

CREATING  
WORKBOOK 3

- E

Chapters that are essential to this workbook.
- O

Chapters that are optional to this workbook.

Please note : Any details or photographs of equipment, software, manufacturers or suppliers do not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by DWP, but are intended to provide typical reference examples only.

CHAPTER 1  
SONGWRITING

- P 6

What is it?
- P 6

Why do I need to know about this?

- P 7

Project

- Notes and guidance
- P 11

Analysing a tune
- P 12

Key elements of a song
- P 12

Tempo / Speed
- P 12

Rhythm
- P 13

Melody
- P 14

Chords
- P 16

Lyrics
- P 18

Structure
- P 19

Dynamics
- P 20

How to analyse a song
- P 24

Tips for writing music
- P 26

Tips for writing lyrics
- P 27

Case study

- Want to know more?
- P 30

More information
- P 33

More tasks

CHAPTER 2  
CREATING MUSIC

- P 36

What is it?
- P 36

Why do I need to know about this?

- P 37

Project

- Notes and guidance
- P 40

Genres
- P 43

How is music created in each genre?
- P 46

Key elements in different genres
- P 48

Writing for a particular artist within a genre
- P 50

Music characteristics of genres
- P 50

Pop / Rock music
- P 54

Urban / Dance music
- P 57

Art / Roots music
- P 59

Commercial Music
- P 60

Case study

- Want to know more?
- P 65

More information
- P 66

More tasks

CHAPTER 3  
REMIXING

- P 70

What is it?
- P 70

Why do I need to know about this?

- P 71

Project

- Notes and guidance
- P 75

What is the purpose of a remix?
- P 78

Who will commission a remix?
- P 79

What kind of person becomes a remixer?
- P 80

Historical Context
- P 82

Case Study
- P 83

What equipment will I need to make a remix?
- P 84

Where can I get remix work or source material?
- P 86

Working to a brief
- P 88

Case Study
- P 90

How do I learn remix skills?
- P 91

How should I prepare?
- P 91

What style of mix will I deliver?
- P 93

How do I begin my mix?
- P 94

Check your progress
- P 95

Case Study
- P 96

Legal and money issues

- Want to know more?
- P 98

More information
- P 100

More tasks

CHAPTER 4  
ARRANGING

- P 104

What is it?
- P 104

Why do I need to know about this?

- P 105

Project

- Notes and guidance
- P 110

The Background to arranging
- P 112

Identifying instruments and what they do in an arrangement
- P 117

Skills you need to arrange
- P 118

Techniques used in arranging
- P 119

General arrangement techniques
- P 120

Chord and structure charts
- P 122

Dance and urban arrangements

- Want to know more?
- P 128

More information
- P 132

More tasks



**SONGWRITING**

## WHAT IS IT?

Songwriting is the ability to use music and words to express yourself. It is both an art and a craft ('inspiration and perspiration') – a skill that lets you create something out of nothing.

Songwriters learn from experience and from influence.

Experience comes from creating music again and again, each new attempt responding to the last.

Influence comes from discovering how other peoples' music works and incorporating those techniques in our own creative work.

A song can touch us emotionally and rally us to a cause; we can lose ourselves in a song and let it change our mood or our view of the world. Most importantly, though, songs remind us of who we are and where we belong.

## WHY DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS?

The creation of music is the lifeblood of the music industry. Without original music being generated, the industry would stagnate. As a career to pursue, writing music can be both the most rewarding and most frustrating of jobs.

Music is used to express what words alone fail to say and is without doubt the most universal language.

Some people think you need a special gift to write songs, but raw talent can only get you so far. Just like playing an instrument or performing on stage you can improve your songwriting skills - and hence your chances of making a living from music - with practice and perseverance.

YOU MUST HAND IN YOUR WORK BY TO



**HOW LONG**  
should this assignment take?

Every person works at his / her own pace.  
As a guide, this should take you 5 hours to read and research and another 3 hours to write your answers and discuss them with your tutor.



**HOW**  
will I be assessed?

Your tutor will assess your work. He / she will give you feedback on how you have done. If your work needs further work to be passed, then you will be given the chance to do further work to bring it "up to scratch". For more details, please refer to your MOLP's own guidance.



**WHAT**  
do I do now?

Read the TASKS section below.  
Then read the NOTES AND GUIDANCE section.  
Carry out the TASKS.

TASKS

- 1 Analyse a song from your own music collection. Look at the notes on P12 - P19 for guidance. Remember to take a copy of the song to your tutorial so that you can discuss your answers with your tutor.

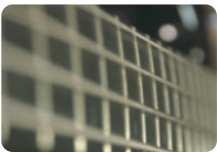


**RHYTHM**

- a) What is the tempo of the song ( the beats per minute )?  
Would you describe it as fast, slow, or medium-paced?

- b) Choose TWO sections of the music and count the number of bars in each. Is there anything unusual about the length of each section?

- c) Describe the rhythms ( these might be percussion parts, or guitar or other instruments ). Are they simple or syncopated?



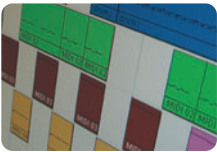
**CHORDS**

- a) Describe the chords you hear. Are they predictable or unusual? Do they change often or little? Do they repeat? Do they sound simple or 'jazzy' or 'colourful' or clashing?



**LYRICS**

- a) Listen to the lyrics. What are they trying to say?



**STRUCTURE**

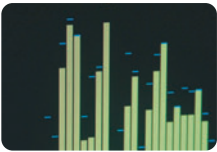
- a) List the sections ( intro, verse, chorus etc ) or list them using AB terms – see notes and guidance for help.



**MELODY ( TUNE )**

- a) Describe the melody of one of the sections. Are the phrases long or short, repetitive or diverse, covering a small or large range of notes?

- b) What are the main hooks? ( These could be a chorus melody, or a particular riff, or a sound, or a lyric, or a sample – any element that seems unique in the song ).



**DYNAMICS**

- a) Which is the strongest section – the most intense? What makes it the most intense?



CHORDS

2 Write out the most common chords you would play in the key of G Major. Number I and II are given to you.

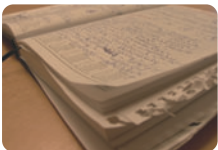
<b>I (1)</b> G major	<b>II (2)</b> A minor	<b>III (3)</b>	<b>IV (4)</b>	<b>V (5)</b>	<b>VI (6)</b>
-------------------------	--------------------------	----------------	---------------	--------------	---------------

3 Play the following chord sequences on an instrument. Start on any major chord and work out where the others are.

**I - II - V - I**

**I - VI - IV - V**

Name one song which uses either sequence, or write your own and play it to your tutor.



