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Subject: Construction of a Song

Posted by [GoodVibrations](#) on Fri, 04 Mar 2011 05:15:08 GMT

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Are there any songwriters amongst us? I was wondering how songs are actually constructed.... is it the lyrics or the music that comes first? I'm also wondering what the producers of recording music do. Are they the ones who determine when the base guitar is accentuated or some other instrument is added, like strings or tambourine or some such percussion? If I had the talent, I would love to write songs.

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Subject: Re: Construction of a Song

Posted by [Adveser](#) on Fri, 04 Mar 2011 05:57:39 GMT

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GoodVibrations wrote on Thu, 03 March 2011 21:15: Are there any songwriters amongst us? I was wondering how songs are actually constructed.... is it the lyrics or the music that comes first? I'm also wondering what the producers of recording music do. Are they the ones who determine when the base guitar is accentuated or some other instrument is added, like strings or tambourine or some such percussion? If I had the talent, I would love to write songs.

Usually, the song's key determines what mood it expresses. This is pretty universal because a lot of people seem to describe the scales in the same way. After that you either write a lyric that fits it, or the lyrics draw their way towards certain note progressions.

You can write one or the other first, it doesn't matter. The key is knowing how a scale or piece feels and making sure it matches. A lot of Metal bands started to realize that very serious lyrics did not match the "carefree" attitude E Minor usually conveys and did not want the limitation of completely avoiding the notes that give it that character. By sheer luck someone must have figured out that Black Sabbath's dirty sound and more solemn "tonality" fit the more serious lyrics better and it took off. Again, if you want to play 6/7th's of a scale to keep the scale's character more ambiguous to fit the lyrics or mood that is another way. But the master use dozens of scales and like the freedom of playing a scale more "naturally" because it reinforces everything. In the case of bands like Rush where the music and lyrics are not done together, they always maintain that certain lyrics always find the music that fits in the end. I am sure those guys will transpose a song if it needs it to sound a bit different mood-wise and go back and re-write to the strengths of the scale. Remember that just because a note progression works in one scale does not mean it will sound good in another. Long story short: All the scales differ so much in pitch between the note intervals that no two scales are alike. At no time is any scale just adjusting the pitch. playing "a half step down" is playing another song completely, even if it sounds very similar to the original arrangement.

The producer usually determines the direction the album will take and is there to make sure the end product is what the label desires. They almost always have a hand in arrangement and sometimes co-write songs or work with the artists involved to put a song together. This can range from very minimal, like someone acting as just another set of ears, or very collaborative where the

producer might as well slap their name on the cover with the artist. They make the artistic decisions on their side of the glass and the engineers physically do it. Classically, all Producers are expert sound engineers and all sound engineers have a background in electronics. This is not so much the case anymore and popular music has suffered since this mandate has seemed to be lifted.

I tend to write songs one note at a time...or something will play in my head or I get a feeling and try to express it musically. Sometimes I like a song and want to do something similar but make some substitutions that I think would be better. Metal bands are very much like a family that shares everything with everyone, but don't try to leave the tribe with any of the forbidden knowledge. Do something else if you wanna make pop music, that's how it's always been. Not that making something catchy or commercial is frowned upon. No it is more like, don't get famous off someone else's work and in this genre, no one is gonna get famous anyway. In other words, don't rip off metal riffs and do a country record for the Wal-Mart crowd. That is relevant because you always have to write with an audience that will appreciate the efforts. Some musicians write with themselves in mind only and come to find out that their tastes are to a lot of people's liking as well.

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Subject: Re: Construction of a Song  
Posted by [Danny](#) on Fri, 04 Mar 2011 12:31:55 GMT  
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I sometimes have the "music" in my head, and depending on the tone of the music, I then try to find the appropriate words to fit it.

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Subject: Re: Construction of a Song  
Posted by [audioaudio90](#) on Fri, 04 Mar 2011 16:04:46 GMT  
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It varies depending on the songwriter. Personally I find it easier to fit words to music than the other way around, so I often work as a lyricist with a musician.

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Subject: Re: Construction of a Song  
Posted by [Kaleb](#) on Mon, 07 Mar 2011 06:00:57 GMT  
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It depends on what inspires me to write. Sometimes I have a thought that just pours out onto the paper and other times, I have a melody that I love that needs lyrics.

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Subject: Re: Construction of a Song  
Posted by [cheeta](#) on Thu, 31 Mar 2011 18:36:32 GMT  
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My daughter seems to find her inspiration in everything that surrounds her. She will sometimes have a tune waiting for lyrics and other times she is really passionate about a subject and tries to think up a tune. Songwriting is so individual and there's no right or wrong way.

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Subject: Re: Construction of a Song

Posted by [GoodVibrations](#) on Sun, 03 Apr 2011 16:13:10 GMT

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Adveser wrote on Thu, 03 March 2011 23:57

...No it is more like, don't get famous off someone else's work and in this genre, no one is gonna get famous anyway. In other words, don't rip off metal riffs and do a country record for the wal-mart crowd. That is relevant because you always have to write with an audience that will appreciate the efforts. Some musicians write with themselves in mind only and come to find out that their tastes are to a lot of people's liking as well.

Thanks for the in-depth explanation Adveser. Not only does the collaboration have to be right, but there is an amount of luck associated as well, I'm sure. From others' comments, it makes sense that it is a very personal process for finding words and music that go together. Therefore, artistry.

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Subject: Re: Construction of a Song

Posted by [miss zoey](#) on Wed, 06 Apr 2011 09:41:18 GMT

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Since I'm a frustrated musician, I'm much better with lyrics. Then I usually collaborate with a friend who's good with music and then we'll write the song together and fix it accordingly. But yea lyrics come to me first.

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