

HCC WORSHIP — Ideal Qualities & Best Practices

Acoustic Guitar

Overview

The acoustic guitarist provides harmonic and rhythmic support, filling out the song's texture while complementing the vocals and other instruments. Acoustic players use strumming patterns to accent the drums, while adding harmonic information with the chords they play. They help drive the groove, add melodic color through strumming or fingerpicking, and enhance dynamics throughout the worship set. The acoustic guitar should serve the song, staying tasteful and consistent without overshadowing other parts.

Sound Quality

Tone Expectations: Acoustic guitars vary in tone depending on construction, strings, and electronics, however there are still general goals for tone. The guitar should sound clear, warm, and balanced; avoiding harshness or muddiness. A warm midrange and a sparkly high end is preferred, while low end is not necessary as it usually is eq'd out of the house.

Gear & Settings: Acoustic-electric with DI is preferred for consistent sound. We typically avoid live miking guitars due to volume concerns and inconsistent tone.

If you use a pedal with your set-up please keep the effects subtle. Slight compression and reverb are the only preferred effects. Please let the sound engineer know if you are running any effects from a pedal, as we normally run reverb to acoustics from the board.

Volume & Dynamics: Play dynamically to support the song's energy; strumming intensity and fingerpicking should match the arrangement. Maintain balance with vocals, keys, and rhythm section. Unless otherwise stated, acoustic guitar does not lead the band and the guitar should follow the drummer dynamically.

Playing Style

Musical Approach: Follow chord charts and use voicings tastefully. Strumming patterns should lock in with drums and bass, supporting the groove. Treat your strumming patterns like a shaker, accenting the rhythm of the song and filling in the space between drum grooves. Fingerpicking or arpeggios can be used to add texture during quieter moments. Use discretion when fingerpicking; consistent patterns and pedal notes are ideal.

Consistency: Play parts reliably from rehearsal to service. Maintain timing and rhythm for a cohesive team sound. Consistent rhythm between rehearsal and service helps the band stay locked in together, and consistent chord voicings help the harmonic instruments mesh.

Adaptability: Be ready to adjust chord voicings, capo positions, or strumming patterns to better fit the song if needed. Rehearsal is the time to make any needed changes if what you practiced isn't working out.

Team Behaviors

Preparation: Acoustic players are expected to show up to rehearsal with all of their gear they plan to use on Sunday. They should know their parts well and be aware of what is needed for their role that week (i.e capos, strap, tuner, ect.).

Rehearsals: Acoustic players should pay attention to song structures and make notes when changes are made. Playing between songs is discouraged and fills the stage with unnecessary noise.

Example Songs

These songs below reflect the way we would like acoustic guitars to sound like in our team.

This Is Our God - Phil Wickham

Worthy - Elevation Worship

My Testimony - Elevation Worship

Rest On Us - UPPERROOM

Phil Wickham's acoustic playing is very similar to our preferred sound.