LYRICS

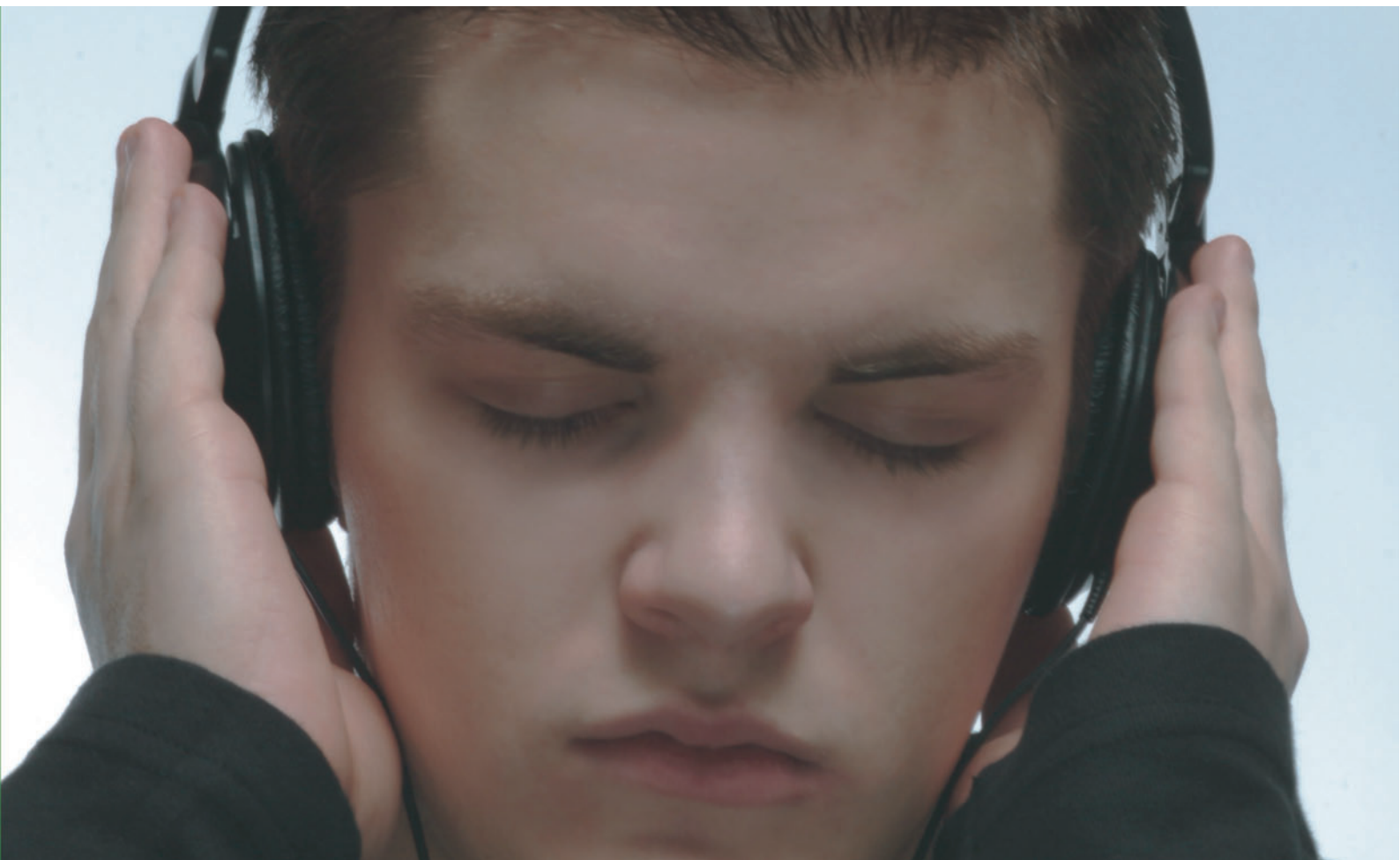
4 Pick up a copy of today’s newspaper. Cut out headlines or short pieces of text and use this as a basis for a lyric. Write your lyric here. (Write at least two lines which rhyme)

1)

2)

5 Give two examples of songs where the words and music complement each other.

<b>a)</b> Title of song	<b>b)</b> Title of song
Describe words	Describe words
Describe music	Describe music
Why do they match?	Why do they match?



## ANALYSING A TUNE

You need to develop skills in analysing music to understand what makes a good song. Try the following tips to improve the way you listen to music:

**LISTEN** to different radio stations, e.g. pirate radio, community radio, different genre radio for example, ethnic music broadcasts, overseas radio. Think about the different musical styles you can identify. Analyse the main elements of music – use P12 - P23 to help.

**LISTEN** to another musician's demo. What do you like and what don't you like and why?

**LISTEN** to your music as if you were an A&R person from a record label or publishing company. Don't listen to the performance, listen to the song. What is the hook? Does it keep your interest? Who will it appeal to?



# KEY ELEMENTS OF A SONG



## TEMPO / SPEED

To count the number of bars in each section tap along with the tune to establish the pulse then count ‘1-2-3-4, 2-2-3-4, 3-2-3-4’ etc from the start to the end of each section. ( Most music has 4 beats in a bar. )

You can establish the tempo with a metronome or the click in a sequencer like Cubase. Or, you can use a stop watch to count the number of bars in a minute. Multiply this by 4 for the tempo, which represents beats per minute ( bpm ).

When trying to work our bpm, think of the standard click track on Cubase – this is usually set at 120 bpm.



## RHYTHM

A rhythm is a pattern of heavy and light beats. Depending where the heavy beats fall, the rhythm will sound different.

A simple rhythm is one that falls mostly on the beat. It will sound fairly ‘safe’ and probably quite fluent – rolling out without too many breaks or jumpy bits. A syncopated rhythm is much more angular, jagged, falling in between beats.

An example of a simple rhythm is the theme from Eastenders.

An example of a syncopated rhythm is La Bamba.



## MELODY

A melody is a tune – but it doesn't have to be pleasant to the ear! Some tunes are discordant – they sound at odds with the chords that are played underneath.

To be able to analyse the melody, you need to know it really well – sing along with it.

### Things To Look Out For In The Melody

- 1 Does it cover a wide range of notes, or stay round just a few?
- 2 Are the phrases ( often a sentence, a line in the lyric ) long or short or varied?
- 3 Do the notes fit neatly with the chords or do they sometimes clash?
- 4 Are there ‘extra’ melodies, maybe counter - melodies from another vocal line or instrument?

A hook is any element of a piece of music that gives it a unique and appealing identity. The chorus of a song will usually have one particular, short line that you recognise as a main theme. But a hook could be a catchy instrumental riff, or a sound or any quirky feature.

**Ring tones are an example of hooks from tunes that instantly identify a particular piece of music.**



Music theory and harmony is a big subject! Look in the ‘want to know more’ section if you’d like to go into the subject in more detail!



CHORDS

A chord is 2 or more notes played together. Chords can also be implied, where notes of a chord are broken up or played by several instruments. The most common chords are major or minor; these basic chords can have notes added or altered to make more ‘colourful’ chords.



Major chords sound 'happy', minor chords sound 'sad'.

Songwriters often describe chords using numbers – roman numerals are common.

Minor chords are shown as ‘m’ or min

Major chords are shown as just the letter ( G = G major ) or sometimes with a Δ or maj.

G / D means play G major with a D note in the bass.

Find out more about unusual chords – diminished, 7th chords, sus4 chords – by looking at the weblinks at the end of the chapter.

Common Chords

Some chords fit very naturally together in a chord progression, feeling like they belong to the same ‘family’. These are chords ‘from the key’. You can build a chord on every note of a scale – whether the chord is major or minor depends on which numbered note it starts on.

