



THE ROLE OF A WORSHIP VOCALIST

BY ROBERT WESTON GILLIARD

INTRODUCTION

At Coastline our main focus is to engage the audience in worship. Worship is not our time to perform, but rather, the churches' time to sing together as a family. Everything we do is to facilitate this. The best way to accomplish this is by being worshipers ourselves and worshiping in front of them as an example. The fact that Coastline allows us to be on stage and lead in this way is a huge honor.



THE ROLE OF A WORSHIP VOCALIST

There is more than talent that goes into being a part of our vocal team at CoastlineWorship. In this document we will discuss the following key roles of a worship vocalist:

1. KNOWING WHAT TO SING
2. KNOWING WHEN TO SING
3. KNOWING HOW TO BE A TEAM PLAYER
4. KNOWING HOW TO LEAD BY EXAMPLE

1.

KNOWING WHAT TO SING

There are only so many positions on the team for vocalist and a limited time to rehearse. It is crucial that everyone knows their craft and is able to find their place on the team with minimal guidance. Here are some key principles of which to be aware:

Why Harmony? In the Bible, it use the phrase “[In one accord](#)” 10 times to describe the early church. This phrase is the word “[Homothumaden](#)” in Greek. The definition of this word literally uses musical harmony to illustrate the church’s unity in Acts. That is why we sing together as a demonstration of our unity.

Sacrifice - Knowing harmony and how the various parts work together takes an [investment of time](#) and practice. [It shows that you have invested in the Kingdom.](#)

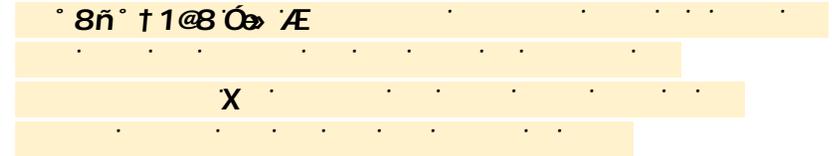
Unity - Every melody notes has 2 other complimenting harmonies to make a chord. [This is a picture of the Trinity.](#) As Father, Son and Spirit are one, so are we to be bringing our own [spiritual gifts to the table to create one sound.](#)

Humility - knowing how to harmonize and blend vocals means that you are willing to [serve others](#). Harmonies are often not pretty by themselves. They are set back in volume. But, when combined make a beautiful sound that has been universally appreciated since the beginning of history. [Being willing to support another vocalist shows a servants heart.](#)

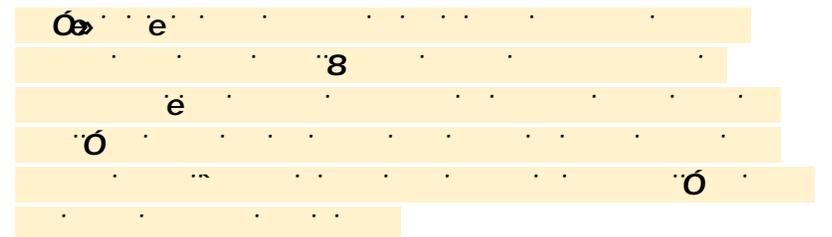
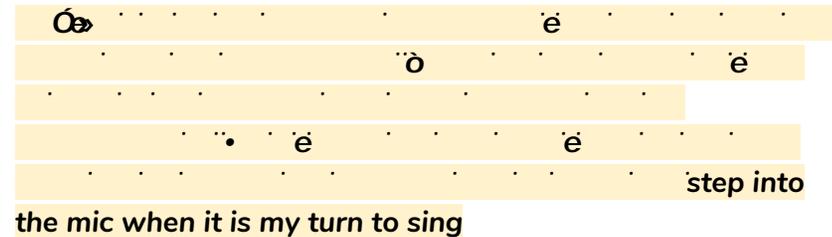
Confidence - Just as the effective Believer knows their [purpose in Christ](#), so the accomplished vocalist knows which part they are to sing. [They execute it without question.](#) Their note is not a guess. It is strategic and confident.

What harmony parts are available? Because we switch lead singers multiple times in a set, BGVs (background vocalists) need to know which part they can (and are to) sing.

