel of Beth-maacah. In 1 Kings 1:34, David instructs Zadok the Priest and Nathan the prophet to proclaim Solomon as king with the blow of the ram's horn, and in verse 39, his orders are carried out. A grand coronation procession follows Zadok's proclamation: "All the people went up after him, playing flutes and rejoicing with such a great joy that the earth split open from the

sound" (v. 40). David's response to Solomon's coronation is to kneel at his bed and worship (v. 47).

The implications of the ram's horn echo in the words of the prophet Amos in chapter 3, verse 6: "If a ram's horn is blown in a city, aren't people afraid?" The prophet Hosea continues with this theme when he declares, "Put the ram's horn to your mouth! One like an eagle comes against the house of the Lord because they transgress my covenant and rebel against my law" (Hosea 8:1). Again, Isaiah raises a warning to the land of Cush: "When a ram's horn sounds, listen!" (Isaiah 18:3). Writing not of terror, but of joy, Isaiah proclaims the sound of the ram's horn will signal the return of the exiles from Assyria (Isaiah 27:13). The ram's horn once again heralds fear in Isaiah 58:1 as the Lord speaks through Isaiah "Cry out loudly, don't hold back! Raise your voice like a ram's horn. Tell my people their transgression and the house of Jacob their sins." Zephaniah, by word of the Lord, tells of the destruction of all nations: "A day of ram's horn and battle cry against the fortified cities, and against the high corner towers" (Zephaniah 1:16). God instructs Jeremiah to "Blow the ram's horn throughout the land" as a warning of the coming destruction of Judah (Jeremiah 4:5). In response to his own proclamation, Jeremiah laments the heralding of destruction which the ram's horn brings (v. 19, 21). Again in Jeremiah 6:1 and 17, the ram's horn foretells the destruction of Jerusalem. This time heralding the fall of Babylon, the ram's horn sounds in Jeremiah 51:27. Ezekiel also foretells the destruction of Israel using the ram's horns in Ezekiel 7:14 and 33:3-6. Zechariah writes, "The Lord God will sound the ram's horn and advance with the southern storms" (Zechariah 9:14).

Solomon to the Exile

Solomon was given great wisdom from God (1 Kings 4:29) and used that wisdom to speak 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs. Given the resources available to Solomon, one may

suspect his songs would have been for worship in the Temple and therefore accompanied by any number of instruments. The building of the Temple perhaps represents one of God's most significant fulfilled promises to Solomon but also a significant milestone in instrumental worship. Throughout the remainder of biblical and early church history, before its final destruction at the hands of Rome in 70 A.D., the Temple would serve as the center for all worship of God. This centralization of worship catalyzed further organization of instrumental forces.

Upon completion and dedication of the Temple, a festival of worship lasted 14 days. All of Israel is attending this monumental worship event where the people make countless sacrifices. (1 Kings 8:65). While 1 Kings leaves out any musical information of the dedication of the Temple, 2 Chronicles fills in the gaps. 2 Chronicles 5:12-13 described the music and musicians:

"The Levitical singers dressed in fine linen and carrying cymbals, harps, and lyres were standing east of the altar, and with them were 120 priests blowing trumpets. The trumpeters and singers joined together to praise and thank the Lord with one voice. They raised their voices, accompanied by trumpets, cymbals, and musical instruments, in praise to the Lord: For he is good; his faithful love endures forever" (2 Chronicles 5:12-13).

2 Chronicles 7:6 again reiterates the above:

"The priests and the Levites were standing at their stations. The Levites had the musical instruments of the Lord, which King David had made to give thanks to the Lord – for his faithful love endures forever – when he offered praise to them. Across from the Levites, the priests were blowing trumpets, and all the people were standing" (2 Chronicles 7:6)

1 Kings Chapter 10 verse 12 described Almug wood as a costly wood delivered to Solomon and made "...into steps for the Lord's Temple and the king's palace and into lyres and harps for the singers. Never before did such Almug wood arrive, and the like has not been seen again." This description clearly illustrates the importance of musical instruments in worship and that Solomon would devote such rare and precious materials to their construction.

Although not explicitly mention music, 2 Chronicles 11:13-17 is significant for its implications. "The priests and Levites from all their regions throughout Israel took their stand with Rehoboam, (Son of Solomon and King of Judah) for the Levites left their pasturelands and their possessions and went to Judah and Jerusalem, because Jeroboam (King of Israel) and his sons refused to let them serve as priests to the Lord." (v 13-15) Not only did the Levites leave Israel, but so did all Israel that wished to worship God (v. 16). Based on the information above concerning the skill and training of the Levites, we may draw some conclusions about the music and musicians of the kingdom of Israel during this period. It is also during this time that the word of the Lord through the prophet Amos speaks: "Take away from me the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps" (Amos 5:23). Speaking woe to the complacent and content among the Israelites, Amos writes "They improvise songs to the sound of the harp and invent their own musical instruments like David" (Amos 6:5). Although the prophet is speaking destruction over Israel, the rare mention of improvisation is noteworthy here.

The exodus of priests and Levites is again mentioned in chapter 13 as Judah prepares for the battle against Israel. Judah pleads with Israel not to fight against God: "Look, God and his priests are with us at our head. The trumpets are ready to sound the charge against you. Israelites, don't fight against the Lord God of your ancestors, for you will not succeed" (2 Chronicles 13:12). Verse 14 shows Judah crying out to God and the priests blowing the trumpets before God delivers Israel into Judah's hands. Judah continued to seek God and follow him under the rule of King Asa, who renewed a covenant with God: "They took an oath to the Lord in a loud voice, with shouting, with trumpets, and with rams' horns. All Judah rejoiced over the oath, for they had sworn it wholeheartedly. They had sought him with all sincerity, and they found him. So the Lord gave them rest on every side" (2 Chronicles 15:14-15). The Levites and priests lead Judah's

army into battle against the Moabites and Ammonites in 2 Chronicles chapter 20, verses 21-22: "Then he consulted with the people and appointed some to sing for the Lord and some to praise the splendor of his holiness. When they went out in front of the armed forces, they kept singing: Give thanks to the Lord, for his faithful love endures forever." Because they relied on God, He handed the enemy over to them: "The moment they began their shouts and praises, the Lord set an ambush against the Ammonites, Moabites, and the inhabitants of Mount Seir who came to fight against Judah, and they were defeated." Verse 28 shows the people returning victorious: "So they came into Jerusalem to the Lord's temple with harps, lyres, and trumpets."

In 2 Chronicles 23:12-13, the priest Jehoida seeks to bring Judah back to God and the worship of God appointed by David: "As she looked, there was the king standing by his pillar at the entrance. The commanders and the trumpeters were by the king, and all the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets while the singers with musical instruments were leading the praise." Verse 16 shows the oversight of temple worship returned to the Levitical priests "to offer burnt offerings to the Lord as it is written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and song ordained by David."

After a time of wickedness and idol worship in Judah, King Hezekiah resolved to restore once again the Temple and the worship of God with instruments and song:

"Hezekiah stationed the Levites in the Lord's Temple with cymbals, harps, and lyres according to the command of David, Gad the king's seer, and the prophet Nathan, for the command was from the Lord through his prophets. The Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. Then Hezekiah ordered that the burnt offering be offered on the altar. When the burnt offerings began, the song of the Lord and the trumpets began, accompanied by the instruments of King David of Israel. The whole assembly was worshiping, singing the song, and blowing the trumpets – all this continued until the burnt offering was completed. When the burnt offerings were completed, the king and all those present with him bowed down and worshiped. Then King Hezekiah and the officials told the Levites to sing praise to the Lord in the words of

David and of the seer Asaph. So they sang praises with rejoicing and knelt low and worshiped" (2 Chronicles 29:25-30).

Furthermore, Hezekiah sought to celebrate the Passover, even though it was not the appropriate time of year, and the people had not appropriately consecrated themselves for the feast. Hezekiah prayed for mercy for those who were not consecrated: "So the Lord heard Hezekiah and healed the people. The Israelites in Jerusalem observed the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days with great joy, and the Levites and the priests praised the Lord day after day with loud instruments. Then Hezekiah encouraged all the Levites who performed skillfully before the Lord" (2 Chronicles 30:21-22). The writer describes the worship event as the greatest since the dedication of the Temple (v. 26). With temple worship restored, Hezekiah also restored the ranks of the priests and Levites for their assigned duties of worship and work in the Temple according to the work of David, and also reestablished offerings to be given to the Levites and priests for their provision (2 Chronicles 31:2-4).

During Hezekiah's reign, the word of the Lord comes to the prophet Isaiah. As with many of the prophet's references to music, many of Isaiah's references are adverse but noteworthy. Isaiah writes in chapter five, verses 11-12, "Woe to those who rise early in the morning in pursuit of beer, who linger into the evening, inflamed by wine. At their feasts, they have lyre, harp, tambourine, flute, and wine. They do not perceive the Lord's actions, and they do not see the work of his hands." Prophesying woe to the kingdom of Babylon, Isaiah declares, "Your splendor has been brought down to Sheol, along with the music of your harps" (Isaiah 14:11). Likewise, speaking woe to the land of Moab, Isaiah writes, "Joy and rejoicing have been removed from the orchard; no one is singing or shouting for joy in the vineyards. No one tramples grapes in the winepresses. I have put an end to the shouting. Therefore I moan like the

sound of a lyre for Moab, as does my innermost being for Kir-Heres" (Isaiah 16:10-11). Jeremiah echoes this prophecy of Moab in Jeremiah 48:36 when he writes, "Therefore, my heart moans like flutes for Moab, and my heart moans like flutes for the people of Kir-Heres. And therefore, the wealth he has gained has perished." Isaiah proclaims the word of the Lord to Tyre: "Pick up your lyre, stroll through the city, you forgotten prostitute. Play skillfully, sing many a song so that you will be remembered" (Isaiah 23:16). In Isaiah 24:8-9, the prophet writes of the end of joyful tambourines and lyres. Ezekiel also speaks of the end of Tyre: "I will put an end to the noise of your songs, and the sound of your lyres will no longer be heard" (Ezekiel 26:13). In Ezekiel 33:32, God compares Ezekiel to "a singer of passionate songs who has a beautiful voice and plays skillfully on an instrument" but that Israel still refuses to listen to his words and repent.

However, not all of Isaiah's musical references are associated with terror and dread. In Isaiah 30:29, Isaiah prophesies the fall of Assyria: "Your singing will be like that on the night of a holy festival, and your heart will rejoice like one who walks to the music of a flute, going up to the mountain of the Lord, to the Rock of Israel." A few verses later, in verse 32, the prophet continues, "And every stroke of the appointed staff that the Lord brings down on him will be to the sound of tambourines and lyres; he will fight against him with brandished weapons." In response to God healing him, King Hezekiah writes a poem of praise and thanksgiving which contains the following line: "The Lord is ready to save me; we will play stringed instruments all the days of our lives at the house of the Lord" (Isaiah 38:20).

After yet another period of wickedness in Judah, young King Josiah set out to once again cleanse and repair the Temple and restore the worship of the one true God (2 Chronicles 34:8-11). Verse 12 records, "The men were doing the work with integrity. Their overseers were Jahath and Obadiah, Levites from the Merarites, and Zechariah and Meshullam from the Kohathites as

supervisors. The Levites were all skilled with musical instruments." Like Hezekiah, King Josiah celebrated a great Passover festival (Chapter 35). Once again, the record shows, "The singers, the descendants of Asaph, were at their stations according to the command of David, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer" (v. 15). The writer describes this as one of the great Passover celebrations since the time of Samuel: "No Passover had been observed like it in Israel since the days of the prophet Samuel. None of the kings of Israel ever observed a Passover like the one that Josiah observed with the priests, the Levites, all Judah, the Israelites who were present in Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (v. 18). Upon Josiah's death all of Judah and Jerusalem mourned the king and "Jeremiah chanted a dirge over Josiah, and all the male and female singers still speak of Josiah in their dirges today. They established them as a statute for Israel, and indeed they are written in the Dirges" (v. 25).

In 2 Kings 3:15, the prophet Elisha requests a musician to play while Elisha prophesies concerning the Moabites. The significance of the presence of the musician here is not clear. It is significant, however, in that it implies continued training of musicians and production of instruments throughout the record of the kings of Judah and Israel.

Post-Exile

While in exile in Babylon, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refuse to bow down and worship the graven image which Nebuchadnezzar had set up "when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, drum, and every kind of music" (Daniel 3:5-15).

New Testament

There are fewer references to music in the New Testament than in the old. The reasons for this disparity are well beyond the scope of this study. The few which do exist, though, are worth mentioning.