Build a chord on every note of a major scale, using notes from that scale alone.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I Major	II Minor	III Minor	IV Major	V Major	VI Minor	VII Diminished
G Major	A Minor	B Minor	C Major	D Major	E Minor	F# Diminished

Some common patterns are as follows:

Two Chord Songs

Two chords a tone apart is a very popular cycle, especially with the second chord minor as in **I - II<sup>m</sup>** ; this would be **C - D<sup>m</sup>, G - A<sup>m</sup>, D - E<sup>m</sup>**. Keeping both chords major gives it a rockier feel, as in the Kinks’ 'You really got me'. Lots of two-chord songs are also based on the **I - IV** change.

Three Chord Trick

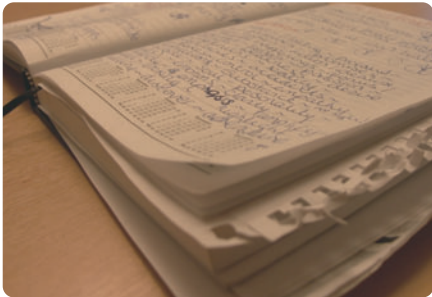
This is the famous **I - IV - V** pattern – **C - F - G**, for example as in 'La Bamba' and 'Twist and shout'. **12 Bar blues** also uses these chords.

I	I	I	I
IV	IV	I	I
V	IV	I	V

Four Chord Songs

An example of a standard chord sequence using four chords is **I - VI - IV - V** for example, using **C - A<sup>m</sup> - F - G** as in almost every Doo - wop song from the 1950s.





LYRICS

Understanding lyrics

It’s difficult to talk about the true meaning of songs because the things we feel when we hear them are personal, and we are all different.  
A great song usually involves the way the music and words interact with each other.

English Folk song

**Words** – use themes about the countryside, lost love or war.

**Music** – uses simple structure to tell a complex and long story, so the music doesn't get in the way of the story.

**Lyrics and music** are working together in an obvious way.

Trinidadian Calypso

**Words** – often about political issues such as corruption and oppression.

**Music** – sounds positive and uplifting, to disguise the true meaning from those in power.

**Lyrics and music** are working together in a 'twisted' way.

Gershwin’s Summertime

**Words** – describes the hardship of life for a servant.

**Music** – sounds like a mother singing a lullaby to a child.

**Lyrics and music** are working against each other, to add weight to the true meaning of the song.

Rhyming

There are no rules in writing lyrics, but most songs still rhyme in some way.

There are perfect rhymes and imperfect rhymes

Perfect rhyme "take care of me, be there for me"

Imperfect rhyme "Will you do or die, will you despise"

Use a rhyming dictionary if you're struggling.

Scanning / meter

We've talked about heavy beats and light beats to produce a rhythm in music. The same is true of spoken words. Listen to a lyric – where are the stressed parts of the words? Do the lines all match in length? Although songs, like poems, can have an irregular rhythm, most lyrics still 'scan' in some way.

“Simply predictable, simple the rhyme  
Watching and waiting and biding its' time”

This rhyme fits into 3s, both lines scan perfectly i.e. add up to the same number of beats per line, without the words having to sound emphasised in the wrong places.

“Bolder and stronger, you think that I care  
I'll take the lion's share”

This rhyme does not 'scan' perfectly, it doesn't fall into a rhythm, but you could still find a way to use it if that's the effect you want to create.



**STRUCTURE**

You can name each different section of a song :

**Intro**  
the introduction

**Verse**  
sets the scene, tells the story

**Bridge**  
provides a development between 2 contrasting sections ( like verse and chorus ). This is often where a twist in the story comes out, or where solos and improvisations live. It is also used to alter the mood of the song altogether, and in the verse or chorus that follows there’s often a key change or a shift in rhythm or dynamics.

**Chorus**  
resolves the verse, provides the climax, delivers the main statement

**Link or Interlude**  
fills in after a verse or chorus, like a new intro.

**Middle 8**  
takes the song somewhere completely different.

**Solo**  
an improvised section, perhaps over the chords and feel of a verse or chorus.

**Instrumental**  
a section of non - vocal melody.

**Breakdown**  
where the song ‘thins out’, often before building up again.

**Outro or Coda**  
the conclusion

Or you can use letters to describe each 'theme' in the music,

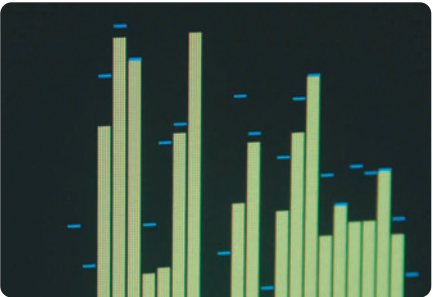
e.g. Verse = A    Chorus = B    Middle 8 = C

Here are some examples :

ABAB  
= verse, chorus, verse, chorus

AABA  
= two verses, a chorus and another verse

BAABAB  
= the Beatles' song 'She Loves You' starts with a chorus



**DYNAMICS**

You can use a line or graph to show where the dynamics and intensity of the music rise and fall.

**Dynamics**  
changes in volume ( louder, softer ).

**Intensity**  
changes in emotional feel.

There are many ways of increasing intensity – introduce more notes, or more unusual chords, or a faster tempo, or more instruments, or more aggressive playing and numerous others musical techniques.

# HOW TO ANALYSE A SONG

Here’s an example of how you might analyse a song. The song is Shooting Star by Tinman, released by RF Records. Hear or download it online at [www.citycol.com/rfrecords/cds/olm/tinman\\_shootingstar.MP3](http://www.citycol.com/rfrecords/cds/olm/tinman_shootingstar.MP3)

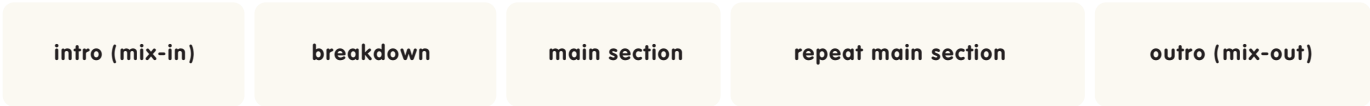
Each box represents a different section of the song.

Shooting Star by Tinman  
the tempo is 132 bpm



The structure of this song is quite typical of many pop songs, but there are no rules in musical structure, as long as your music goes on a satisfying journey.

If you’re analysing a dance track, then there may be no verse-chorus structure, where the grooves, textures and samples are more important than song structure.  
You might identify an introduction ( a ‘mix-in’ section to make it suitable for a DJ set ), a main section, a breakdown, a repeat of the main section and an outro ( a ‘mix-out’ ).

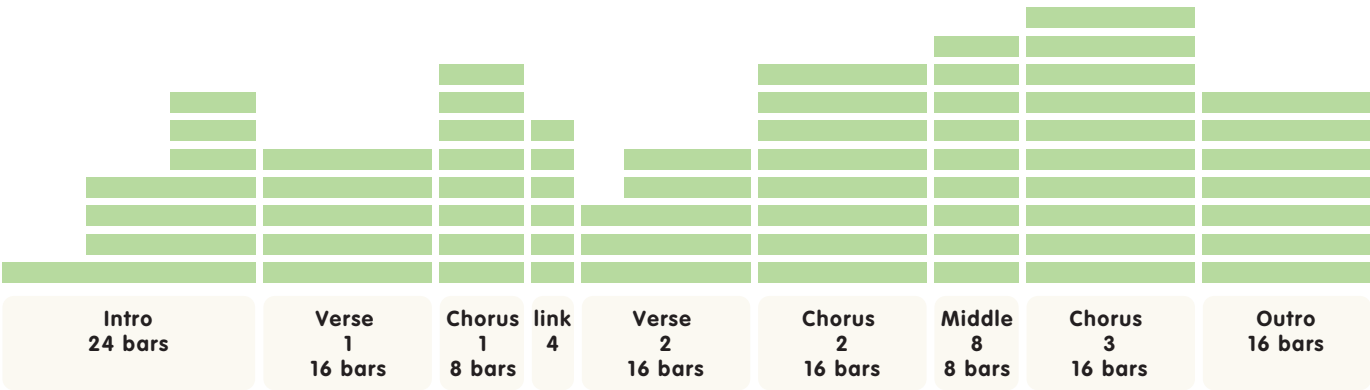


## DYNAMICS and INTENSITY

Now a line or graph is used to show where the dynamics and intensity of the music rise and fall.