- **VOCAL1** - Lead
- **VOCAL2** - Tenor (harmony part just higher than lead note)
- **VOCAL3** - Alto (harmony part just lower than lead note)
- **VOCAL4** - Unison (match song melody)



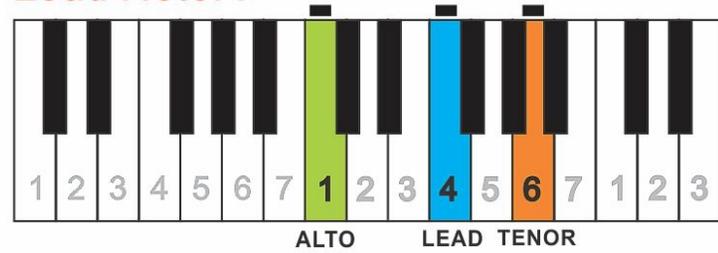
How do I find my note? The simplest way to find a correct harmony is to know the lead-vocal’s melody note. EVERYTHING is built off of the lead singer’s melody and the chord we are singing. It is impossible to find the right part without knowing the lead. Every note the lead singer sings, has 2 harmonies that help it match the chord.



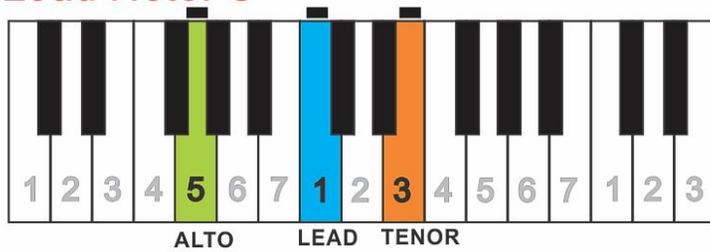
WHAT HARMONY LOOKS LIKE:



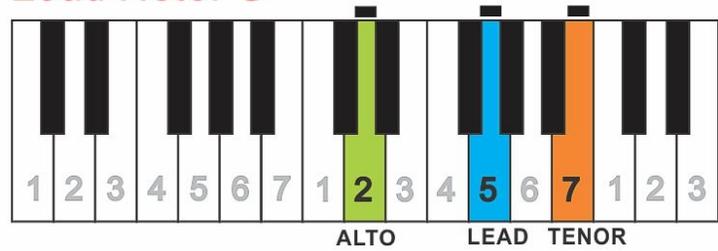
Chord-F
Lead Note: F



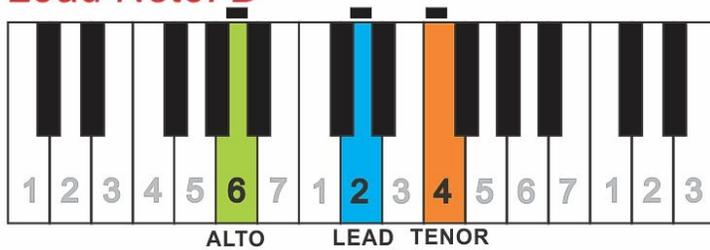
Chord-C
Lead Note: C



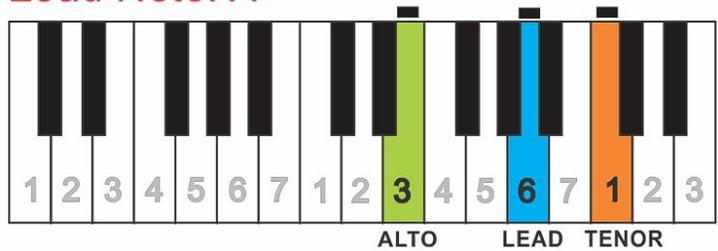
Chord-G
Lead Note: G



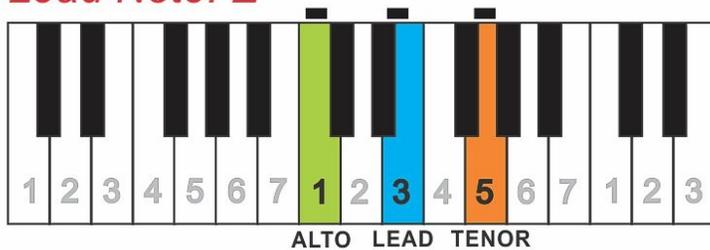
Chord-Dm
Lead Note: D



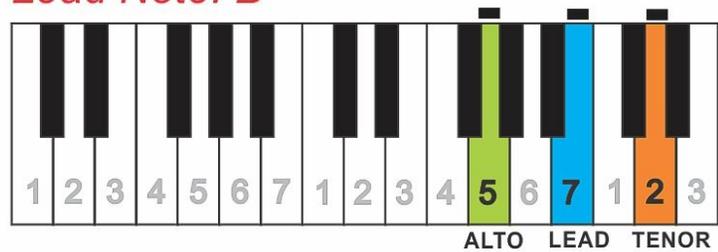
Chord-Am
Lead Note: A



Chord-C/E
Lead Note: E



Chord-G/B
Lead Note: B



2. KNOWING WHEN TO SING

[Just as every worship set is designed to take the church on a spiritual meditation](#), so does every song have a pattern of building. We layer vocals to build dynamics and create this journey. Here is a typical song layout.

- à0«³0 ĩš n š°NNÝ° ĩ•³ 0 @† « ũ@Ý ° ü³ u³
 - ! R...«È³ ĩšn š°NNÝ° ĩ•³ 0 @† « ũ@Ý ° ü³ u³
 - à0«³0 Đš n š³³ êÝ•8 u ø°u ũ8ã-@
 - ! R...«È³ Đšn š³³ êÝ•8 u } NÝ°8n → ũ@ã Ő ° ü³ u³
 - «X J0 ĐrŐt š n š•u°8n → ũ@ã%5•8N@N «Vãž NÝ° @ V³³
 - ! R...«È³ ŃŐš š J à @- n°8• ũ5•8N@@ n°•³ → •³ ũ«³
 - 0z (X J šňã•8ž @«• @³ @ Ő³ u • ã³
- z ..Á0eÁÝã@ • u n•8u³°5° ³ã Ő @ Ő•³ 5ü-° ã NÝ° @N



[It is confusing for people to hear singers saying words differently.](#) It is the responsibility of every vocalist to match the phrasing and vowel sounds of the lead vocalist. Sometimes this is impossible. If that is the case, the harmonies should not sing every word. Instead, they should only sing the key words. For example: X NÝ° -Ý 8V@ Őh° @@³ ..Ő ³•³ Ý•8 ă @ ãŶN@ Ő)ã « ĩ-ě

You laid ³ o ç V85°8Ő-NũŐ
 You •8° NÝ° @-8ã-°
h° @/@³ Ő ³
 You are h° @/@³ Ő ³

z ..Á0eÁÝã@N-Ý ăV° @ Ý Vř•ü@ «° V@³ ãNÝ° ĩ•³ N³
 ³85@N üo 8N ÝãŶŐ8NÝ° Ý•8 ă @N ÝãNÝ° ă N@

[Adding a harmony on just the right line can be more effective than singing the whole song.](#) While it is fun to sing everything, it does not come across well online or in the audience. You should [only sing when appropriate](#) and when you are confident in your note. Singing without confidence should NEVER be done in the microphone.

3. KNOWING HOW TO BE A TEAM PLAYER

Our rehearsals are very collaborative. We go in with a plan, but the best way to build an effective set is seeing how the songs develop during rehearsal.

R0«0 X R..á ç...È« «0R0 «³ n³³
³ Á« Á0Jç ³ R..Èn(n.....kě

01 ...«0 «0R0 «³ n³š Vocalists are given ample time to see the setlist and learn new songs. Come to rehearsal knowing the song well enough to find a harmony part.

ÁRÈ«³(ç 0à0z X J «0R0 «³ n³š We go through each song about 2-3x with the band. The first time, we establish who sings what. The second/third time gives us a chance to see how it sounds and tweak. After band rehearsal is over, we pray, then vocalists gather around the piano and smooth out any vocal issues.

0Áá 00z «0R0 «³ n³š Between Thursday and Sunday Worship, each member should rehearse personally, going over any problem sections they have.

