

Writing Lyrics

The human voice is a very powerful musical instrument in its own right. It also has the unique advantage among of other instruments of being able to add language to music, with lyrics.

The quality of lyrics has a great impact on the overall effectiveness of a song. Well crafted lyrics, telling a strong story, can turn a nice piece of music into an absolute jewel of a song. Mediocre lyrics can leave you feeling that the music should have remained instrumental!

Entire books could be (and have been) written about the art of lyric writing. These tutorials have a musical focus, so we will not go into a great deal of detail here. However, if you bear in mind the points outlined below, your lyric writing will benefit.

- 1. Match Lyrics with Music** - Most words have one syllable which is stressed, compared to the others. Your melodies will also have some notes that are naturally stronger than others. Make sure the stressed syllables match up with the strong notes, or the words will sound forced or artificial.
- 2. Create Fresh Expressions** - For your lyrics to have credibility, they must sound like they are inspired by your own genuine, original emotion. Avoid expressions that seem to belong in a song as they usually sound stale and manufactured ("I love you, I tell it to stars above you?").
- 3. Tell a Story** - Try to create a plot in your song which develops as the song progresses. Too many songs are made up of a bunch of short platitudes which don't really go anywhere. Truly great songs almost always leave you with the sense that they are **about** something.
- 4. Rhyme Well or Not At All** - Rhyming is a very effective tool for adding spark and cohesiveness to your lyrics, but you don't have to use it. Avoid placing a word that sounds false just to get a rhyme.
- 5. Rhyme Freely** - Experiment with overlapping and nesting rhyming words within each other, as they don't have to be the standard **aabb** or **abab** arrangements. In fact, some of the most effective rhymes are those which are not expected.