**Dynamics** changes in volume ( louder, softer )                      **Intensity** changes in emotional feel

There are many ways of increasing intensity – introduce more notes, or more unusual chords, or a faster tempo, or more instruments, or more aggressive playing and numerous others musical techniques.  
Here’s an intensity and dynamics diagram for Shooting Star. It starts off at a low level, goes through various rises and falls before reaching a peak at the last chorus.



## MELODY

In this song the vocal range is wide ( more than 1 and a half octaves ) and the melody moves up and down a lot. It is very syncopated and ‘jazzy’, in that it uses elaborate turns and phrasings. It’s quite difficult to sing. The vocal range in the chorus is generally higher than the range in the verses. The chorus melody only uses a few different notes ( from the pentatonic minor scale ) and it repeats the main line ( “Shooting Star that’s what you are” ) several times.

CHORDS

Any 2 notes played together form a chord, though generally expect to hear 3 or more notes together. Chords can also be implied, where notes of a chord are broken up (like picked guitar chords) – we might only hear one note at a time, but we still feel that a chord is there. The most common chords are major or minor; these basic chords can have notes added or altered to make more ‘colourful’ chords.

To work out the chords of a song, play along on guitar or keyboard, listening to check that what you play is what you hear.

Some chords fit very naturally together in a chord progression, feeling like they belong to the same ‘family’. These are chords ‘from the key’; if a piece of music is in C major then C major, F major and G major chords will sit very comfortably along side each other.

Shooting Star by Tinman

Intro	Am9	/	Dm9	G13	Am9	/	Dm9	G13
	Am9	/	Dm9	G13	Am9	/	Dm9	G13
	Am9	/	Dm9	G13	Am9	/	Dm9	G13
Verse 1	Am9	/	Dm9	/	Am9	/	Dm9	/
	Am9	/	Dm9	/	Am9	/	Dm9	/
Chorus 1	Am9	/	Dm9	G13	Am9	/	Dm9	G13
Link	Am9	/	/	/				
Verse 2	Am9	/	Dm9	/	Am9	/	Dm9	/
	Am9	/	Dm9	/	Am9	/	Dm9	G13
Chorus 2	Am9	/	Dm9	G13	Am9	/	Dm9	G13
	Am9	/	Dm9	G13	Am9	/	Dm9	G13
Middle 8	Fmaj7	/	G13	/	Fmaj7	/	G13	G#dim
Chorus 3	Am9	/	Dm9	G13	Am9	/	Dm9	G13
	Am9	/	Dm9	G13	Am9	/	Dm9	G13
Outro	Am9	/	Dm9	G13	Am9	/	Dm9	G13
	Am9	/	Dm9	G13	Am9	/	Dm9	G13

These are known as the primary chords, built on the 1st, 4th and 5th steps of C major scale. Throw a chord of G# minor in with them and it will sound more unusual – but not necessarily wrong!

Music theory and harmony is a big subject! Look in the ‘want to know more’ section if you’d like to go into the subject in more detail!

In this song most of the chords are from the key. The key is A minor ( that’s to say the chord of A minor is ‘home’, the place where this music most naturally rests ). The song mostly uses just 2 chords – A minor and D minor – but it sounds more complex because of the many jazzy extensions and alterations to the chords.

Here’s the chord chart.

LYRICS

What’s the song about? Does it tell a story or reflect an emotion? Are the lines equal or unequal in length? Do lines rhyme?

RHYTHMS

In this song we could describe the rhythms as very syncopated in all the main instruments. Listen to the drums in the chorus and the electric piano in the middle 8.

HOOKS

The main hooks in Shooting Star are the chorus vocal melody and the pizzicato riff.



Have you protected your copyright in the songs you have written?

Your copyright is created as soon as you have set your music down in a fixed form. However you may want to prove that you are the copyright owner if there is a problem later on. The easiest way to do this is to send a copy of your music by 'Recorded and Signed For mail' to yourself. Use the © symbol with your name and date, only put one work in the envelope and mark that work on the outside of the envelope.

For more information about the important subject of copyright, go to Workbook 7 Chapter 2.

TIPS FOR  
WRITING  
MUSIC



Sampling from existing records is also a good way to get started, but remember that if you want to release a recording commercially, any samples will have to be cleared by the original owners.

➤ WORKBOOK 7 – COPYRIGHT, LEGAL AND MANAGEMENT  
– CHAPTER 2

When you get stuck: try experimenting with unusual features like odd chords, or odd length bars and phrases (most music is in 4/4, built in 4 bar phrases). Do something that goes against what you already have, such as melody notes that clash with the chords, or ideas from opposing styles.

Don't be frightened about 'pinching' ideas from existing music, as long as you don't simply copy and infringe copyright!

Focus on what you're trying to say.

Try playing your favourite chord sequence backwards; if this is too much, just reverse part of it. Also try converting a song you know into a minor key.

Build as much variation and contrast into the structure of your songs as possible. If your verse has lots of short words in a choppy rhythm, for instance, try using longer, sustained ones in the chorus. Also, vary the length of the sections, and add extra bars, bridges and so on.

Start your compositions from a range of different basic ideas – a chord sequence, a key, a different time signature, a riff, a melody, a groove, a lyric, a sample, a sound. If you always start from the same place all your compositions can end up sounding the same. Try different instruments.

Write or jam with someone else; their strengths might complement your weaknesses, and vice versa. Creating need not be a lonely experience.

Be inspired!  
Go for a walk, be in a different environment. Take time out from writing, return to it in a different frame of mind or even different time of the day, this may change your mood or outlook.

Keep it simple!  
'Less is more' – it's a cliché, but so often true. A simple idea honestly and convincingly presented, communicates very strongly. Quality, not quantity.

Use existing songs as a launch-pad for your own material. Write new words for an existing song, then put a new tune to these words.

Sing a tune over one constant chord, or bass note.

Listen to other types of music to learn new tricks and get ideas, for example, some country/roots type artists will throw in a chord which is totally out of the key used in rest of song. For example an E - A - B turn around followed by a "C" chord. Especially effective in bridges and middle 8.

Legal stuff

Song writing splits should be agreed at the time to save arguments later. The rights to the song are shared equally 50/50 between lyrics and music (although this rule is not strictly adhered to).

➤ WORKBOOK 7 – COPYRIGHT, LEGAL AND MANAGEMENT

Use technology – sequencers and drum tracks are good for setting up loops and other backing for you to play over.