³ Èz (ç x ...«z X J «0R0 «³ n³š X«⁰ Ōã 8⁰ Ý⁰ • 8@ Ō N⁰ é@
@ Ō • Nðê î x.µ That means everyone needs to be there with vocals warm, ipads set-up, in-ear monitors set, and instruments tuned and sound-checked before this time.

ÁX e³ -Ý⁰ VÛ Nã ° N 8⁰ Ý⁰ • 8@ • NÝ °%% NÝ³
«⁰ Ō 8⁰ • ³ • Ō 8ÁÝV8@ • u 8⁰ Ý⁰ • 8@ ùkŌãNã@ N
@Ý⁰ VÛ³ fãNo N V@/• üü Ý• 55⁰ k³

0 ..z ÁX 0J am considerate of your time, so every second we have to sing together is important. During rehearsals we are all learning how to phrase our words, how to best blend and how to sing together as one. Your absence or tardiness, will tax the team, but we will continue without you. If this happens more than once, we will have to address the issue for the sake of the team's benefit. There are only so many positions for vocalist. These positions will go to the most faithful, professional and exemplary team members.

ÁÁÁÈ(0JÁÝ⁰ 8⁰ ä@ 5Û -⁰ Ō 8⁰ Ō 8ã @ -V8@N V8⁰
N • kš Be confident that if God has you here, He will equip and work through you. Everyone on the team and church want you to succeed. How you communicate and work with the team is a great way to practice a servant's heart.

X³ 0! È« ÁX³ Jš Rehearsals are a time to exchange ideas and try various options. But the final decision goes to the worship leader. That does not mean your ideas are inferior. Many times it comes down to just having to make a final decision, and the worship leader is thinking about more than creating the "best sound." Worship is less about showmanship and more about giving the average church member an opportunity to worship through song.

I 00(! kš If you feel like your part on the team is not fulfilling enough for you or helping you grow in the areas you desire, please talk to the worship leader separately. Do not take this out on other team members or talk about it with other people. As the worship leader, it is my goal to develop and grow everyone. I would be glad to discuss why you aren't where you want to be and how we can work to get you there.

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4. KNOWING HOW TO LEAD BY EXAMPLE

It is my belief that we lead people in worship by worshiping in front of them. I have no interest in cultivating actors or manufacturing a stage presence that is not authentic worship. If we are truly expressing our awe in God, it will be obvious and manifest itself in our stage presence.

Paul said, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.” A worshiper will not be afraid or hold on to their mic stand for dear life. They know who their God is, they know who they are in Christ, and they know they are there to express their thankfulness to an almighty God. [We MUST worship God in Spirit.](#) That means that as we meditate on God’s glory, [we are being transformed.](#) Our Spirit is being strengthened and our body falls under submission.

[When expressing true thankfulness one can't help but smile](#)...if they are truly thinking about what they are singing. Let the lyrics you sing dictate the expression of your face.

When appropriate) [When expressing true thankfulness one can't help but smile](#)...if they are truly thinking about what they are singing. Let the lyrics you sing dictate the expression of your face.

The [lifting of hands](#) in scripture was a sign of [peace among the church and unity.](#) It also is a statement that you are connecting with the words you are singing and that you can testify to its truth.

Again, we lead by worshiping in front of people. [If we do this authentically,](#) we will not need to exaggerate our motions to coax an audience’s involvement. Our goal is that they see you enjoying the song, and join in.

A vocalist is expected to know the lyrics they are leading. They should look at their ipad less than 20% of the time. [It is certainly encouraged to exchange smiles and eye contact between band members and church members as long as it is encouraging and not distracting.](#) We are there to include the audience while singing to each other and to God and not exclude people.

From a distance, our movements look much more subdued and smaller from the audience. That means don't be afraid to use your space. Raise your hands high, be conscious that your feet do not look like they are glued to the floor. [Step back away from the mic when appropriate and feel free to move with the beat of the music.](#)

There should not be a moment during the worship set that you are not worshipping. One of the best ways to do this is to take a step back and sing (away from the mic). Then, when your part comes up, step into the mic. This will help you stay on pitch and stay in sync with the moment.

