

Your Guide to Music Directing at Hillsong Downtown.

What is the MD?

The MD or music director is a team member on the platform who is in charge of running the rehearsal and guiding the flow of the worship set.

MD responsibilities

Touching base with WL - Making sure reaching out to WL regarding plans of set, transitions & moments. So then we are prepared to relay anything to the team.

Running rehearsals - Making sure things are running smoothly and on time. Using the Rehearsal guide as a reference to make sure we are honouring times.

*note Knowing the songs beforehand This is key to helping the band to know the songs and speak into the band. I.e chords bpm's arrangements (speaking to the WL beforehand) etc.

Being able to make calls during the live set - It's important to be able to not only look up to see what the WL is calling but to read the room and be able to suggest things also. I.e calling out to have a moment if the congregation is leaning in, another example could be "let's do an extra bridge here" as the congregation is singing out in the bridge.

*note this doesn't have to be something that you need to do for every song it's important to choose moments when it calls for it. Ultimately Md's need to be following the vision of the WL but not be afraid to suggest when called upon.

Other things to note

Need to help with relaying things to monitors for band members so that they can help move things along during in-ear check & possibly during the set Always speaking into the culture we're trying to build.

Making sure that MC moments are Well supported at all times. Coming up with a up-tempo cool MC groove (usually in the same key of whatever song you've landed on in the set, preferably) Always thinking and suggesting ways to better the set and being on the same page as the WL.

What makes a good MD?

Communication with the holy spirit - Be open to what God is doing in the service, be aware of how He is moving in the congregation and facilitate that. Is it time for a down moment, is it time to declare something with authority?

Communication with the WL - Alignment between MD and WL is important. Touch base with the WL and understand the vision and the direction of the service. Not every WL will speak in musical terms, so it is your role to assist them in bringing that vision to life musically.

Communication with the band - During the worship set, a good MD will call song sections. You may not have to call every section, but if in doubt it's always better to communicate. It's also important to keep your eyes on the WL especially in dynamic moments. If the WL doesn't make a call, then you make a call. I like to ask the WL things like, do you want to repeat, do you want to go to bridge etc, then they can nod or shake their head etc.

Know EVERYONE'S PARTS - Know the chords, know the parts, know the elements of the song. You will need to know more than your own instrument. Know the chords in case you need to call them. Know the hooks in case you need to coach someone through them.

Know the capacity of the team - If you know the capacity of the team, you can support and uplift them and manage expectations. For example, if you have a new guitarist on, don't throw an overly complex guitar part to them. Don't ask a keys player to play a lead line beyond their capacity. Don't ask a WL to sing in a key that doesn't work. Do you need to count in for a certain WL etc. Know how to support your team.

Think like a producer - Think about the sonic space the band needs to fill. Does it need to be empty does it need to be full? For example if there is a big moment and only one guitar, do they really need to be playing lead lines, would open chords be more suitable?

Don't be afraid to provide feedback - Provide feedback to the team, if they did something great?reinforce that behavior. Is there room for feedback, raise that with the team member or relevant oversight. As daunting as it is, delivering the negative feedback, when done in an uplifting manner shows team members that you value you them and will support their growth. Just be mindful of how and when you deliver it.