Vary the dynamics so the song peaks and subsides, rather than staying on the same level. Altering the tempo can also work well to add drama or excitement.



"Singers are nothing without the songwriters because without the song, what would they sing?"

Albert Hammond



"One good thing about music, when it hits you feel no pain"

Bob Marley

TIPS FOR  
WRITING  
LYRICS

TIP

Write about something someone else told you about, and try to describe what you think it felt like for them.

Learn to simplify. Many songwriters stress the importance of having only one main theme or subject in a song. Always edit your work to narrow its focus and sharpen its impact.

Listen out for lines on TV, films, in the street, etc.

Good titles conjure up images before a song is even heard. Collect strong titles.

Write about something personal, try to describe what it felt like.

Read a lot. Books, poetry, plays, magazines etc can be a useful source of inspiration, as can newspapers.

Make notes always, not just when you sit down to write. Don't leave it to the last minute unless you work best under pressure.

Try to use as many lyrical hooks as possible. Anything that grabs the listener's attention can be a hook – the opening line, a single repeated phrase in the chorus, a neat line buried in the verse. Also, don't be afraid to use catchphrases, slang and everyday phrases.

Rhyming dictionaries and a thesaurus come in handy.

Lyrics : write about what you feel, or what someone has told you, or what you imagine. Look out for lines in movies, books, newspapers, on TV, radio or in conversations that seem to capture a moment.

Keep a notebook or a dictaphone with you all the time to record ideas for lyrics, song titles, overheard phrases, etc.

Have a notice board or wipe board, with titles and ideas on it, hung where you play.

Don't worry about grammar – that's for written words.

When you have an idea for a song, try 'brainstorming' or 'mind-mapping'. This means writing down everything that comes into your head about the subject, without worrying whether it's of any use or not. This can throw up interesting ideas or lead you down a new path.



CASE STUDY

**TOM HINGLEY**    Front man of the Lovers and Inspiral Carpets

**How would you describe your job?**

Performer, songwriter, record company owner and manager.

**How do you usually start creating a piece of music?**

With a guitar.

**Which 2 pieces of musical equipment are most important in your work?**

My guitar and my 8 track recorder.

**What, for you, are the 2 most important elements in a well-crafted piece of music?**

The tune and the lyrics.

**Do you take influences and ideas from outside your genre?**

I take influences and ideas from everywhere.

**Do you like to collaborate with others in writing and recording?**

Yes and I generously share co-writes!! I'm a good listener and a good initiator.

**If you were to offer one piece of advice for writers, what would it be?**

Don't simply look for a record deal. Most young musicians think that a deal is the pinnacle of every musical career. If I could have had a website which streamed music live on the web when I was 16, that is what I would have done. It's all about marketing your profile online now, not getting record deals.

**TOM HINGLEY** photography © Ian Tilton [www.iantilton.com](http://www.iantilton.com)





CASE STUDY

**HENRY PRIESTMAN**     Writer and musician with The Christians

**How would you describe your job?**

Writer, composer, producer.

**How do you usually start creating a piece of music?**

No particular way, maybe a chord sequence, a groove, a sample, a loop, melody, lyrics, a sound – I’ve used each approach.

**Which 2 pieces of musical equipment are most important in your work?**

Piano and audio recorder

**What, for you, are the 2 most important elements in a well-crafted piece of music?**

Melody and chord sequence.

**Do you take influences and ideas from outside your genre?**

All the time!

**Do you like to collaborate with others in writing and recording?**

Yes.

**If you were to offer one piece of advice for writers, what would it be?**

Listen to as much music as possible, especially old music....discover the past....and learn from it.

photograph supplied courtesy of **HENRY PRIESTMAN**



CASE STUDY

**PAUL MORTLOCK**     Aspiring singer / songwriter

**How would you describe your job?**

Writer, producer, composer, arranger, re-mixer. I think it's important to have a good sense of music direction. To that end, to have just one skill is not enough. Be a control freak!

**How do you usually start creating a piece of music?**

I mostly write with my guitar, moving through chord sequences and finding a melody.

**Which 2 pieces of musical equipment are most important in your work?**

Guitar and piano.

**What, for you, are the 2 most important elements in a well-crafted piece of music?**

Melody and arrangement.

**Do you take influences and ideas from outside your genre?**

Yes, I'll pinch from anyone.

**Do you like to collaborate with others in writing and recording?**

Sometimes, it depends on the tune, and who is around at the time. I collaborate on recording. It's very easy to get too absorbed, lose your objectivity and decide that it's all rubbish!

**If you were to offer one piece of advice for writers, what would it be?**

Find great people to work with.

photograph supplied courtesy of **PAUL MORTLOCK**

# WANT TO KNOW MORE?

## LINKS

New Deal for Musicians has no responsibility for or control of the following sites. The inclusion of any site does not necessarily imply New Deal for Musicians approval of the site. To access any of the sites please type in the address into a browser or search using keywords from the name of the link.  
www.dfes.gov.uk/ukonlinecentres Find Internet access that's close to you.

### HELPFUL LINKS ABOUT WORKING AS A WRITER OR COMPOSER

- ☐ **www.prsfoundation.co.uk**  
Performing Right Society Foundation  
PRS based charity to encourage, promote and sustain new music. Funding available.
- ☐ **www.bbc.co.uk**  
Radio 2 'sold on song site';  
Radio 1 One Music site;  
There are many BBC resources which are helpful!
- ☐ **www.britishacademy.com**  
British Academy of Composers and Songwriters.  
Trade association for the UK songwriting and composing community.  
Excellent site, lots of resources including information on songwriting competitions.
- ☐ **www.musesmuse.com**  
Great site for songwriters – information, links, networking and recommended products to help you.
- ☐ **www.pcam.co.uk**  
Society for Producers and Composers of Applied Music  
UK trade association for producers and composers of music for advertising, television and film
- ☐ **www.bmr.org**  
British Music Rights  
Promotes the interests of composers, songwriters and publishers
- ☐ **www.alchemyaudiolab.com**  
Music, sound design and post - production services. See how the professionals do it.

### HELPFUL LINKS ABOUT MUSIC THEORY

- ☐ **www.musictheory.net**  
On - line training and notes in music theory, notes, rhythm, chords.
- ☐ **www.musicianuniversity.com**  
Online Music Courses – music theory, songwriting, instrumental lessons – for a fee ( based in USA dollars )
- ☐ **www.microtools.de/guitarcodex/**  
Free application for desktop - teaches you chords / scales on the guitar.
- ☐ **http://hatbox.lib.virginia.edu/text/gtrchord/**  
This site allows you to search for guitar chords and lets you download midi files so you can hear the chords it finds
- ☐ **www.songplayer.com**  
Online music tuition
- ☐ **www.theguitarguy.com**  
Chord for many popular songs
- ☐ **www.insidethemusic.co.uk**  
Interactive resourses for musicians.

