

Song Writing

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Tips for composing a song

1. Choose text or write own lyrics.
2. Put lyrics to rhythm and add a time signature
3. Choose a style for your song.
4. Think of the tempo....
5. Work out a form for your song.

Chorus, Verse, Chorus, Verse etc.....

You may wish to use **strophic** form (each verse has the same melody).

CHORDS

1. Choose a chord sequence. Try to use **cadences** at the end of phrases and **modulations** to different keys.

Cadences:

The endings of phrases are marked by cadences. Cadences in a piece of music are resting points—a kind of musical punctuation. A cadence consists of a progression of two chords. There are four types of cadences.

Perfect cadence:

The two chords are the dominant (V) and the tonic (I). Sounds finished.

Plagal cadence:

The two chords are the subdominant (IV) followed by the tonic (I). Sounds like “Amen” cadence from hymns.

Imperfect cadence:

A tonic (I) chord followed by the dominant (V). Like a coma, sounds unfinished.

Interrupted cadence

Sounds like a surprise. The two chords are the dominant (V⁷) followed by the submediant (VI).

If stuck for a chord sequence try out the following:

C Dm⁷ F || G :: Am Em Dm G

Tunes

Tunes are like people. They come in all shapes and sizes, they are happy and sad, lively and sleepy, some are going somewhere and some are vaguely wandering.

A good tune has only two or three ideas, just long enough and different enough to catch attention and be remembered.

Once you have found a catchy tune then you need to try and make it grow. One way to do this is to use **sequence**. A sequence is an immediate repetition of a melodic pattern at a slightly higher or lower pitch.

We could also invert our sequence. This means turn the music upside down.

For example if our original tune had the notes: C E G E
Our sequence could be: D F A F
Our inverted sequence would be: D B G B

Then using this simple idea we could experiment with rhythm and then add chords. A simple idea has been created!!

