

The Keyboard

THE ROLE OF THE KEYBOARD IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP
ENSEMBLE

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What is the purpose of the worship ensemble?

facilitate participation, singing is one of the things we can all do together

provide an appropriate setting for the lyric

provide musical interest/beauty

provide dynamics which fuel energy to move us

stirs the soul

Keys to making great music

Rhythmic tightness

Dynamics

Arrangement (who's in and who's out? who's playing which part?)

Awareness of your place in the sonic spectrum
(L/M/H)

What role does each instrument play?

Percussion

- practice to a click, position yourself to see everyone, keep it simple and solid, match the intensity of the other musicians

Bass Guitar

- lock into the kick drum, don't clash with the keyboard/pad rhythmically or tonally

Acoustic guitar

- consistent strumming, locked into the drums

Rhythm guitar

- don't strum like an acoustic, keep it open, drive, cleaner tone, use effects wisely

What role does each instrument play?

Lead guitar

- lead lines, ambience

Keyboard

- lead lines, rhythm, fill

Pad

- foundation, ambience, flow

This is a natural place for conflict or concordance with the keys/pad, so they must work together!

Whom do all instruments serve?

Musically: vocals

- Backing vocals serve the lead vocals

Ultimately: The church

Grace So Glorious

Lead

Pad

Simple chording

Doubling electric lead

Rhythmic line in chorus

Keyboard can be a great entry-level instrument

Most musicians have basic keyboard abilities

Experience and good practice are the keys to success

Keyboard skills are easily taught once you have a solid foundation

Lots of on-line tutorials are available for specific songs

Even a beginner can play “pad” sounds to fill out to ensemble, rhythm can come later

Basic keyboard skills

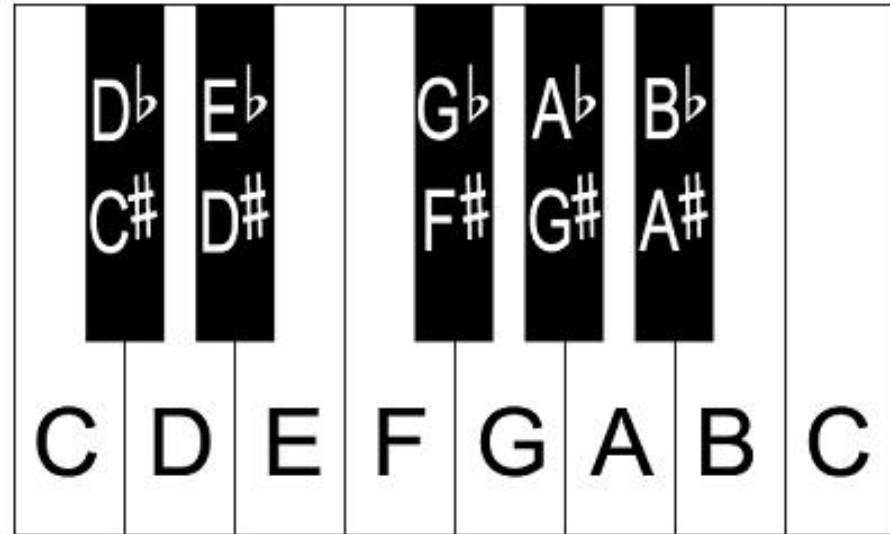
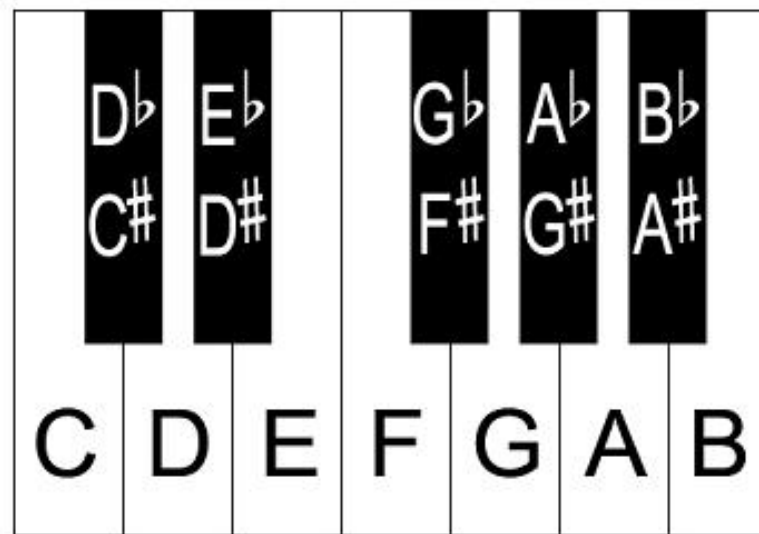
Knowledge of the most common key signatures

- C, G, D, A, E, F

Be able to play 2 octave scales in those keys

- RH - 123,12345 | LH – 12345,321

Know basic chords – I, IV, V, vi – in all inversions/voicings



Basic keyboard skills

Know the difference between major and minor chords

Careful use of the foot pedal

Voice leading – movement of notes as we switch between chords in a progression

- Keep one note, move the other two but no more than one tone

Improvisation

- black keys only
- white keys only using C, Dm7, Em7, F
- chord progressions

Reading chord charts

Music Theory 101

Use inversions instead of root positions

Play octaves in the LH

Play arpeggios in the LH cautiously

Keep the melody on top in the RH when playing solo or teaching a song

Otherwise, do not play the melody on top

Practice with a metronome (or a recording) to keep a steady tempo & build up speed

Resurrecting

Keyboard lead, echoed by a second keyboard in intro

Delay applied to lead, panning?

Simple chording with a bit of lead

Bridge, don't play melody, keep the top note away from the melody

During the build in the bridge, chord on the accents (1 & 4)

Keep some movement going while rhythm fills the sound

Play a harmony part coming out of the acap section

More movement on the last chorus, guitar takes the lead

Stylistic techniques

Roll chords

Roll octaves

Delay

Adding 2s

Open 5ths, add 2s (5-2-5), RH in 8vas

Minor seconds for extra dissonance

Play a lead line in the midst of a chord progression

Hymn playing

To place the hymn in a contemporary setting:

Simplify the chord progression

Sustain the root in the LH (e.g. Come Thou Fount)

Add minor 7s

Add major 7s

Add suspensions

Add dissonance

Underscoring

Keep it simple, less movement

Play a chord progression

Use chords in lower register of the keyboard

Use 8vas in upper register

Be prepared to fill in unexpected “dead” space

Communicate about volume with your sound tech

Try this progression: Am7 , Am7/G, Am7/F

Transitions

Have the tempo/melody of the next song in your head

Changing keys

- I, IV, V – easy to move from one to another
- Sustain a single pitch in multiple octaves while changing chords
- To modulate up a whole step:
 - V7 to the new key
- To modulate up to the IV:
 - Drop the I one whole step and place it over the I (e.g. Bb/C to F)

Playing keyboard in an ensemble

Keyboards have the potential to fill the entire sonic spectrum

Listen to what the other instruments are doing at all times and “locate” yourself accordingly

Specifically listen for:

- bass guitar (matching rhythm and pitch)
- rhythm/acoustic guitar (rhythm)
- lead electric (playing over each other's leads)
- vocals (always support the vocals)