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

- ☐ 88 songwriting wrongs and how to right them  
Pat and Pete Luboff  
Publisher : Writer's Digest Books  
ISBN : 0898795087
- ☐ Rhyming dictionaries - various  
Publisher : Penguin, Oxford University Press,  
Chambers all produce their own versions.
- ☐ Songwriting and the creative process  
Steve Gillette  
Publisher : Sing Out! Publications  
ISBN : 1881322033
- ☐ Essential Guide to Lyric Form and Structure:  
Tools and Techniques for Writing Better Lyrics  
Pat Pattison  
Publisher : Music Sales Limited  
ISBN : 0793511801
- ☐ Popular Music Theory Syllabus  
Cammilla Sheldon, Tony Skinner  
London College of Music.
- ☐ Songwriting ( Usborne Learn to Play )  
N. Hooper  
Publisher : Usborne Publishing Ltd  
ISBN : 0746030460
- ☐ Music Theory in Practice  
Music theory workbooks grades 1-8  
Eric Taylor ( grades 1 - 5 )  
Peter Aston ( grades 6 - 8 )  
Publisher : Associated Board of the Royal  
School of Music
- ☐ How to Write Songs on Guitar : A Guitar Playing  
and Song Writing Course  
Rikky Rooksby  
Publisher : Backbeat UK  
ISBN : 0879306114
- ☐ The Songwriter's Idea Book  
Sheila Davis  
Publisher : Omnibus Press  
ISBN : 0898795192
- ☐ Songwriting Sourcebook  
Rikky Rooksby  
Publisher : Backbeat UK  
ISBN : 0879307498

MORE TASKS

- 1 Writing under the influence! Use your example of an analysed song to create a piece of music of your own that has a similar structure, tempo, features etc.
- 2 Play your music to friends and colleagues and ask for their opinions.
- 3 Experimenting ( 1 )  
How you start a composition will dictate much of its character. Try starting in a completely different way, so if you usually put down a drum groove, start with a chord sequence, if you usually start with a riff, start with a sample.
- 4 Experimenting ( 2 )  
When you generate a basic musical idea, try to give it a quirky element. So if you've come up with a chord sequence, add an unusual chord; if you've got an 8 bar section, make it 9 bars; if you have a constant groove, vary it every couple of bars and puts some breaks in.
- 5 Re-create. A really good way of getting inside a piece of music is to recreate it yourself, either in a live room with other musicians or in a computer sequencer like Cubase. Import the audio, match up the tempo and play along!
- 6 Choose two songs in different styles and analyse their chord sequences as I, IV, V, etc.
- 7 Write a riff, hook or motif: these are all small musical ideas which can be developed. Now vary this in one or more of the following ways:  
- Play it backwards  
- Change the rhythm  
- Play it in sequence, changing the start note everytime you play it, but keeping the shape of the idea.
- 8 Learn as much as possible about music theory – it WILL help your songwriting. Study the 'Music Theory in Practice' or 'Popular Music Theory' books listed on the previous page. Answer the following questions:  
- How do you form a diminished chord?  
- How do you form a major 7th chord?  
- How do you form a sus 4 chord?  
- What is chord substitution?



# CREATING MUSIC

## WHAT IS IT?

This chapter is about creating music in different 'genres'.

Genres are different styles of music, such as pop and rock music, urban music, world music or jazz, music to picture, like advertising, TV or film music...

You can also include 'Commercial Music', such as music to picture (for advertising, TV or films) and music for computer games, mobile phones and any other commercial uses.

## WHY DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS?

We all create music because we love to, but we also make it to earn money. If you are aware of your potential market, then you have a clear direction. Your music will have a target audience who will buy from shops and websites which stock product of a particular genre.

There are plenty of successful artists who are not household names, but have a big fan base in a particular genre and sell directly to them.

Your music needs to respond as much to market demands as your own creative instinct.

If you are interested in writing for film, TV or video games, you'll have to work to strict deadlines and budgets. Most composers for media have their own recording set-up, capable of producing good quality recordings.



YOU MUST HAND IN YOUR WORK BY TO



**HOW LONG**  
should this assignment take?

Every person works at his / her own pace. As a guide, spend 3 hours reading and preparing for the project and another 2 hours writing your answers and discussing them with your tutor.



**HOW**  
will I be assessed?

Your tutor will assess your work. He / she will give you feedback on how you have done. If your work needs further work to be passed, then you will be given the chance to do further work to bring it “up to scratch”. For more details, please refer to your MOLP's own guidance.



**WHAT**  
do I do now?

Read the TASKS section below.  
Then read the NOTES AND GUIDANCE section.  
Carry out the TASKS.

TASKS ( Read the notes and guidance section for help ).

1 Choose a piece of music from your own collection.

What’s it called?

Who has written and performed it?

What genre or style is it?

Name and list the sections - Is there a verse and chorus, or other typical features of song structure?

What’s the bpm? ( beats per minute, or tempo )

What are the chords? Are they simple or complex?

What are the main hooks?

What are the characteristics of the music that make it fit into a particular genre?  
( For example consider lyrics, vocal delivery, instruments / sounds, tempo, structure. )

2 Identify artists in different genres. Identify artists or composers who work in different genres:

Genre	Identify an artist or writer who works in this genre of music
Punk	
Rock and roll	
Drum n Bass	
Hip Hop	
World Music	
TV theme tunes	
Your choice of genre	
Your choice of genre	



3 The market for your music. Using the same piece of music you have chosen for Q1.

What record label is it on?

What genres of music does that label focus on?

How would you describe your own musical style? What genre or genres do you represent?

4 About your music

What type of music do you write, and what genre does it belong to?

How do you write your music – compare it with the techniques found in Notes and Guidance.

Do you work with others when writing your music? If so, what tasks do you all perform?

5 List 3 types of work involved in writing commercial music. See P49.

1)

2)

3)

6 Markets

Pick an artist or writer in a genre that appeals to you and list an outlet for the music in each of these categories.

The artist :

The genre :

A radio station and show that plays this music :

A club or live venue in your town where this artist might perform :

A TV station and show that plays this music :

A magazine that might feature this artist :

A specialist web site that sells this artist’s music :

A specialist shop that sells this artist’s music :

Now hand in this worksheet to your tutor. Remember to take a copy of the song to your tutorial so that you can discuss your answers with your tutor. Go to the ‘more tasks’ section for extra projects.

WELL DONE, THAT’S THE END OF THIS ASSIGNMENT CHECK IT AND HAND IT IN!

# GENRES

Learning what makes a good song in other genres will make you a more rounded songwriter. But to really understand some music scenes you have to live them. The list of musical genres is enormous! And most genres have sub-genres and crossover genres. Here is a basic list of some of the many genres that exist in contemporary music. Disagree? Design your own chart and discuss it with your tutor.





POP/ROCK	URBAN/DANCE	ART/ROOTS	COMMERCIAL
BRITPOP	DISCO	AMBIENT	ADVERTISING
DEATH METAL	DRUM' N' BASS	AMERICANA	COMPUTER
EUROPOP	ELECTRONICA	BLUES	GAMES
GOTH	FUNK	CLASSICAL	CORPORATE
GRUNGE	GARAGE	COUNTRY	FILM
HEAVY METAL	GRIME	DUB	ENTERTAINMENT
INDIE	HIP HOP	FOLK	LIGHT
NEW WAVE	HOUSE	GOSPEL	THEATRE
PROGRESSIVE	NU SOUL	JAZZ	TV
PUNK	RAP	NEW AGE	
ROCK	R'N'B	REGGAE	
ROCK'N'ROLL	SOUL	WORLD	
SOFT ROCK	TECHNO		
THRASH METAL	TRANCE		
	TRIP-HOP		

Changes in musical genre can be driven by politics, lifestyle or technology. They are generally not invented, but evolve over time. The development of each genre of music has its own history. What kind of music do you like – and why do you like it?

