

SONGWRITING 101

From: <http://mysongcoach.com/write-a-song-in-ten-steps/>



Songwriting isn't difficult as long as you approach it with a silly attitude! For your first attempts, don't try to write the song of century, just write a small short piece that's fun. The song of the century will come later (or maybe not, but who cares?).

I found a wonderful website that I think will be a great starting point in your artistic endeavors. Take a look:

<http://mysongcoach.com/write-a-song-in-ten-steps/>

And...

<http://mysongcoach.com/song-starters/>

A very helpful tool to explore common chord progressions that you may want to use for your song can be found at:

http://www.hotfrets.com/chord_progressions

Don't feel bound by the chord progressions you find here. You may want to start with one of these, but then change the progression around a bit (in a different order, or use just a few of the chords in the progression) for the "bridge" or the "chorus" of the song.

When I wrote "I Wish I Met You In Kindergarten" I started with an idea (the title), and then thought about all of the things that might have happened. I wrote them all down and eventually only used a handful of them for the different "verses". I then picked one of these to be the re-occurring "chorus", and finally fooled around with a few of the chords and made a "bridge". Not a masterful tune, but I had a lot of fun writing it.

Remember... you're in charge! Have fun, and don't expect your first songs to be anything but FUN!

SUMMARY OF THE TEN STEPS:

1. Start with the title.
2. Make a list of questions suggested by the title.
3. Decide on a song structure.
4. Answer one question for the chorus, and a different one in each verse.
5. Find the melody in your lyric.
6. Begin to add chords to your chorus melody.
7. Choose a question to answer in your first verse.
8. Connect your verse and chorus.
9. Build your second verse and bridge.
10. Record your song.

Song Structures

From - <http://mysongcoach.com/write-a-song-in-ten-steps/>

Verse 1: This is the problem.

Chorus: This is how I feel about it.

Verse 2: This is what I tried to do about it.

Chorus: This is how I feel about it.

Bridge: What I hope will happen is this.

Chorus: This is how I feel about it.

Verse 1: Let me tell you about a person I know

Chorus: Here's how it feels to be around this person

Verse 2: Here's what they said or did that affected me

Chorus: Here's how it feels to be around this person

Bridge: This is what I value about this person

Chorus: Here's how it feels to be around this person

Verse 1: I took a chance

Chorus: Now my life has changed

Verse 2: I risked everything for happiness

Chorus: Now my life has changed

Bridge: It was worth it

Chorus: Now my life has changed

Note: the most common chord structure is:

Verse – Chorus – Verse – Chorus – Bridge - Chorus

Here are some useful definitions for understanding song structure:

- **Verse:** The verses in a song all have the same melody but different lyrics. The verse lyrics give us information about the situation, emotions, or people in the song.
- **Chorus:** We may hear the chorus of a song three, four or more times. The lyric and melody remain the same each time it recurs. The chorus lyrics sums up the heart of the song. The title of the song almost always appears in the chorus section and may be repeated two or more times.
- **Bridge:** The bridge has a different melody, lyrics, and chord progression from the verse or chorus. It provides a break from the repetition of verse and chorus. The lyric often provides an insight or revealing moment.

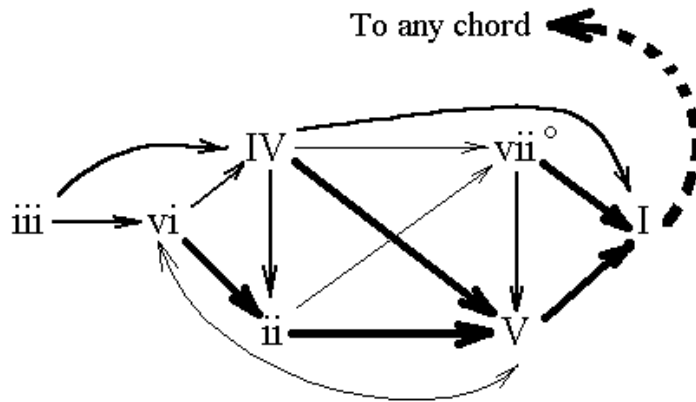
Definitions from: <http://robinfrederick.com/learn-how-to-write-a-song/#songform>

Developing your lyric ideas

Once you choose a theme, develop a “Word Palette” by:

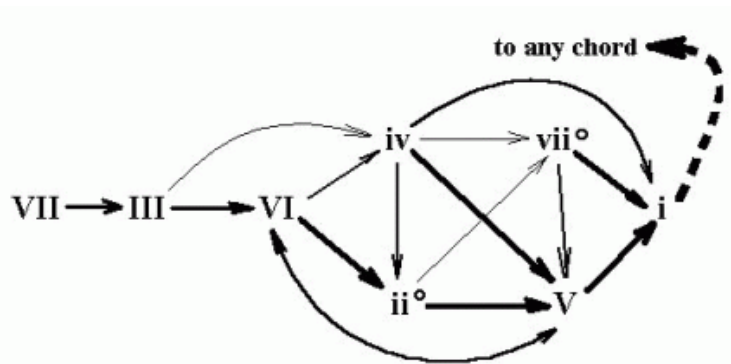
- 1) Make a list of words that come to mind when you think of the theme.
- 2) Make a list of things, people, creatures you associate with the theme.
- 3) Make a list of sensations or conditions associated with the theme.
- 4) Make a list of words that describe feelings about the theme.
- 5) Make a list of metaphors about the theme.
- 6) Think of wordplays based on the above words or phrases.
- 7) Grab a thesaurus and check out alternate words for those you’ve collected.

(Developing your lyrical ideas from (and at times, paraphrased from (and added to)) a book entitled: “Essential Songwriting, Everything you need to compose, perform, and sell great songs” by C. J. Watson, F & W Publications, Inc. 2006)



Major Key Chord Progressions

Begin at the “I” (or “i”) chord and create your song’s chord progression by following arrows back to the beginning chord (the “I” or “i” chord)



Minor Key Chord Progressions

IMPORTANT:

Capital Roman Numerals are MAJOR chords
 Lower case Roman Numerals are MINOR chords
 Chords with little circle (superscript) are DIMINISHED chords
 The darker lines represent the more common progressions

Key	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
C	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
G	G	A	B	C	D	E	F#	G
D	D	E	F#	G	A	B	C#	D
A	A	B	C#	D	E	F#	G#	A
E	E	F#	G#	A	B	C#	D#	E
B	B	C#	D#	E	F#	G#	A#	B
F#	F#	G#	A#	B	C#	D#	E# (F)	F#
Gb	Gb	Ab	Bb	Cb (B)	Db	Eb	F	Gb
Db	Db	Eb	F	Gb	Ab	Bb	C	Db
Ab	Ab	Bb	C	Db	Eb	F	G	Ab
Eb	Eb	F	G	Ab	Bb	C	D	Eb
Bb	Bb	C	D	Eb	F	G	A	Bb
F	F	G	A	Bb	C	D	E	F