While teaching his disciples to give to the poor, he says, "don't sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be applauded by people" (Matthew 6:2). When Jesus arrives to bring the young girl back to life in Matthew 9, he finds "the flute players and a crowd lamenting loudly" (v. 23) over the deceased girl. Two chapters later, Jesus compares the current generation to a people who heard flutes playing but didn't dance and heard singers lamenting but didn't mourn (Matthew 11:17). This story also plays out in Luke's gospel chapter 7, verse 32. In Luke's telling of the parable of the prodigal son, he writes of how the oldest son heard music and dancing of celebration upon the younger son's return. Both Matthew and Mark's gospel accounts describe the end of the Last Supper the same way: "After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives" (Matthew 26:30, Mark 14:26). Jesus describes his second coming in Matthew 24:31 "He will send out his angels with a loud trumpet, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other." When Paul and Silas were in jail in Acts 16:25-27, they sang Hymns to God and prayed when the earthquake opened the prison doors. In Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church, chapter 13, verse 1, he writes, "If I speak human or angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal." Later in 1 Corinthians, in 14:15, Paul writes, "I will sing praise with the spirit, and I will also sing praise with my understanding." A few verses later, in 14:26, Paul instructs the church to be orderly when they meet together: "Whenever you come together, each one has a hymn, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Everything is to be done for building up." He expounds in 1 Corinthians 14:6-8

"So now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I speak to you with a revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? Even lifeless instruments that produce sounds – whether flute or harp – if they don't make a distinction in the notes, how will what is played on the flute or harp be recognized? In

fact, if the bugle makes an unclear sound, who will prepare for battle?" (1 Corinthians 14:6-8).

In 1 Corinthians 15:52-53, Paul writes of the second coming of Christ "Listen, I am telling you a mystery: We will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed." In the letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul writes, "And don't get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit: speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music with your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:18-19). In Colossians 3:16, Paul echoes this sentiment: "Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts." In Hebrews 12:17, the author writes, "For you have not come to what could be touched, to a blazing fire, to darkness, gloom, and storm, to the blast of a trumpet, and the sound of words." James instructs Christians, "Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone cheerful? He should sing praises."

Revelation

John opens his revelation from God in the following way "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard a loud voice behind me like a trumpet saying, 'Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches'" (Revelation 1:10). In Revelation 4:1, John sees the throne room of Heaven and hears a voice "speaking to me like a trumpet." Now around the throne of God, John sees and records this scene: "When he took the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and golden bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song" (Revelation 5:8-9).

Revelation 8-11 describes the seven angels that stand in the presence of God, each blowing a trumpet with cataclysmic, apocalyptic events taking place after the sound of each trumpet. In Revelation 14:2-3, John describes the sound of the 144,000 with the Lamb: "I heard a sound from Heaven like the sound of cascading waters and like the rumbling of loud thunder. The sound I heard was like harpists playing on their harps. They sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders." In chapter 15:2-3, John writes of the scene of the victory over the beast: I also saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had won the victory over the beast, its image, and the number of its name, were standing on the sea of glass with harps from God. They sang the song of God's servant Moses and the song of the Lamb." Revelation 18 shows the mighty angel proclaiming the fall of Babylon: "The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters will never be heard in you again."

Conclusion

The above is an extensive and exhaustive catalog of musical references found in scripture. The references themselves do not provide the whole picture. Instead, they provide evidence and clues which may inform the construction of appropriate and acceptable worship. The association between instruments and social life and worship throughout musical history becomes abundantly clear throughout scripture. It is also clear that instrumental use was not limited to God's people in Israel but the entirety of human civilization. The Old Testament seems to command and insist upon the use of instruments in worshipping God, while the New Testament is significantly less specific regarding worship methodology. The New Testament makes it clear, however, that the same instruments in everyday use during the Old Testament are still widely available during the time of Jesus and the early church. John's Revelation from God also clearly shows that instruments are, and will be, an integral part of worship in Heaven. As an extension,

as worship on earth is a rehearsal of worship in Heaven, instrumental use in worship is thoroughly supported throughout scripture.

The following sections will focus on literature in church music and music education which inform the practical use of instrumental ensembles in worship.

Church Music

The use of orchestras in worship is in no way a new phenomenon. From the scripture examples listed above to orchestral worship of the 17th century to modern-day orchestras, instruments have received used in worship throughout much of recorded history. What follows is a collection of materials from the field of church music which discuss the various aspects of instrumental worship.

We will begin by defining a few terms which should prove helpful as this study continues. Don Cusic's *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music* defines Contemporary Christian Music as "popular music with Christian lyrics." The author explains, "Musically, contemporary Christian music encompasses many genres. It comes under the general umbrella of gospel music, which includes everything from black gospel, spirituals, southern gospel, and contemporary hymns to the secular sounds of rap, hip-hop, rock, heavy metal, and any other musical genre."²⁵ As the above definition lists lyrics as an integral part of defining Contemporary Christian Music, Cusic qualifies the use of instruments in worship: "If Christian and gospel music is identified primarily by the lyrics, can an instrumental be a Christian song? And if Christian performers are known for presenting the gospel during their performances, can an

²⁵ Don Cusic, *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music: Pop, Rock, and Worship: Pop, Rock, and Worship*, (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2009).

instrumentalist be a Christian performer? The answer is, yes, an instrumental song can be Christian, and a number of instrumentalists are Christian performers.²⁶

As one of the earliest forms of Contemporary Christian Music, "Jesus Music" is worth considering for its definition. Cusic writes, "Jesus Music was born when the hippie counterculture of the 1960s merged with evangelical protestant Christianity and converts combined the music of pop and rock with Bible based lyrics." Morton asserts this evolution, "The right lyrics on a beautiful melody accompanied by wonderful chord progressions and impressive instrumental solos may help young people develop a relationship with Christ."²⁷ Cusic provides further historical elaboration: "When those in the Jesus movement joined or founded churches, they wanted a music connected to popular culture rather than the traditional hymns and songs of the church.

When these churches were founded, they generally began as small, independent, nondenominational "storefront" gatherings of believers who sang and worshiped with songs from the Jesus movement."²⁸ Cusic continues: "Some of these churches grew to become major congregations, and church members often formed musical groups who performed at church services. There was usually a worship leader who led the congregation in songs with lyrics directed to God."²⁹ Cusic also describes Praise and Worship music as related but separate forms. "Praise and worship music evolved from the songs sung in the services of these

²⁶ Cusic. *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music*. 2009.

²⁷ Marius E. Marton, *Worship Music in the 21st Century: Selecting Proper Music for Worship in Regards to Lyrics, Instrumentation, and Rhythm*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015).

²⁸ Cusic. *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music*. 2009.

²⁹ Ibid.

nondenominational churches. They are songs that are musically more akin to pop and rock music (especially soft rock) than to traditional hymns."³⁰ The makeup of ensembles leading this music is described here. "Churches often have a band comprising electric guitars, bass, keyboards, and drums playing behind a worship leader who serves as a lead singer for the congregation."³¹

The style of the music is also described for its simplicity and lyrical content. "The songs are often simple, with few words and easy to remember melodies. These worship songs often come from scripture, taking a phrase from the Bible, and setting it to a melody; other songs are written to praise and exalt God and Jesus."³² As one of the earliest producers of Christian Contemporary Music, Integrity is worth noting and considering for its beginnings and evolution. Perez writes: "Integrity's musical roots came not only out of the church context, but also through the contact of early Integrity leaders with the International Worship Symposium."

Perez also provides historical context for the International Worship Symposium (IWS): "As its name suggests, IWS was a series of worship conferences popular during the 1980's led by musicians connected to the Latter Rain Movement to disseminate teaching on the practice of worship that built upon Old Testament temple and tabernacle models of worship." Perez then connects Integrity to IWS through shared personnel: "It was at IWS that Tom Brooks (first producer and arranger of IH!M tapes), and Don Moden (Integrity's first creative director) learned "praise and worship" in and around the early 1980's."³³ Finally, the author describes the style taught at the IWS and emulated at Integrity. "Steve Griffing, one of IWS's founders and worship

³⁰ Cusic. *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music*. 2009.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Adam Perez. "Beyond the Guitar: The Keyboard as a Lens into the History of Contemporary Praise and Worship", (The Hymn; Boston, Vol. 70, Iss. 2, Spring 2019).

leaders, described the musical style taught and modeled there as a "Keyboard Symphony," that is, a style with the keyboard as the backbone for a symphonic orchestra that was only achievable in larger and musically able churches. This grandiose style with full orchestration appears on Integrity's earliest tapes.³⁴

From the above record, it becomes abundantly clear that orchestral involvement in contemporary Christian worship is not only indicated but embedded within its very DNA. The work of Carl Phillip Posey further emphasizes this fact. Posey provides an extensive catalog of instrumental/vocal music appropriate for corporate worship between 1945 and 1973. Many of the pieces referenced in this study are of an orchestral/vocal nature and fall under categories such as neo-baroque, neo-classical, neo-romantic, jazz, pop, and rock. Figures show marked increase in contemporary styles of instrumental and vocal publications between 1969 and 1973, while all other styles of publications show a marked decrease. While the date of this study limits its effectiveness, it clearly shows the beginning of a trend which has continued since 1973.³⁵

Timothy Bandy, writing of the orchestra at Whitesburg Baptist in Huntsville, AL, sums up the overall benefit of an orchestra in worship: "A church orchestra is an aural microcosm of the abstract sounds of creation – melodic, percussive, harmonic – purposefully united in skillfully manipulating the spectrum of sound for the praise of His glory."³⁶ Bandy continues by comparing the enhancement of films by orchestral scores to the enhancement of worship: "In the same way an instrumental score intensifies the drama of a movie script, instrumental worship can

³⁴ Perez. *Beyond the Guitar: The Keyboard as a Lens into the History of Contemporary Praise and Worship*. 2019.

³⁵ Phillip Carl Posey, *Instruments and Voices in Contemporary Christian Worship*, (Order No. 7423787, University of Missouri - Kansas City, 1974).

³⁶ Timothy Lee Bandy. *The Developing Role of the Instrumental Ministry at Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville, Alabama*, (Dissertation at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021).

intensify the meaning of a text or the gravitas of a lyric."³⁷ Specifically writing of the fusion of new and old styles of all music, Bandy writes, "It's safe to say that elements of today's popular music will eventually reconcile themselves with more conservative style traits, and that future musical styles will be all the richer for it-including styles of church music."³⁸

As will be discussed later, an orchestra is undoubtedly an immense investment of financial and human resources. Bandy attempts to justify this investment: "Worship should reflect an investment of resources, time, and talent commensurate with the size, resources, and talent available in churches."³⁹ The use of an orchestra is not for every church of every size and type, but as Bandy points out, "Involvement in a church orchestra represents a sacrificial investment in the worship life of the church."⁴⁰ For those capable of utilizing such resources, the benefits are marked. Bandy continues, "An orchestra provides a unique type of sonic energy that intensifies music worship. Certainly, this was one of the reasons choirs and orchestras were involved in large celebrations in the Old Testament. A large space with a large gathering of people is enhanced by the sonic energy an orchestra provides."⁴¹ Bandy continues by highlighting the importance of an orchestral presence in one of the grandest worship settings ever recorded: "Could Solomon have dedicated his Temple without 120 trumpets? Of course, but 120

³⁷ Bandy. *The Developing Role of the Instrumental Ministry at Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville, Alabama*. 2021.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

trumpets provide a massive acoustic reinforcement in a large gathering of people."⁴² However, the benefits of a large ensemble are not limited to the aural and the sonic.

According to Bandy, there is also a visual benefit: "An orchestra also provides a unique visual energy. Consider again the dedication of Solomon's Temple. While the sonic energy of 120 trumpets plus cymbals, harps, and lyres described in 2 Chronicles 5 created enormous acoustical energy, the visual image was equally compelling."⁴³ While Bandy espouses the vast benefits of large ensembles here, he makes sure not to despise the smaller offerings: "While a large ensemble offers a unique aural intensity, a solo instrument, skillfully played, offers another type of aural intensity, often used to highlight a poignant or an intimate moment in worship."⁴⁴

Thus far, the focus has been on the musical benefits of an orchestra. There are also, however, profound theological ramifications and parallels to draw. Bandy compares a volunteer orchestra to the New Testament priesthood of all believers by writing, "Most modern church orchestras consist of volunteer instrumentalists, whereas the Temple orchestra consisted of professional, full-time priests. A group of lay people leading worship with instruments demonstrates the New Testament priesthood of believers in a powerfully visible way."⁴⁵ Bandy continues: "An orchestra ministry allows a larger number of lay people to be directly involved in leading worship, which in turn helps make the worship a more authentic expression of the local body of believers. Instead of a church trying to manufacture or impose a style of worship on its

⁴² Bandy. *The Developing Role of the Instrumental Ministry at Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville, Alabama*. 2021.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

community, a volunteer church orchestra creates a worship environment which is an expression of its community."⁴⁶

The benefits of an orchestra also reach through multiple generations of the church. Bandy highlights these benefits by writing, "Another benefit of an orchestra ministry is that it can allow a cross-section of the church to be involved in worship leadership. Orchestras typically have members from a wide variety of ages and backgrounds." Bandy elaborates: "Church orchestras provide a unique cross-generational ministry that actively benefits the entire church. In particular, student ministries often have no avenue of involving talented teenage instrumentalists in leading worship unless they play a rhythm instrument. A church orchestra side-steps this barrier to musical involvement."⁴⁷ This involvement of teenage players also teaches them a valuable lesson at an early age. Bandy explains this lesson: "Players learn that musical talent (or any kind of talent) should not be compartmentalized outside their life of faith."⁴⁸

Finally, Bandy draws deep parallels between instrumental worship and God's creations praising Him. "In summary, instrumental music combines woodworking, metallurgy, technology, acoustic, and electronics with abstract reasoning, emotional engagement, time, talent, and skill to cultivate the raw acoustical materials of creation. Therefore, instrumental worship combines aspects of creation praise with elements of the creation mandate."⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Bandy. *The Developing Role of the Instrumental Ministry at Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville, Alabama*. 2021.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Bandy. *The Developing Role of the Instrumental Ministry at Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville, Alabama*. 2021.