- Do you identify with the lifestyle and culture associated with it?
- Do you like the sound of the instruments used?
- Do you like the message that the words ( lyrics ) convey?

# HOW IS MUSIC CREATED IN EACH GENRE?

Music is created in many different ways. Let's explore some of the methods...

## JAMMING OR REHEARSING IN A GROUP

This can take place in a rehearsal space or the live room in a recording studio. A lot of pop and rock music is created in this way, particularly with bands. The original idea for a song may have come from one individual ( a guitar riff, a chord sequence, a lyric idea or a complete song ) but the final product will evolve into something with the shape, energy and features of a song in a live room, because each musician takes on a role ( bassist, drummer, guitarist, singer etc. ) and they bounce ideas off each other, responding to what they hear in a natural, 'live' way. The gear will be mostly acoustic and electric musical instruments, amps, mikes, PA.





**BEDROOM STUDIO, USING A COMPUTER**

A lot of pop, dance and urban music is created by individuals or small collectives of people, based in cheap home studios. The song might start out with a sample, either from an existing tune or a loop from a sample library and will build up one element at a time, adding more samples, loops, midi parts and audio (live vocals/ instruments). Musicians will be involved in the development of the song depending on their speciality – a rapper, a singer or a DJ may work on the song at different points, while still responding to each other’s performances. It’s a very liberating way to work, as many ideas are drawn together and much of the arrangement is constructed as part of the mixing/production process. This is a very different evolution from the band-based process, but the goals are the same – to create a song, with hooks, character, feel and shape. The gear will be mostly music technology equipment – a computer, midi/ audio software (like Cubase), samplers, synths, decks. If you’re using samples from existing music you MUST be aware of copyright issues.

» WORKBOOK 7 – COPYRIGHT, LEGAL AND MANAGEMENT



**WRITING FOR COMMUNITY / ARTS AND ROOTS MUSIC**

The field of art/roots music is enormous and the creative processes are many! Classical music will generally be the work of just one writer, notating the notes to be performed later. Folk music might evolve out of a community environment, where songs are part of work and life.

**PROFESSIONAL RECORDING STUDIO**

The piece of music has already been written (composed) and it is now the job of a music producer to create the final production using the full capability of a professional recording studio, sound engineer, programmer and possibly session musicians. One example may be the score for a film, which has already been written, but requires performing by a full orchestra.



**COMMERCIAL MUSIC COMPOSITION**

Commercial music is created to a specific, non-musical brief, to fulfil a need such as supporting spoken word and moving image, rather than existing for its own sake. It will generally evolve from one or two people using a midi/ audio recorder, or traditional notation. There will probably be strict timings to adhere to (both in the length of the music and the date it needs to be completed!). Examples include theme tunes for TV shows, advertising jingles, Radio station Idents, incidental music for TV and film, music for computers games, production music for corporate videos and supermarkets/ trade test transmission.

**ARRANGING**

Increasingly, session musicians work from home. The traditional session, where a group of musicians turn up at the same time, same place is still a common and effective way of working, but with the technical developments in home recording and broadband internet, many musicians will add their specialised contribution in their own home studio, sending computer audio files to the writer/producer by post or email.



**ARRANGING IN A LIVE ROOM**

Working on an arrangement in a band situation is a stimulating musical experience. Just like the band writing process, it can lead to something unique, that no individual would have achieved. The flip side however, is that each individual may not ‘see the big picture’ or hear the arrangement as a whole, concentrating instead on his or her own individual contribution. To get all the elements to gel, to interact in a satisfying way, either needs musicians with perfect diplomacy skills or one person taking charge of the arrangement. If there’s one useful piece of advice, it’s spend as much time and effort listening, as playing.

Disagree with these generalisations? What’s your opinion?



# KEY ELEMENTS IN DIFFERENT GENRES

Look at the examples on P50 - 59.



## ROCK AND POP SONGS, FOLK, 'ROOTS', BLUES, COUNTRY

- 1 Traditional methods using an instrument, or jamming with a band
- 2 Read Chapter 1 on songwriting for more information. Often starts with chords or melody.



## HIP HOP, R'N'B, URBAN, ELECTRO, DRUM AND BASS, JUNGLE

- 1 Computer driven, using 'break beats' - they work best at 80 – 100 bpm or double this! Often starts using rhythm.
- 2 Rather than complex musical ideas, production is all important in Hip-Hop/ RnB. Tracks can just be a beat and single vocal.
- 3 The METER and tone of the vocal is a key factor. For example, Eminem has a very original style.
- 4 Good production does not always mean a good quality sound. Like early punk, where roughness suited the time, a bit of an edge is desirable. Public Enemy, Dr. Dre, Eminem and 50 Cent are good examples to listen to.
- 5 Music is written in blocks of 4, 8, 16, 32 bars, and its very rare that it changes from this format. Because of the way it's written on software, there is a lot of copying of large sections of the same thing. There is a lot of repetition, even in fills, which occasionally makes a kind of hook, because the same fill or device comes round every 8 bars.

TIP

- A 'fill' is a short rhythmic pattern between sections of music.
- 6 Many songs use no chords at all! Recently there have been many songs released with no bass line.
  - 7 Certain sounds may be common in a particular style. You must be able to identify them, and the equipment used to create these sounds.
  - 8 For example, the Akai MPC sequencer and sample player is still used in American Hip-Hop and RnB, giving a very definite feel.



## HOUSE, TRANCE, TECHNO, DANCE

- 1 Computer driven, inspired by the groove, using 'four to the floor' beats, generally around 120 -150bpm.
- 2 Once the groove is set up, the chords or melody are adapted to match the groove. The bounce or feel will make them sound different.
- 3 Arranging is done by muting tracks or parts on the sequencer. Usually no bridges are used and the middle 8 is a 'drop down' or 'break down'.
- 4 There is a very constant feel to the chord progression, often the same four chords are used throughout.
- 5 Dance music is often moved into the pop arena by introducing more mainstream influences, such as disco, gospel and soul.
- 6 Similar to urban music, certain sounds may be common, so you must be able to identify them, and the equipment that creates the sounds ( for example Nord Modular synth ). New technology can drive a music scene as the same sounds or techniques are regularly used.



## CLASSICAL

Composers often write parts for different instruments straight onto papers, using their understanding of music theory - or use a piano. Usually start with writing themes which are the central melodies.



## JAZZ

Melody and chord progressions are crucial, often start with a 'riff' or short melodic idea, based around a particular scale. Much jazz is composed in a live environment.

# COMMERCIAL MUSIC

There are many ways of earning money by writing commercial music to a brief.

## WRITING FOR A PARTICULAR ARTIST WITHIN A GENRE

Sometimes, writers are asked to create music for a particular artist in a certain style. It might be worth taking these points into consideration.

- Listen to what they and other similar artists have recorded.
- Try to work out the next step or musical progression for the artist.
- You may be asked to provide backing tracks in the correct style for the artist to write melodies over.
- Get them involved whenever possible and they will feel happier using the song and working with you more often.

## FILMS AND ADVERTS

- Music used in adverts can give the artist a big hit, so it’s a very desirable thing to do.
- A recent development is for advertising companies to get unsigned acts to provide the music. The ad company will own the copyright, so both sides share profits from record sales caused by the TV exposure.
- Play a favourite scene from a movie with the volume down. Now play a variety of other tracks along with the pictures and see what fits.
- Examine why some things give a totally different feel to the scene.