Manuel Garcia II unpacks some of the challenges of utilizing an orchestral ensemble. We should note here that Garcia is writing from the context of a period from 1979-2009, and thus much of what he is writing may no longer be accurate. The record is still valuable, however, as it highlights the evolution of orchestral worship and shows some of the challenges churches might face with lower budgets or fewer resources. Garcia writes explicitly of the challenges of the lack of availability of orchestral sheet music: "When the newly formed church orchestra did accompany the choir, the individual instrumental parts had to be manually written to accompany the anthem. This was a time-consuming process and was seldom done." Garcia continues, "Orchestral parts were not available for the selected hymnal; therefore, the players had to write their individual parts for the hymns to be played the following week. Smith stated that it was necessary for the players to learn to transpose their parts."⁵⁰

The evolution and improvement of the Orchestral worship music market has improved, though. As Garcia states, "The instrumental church repertoire market has expanded exponentially in recent years. Most choral selections now have orchestral accompaniments professionally written by the composer, arranger, or a separate orchestrator."⁵¹ Garcia II also touches on the spatial challenges of utilizing an orchestra when he writes, "Because of the physical logistics of having an orchestra within a worship center that was not designed or renovated to contain one, it was decided that the Orchestra was to be seated in front of the chancel." Garcia II continues by explaining the inherent issue within a Baptist tradition: "This presented a problem at FBCPC

⁵⁰ Manuel Garcia II. "*The Role of Music Education in the First Baptist Church of Panama City, Florida (1979-2009)*", (Dissertation at Boston University, 2013).

⁵¹ Ibid.

because it blocked access to the altar area and physically prohibited people from physically responding to the invitation, which in Baptist tradition occurs at the conclusion of the sermon."⁵²

It is also worth considering some of the arguments opponents of instrumental worship have levied against the church and biblical evidence supporting its use. As a foundational statement in these arguments, Marton writes, "People have different opinions on what is proper sacred worship music, but the majority of people base their decisions on likes and dislikes instead of basing it on theological and musicological facts."⁵³ Marton explains how the beliefs taught by his parents and the evidence of instrumental worship found in the psalms were a source of confusion for him. "Reading these psalms and others on one hand and listening to my parents' reasoning on the other hand, the confusion was strong."⁵⁴ Marton describes a much more historically grounded discourse: "Throughout history, the church was in tension with popular music. In light of this tension, the church was even against sacred music that encompassed sacred instrumentation with sacred words but was in the style of secular compositions."⁵⁵ Marton writes of the irony of this disdain "However, much to the church's displeasure, it was this type of music that composers experimented with and reformers promoted, i.e., a hybrid of secular music with sacred lyrics."⁵⁶ Faulkner confirms this assertion in a future-conscious context when he writes, "It's safe to say that elements of today's popular music will eventually reconcile

⁵² Garcia II. *The Role of Music Education in the First Baptist Church of Panama City, Florida (1979-2009)*. 2013.

⁵³ Marius E. Marton, "*Worship Music in the 21st Century: Selecting Proper Music for Worship in Regards to Lyrics, Instrumentation, and Rhythm*", (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015).

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Marton. *Worship Music in the 21st Century: Selecting Proper Music for Worship in Regards to Lyrics, Instrumentation, and Rhythm*. 2015.

themselves with more conservative style traits, and that future musical styles will be all the richer for it-including styles of church music."⁵⁷

While many musicians involved in instrumental worship are primarily educators or symphony players, there do exist a smaller number of classically trained players of classical instruments who would describe themselves, especially as worship instrumentalists. Two examples of such are Violists David Wallace and Diana Christine Clemons.

In his article discussing the role of a worship violist Wallace writes, "The typical worship violist is fluent in all contemporary styles, not only as a player, but also as a listener, composer, and arranger. In every style, the worship violist must be able to improvise solos, harmonies, and rhythmic accompaniments from a piano-vocal score or chord chart."⁵⁸ Wallace's experiences are supported by Faulkner when he writes, "They are even reintroducing the art of improvisation to worship at a level that hasn't been heard for centuries"⁵⁹ Wallace continues to describe the role and responsibilities: "Well-versed in transposition and playing by ear, contemporary worship violists embody numerous skills expected of a Kapellmeister in Bach and Handel's day."⁶⁰ Indeed, Bach remains a relevant name in modern worship music, affirmed by Marton: "Although Bach lived during the Baroque period, his music is still admired and studied by jazz musicians in the twentieth century for its improvisational qualities."⁶¹ Continuing to espouse the specific

⁵⁷ Quentin Faulkner, "Straight Talk About Traditional Versus Contemporary Christian Music", (The American Organist; New York, Vol. 40, Iss. 6, June 2006).

⁵⁸ David Wallace. "The Eclectic Violist: The Contemporary Worship Violist", (Journal of the American Viola Society Provo, UT, Vol. 29, Iss. 1, Spring 2013).

⁵⁹ Faulkner. "Straight Talk About Traditional Versus Contemporary Christian Music". 2006.

⁶⁰ Wallace. "The Eclectic Violist: The Contemporary Worship Violist". 2013.

⁶¹ Marton. *Worship Music in the 21st Century: Selecting Proper Music for Worship in Regards to Lyrics, Instrumentation, and Rhythm*. 2015.

strengths of classic strings in contemporary worship, Wallace points out, "Double-stops can provide the illusion of a string section and can fill out missing vocal harmonies."⁶² This versatility allows classical strings to fill the roles of multiple musicians, from vocals to guitars.

Wallace also points out that there are not only musical benefits to orchestras but spiritual benefits as well: "On a more metaphysical and spiritual level, pastors frequently compare the role of the worship team to the priestly role of the Levites, the Hebrew tribe dedicated to temple service and musical in biblical times."⁶³ As such, Wallace explains "serving on a worship team brings the expectation of maturity, personal accountability to pastors and fellow team members, an active devotional life, and a high and often clearly stated standard of conduct."⁶⁴ Wallace points out another difficulty in utilizing a worship orchestra of diverse players. "While some congregations do pay their worship teams, the vast majority of musicians volunteer their time and talents. In working with amateurs, professionals on a worship team must apply tremendous patience in bridging the gaps between diverse instrumental skills, degrees of musical literacy, and comprehensive knowledge."⁶⁵

As interviewed by Wallace, Diana Christine Clemons describes the freedom and fulfillment she receives from playing in a contemporary worship context: "I am fortunate to be able to play by ear; so, when there is something extravagant to be played, I usually get to play it." Clemons continues, "I get to enter into a realm of freedom as a performer that few classical

⁶² Wallace. *"The Eclectic Violist: The Contemporary Worship Violist"*. 2013.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

musicians will ever get to experience."⁶⁶ Clemons explains how longevity and trust allow for increased freedom: "I have been at my current church for about ten years. Now, most of the time they don't even give me music, charts, or mp3s to study ahead of time; they just set up a microphone, tell me when to show up, and let me do what I do. I live in a world of improvisation that is like living life in a giant cadenza. There is little that I do as a musician that is as fulfilling as the time I get to worship."⁶⁷

Speaking of microphones, Clemons describes how the lack of relative volume produced by classical string instruments is overcome in a contemporary setting: "I am amplified. I have used everything from a lapel microphone strapped around my viola to every form of stand or boom microphone."⁶⁸ Lastly, Clemons describes sharing her love of contemporary worship with others: "In recent years I have begun teaching improvisation to classical musicians at summer camps and at colleges. It is really fun. It has come directly from my time as a member of a worship team."⁶⁹

Music Education

While the origins of orchestral music are found in the church, much of their study has since moved to academia. What follows is a collection of data from the field of music education, which informs and supports the theses of this dissertation.

⁶⁶ Wallace. "*The Eclectic Violist: The Contemporary Worship Violist*". 2013.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

There are certainly many differences between professional/civic orchestras and church orchestras. However, studying the organizational and financial struggles of the former can provide valuable insight into the successful implementation of the latter.

In Brian Barber Dillie's case study of four different professional/civic orchestras, people associated with each organization were asked questions. The results of Dillie's research, when viewed through the lens of church orchestras, contain significant implications. Dillie writes, "First, respondents often mentioned a small set of themes. The five most common included: (a) finances/survival; (b) artistic excellence; (c) organizational/personnel; (d) making music accessible & relevant; and (e) to serve the community."⁷⁰ Again, it is essential to simultaneously consider that this data is related to a secular organization, and the data could well describe the most artistic organization of religious or secular context. Dillie expounds upon the theme of finances/survival: "This theme includes subthemes that dealt explicitly with orchestras' finances, and these goals were often expressed in terms of simply keeping an orchestra in operation. Respondents mentioned stability, solvency, financial sustainability, and viability..."⁷¹

Each of these sub-themes is also valuable in the context of a church orchestra. On the theme of artistic excellence, Dillie relays, "Respondents mentioned many goals that fit under the rubric of musical quality: aspiring to be an orchestra that is celebrated nationally and internationally, presenting superb music, and serving the missions of their organizations, which express artistic excellence as a *raison d'etre*."⁷² At first glance, artistic excellence may seem a

⁷⁰ Brian Barber Dillie, "Vibrant Symphony Orchestras: A Policy Analytic Perspective." Order No. 10300570, The Pardee RAND Graduate School, 2016.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Dillie. *Vibrant Symphony Orchestras*. 2016.

vain goal for an orchestra in the context of worship. On the other hand, consider that few congregations or clergy will be interested in funding an orchestra they do not see as glorifying God or enhancing His worship.

There is somewhat of a departure in organizational and personnel goals that are not as applicable to church orchestras. On "making music accessible and relevant," Dillie writes, "This theme captures a range of goals including attracting younger and more diverse audiences, expanding audience size generally, and developing music education programs. Respondents mentioned that it was important to cultivate and expand the number of youth and ethnic minorities (specifically, Latinos) who participated in concerts and programs."⁷³ Any conversation about music and worship in the 21st century is bound to include the term "relevant." It is no stretch, then, to see how the above concerns could just as easily exist in the context of a church orchestra. Dillie continues: "They felt it was important to keep classical music performance alive, generally, and suggested that fostering music education, and other innovative programming as well as spreading of the communal experience, were a salient part of their mission."⁷⁴

As this study is concerned with orchestras in a contemporary context, the concern is not so much with keeping classical music alive. However, if "classical" were substituted with "worship," the implications would become more apparent. Lastly, Dillie explains the desire of the case study respondents to engage, relate to, and positively contribute to the communities in

⁷³ Dillie. *Vibrant Symphony Orchestras*. 2016.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

which they exist.⁷⁵ Likewise, a church, specifically a worship ministry, must always consider its effect on its worshiping community and its surrounding physical/geographic community.

Dillie separates orchestral revenue into two categories: performance and nonperformance. Of the latter, he writes, "As stated in the background section, nonperformance revenue is largely the product of uncoordinated decisions made by individuals motivated by diverse interests, largely outside an orchestra's control."⁷⁶ This form of revenue most closely resembles the funding of a church orchestra. Churches do not sell tickets or charge admission, so performance revenue is non-existent. Dillie explains nonperformance revenue: "The orchestra's role is sometimes as simple as asking for money, but often involves a long process of developing strong relationships with donors and working with them to find the right mechanisms for providing gifts."⁷⁷ One could just as easily apply giving to the church in the context of tithes and offerings in a church setting. One can quickly draw the parallels here as a church's budget and, by extension, a church orchestra's budget is primarily determined by such giving.

Further describing the role of individual giving, Dillie continues, "Of all the sources of nonperformance income, private giving is the largest and most important (for both US orchestras in general and for the case study orchestras in particular)."⁷⁸ Dillie writes that 86 percent of the nonperformance revenue of his case study orchestras is private gifts. While this figure is likely even higher for churches, the figure is sufficiently high to portray the importance of private

⁷⁵ Dillie. *Vibrant Symphony Orchestras*. 2016.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

giving in both contexts. It is also worth noting that, like churches, orchestras are much more likely to receive funding from individuals as opposed to businesses or other organizations.⁷⁹

Dillie draws further similarities by describing how the case study orchestra players receive pay. "All of the case study orchestras paid their musicians for services, which are rehearsals or performances, as opposed to paying them fixed salaries." He continues, "The total cost of musicians to an orchestra is a function of the costs for services and the total number of services required."⁸⁰ For a professional/civic orchestra, the season schedule determines the total number of services required. The leadership of the organization largely determines the season schedule. In contrast, the church orchestra's total number of services required is much more consistent and predictable. On the other hand, a church orchestra may not participate every week, or the size of the orchestra may vary from Sunday to Sunday, bringing the similarities to the case study orchestras that much closer. Dillie further illustrates this similarity by writing, "To reach their diverse goals, orchestras have different cost profiles...these profiles vary considerably as each orchestra juggles musicians, performances, venues, and professional staffs."⁸¹ While variables such as venue and professional staff are less likely to apply to church orchestras, other factors are easily seen in seasonal/liturgical cycles of the church.

Dillie describes two broad categories of financial struggles orchestras face, which are separate yet intertwined. First, "In the short- term, they are constantly trying to stay afloat - making sure that they have enough revenue to offset their expenses." And second, "In the long-

⁷⁹ Dillie. *Vibrant Symphony Orchestras*. 2016.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

term, US orchestras are continually trying to survive in the changing social environment in which they operate."⁸² While the short-term struggles could undoubtedly apply to church orchestras, one could assert that the long-term struggles are more significant in a church orchestra's survival or implementation. As the social and musical culture of the church continues to change, an orchestra must ever evolve in its execution of worship to justify its continued existence.

Dillie continues to describe the social struggles facing orchestras. "Attending symphony performances is a leisure activity that people have engaged in for hundreds of years. Orchestras are associated with tradition, specifically, with "high culture" and other performing arts such as opera and ballet."⁸³ It is an unfortunate yet accurate statement that the same is true of attending regular worship in the church. In addition, for those who regularly attend worship services, the presence of an orchestra in worship is similar. There is undoubtedly an element of local pride for the church to be able to implement an orchestra. However, as social and generational trends evolve, that element of local pride may change in favor of more "contemporary" aspects of worship, such as sound, lighting, staging, and other production-related items. Dillie emphasizes this evolution when he writes, "In addition...the evidence indicates that there are generational changes occurring in preferences for leisure."⁸⁴

Finally, Dillie suggests solutions for the professional/civic orchestra facing these struggles, some of which could apply to the church. "Orchestras may benefit from merging with their community's youth orchestra(s). One possible benefit of merging is lower overhead

⁸² Dillie. *Vibrant Symphony Orchestras*. 2016.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

spending."⁸⁵ Similarly, a church orchestra might find lower costs associated with hiring players from the local college, high school, or even potentially middle school instead of relying primarily on local professionals. In addition, congregation and clergy alike may see evangelical and outreach benefits in the involvement of youth players, further fortifying support and, thus, funding. Dillie supports this. "Providing support for youth ensembles would undoubtedly strengthen an orchestra's reputation, as I have defined it. It would provide music education and demonstrably fulfill the desires of parents in the community."⁸⁶

Dillie also describes the benefits from the perspective of the youth: "The youth orchestra also potentially benefits from merging with an adult orchestra, as young players often have increased opportunities to interact with and learn from older, more experienced musicians and conductors."⁸⁷ Inherent within this benefit is a certain amount of self-sustenance, whereby youth players who benefit from interaction with, and hands-on education from, professional players and conductors, become the very professionals with whom they interacted and learned.

Michael G. Mauskapf provides additional strategies to struggling orchestras, some of which can apply to the church orchestra. Describing programs that involve and engage the community, Mauskapf writes, "Thus while arts organizations have traditionally viewed audiences as passive consumers, these programs suggest a shift toward a more participatory framework, in which community members interact with both the music and the musicians."⁸⁸ In

⁸⁵ Dillie. *Vibrant Symphony Orchestras*. 2016.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Michael G. Mauskapf, "Enduring Crisis, Ensuring Survival: Artistry, Economics, and the American Symphony Orchestra." Order No. 3519659, University of Michigan, 2012.

the context of the church orchestra, this describes a mission for both the orchestra and the church. Worship should engage a congregation in participatory worship instead of quiet observation or vicarious worship. A congregation actively worshipping with, instead of being entertained by an orchestra is more likely to exhibit support for; thus funding, said orchestra. Likewise, a church orchestra that utilizes its own congregation members, not as paid players, but as volunteer worshipers, is more likely to maintain a relationship with its congregation whereby the members have a sense of ownership and belonging, even if they do not play in the orchestra.

Finally, Mauskapf provides hope for orchestras everywhere when he writes, "Yet strong evidence exists, and reminds us, that orchestras have done more than simply survive in the twentieth century."⁸⁹

The skill of improvisation is critical to any discussion of instrumental participation in worship. April Koeller-Hajos writes, "Improvisation has existed throughout the history of music. Its significance has varied from dominating musical styles to being virtually non-existent."⁹⁰ Tracing the practice back millennia, Koeller-Hajos continues, "Over two thousand years ago the practice of improvisation among the Greeks was widespread. Music was performed spontaneously to accompany daily activities: work, play, war, love, and worship."⁹¹

Focusing on worship as our primary concern, Koeller-Hajos continues, "In the first Christian churches and up to about the eighth century the singing of chants was improvisatory.

⁸⁹ Mauskapf. *Enduring Crisis, Ensuring Survival: Artistry, Economics, and the American Symphony Orchestra*. 2012.

⁹⁰ April Koeller-Hajos, "Improvisation in an Intermediate Instrumental Music Setting." Order No. EP31758, Silver Lake College, 1999.

⁹¹ Koeller-Hajos. *Improvisation in an Intermediate Instrumental Setting*. 1999.

This was not "free" spontaneous improvisation, the singer would embellish on traditional melodies associated with particular parts of the liturgy or seasons of the church year."⁹²

Koeller-Hajos explains the necessity of improvisation as notation did not account for all the desired notes in a given performance. This practice continued through the Renaissance and Baroque eras. In fact, improvisation was such a critical skill for musicians of this age that Italian churches selected organists for employment primarily on their affinity for improvisation."⁹³ Often, the only explicitly notated music available was a melody or, later in the Baroque period, a bass line commonly referred to as a "Ground."

During this period, much improvisation centered around embellishments on given melodies and improvised accompaniments of written ground lines.⁹⁴ The importance of improvisation in the Renaissance and Baroque eras produced an entire generation of composers well-known for their expertise as improvisators. Mozart and Beethoven, in particular, were famous for their improvisatory abilities on the piano, frequently utilizing this skill in live concert, as well as a means for composing written, notated works.⁹⁵

The one area in which classical performers had the freedom to improvise was during the cadenza of the instrumental concerto form, which at the time would have been improvised based on scant information from the composer.⁹⁶ While some modern performers rely on cadenzas written out from prior performances, some continue the practice of improvising the cadenzas

⁹² Koeller-Hajos. *Improvisation in an Intermediate Instrumental Setting*. 1999.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

during live performances. The increased use of implicit notated musical instruction through the 19th century further reduced the need for, and thus the teaching of, improvisation. It was the turn of the 20th century that saw the advent of a new musical style with improvisation at its core.

As Koeller-Hajos writes, "jazz became the style in which spontaneous creation became a standard element."⁹⁷ Jazz combined stylistic elements from an incredibly diverse array of cultures to create something unique. Writing on the origins of Jazz, Felipe Blanco asserts, "The roots of jazz and its improvisatory nature can be traced back to Africa. Songs, instrumental techniques, repertoire, and dance were all learned informally through observation and imitation."⁹⁸ Blanco explains that once enslaved and forcibly transported to the United States, "African-Americans retained these performing traditions, adapting them to new forms of music such as the spiritual, the work song, and the blues, thereby creating the foundation for jazz."⁹⁹

Koeller-Hajos provides further historical context to jazz history: "A mixture of sacred and secular music from England and Europe also influenced the jazz style. Church hymns, folk songs, popular dances, including reels and jigs, and military marches made their contribution to the new music. (39:4)"¹⁰⁰ It becomes clear that jazz influence in church music is merely a "paying back" of the church's influence on jazz music. Koeller-Hajos continues, "In the early part of the nineteenth century, the religious movement known as the Great Awakening brought together the slaves and the Christians." These meetings served not only as a place for God's

⁹⁷ Koeller-Hajos. *Improvisation in an Intermediate Instrumental Setting*. 1999.

⁹⁸ Felipe Tobar Blanco, "The Integration of Improvisation in the Curriculum of String Orchestral Music Education for K-12." Order No. 28648560, Northeastern Illinois University, 2021.

⁹⁹ Alicea Peyton, "Collaborative Information Behavior: Storefront Church Gospel Communities of Musical Practice." Order No. 29399015, Dominican University, 2023.

¹⁰⁰ Koeller-Hajos. *Improvisation in an Intermediate Instrumental Setting*. 1999.

Word to be shared but for diverse musical styles to be shared. "Camp meetings, held by Presbyterians, Methodists and other nonconformist sects, met in large tents in rural areas to worship. The slaves attended the worship services and contributed their own enthusiasm."¹⁰¹ Sharing musical idioms at these camp meetings continued to leave its mark on American music for the next century and beyond, even to the present. Koeller-Hajos remarks, "The rock' n' roll era of the 50's and 60's was largely influenced by the blues idiom."¹⁰²

Peyton points out that, at least for African Americans, their contributions to jazz never left the church but continued to influence worship even as it influenced more popular styles of music. "According to Booker (1988), the first paid instrumentalist at the St. Luke Church of God in Christ, located in Tutwiler, Mississippi, could not read music and played by ear. In Pentecostal churches, spontaneity was central to worship services during the early development of music ministry."¹⁰³ Peyton continues, "The ability to incorporate one's individualized musical expression during church services gave way to ear-training practices that often mimicked the techniques heard among circles of storefront church music ministries."¹⁰⁴ These ear-training practices not only perpetuated the tradition within the church but served as a foundation for future, more standardized educational methods. Peyton also remarks that some considered these "ear-trained" musicians musically and supernaturally "gifted by the spirit."¹⁰⁵ Peyton goes on to

¹⁰¹ Koeller-Hajos. *Improvisation in an Intermediate Instrumental Setting*. 1999.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Peyton. *Collaborative Information Behavior: Storefront Church Gospel Communities of Musical Practice*. 2023.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Peyton. *Collaborative Information Behavior: Storefront Church Gospel Communities of Musical Practice*. 2023.

emphasize not only the importance of possessing a "good ear" but also the perceived deficiencies of musical literacy within some of these "storefront" churches: "As gospel music became popularized, churches sought skilled musicians. Aside from knowing specific gospel standards, having a good ear was the only requirement for role fulfillment (Mapson, 1984). Moreover, being musically literate was often criticized because of the musicians' dependency on sheet music (Mapson, 1984)."¹⁰⁶

Contrasting storefront and mainstream churches, Peyton adds, "On the other hand, in many mainstream African American denominations, ear-trained musicians who did not know how to read music were considered musically deficient (Mapson, 1984)."¹⁰⁷ Koeller-Hajos also extols the virtues of this free form of musical expression "Improvisation allows musicians to individually express their thoughts, emotions and experiences at any time or place. This spontaneous creativity can be one of the most rewarding and enjoyable activities offered to any student of music."¹⁰⁸

Writing on the education of gospel, jazz, and blues musicians, Palmer asserts, "Most often, gospel pianists who played by ear developed their skills by attending the concerts of famous musicians whom they admired and then emulating what they heard while in session or from a recording (Southern, 1997)."¹⁰⁹ Palmer further emphasizes this point when he writes, "In its early days, jazz education occurred "on the bandstand" and in the informal environment of the

¹⁰⁶ Peyton. *Collaborative Information Behavior: Storefront Church Gospel Communities of Musical Practice*. 2023.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Koeller-Hajos. *Improvisation in an Intermediate Instrumental Setting*. 1999.

¹⁰⁹ Christopher Michael Palmer, "An Analysis of Instrumental Jazz Improvisation Development among High School and College Musicians." Order No. 3610139, University of Michigan, 2013.

club, dancehall, and theater (Dobbins, 1988)."¹¹⁰ Clearly, experiential learning has dominated jazz education, and thus education on the skill of improvisation. Palmer continues on the "by ear" nature of jazz and improvisation "Improvisation is generally regarded as an aural process; while ideas for jazz improvisation are derived from sketches or skeletal frames of notation, aural inspiration frequently takes precedence over the written note, giving jazz its characteristic quality of free expression" (Campbell, 1991, p. 177)."¹¹¹ Further contrasting jazz education and "classical" education, Palmer writes, "Unlike any other traditional form of music taught in American schools, jazz is unique primarily because of improvisation. It depends on sophisticated knowledge of repertoire, style, technical expertise, and the ability to interact with others to create music in the moment."¹¹²

Koeller-Hajos provides a baseline definition for jazz improvisation

"In the style of jazz music, musicians improvise when they create music during a performance. The foundation of the improvisation is an established composition or idea with a prearranged chord progression. This progression dictates which sounds the musician may use within his creative endeavor. Improvisation, in music, although it is a spontaneous endeavor, requires a variety of processes including: background knowledge, preparation, and finally the performance. A well-performed improvisation depends on the performer having a broad base of musical experiences."¹¹³

Chancey provides some informal introduction to improvisation that is helpful for those who practice improvisation and those who seek to understand it better. "Making stuff up" is the first

¹¹⁰ Palmer. *An Analysis of Instrumental Jazz Improvisation Development among High School and College Musicians*. 2013.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Koeller-Hajos. *Improvisation in an Intermediate Instrumental Setting*. 1999.

step in the practice of "making stuff up in a particular historical style."¹¹⁴ What follows is an excerpt from a beginner's improvisation exercise:

"Try this: in two minutes, tell me the story of Jack and the Beanstalk in music, using just the first five notes of the major scale (C, D, E, F, G in any octave). Hint: Like most stories it's in ABA form. First, the story is set in motion; then, Jack goes out and engages with the Giant; and finally, he comes home victorious. (In musical terms, that's Exposition-Development-Recapitulation.) Plan your improvisation. Did you think that all improvisation is totally spontaneous? Well, maybe it is in Free Improv (not necessarily tied to any models), but with an improv that tells a story, it never hurts to prepare a structure."¹¹⁵

Chancey follows this exercise with encouragement on approaching improvisation "If you want to improvise, it's not enough to play the notes well. You'll need to change the way you think about the notes-from fixed to flexible, from set in stone to open to change. And you'll need to start playing around with these new approaches."¹¹⁶

Koeller-Hajos quoting Chuck Israel, also provides some information critical to both the practice and understanding of improvisation "Jazz String Bass Player Chuck Israel said, 'The musical decisions that take place during improvisations are made instantly, but the work behind those decisions takes place over long periods of time-hours, days, weeks, months, and years spent considering all of the musical possibilities.'¹¹⁷ Writing on the acquisition of these critical skills, Koeller-Hajos asserts

"Improvisers need experiences in listening and performing by ear solos of great improvisers, scales and chords, harmonic progressions and usable patterns. Through listening, the musician is rigorously training his ear and building a storehouse of basic musical components. This "playing by ear" is essential in improvisation. Once a

¹¹⁴ Tina Chancey, "Improvisation: Basics for Beginning Improvisers; then Ideas for Intermediate Improvisers using La Folia." *American Recorder* 63, no. 3 (Fall, 2022): 30-4.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Koeller-Hajos. *Improvisation in an Intermediate Instrumental Setting*. 1999.

performer is able to perform what he hears from an outside source, he will more readily be able to translate his own ideas during improvisation through the same technique."¹¹⁸

Koeller-Hajos is clear in not undervaluing the importance of theoretical knowledge in concert with experiential learning.

Some improvisers may need more experiences than just listening and transcribing to produce a spontaneous solo. They may require more theoretical knowledge. This awareness may include the study of scales and chords. The training of musicians in the area of scales is very similar to the learning of the alphabet. As students learning the English language, the alphabet is taught as the foundation. The goal in learning the alphabet is not to recite it, but to use it as a tool to learn to read, write, spell, talk, pronounce correctly and finally to communicate. Scales are the foundation to which the musician can create musical words, sentences, paragraphs, and finally to communicate. Therefore, the learning of scales is an important resource in improvisation.

For the improviser, the awareness of scale-chord relationship allows for the use of an entire scale for each chord in the progression. Instead of playing only the three or four notes of the chord, there is the possibility of the seven different notes of the scale with which to create.

The improviser may also require background experience in the device of usable patterns. Patterns are short melodic fragments built from scales and comparable to words or short sentences.

When a musician's need to rely strictly on pre-planned patterns diminishes, he develops his own skill and confidence in creatively producing his own ideas spontaneously.

Prior to the sound coming out of the performer's instrument, the improviser must hear or sing in his mind the note or notes to be played, recognize them, understand what they are trying to say and associate the idea to the fingers."¹¹⁹

While the above clarifies the advances in understanding, communicating, and performing improvisation, formal and institutionalized education on the subject continues to lag. Palmer explains, "Despite the development of a wide range of instructional approaches to learning jazz improvisation, understanding the sequence of improvisational development, from novice to

¹¹⁸ Koeller-Hajos. *Improvisation in an Intermediate Instrumental Setting*. 1999.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

advanced stages, has not been systematically explored."¹²⁰ Palmer further decries the lack of formal and institutional advancements made in jazz and improvisation when he writes

"Much of music education during the 19th century through the first half of the 20th century in the United States focused almost exclusively on cultivating music performance abilities, reading of notation, and appreciation through listening (Mark & Gary, 2007). Other form of musical creativity (i.e., composition, improvisation and musical analysis) are rarely mentioned in music education curricula of this time. And since jazz did not become a part of school music programs until the 1960's (Mark, 1975), improvisation was a skill seldom mentioned in K-12 education."¹²¹

May brings a more positive outlook on formal and institutionalized jazz education. From the context of more recent history May writes, "During the past 40 years, jazz education has become an integral part of music education. Improvisation, a central element to jazz, has often been viewed as a gift that does not lend itself to instruction. This myth has been refuted by the success of a wealth of methods and pedagogical tools developed for the teaching of jazz (Coker, 1989; Witmer & Robbins, 1988)."¹²² May further elaborates on the implications of the above statement when she writes

"This finding suggests that the multiplicity of subskills contributing to achievement in instrumental jazz improvisation should be developed simultaneously rather than in a sequential fashion. Although it is often necessary pedagogically to break a complex skill such as improvisation into manageable subskills, the interdependence of these subskills as evidenced by the high correlations reported in the present study indicates that they should be developed contiguously."¹²³

¹²⁰ Palmer. *An Analysis of Instrumental Jazz Improvisation Development among High School and College Musicians*. 2013.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Lissa F. May, "Factors and Abilities Influencing Achievement in Instrumental Jazz Improvisation." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 51, no. 3 (Fall, 2003): 245-58.

¹²³ Ibid.

While the above information discusses jazz from diverse viewpoints, there remains one viewpoint that is, at the very least, underrepresented: classical string instruments. Blanco discusses a possible explanation for this exclusion.

Improvisation can be immediately linked to some specific styles of popular music such as Jazz and Blues. Now the fact that bowed string instruments (we are talking about violin, viola and cello, excluding the upright bass which has a predominant part in these styles) are not very common in these styles, might contribute to the lack of inclusion of these instruments into what is associated with instruments for improvisation. For example, when we think of a jazz group or ensemble, we immediately imagine a group with drums, bass, piano or electric guitar and a couple of brass or wind instruments, usually trumpet, saxophone or clarinet."¹²⁴

To make progress towards rectifying the inequality mentioned above, Blanco provides several resources for bowed string players who desire to pursue jazz education. Blanco writes

"Julie Lyonn Liberman has written several books and methods on the topic, specifically in her book *Improvising Violin (Huiksi Music 1995)* She approaches improvisation through several different styles including; blues, swing, jazz, rock, folk and new age. She also explains some important topics such as playing on chord changes, the deep study and practice of all different keys, guidelines for learning a tune, rhythms, intervals, jazz modes and audio amplification.

Mark O'Connor who is well known as a fiddle, mandolin and guitar virtuoso, also has published a method in several volumes for violin, viola, cello, bass and string orchestra. This method is presented in a progressive manner similar to the Suzuki method but based on traditional, classical, and folk music from the Americas and original compositions. The principles of the method are described as: listening, practice, progression, exercising, performance, relevance, creativity and expression.

Online platforms have also become an important source of information and pedagogical tools for teachers and students looking to incorporate improvisation into the world of bowed string instruments. Violinist Christian Howes has been creating online content and methods for over 10 years in his media platform "creative Strings." He is also an associate professor at the Berklee College of Music. Howes has created dozens of "play along" videos to incentivize creativity and improvisation, all free to access in his Youtube channel. He refers extensively to his experience learning and exploring improvisation and different styles of music in interviews and in his website."¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Blanco. *The Integration of Improvisation in the Curriculum of String Orchestral Music Education for K-12*. 2021.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

While the above resources are more in the vane of private, individualized study, Blanco also discusses some institutions of higher learning which have ventured into formal jazz education.

"Some major music schools and universities have also incorporated classes and degrees dedicated to music styles that use improvisation. Berklee College of Music has a whole string department dedicated to teaching music related to jazz, blues and folk music. The University of Texas recently opened both Bachelor's and Master's degrees for jazz violin, viola and cello. "The Jazz Strings program at UNT provides students with a solid foundation in acoustic jazz playing. The curriculum includes amplified playing and the use of electric instruments. Students will also have the opportunity to work in popular and alternative styles."¹²⁶

Blanco praises these post-secondary institutions for their forward-thinking approach to jazz education, especially that of bowed string players. "These college programs are showing a clear change in perspective of what students of bowed string instruments can integrate and seriously study in their curriculums."¹²⁷

While Blanco recognizes and lauds the improvements made in jazz education for bowed string instruments, there is also criticism for the lack of emphasis on improvisation in music education. "While improvisation has been an active part of music creation, its role in music education is still unclear."¹²⁸ Blanco advocates for the correction of this inequity when she writes

"The ability to improvise music can open so many doors for a musician that teaching that ability to young music students seems to be especially important these days. Incorporating elements of improvisation into music classes from the early stages can definitely benefit those students.

In the American String Teachers Association curriculum improvisation is acknowledged in the area of tonal aural skills and ear training section. According to this curriculum tonal aural skills are "as integrally tied to successful string playing as they are to successfully communicating in language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing.) It is

¹²⁶ Blanco. *The Integration of Improvisation in the Curriculum of String Orchestral Music Education for K-12*. 2021.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

essential that string teachers place strong emphasis on the development of aural skills in the earliest stages of instruction."¹²⁹

Conclusion

This chapter began by providing the biblical presuppositions, foundations, and backgrounds for orchestral and instrumental worship in the modern church. Sources from the field of Church Music then served as resources on the historical and more recent practices of including orchestral and instrumental ensembles in the execution of modern worship. Finally, writings from the field of Music Education provide historical context for the styles which most influence instrumental church music and offer some informal education on improvisation. Lastly, the researcher provides resources for formal education on improvisation and jazz for those interested.

The next chapter will discuss the methodology with which the researcher gathered the above sources.

¹²⁹ Blanco. *The Integration of Improvisation in the Curriculum of String Orchestral Music Education for K-12*. 2021.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

In conducting the literature review research of this study, the researcher identifies three primary categories which would greatly inform the use of instrumental forces in worship: Biblical factors, methodological church music factors, and integrated music education factors. Biblical factors consist of biblical references to music and worship. Methodological church music factors are churches previously implemented methodological practices that occur outside of the biblical record. Integrated music education factors are the theories, methods, studies, and curricula born in academia but have direct implications for the subject of the present study.

Biblical Factors

The researcher surveyed the entire canonized biblical record for several keywords and subjects to discover the biblical factors informing instrumental worship. For consistency, the researcher utilized a single version of the Bible: The Christian Standard Bible. Due to a wide range of variations in word use among innumerable versions of the Bible, the keywords and subjects used were highly inclusive to categorize as many instances of worship as possible. For this reason, some examples are more directly applicable than others. All the examples, however, are valuable to the study.

The researcher recorded all biblical accounts of instruments, whether specifically related to worship or not, to show the vastness of instrumental use throughout biblical history. Likewise, the researcher recorded all examples of worship regardless of type. Various types of worship noted can be categorized into three primary headings: Setting, Method, and Covenant. The two types of settings are private and corporate. The three types of methods are musical (vocal and instrumental), sacrificial, and Word-based (prayer, reading of scripture). The covenants are those acts of worship centered in the Old Covenant and New Covenant. In any given instance of

worship, one can identify at least one item from each of these three categories. Often, multiple methods are identifiable. For example, the account of the dedication of Solomon's temple is charted accordingly:

Dedication of Solomon's Temple		
Setting	Method	Covenant
Corporate	Vocal, Instrumental, Sacrificial, Prayer, Reading.	Old Covenant

As a contrasting example, worship in the account of the Last Supper between Jesus and the 12 is charted accordingly:

Last Supper		
Setting	Method	Covenant
Corporate	Vocal, Prayer, Reading	New Covenant

Lastly, worship in the account of Paul and Silas in jail could be charted accordingly:

Paul and Silas in Jail		
Setting	Method	Covenant
Private	Vocal	New Covenant

Also identified is an exhaustive reference to every instance of instrumental use in the biblical record. As previously mentioned, not all instances of instrumental use are instances of worship. Some non-worship references to instrumental use show instruments' widespread, multi-cultural, multi-generational, and multipurpose usage worldwide. Some non-worship references to instrumental use show the consistent use of instruments throughout history. Some non-worship references to instrumental use show how instruments pervaded everyday life at certain biblical times. Together these references form a complete resource about biblical worship and instrumental service.

Methodological Church Music Factors

Through ProQuest Dissertations publishing, the researcher sought to identify the existing and previously implemented instrumental worship methodologies. The only criterion for consideration in this category was instrumental implementation in corporate worship. The researcher gave zero consideration to worship style (traditional, blended, contemporary). Nor was there any consideration given to denominational practice. The goal in this category was simply to identify other scholarly recorded instances of instrumental use in corporate worship and to attempt to learn valuable lessons from the efforts of others.

Integrated Music Education Factors

As there was insufficient research previously conducted on practical, modern instrumental use in church settings, the researcher had to consider other subject areas. Research in music education is an extensive topic. Therefore, the researcher identified criteria to focus the scope of the search on a more useful and applicable set of data. The criteria applied to ProQuest Publishing exist within the following categories: Institutional, Historical, and Curriculum.

Institutional studies were those related to professional instrumental ensembles, specifically orchestral ensembles. While these studies dealt with a wide range of topics, perhaps the most valuable topic for this study were those related to finances and economics. There are also valuable customer/patron relations topics present in these studies, which have indirect implications for church music.

Historical studies are those related to the history of musical topics which have impacted contemporary worship. Namely, the history and development of the Jazz and Blues styles receive consideration for their impact on contemporary worship. Jazz and Blues receive consideration for their stylistic implications for contemporary worship and the methodological practices unique to each, which might be particularly practical for contemporary instrumental worship. Specifically, the practice of improvisation receives significant consideration.

Curriculum studies are those related to the musical practice of improvisation across various instruments. While this study is not exclusively concerned with instrumental improvisation in contemporary worship, the practice remains an essential part of the style. As such, it was critical to consider the state of improvisation in formal, instructional, and informal music education today. These curriculum studies also contain valuable information for a church musician who desires to learn the skill of improvisation or to teach the craft to those they direct.

Also considered in this study, but not included in the literature review, are the researcher's experiences in their worship context. To avoid bias, this context's name, location, and denomination are not provided. Nor have these identifiers been considered a notable factor in the research. Only the methodological practices of this worship context have received consideration as valuable, real-world examples of the issues facing using instrumental ensembles in contemporary worship.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Biblical Findings

The biblical record, especially the Old Testament, is an invaluable resource on the mandate to worship with instruments. Unfortunately, little detail exists as to the organization of these instruments. We see instruments utilized as solo instruments (David playing his harp in 1 Sam. 16) and instruments in great numbers (Great orchestra at the Passover celebration of King Josiah in 2 Chronicles 35). In many cases, it seems that availability was the only limiting factor. For a nation as economically and musically rich as Israel and Judah often were, this led to the utilization of some rather extravagantly sized instrumental ensembles.

Another detail of biblical instrumental worship that is helpful for churches today is the skill and ability of those who played. Skill often receives mention as a prerequisite for instrumental worship (Psalm 33, 1 Sam. 16, 1 Chron. 15, 1 Chron. 25). On the other hand, it is essential to consider this skill as relative. Since no biblical materials and methods, literature, or sound recordings exist to compare, these players' skills can only be regarded as relative to their own. These players were considered skillful within their own time and location. Therefore, we can only consider what is available in evaluating musicians today. This relativity is an important distinction as it directly influences one of the most significant difficulties in utilizing instruments in worship. The skill available in a large metropolitan area with numerous higher education institutions will likely differ drastically from a small rural area with no institutions of higher learning within 100 miles. From an absolute viewpoint, one could expect the quality of instrumental worship to be more outstanding at the metropolitan church than at the isolated urban church. That does not mean, however, that we should disqualify the rural church from implementing instrumental worship.

A certain amount of objective skill should exist in playing in tune and accurately regarding pitch and rhythm. Beyond those baseline skills, however, it might be unreasonable to expect the isolated rural players to play with a superior tone, from superior quality instruments, or as musically as those with more significant resources around them. Beyond skill and ability, there is another important yet commonly overlooked aspect of instrumental worship in the Old Testament: Those playing instruments were exclusively from the tribe of Levi. This tribe was consecrated to the Lord for service in worship. This consecration perhaps presents an even more critical aspect in employing instrumentalists than their musical ability. It seems clear from the biblical record that instrumentalists should have at least a basic understanding of, and thus be engaged in, worship and not simply performing.

Just as evaluating musical skill and ability can be difficult, assessing a person's spiritual state can be even more difficult. In some ways, a person can fake or misrepresent spiritual aspects of life. On the other hand, certain musical elements are present or not. At this point, a director must rely on prayer and discernment to determine who to invite immediately and who might need more immediate development before worshipping. In either case, however, musically or spiritually, it is not the director's goal to "root out" certain traits or to place themselves in a situation of judgment over others. Instead, it should be the goal of the director to humbly consider which players might have a discernable heart for worship and meet certain baseline musical abilities. As is often the case, the line between prayerful discernment and pharisaic behavior can be dangerously thin. In situations like this, Colossians 3:23-24 may serve as a helpful barometer for directors.

It is worth noting here that different pastoral leaders will have different opinions about whether to hire those musicians who may not be actively pursuing a relationship with Christ.

Some pastors will view such a situation as an opportunity for evangelism. The desire and hope are that by regularly attending church to play, the non-believing musician might come to know Christ or deepen their relationship with Him by being present. Other pastors may desire the hired musicians to be an example for the congregation and thus only employ those who are active disciples of Jesus. Neither of these approaches is inherently right or wrong, as both are born of a desire to be good and faithful servants, leaders, and stewards. As a music ministry leader, one should always defer to their pastor. In some circumstances, this approach could present an additional challenge to an instrumental worship ministry. For instance, only being able to hire those musicians who are active disciples of Christ may significantly limit the options available to a director. Size and overall musical excellence may suffer in such a situation. These risks must be communicated to pastoral leadership, not to change their mind, but as a matter of transparency. No pastoral leader should be willing to sacrifice integrity for musical excellence.

Another consideration likely to be influenced by the geographic location of a church is size and budget. Using our example from above, the metropolitan church is likely to be larger than its rural counterpart and thus possess a larger overall operating budget, which will likely result in a larger budget allocated to music in worship. In addition, the membership of the metropolitan church is more likely to be of a certain level of affluence than the rural church. This affluence may result in direct individual gifts to the music department of the metropolitan church or may simply result in more general giving. These observations are not hard and fast rules but are factors more generally associated with geographic location.

Due to the above factors, the metropolitan church is more likely to offer monetary compensation for its players, whereas the rural church is more likely to rely exclusively on volunteers. This dichotomy is not a positive or negative aspect, simply an observation. Many

directors decry having to pay instrumentalists instead of employing volunteers yet make no apologies for their compensation. On the other hand, others may consider players willing to play for free as somehow more "Holy" or "pious" than those who receive pay. Again, it is beneficial to consider the biblical record. Deuteronomy 18:1-2, 5 reads:

The Levitical priests, the whole tribe of Levi, will have no portion or inheritance with Israel. They will eat the Lord's food offerings; that is their inheritance. Although Levi has no inheritance among his brothers, the Lord is his inheritance, as he promised him." "For the Lord, your God has chosen him and his sons from all your tribes to stand and minister in his name from now on."

From this verse, it becomes clear that players in the Old Testament were compensated for their services, even if the compensation differed from what we utilize today. There should be no shame in paying players now while valuing and appreciating those who can or feel called to volunteer.

Financial Considerations

On the other hand, the number of players available, by hire or as volunteers, might be affected by geographic location. It is not the position of this researcher that you should either employ an entire orchestra or no orchestra. However, there are certain benefits to having each instrument within a classical orchestra represented. For instance, the more instruments played, the more likely crucial musical material is covered at any given time. There are also certain sonic benefits, as more instruments produce a louder acoustic sound. The argument could be made that perceived visual benefits also exist, as the presence of many players might cause a congregation to make certain favorable presumptions about their ability. These presumptions are often misleading or simply false, however.

On the other hand, as discussed above, specific scenarios will likely limit the number of players available. This limitation should in no way discourage the use of instruments in worship.

There are also particular benefits to employing a smaller number of players than a large orchestra. The financial benefits of a smaller number of players are apparent. Fewer players will almost always equal less money, allowing leadership to allocate funds to other ministries. The financial implications also go beyond the compensation for the players, however. Fewer players also equal less equipment necessary. Less music stands, fewer copies of music, fewer microphones (if amplification is desired or required), less need for a conductor, and less need for a sound engineer. Each item in the above list costs money but will nearly always cost less money with fewer players involved.

Human resources will nearly always be a church's most significant instrumental music ministry expenditure. The financial resources available, or lack thereof, to hire players will likely determine almost every other aspect of the ministry. The success of an instrumental ministry requires a high level of financial responsibility, accountability, and advanced planning.

It may be helpful to begin with a flat hourly rate at which hired players are compensated. Knowledge of the local "market" is critical, so players are offered a competitive rate without grossly underpaying. This rate should remain consistent for all hired players in the interest of equity and fairness. This rate may, by necessity, change during the holiday seasons, especially Advent and Lent. Again, this should generally be determined by the local "market" so that rates are fair and competitive. Next, the director should determine the amount of rehearsal time desired. Typically, hired players will only rehearse the morning of a worship service, saving time and money and making scheduling easier. For most hired players, a one-hour rehearsal before services begin should suffice.

On the other hand, volunteers may find it beneficial to attend a mid-week rehearsal. The number and spacing of services will generally determine the number of hours employed. For example, a

church that presents two services, one at 9 am and one at 10:30 am, might begin rehearsal at 8 am and be released by Noon. In this example, hired players play for four hours each week.

Based on the information above, one can easily construct a chart to plan how many players to hire. Below is an example of a chart in which each column is multiplied by the next column to the right. 16 weeks per school semester, roughly mirroring a university academic calendar, determines the number of Sundays:

Hourly Rate	Number of Hours	Number of Players Per Week	Number of Sundays	Total Expenditure
\$15/hour	X 4 (= \$60)	X 15 (= \$900/Week)	X 32	= \$28,000/Year

Below you will find a similar version of this chart for the season of Advent. As reflected below, a ministry might choose to hire a larger than-normal ensemble, at a higher hourly rate, with more rehearsal time during such a holiday season:

Hourly Rate	Number of Hours	Number of Players Per Week	Number of Sundays	Total Expenditure
\$30/hour	X 5 (= \$150)	X 25 (= \$3,750/Week)	X 5	= \$18,750/Advent

A chart for the two "biggest" Sundays of the Lenten season, Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday would change the number of Sundays to 2, and thus the total expenditure for the Lenten season to \$7,500.

Below you will find an example of an additional chart for calculating the total annual expenditure of hired musicians:

Total Non-Holiday Expenditure	Total Advent Expenditure	Total Lenten Expenditure	Total Annual Expenditure
\$28,000	\$18,750	\$7,500	\$54,250

One can alter these charts to represent a church leadership's desires and the available budget. The above examples would represent a combination of a high level of desire among leadership with a high level of financial resources, perhaps a somewhat less likely scenario. Each of these examples assumes the presence of a previously employed pianist or accompanist at the very least. Other pre-existing personnel would also potentially alter the needs of a ministry.

An instrumental ministry this large may also benefit from the presence of a dedicated orchestral conductor to lead the said ensemble in rehearsals and worship. This position could represent an additional financial investment. Estimating the amount of this investment would depend on too many other variables to accurately list here accurately, however. For example, an orchestral conductor could be a full-time staff member with other responsibilities, salary, and benefits or an additional hired musician reflecting the same rates as above. Churches in cities hosting post-secondary music departments may find employing a music department member beneficial. Doing so would create a natural, constant source of available musicians and provide outreach opportunities for the school and the church.

Smaller ensembles, on the other hand, may not require a designated conductor. In such circumstances, the orchestra's leadership may fall to the "lead singer" or "lead worshiper." A member of the orchestra itself may be able to provide leadership, as well as many other potentially present musicians. When a conductor is not needed, there is much more flexibility in personnel. Once again, size should be the primary determining factor here.

We should note the importance of a qualified accountant/bookkeeper should be consulted on the best way to facilitate payment to each of these musicians. Circumstances, as well as local and federal tax laws, will likely determine the best method. With a size as significant as the

above examples, musicians are probably placed on payroll, whereby the appropriate taxes are withheld and reported.

Space, Size, and Technology

Another consideration with the number of players that may or may not be financial is space. For the existing church building, it is unlikely to expect changes to that space and therefore is unlikely to be an economic factor. On the other hand, for the church planning a new building or a new major renovation, the financial ramifications of the number of players becomes much more apparent. Some players, such as classical strings and trombones, will take up more space while others, such as flute and clarinet, take up less. For easy calculations, consider the average space required for an instrumentalist as nine square feet. Employing a simple string quartet will require a minimum of 36 sq. ft. To hire a string quartet with single winds would need at least 72 sq. ft. To add single brass to that would require at least 108 sq. ft. To employ a full romantic symphonic orchestra could require as much as 1,000 sq. ft. Most church buildings are likely already able to accommodate at least a string quartet. In contrast, few churches can accommodate a full symphonic orchestra or anything close to it.

Another benefit of smaller instrumental ensembles is the possibility of improvisation. This possibility assumes the skill of improvisation, which may or may not be present. However, assuming the talent is present, employing a small number of instrumentalists makes utilizing the skill possible. A more in-depth discussion on improvisation follows later in this chapter. For now, as the number of players is concerned, it should suffice to say that the fewer players present, the easier it is to improvise. As players increase, so does the difficulty of improvising, to a point where improvising becomes highly impractical.

Several strategies also allow for a smaller number of players but still achieve a sufficient volume for any sized space. The most practical of these strategies is the amplification of certain instrument families. Namely, classical string instruments and woodwind instruments should receive consideration for amplification. The need for amplification is especially true in the presence of brass instruments or a drum set. In a traditional orchestral setting, a string count for each section (Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Cello, Double Bass) would be used to achieve an appropriate volume. A sizeable symphonic orchestra might employ a string count of 16-Violin 1, 14-Violin 2, 12-Viola, 10-Cello, and 8-Double Bass. The space required for such an ensemble disqualifies their use in all but the largest church spaces. One may use a single instrument, amplified with a condenser microphone, plugged directly into the PA system of the room to achieve the necessary volume from each section. If *divisi* exist within the string writing of contemporary worship scores, a single player utilizing double stops can often cover these.

Likewise, woodwind instruments are good candidates for amplification within a church setting. While woodwind instruments typically produce greater volume than classical strings and require fewer players within a large symphonic orchestra setting, amplification may still be necessary for the presence of brass instruments and a drum set. If space and budget are limiting factors, a single player per woodwind section will often suffice (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon). *Divisi* is more likely to be present within woodwind writing of contemporary worship scores, necessitating choosing which part to prioritize. In almost all situations, the first part of each section receives priority. Where space and budget are less limiting, employing a pair of each woodwind instrument will allow for playing most *divisi* parts without causing insurmountable balance issues between the woodwinds and strings. Only one microphone placed equidistant between the two players should be used when using pairs of woodwind players.

Even with the amplification of strings and woodwinds, it may be necessary to employ additional strategies to create balance in the "house" between strings, woodwinds, and brass. As brass instruments tend to be more unidirectional in their sound production, placing trumpets and trombones so their sound is projected parallel to the stage rather than perpendicular will keep more of the sound on stage rather than projecting into the house. Employing this strategy is likely to exacerbate balance issues from the perspective of the conductor or singers. Therefore, it is imperative to have a sound engineer with a trained ear who can relay the "house" balance to those on stage. Unlike trumpets and trombones, F Horns, whose sound projects backward, should be placed facing forward, without reflectors, for their sound to best balance with the remainder of the ensemble.

The number of players employed per brass section is worth more consideration, as writing for brass typically utilizes more *divisi* than woodwind writing. It is typical for brass writing in contemporary worship scores to call for three trumpets, trombones, and horns. While using the full complement of brass instruments will render a score as intended, budget, space, and balance issues may necessitate employing less brass than called for. Utilizing one player per brass section will result in a noticeably thinner, less robust sound but will suffice in most situations. Additionally, many contemporary worship scores are written flexibly and offer several substitutions, especially for brass instruments. Most notable of these brass substitutions is the utilization of the various instruments within the saxophone family (baritone, tenor, alto, soprano) in place of brass instruments. Substitutions utilizing other members of the clarinet family are also common. When using saxophones or clarinets as substitutes for brass instruments, they should also receive consideration for amplification like their other woodwind

counterparts. Brass instruments should rarely receive amplification, even when utilized as solo instruments.

When a drum set is present, as it often should be in contemporary worship, an enclosure will help maintain appropriate balance. If you utilize a semi-open enclosure style, amplifying the drums would be counterproductive to a proper balance. With a fully enclosed enclosure, microphones allow optimal balance by placing only the amplified drum sounds in the house and relying on no acoustic sounds.

Orchestration and Improvisation

As outlined above, there are two basic ways of providing musical material from an orchestra to play from in a contemporary worship setting. These are to play from previously arranged or published scores and parts specifically written for each instrument or to allow each player to improvise from either a chord chart or a lead sheet. Both approaches have their merits as well as their downsides. Nor should they be mutually exclusive, as you may utilize both simultaneously in certain situations.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, size should be the primary determining factor in which approach to utilize. Ensembles larger than six to eight players will likely benefit from scored parts. In comparison, ensembles smaller than this may find it challenging to support congregational worship by utilizing scored parts and thus may benefit from improvisation.

Scored parts are primarily available through online music publisher Praisecharts.com. Here one will find quite an extensive catalog of orchestrated praise and worship songs from decades past and present. The newest worship songs are also regularly added shortly after their artist's release. Orchestration from Praise Charts is very accessible able to be confidently played by amateur volunteers, music students, and professionals alike. Another benefit of these

orchestrations is their somewhat modular nature, meaning they allow the ensemble's diverse size and makeup to execute them successfully. When a player, or even many players, suddenly become unavailable to play on a Sunday morning, Praise Charts orchestrations retain their value almost regardless of the instruments available. That is not to say the orchestrations are not at their best when all instruments scored are present. However, nearly any size ensemble or almost any makeup will still be able to execute an accompaniment that enriches the worship for those attending.

Each selection is typically offered in at least three keys representing either male or female vocal leadership. The limited available keys can sometimes complicate planning a worship set with appropriate key relationships. However, Praise Charts now offers the option of purchasing most of its orchestrations in a Finale music notation format. This offering allows for quick and easy transposition of each selection to any key your singers or congregation might require.

An important note on transposing Praise Charts Finale orchestrations: Transposing orchestrations too far from their original key will likely result in notes outside the playable ranges of many instruments. This researcher prefers to keep transpositions within a major second of their original key to avoid unplayable notes or passages. There are instances, however, due to too few original keys or a specific need for key relationships or singer range, that a transposition at the minor third might be necessary. It is critical, in these instances, to thoroughly inspect all instruments to check for playability. Accomplished players will easily be able to edit their parts if necessary. Amateur, volunteer, or younger student players will likely need edited parts.

It is also important to note that Praise Charts orchestrations are strictly arrangements, not transcriptions. Arrangers need to expand what is initially a relatively thin musical texture into, at times, a rather dense, involved, orchestral texture. There are times when this can result in an

overly complex, muddy sonority. On the other hand, certain sections are excessively thin, utilizing only piano and drums for extended passages. This thin texture is especially true in songs or passages with a softer, more reflective affect. During these thinnest of passages and songs, a director might consider adding an improvisatory instrument or two to fill space if the players are available and comfortable enough to do so.

Praise Charts orchestrations also frequently exhibit at least one of the oft-decried aspects of contemporary worship music: unnecessary repetition. You can avoid these unnecessary repetitions with some strategic editing of the parts. Directors may also find it beneficial to edit out extended instrumental portions of songs. Some congregations may become less engaged during these passages and benefit from their removal. Other congregations may benefit from extended instrumental passages. It is for the director to know their congregation and act accordingly.

Directors utilizing Praise Charts must also be diligent in analyzing both parts and scores to ensure accuracy between the two. One of the most common inconsistencies between the score and parts occurs within the percussion parts. The symbol for a whole rest and the percussion symbol for repeating a measure are somewhat similar. This similarity leads to the use of one where the other is needed. Most often, the whole rest appears where the repeat symbol is required. This confusion often results in extended, unintentional passages of rest for percussionists. Another way in which this error manifests itself is in alternating patterns that each last two measures. Instead of the part showing a pattern for two bars, it shows the pattern for one measure, followed by a measure of rest. Fortunately, this mistake is reasonably easy for the experienced percussionist to catch and correct. On the other hand, an inexperienced player might be more likely to take the part at face value and not question its accuracy.

Percussion parts are not the only parts subject to inconsistencies and inaccuracies. Parts sometimes lack entire lines of their part, thereby skipping as many as eight measures. Trumpets and F Horn parts sometimes receive inaccurate or no transpositions, leaving their part in concert pitch. The occasional typo of a sharp, flat, or natural is also not uncommon.

Missing lines of a part and un-transposed, or mis-transposed, parts are among the more severe issues found. Missing parts not identified until a rehearsal leave a player with little option but to skip the measures or improvise the absent ones. An advanced player might easily overcome un-transposed or mis-transposed parts for transposing instruments able to transpose on sight. A less experienced player might not even recognize the mistake before hearing the part in the context of the rest of the ensemble. They are even less likely to be able to transpose a part on their own.

Many orchestrations also suffer from what one might categorize as "over-editing." Over-editing is the overuse of editorial markings such as multiple repeats, *segno*, and multiple *codas*. At times this "over-editing" renders what would generally be a very readable part unnecessarily complex and difficult to navigate. Due to this, it is helpful to use as much detail as possible when editing parts, even to the extent of erasing and rewriting editorial marks where needed. Directors may also find it helpful to begin rehearsals by pointing out any changes made.

The utilization of scored parts for an orchestra, by necessity, significantly limits the amount of flexibility available within a worship context. It is not impossible, but very difficult, to adjust a song "on-the-fly" when a worship leader may feel led to repeat a passage or speak to the congregation. There are times when a worship leader may forget the existence of an interlude or instrumental section and jump forward to a vocal entrance. While effective rehearsal will limit these occurrences, they will still inevitably happen. In these instances, the director and orchestra

must adjust quickly to the singer. Adjustments should always occur to meet the singer where they are, as they will typically be unable to see or communicate with the rest of the ensemble. A worst-case scenario is for a director to create a power struggle in the middle of a song by insisting on adherence to the score. This struggle will likely cause a much more noticeable and distracting event, where everyone working together to follow the singer may go unnoticed by all but the most trained ear within the congregation.

The work required to prepare orchestral parts for a large worship ensemble also limits the amount of flexibility in planning for a Sunday. Once parts receive transposition, are printed, and are edited for a given piece, very little can be done to make significant changes without the need to start the process over again. For this reason, advanced planning is even more critical than usual. It might be helpful to implement a weekly schedule for preparation, allowing for sufficient time earlier in the week to make necessary changes. This schedule might look like the example below:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Finalize keys and order for the worship set. Print parts.	Analyze parts for errors. Identify and mark edits.	Prepare rehearsal materials.	Finalize any minor changes from the rehearsal

Notice no time exists for planning a set, as the set for any given week should ideally be prepared well before the Monday of the week it will take place.

There are also several considerations in settings where improvisation is likely to be a more practical approach. Primary among these is the ability to improvise and experience doing so in an ensemble setting. In a formal, post-secondary music education program, improvisation

may only be emphasized or offered in jazz degree programs. These jazz degree programs are typically only available to wind and brass players. As a result, orchestral string players are the least likely to have experience improvising in an ensemble setting. This inexperience doesn't necessarily mean that wind and brass players will be able to improvise and string players will not; only that there are more ensemble opportunities for one than the other.

Those not experienced in improvising in an ensemble should not necessarily exclude themselves from such opportunities in a worship context. The most important training one can receive in improvisation is experience. Therefore, experience in a worship context may be the only opportunity available and the only opportunities needed. In addition to the methods outlined in chapter two, some fundamental techniques can get any player improvising.

Player's improvising will likely do so from a chord chart or lead sheet instead of a transcribed part. One option for the least experienced improviser is to play the "bass" note of each chord simply presented. In less technical terms, this will always be the letter name furthest to the right within any chord symbol. For example, if the chord chart has a progression of [G G/B C G/D D/F# G], the beginning improviser might simply play the notes G, B, C, D, F#, G, playing only one note per chord. This beginning approach requires very little knowledge of music theory and is thus appropriate for players of most skill, ability, and experience levels.

Players might be encouraged to play a combination of the roots and thirds of each chord symbol present as a next step in improvising. This technique will require more music theory knowledge than the previous example. Using the progression above this would result in the player having the following options of notes to play: G or B, G or B, C or E, G or B, D or F#, G or B. As a natural next step to this technique, the player might extend their options to all chord tones, meaning the root, third, or fifth of any triad. In this case, continuing with the progression

above, the player would have at their disposal: G, B, or D; G, B, or D; C, E, or G; G, B, or D; D, F#, or A; G, B, or D. Next a player might consider adding in passing tones or neighboring tones within their improvisation. They may play notes not found within the chord if they move stepwise to a chord tone. It is easy to see how this approach would continue to scaffold into the player's ability to improvise any given chord progression more seamlessly and naturally.

As players become more comfortable improvising, they may attempt to harmonize or embellish the melody. When harmonizing a melody, a player might find it easiest to begin harmonizing in parallel motion. A player might start by harmonizing in parallel thirds or sixths to the melody. An embellishment of a melody can take on nearly infinite forms, including rhythmic diminution and augmentation, adding chromaticism to the melodic line, and inverting the melodic line. Making use of these techniques may require the use of a lead sheet instead of a chord chart. A lead sheet will likely present the transcribed melody at any given point, along with the chord symbols. More experienced improvisers might be able to perform this technique "by ear" without the need for the notated melodic material.

Of course, some players will already have a "knack" for improvising with or without the theoretical knowledge to follow the above techniques. The process listed above would be intended more for the "classically trained" musician with some theoretical knowledge but little experience or knowledge of improvisation. The critical aspect is not "how" a player improvises but "that" they improvise. Experience is nearly always the best teacher for improvisation.

Once players have become more comfortable as improvisers, they need to understand their role in an ensemble setting. At the most basic level, this role should mirror the role a given instrument fills within a typical orchestral setting. As an example: Double Bass, Cello, Trombone, Tuba, and other "bass instruments" will almost always function as the foundation of

an ensemble, regardless of playing style. Conversely, Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets, and Trumpets might be better suited to play more melodic material. These roles, of course, are not hard and fast. Instead, they serve more as general guidelines which keep players in an improvised ensemble from filling the same space as another. Any instrument may, at any time, fill any role within an improvising ensemble if other instruments are aware and understand that there is now a functional void that requires filling.

Naturally, understanding the concept of roles and functions may take just as much experience to master as the concept of improvising itself. While players are still developing a sense of role and function, having more of a scripted plan for a given song may be helpful. Eventually, as with all aspects of improvising, players learn to trust themselves and others to the point where role and function are more naturally understood and executed.

Somewhat unique to improvising within a worship context is the nearly constant presence of a vocal melody upon which the entire song is likely built. The presence of this melody creates yet another layer to the subject of role and function, as the vocal melody, when present, must always take precedence over all other instruments. This requirement is because the vocal melody is the only instrument capable of carrying the text or lyrics of a song. The lyrics must always take precedence because they most effectively convey the song's affect or purpose to most people.

The larger the improvising ensemble, the more influential the concept of role and function becomes. In an improvising string quartet, there are fewer instruments than potential roles to fulfill. Therefore, there is a significantly decreased likelihood of more than one instrument performing the same function simultaneously. Such overlapping will rapidly degrade the clarity and structural integrity of the improvising ensemble. With adding a wind quartet to

that string quartet, the chances of overlapping functions are now drastically increased. Even this relatively small ensemble size will require experienced, aware improvisers to maintain clarity and structural integrity.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, playing from notated parts and improvising are not necessarily mutually exclusive of each other. Regardless of the source of music being played (orchestrated or improvised), several "standard" contemporary worship instruments are still likely to be present at any given time and will likely be improvising. Some may refer to this as the "band," while others may refer to this as the "rhythm section." While these instruments (drums, keyboard/piano, electric guitar, acoustic guitar, bass guitar) can provide the entire musical texture in contemporary worship, they can also provide a foundation upon which an orchestral texture is added. The "rhythm section" can improvise from chord charts while an orchestra plays from scored parts. However, this technique is not necessarily recommended as it presents a significant issue in running an efficient rehearsal. When some use parts and some use chord charts, a director must give two sets of instructions instead of one. For example: "Let us begin at pickup to measure 36. For those on chord charts, that is the fourth chord in the third line of the second chorus before we go to the bridge." This instruction can become time-consuming and confusing, especially with less experienced players or directors. In this case, a lead sheet may be most helpful for the "rhythm section." A good lead sheet will provide the same organizational and expressive markings (measure numbers, repeats, dynamics, etc.) as a conductor's score and parts while presenting the same chord symbols that would populate a chord chart. This results in a director being able to give one set of instructions to the entire ensemble. In the example above, the first set of instructions is necessary for all to know where to begin from. As mentioned above and as the name implies, lead sheets also present the various

lead lines and melodies in notated form, which may be helpful for improvising players. One can find quality lead sheets matching orchestrated parts on PraiseCharts.com as well.

While not specifically applicable to live instrumental ensembles in contemporary worship, it is worth noting that both Loop Community and Multi Tracks have recently begun offering backtracks that are specifically orchestral. Given the right technology, it is feasible that these tracks could supplement a smaller live instrumental ensemble while also saving space and money. More research is needed into the flexibility and quality of these tracks to determine their practical use as a supplement.

Multigenerational Mentoring

Another potential strategy for fielding an orchestra is developing a mentor system whereby younger or less experienced players can play with and learn from your more experienced or paid players. This system could entail younger and less experienced musicians only playing on strategically selected Sundays, playing regularly but without amplification, or playing as regular members of an ensemble. Strategic Sundays could include Mother's Day and any Sunday traditionally set aside for youth leadership or to recognize those graduating high school. No right or wrong Sundays exist for such a plan, and the more often these players play, the more rapidly they will progress. However, circumstances may exist which prohibit weekly participation. In such cases, it may be helpful to identify certain occasions for which increased youth involvement makes more sense than others. For less experienced adult players, such circumstances are less likely to be present, and therefore more regular opportunities should exist.

One circumstance which might prohibit regular participation from youth is the existence of a separate youth worship venue. While this researcher does not advocate for such arrangements, they have undoubtedly become more common and may present as an obstacle. In

such cases, a potential solution is to develop a separate youth band and orchestra, which would regularly be responsible for leading a youth worship service. At the beginning of implementing such a strategy, utilizing a mentor situation like the one mentioned in the previous paragraph may be beneficial. After an appropriate amount of time, the adult mentor would leave the youth service to be entirely led by the youth musicians.

In addition to the musical advantages of a mentor system, there are also nearly limitless professional and spiritual benefits. As the psalmist proclaims, "One generation will speak of your works to another." A musical mentorship provides a regular, practical opportunity for adult musicians to encourage, teach, guide, and support younger musicians in ways that will produce musical and spiritual fruit in a way few other opportunities can.

Conclusion

The decision to incorporate an instrumental ensemble into a contemporary worship context is a complex matter one should only enter into with great prayer and discernment. Not every church has the resources to initiate or sustain such a ministry successfully. Those churches supporting such a ministry should ensure that all other biblically mandated and spiritually fruitful endeavors within the church are first endorsed. Ministries such as missions, evangelism, spiritual formation, children, and youth, should be financially thriving before serious consideration is given to investment in expanded instrumental worship. To do otherwise would represent a lack of faithful stewardship.

It is essential to recognize the difference between what is required to worship God in spirit and truth and what ways might enhance said worship. God is not somehow more glorified when worship is enhanced. That is not to say that such enhancement is without value or merit, only that it is not required. The argument could be made that very little of what modern churches

do in worship is needed. However, much of what churches bring to worship represents the great diversity and creativity with which God created the world. Enhancement of worship also offers the ability to use diverse gifts in worship. The church should help God's diverse creations understand they can worship God by contributing the skills they have received to Him. An instrumental worship ministry represents one of many ways this is possible. Otherwise, Christians may misunderstand the value of their God-given gifts and forsake them for endeavors on which the church appears to place greater value.

On the other hand, one should take great caution to ensure that an instrumental worship ministry does not become an idol for the gathered body to worship instead of God. Such a temptation can be incredibly deceptive and difficult to identify. Even more so, convincing a person of what they are worshiping can be challenging. All those involved, from the musicians to the worshipping congregation, must deeply understand what is taking place. Musicians must resist the temptation of pride, arrogance, self-glorification, and self-promotion. Likewise, congregants must take great care to direct their praise and adoration to God, the creator, rather than the music or musicians, the created (paraphrase of Romans 1:25). Simple actions on the part of the congregation, such as applauding the musicians, while seemingly innocuous, might be better saved for the concert hall. Likewise, the musicians should avoid actions, such as bowing, which might suggest entertainment instead of leading worship.

The congregation and musicians alike might benefit from some basic teaching about worship. Such instruction might occur from the pulpit in the form of the occasional sermon or sermon series focused on worship. Sunday schools and other small groups might also address the topic to aid congregants. On the other hand, musicians might benefit from some subtle but persistent leadership and guidance from the leader of the broader worship ministry. One must

also not undervalue prayer as a tool against these temptations. Leadership should pray for all those involved in leading worship. Likewise, those leading in prayer should pray for those they are leading.

CHAPTER FIVE: LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This final chapter will briefly discuss the inherent limits of this study, as well as suggestions for further future research to overcome such limitations. This chapter gives particular emphasis to the contemporary nature of this study, as well as the available sources of contemporary musical material.

While this study is exclusive to the nature of instrumental ensembles utilized in a contemporary worship context, much of the information will also be directly applicable to blended and traditional worship contexts. However, aspects of this research have little to no correlation to non-contemporary worship contexts. For example, very few, if any, opportunities for improvisation exist in traditional worship contexts. The exception to this might be certain types of keyboard selections. Even in these selections, the improvising style would differ significantly from the style utilized in contemporary worship. Significant research and history exist concerning instrumental ensembles in traditional worship. Those wishing to begin a broader instrumental music ministry for a traditional worship context may find helpful information here, such as that related to space and finances. However, they may discover research limited to the study of traditional worship contexts is more comprehensively beneficial.

Those seeking information on blended worship contexts will find essential and helpful information here. However, blended worship is so broad and executed in diverse ways that more research would be needed to supplement the information found here. Blended worship has become such a diverse stylistic worship practice that the term itself has become vaguer and, therefore, less helpful in describing what a worship context looks and sounds like.

This study has purposely excluded all non-instrumental aspects of a music ministry. The study is also limited to instruments typically found in a traditional orchestral setting and those

that might have already been present in a contemporary worship context. The researcher has carefully excluded other forms of instrumental worship in any context. As an example, contemporary worship choirs continue to grow in popularity. Even handbell arrangements for contemporary worship are becoming more common. Additional research would be necessary to investigate the use of each of these examples independently. Any combinations of choirs, handbells, and orchestras in a contemporary worship context would require still much more research.

As mentioned at the end of the previous chapter, as of this writing, the last several months have seen the advent of pre-recorded orchestral loops and backtracks for contemporary worship. This study is exclusive to live instrumental ensembles in contemporary worship. Those wishing to utilize such pre-recorded resources will require further research.

As of this writing, Praise Charts possesses a kind of monopoly on the contemporary worship orchestration market. Further research into the arranging techniques and processes utilized at Praise Charts could lead to much-needed competition within the said market. Such competition would doubtlessly lead to improved quality control within the market, benefiting church orchestras everywhere. Likewise, additional research into the current quality control practices of Praise Charts orchestrations could steer customers to more educated purchasing. For example, the inaccuracies in Praise Charts orchestrations outlined in the previous chapter seem to be much more prevalent in the Finale file format than in the pdf format. Further research could provide concrete proof of such a hypothesis and, in doing so, discourage customer purchase of the Finale format or encourage Praise Charts to improve their Finale offerings.

The previous chapter describes a lack of flexibility inherent in using orchestrations as a potential negative. Further research into the arranging techniques and the methodologies utilized

could allow for increased flexibility in the execution of worship. For example, a more modular approach to the form of the orchestrations might allow for more seamless, spontaneous movement from one section to any other. On the other hand, further research into the use of technology might bare out a means of verbal communication between conductor and orchestra, which could also result in increased flexibility.

While this study utilizes research in jazz music applied to the field of church music to form the basis of improvisation in contemporary worship, it stops well short of a fully developed pedagogy for teaching improvisation in contemporary worship as a different style together. More specifically, jazz improvisation alternates between ensemble sections and solo opportunities. This form is not present in contemporary worship. While any musician fluent in jazz will likely have no problems in a contemporary worship context, a separate pedagogy more exclusive to contemporary worship would enrich and diversify the practice of improvisation.

As orchestral instruments in contemporary worship continue to grow, research will also be necessary to design and implement curricula whereby future church musicians receive training to lead such ensembles. Present training of worship leaders centers around leading primarily from a solo instrument, such as voice, guitar, or piano/keyboard. Future worship leaders will need to be more equipped to lead, direct, and conduct larger, more diverse instrumental ensembles to thrive in ministry. In the past, such training would have taken place in a strictly traditional context, focused on learning and teaching standards of classical repertoire. Future curricula may benefit from a similar, hands-on, practical approach, albeit one contextualized specifically within contemporary worship repertoire.

Worship methodology is a rapidly evolving subject. What is common and popular in worship today will give way to new methods and trends. Therefore, constant research is

necessary to discover, evaluate, and share these methods. God's diverse, creative creation will always seek to worship Him in meaningful and authentic ways.

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