## Music for TV and Radio

A theme tune for a TV programme. Incidental music for a TV documentary. ‘Stings’ for a TV quiz show ( like the Channel 4 programme ‘Countdown’ ) Radio Station ‘Idents’ ( like the jingle for BBC Radio One )

## Advertising

Radio and TV advertising music, including jingles. You need to work fast and to very tight deadlines. Pays very well if you are good.

## Ringtones, musitones, polyphonic ringtones

Creating fairly simple MIDI music files from existing works and migrating the data to the various ringtone formats inside mobile phones.

## Musicals

An incredibly competitive field of work, you would normally work with a lyricist and arranger.

## Sound design for computer games and films

Very specialist work which involves creating special sound effects and synchronising them to computer games or films. A sound designer will have access to a huge library of sound effects and other source material.

## Film soundtracks

The ultimate job in commercial music – writing film soundtracks – requires incredible musical creativity and attention to detail. The top film composers such as John Williams, Danny Elfman, John Barry make millions.

## Library music ( Production music )

Writing music of many different genres, which is stored in a library and bought by commercial companies. Music in hotel lifts, supermarkets, TV programmes and corporate videos uses a lot of library music. You can make surprisingly good money if you are good at this.

note : Any details or photographs of equipment, software, manufacturers or suppliers do not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by DWP, but are intended to provide typical reference examples only.



# MUSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF GENRES

## ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENT MUSICAL GENRES

Let's explore some music from different genres and see if we can analyse it. Most of these examples come from nominations at the Brit Awards 2003, Classical Brit Awards 2003, Mercury Music Prize 2003 and Q's best of 03 CD.

POP & ROCK MUSIC  
AND ITS SUB GENRES

URBAN & DANCE MUSIC  
AND ITS SUB GENRES

ART & ROOTS MUSIC  
AND ITS SUB GENRES

COMMERCIAL MUSIC  
AND ITS SUB GENRES




### COMMERCIAL POP


like **ONE LOVE** by **BLUE**

 **STRUCTURE**  
Classic song structure, predictable but effective – verse, chorus, verse, chorus, middle 8, chorus.

 **MELODY**  
Very memorable, easy to sing, very ‘melodic’.

 **HARMONY**  
Chords from the key, not too provocative, but satisfying.

 **RHYTHM**  
Solid on - beat / off - beat, with additional character drawn from other genres. Moderate tempo – 95 bpm.

 **INSTRUMENTATION**  
Arranged and produced to perfection – many classy sounds, drawn from many other genres, loads of vocal.

 **MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES**  
Vocal harmonies, slick production, hooky vocal melody.

photography © Roger Woolman  
www.gigpics.com

### POP & ROCK MUSIC

AND ITS SUB GENRES





## POP & ROCK MUSIC

AND ITS SUB GENRES

### CLASSIC ROCK

like **GET YOUR HANDS OFF MY WOMAN** by **THE DARKNESS**



#### STRUCTURE

Classic song structure, predictable but effective – verse, chorus, verse, chorus, solo, chorus.



#### MELODY

Ambitious melody, though vocal 'attitude' as important as the notes themselves. Melodies also exist in the guitar riffs.



#### HARMONY

Many chords from the key, but some odd ones thrown in, giving the track some edge. Plenty of guitar power chords.



#### RHYTHM

Mostly 4s and 8s, fragmented and syncopated, but not as much as jazz influenced music like funk.  
Fast tempo – 152 bpm.



#### INSTRUMENTATION

Lead vocal, bass, drums and distorted guitar.



#### MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES

Screaming lead vocal, guitar and bass riffs.

photography © Karen McBride



## POP & ROCK MUSIC

AND ITS SUB GENRES

### INDIE

like **LITTLE BY LITTLE** by **OASIS**



#### STRUCTURE

Strong song structure, building from a low - dynamic verse to a big chorus.



#### MELODY

Memorable, instantly appealing, easy to sing. Plenty of melodic guitar riffs.



#### HARMONY

Mostly straight chords from the key, but the chord sequence is a satisfying part of the song, helping to define each section.



#### RHYTHM

Solid on - beat / off - beat groove, big drum fills. 73 bpm.



#### INSTRUMENTATION

Predominantly guitars, bass, drums, lead vocal.



#### MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES

'Baggy' feel, strumming guitar, memorable melody.

photography © Allen Kiely [www.gigpics.com](http://www.gigpics.com)





HIP HOP  
like DON'T MUG YOURSELF by THE STREETS

**STRUCTURE**  
Just 2 main sections ( verse and chorus ) repeated, with some links. The main difference between the 2 sections is the vocal – backing remains mostly the same

**MELODY**  
The lyric is more important than the melody. The verse is rapped, the chorus uses a simple repeating melodic hook.

**HARMONY**  
Repetitive, same loop of chords for both verse and chorus – harmonic movement is not important here.

**RHYTHM**  
Fast – 180 bpm. Rhythms are angular and fragmented, with many quirky elements.

**INSTRUMENTATION**  
Synths, loops, samples rap vocals. Tight, edgy sounds.

**MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES**  
Lyrics, rap vocal.

photography © Allen Kiely [www.gigpics.com](http://www.gigpics.com)

URBAN  
like DY-NA-MI-TEE by MS DYNAMITE

**STRUCTURE**  
Just 2 main sections ( verse and chorus ) repeated, with some links. The main difference between the two sections is the vocal – backing remains the same.

**MELODY**  
Verse uses fast moving, repetitive lines, chorus is broader and more obviously melodic.

**HARMONY**  
Repetitive, same loop of chords for both verse and chorus – harmonic movement is not important here.

**RHYTHM**  
Heavy, slow groove – 79.5 bpm. Repetitive, syncopated rhythms.


**INSTRUMENTATION**  
Many samples and loops ( often 'tatty' acoustic loops ) – lots of percussion. Lead and backing vocals are the main elements as much of the instrumental arrangement is repetitive.


**MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES**  
Lyrics, vocal melody, wacky loops.




URBAN &  
DANCE  
MUSIC  
AND ITS SUB GENRES


R'N'B like B WITH ME by MIS-TEEQ


- 


**STRUCTURE**  
Strong verse - chorus structure, with the chorus repeated often, but several contrasting sections.
- 

**MELODY**  
Ambitious but hooky vocal melody, wide range, syncopated and pacey. Slips in and out of rap and sung vocals.
- 

**HARMONY**  
Based on just a few chords in a minor key, but plenty of jazzy extensions, particularly in the vocal harmonies. 134 bpm.


- 


**RHYTHM**  
Very tight and syncopated, many layers. Lots of short sounds, percussion and synths.
- 


**INSTRUMENTATION**  
Vocals are most prominent, with many percussion, synth and sampled sounds. Advanced arrangement and production gives it a slick feel.
- 


**MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES**  
Slick vocals, hooky chorus melody.
- photography © Karen McBride


JAZZ  
like DON'T KNOW WHY by NORAH JONES


- 

**STRUCTURE**  
There are 2 sections, but not really a verse and chorus, but an A and B section that alternate.
- 

**MELODY**  
Advanced – hooky but difficult to sing, wide range.
- 

**HARMONY**  
Jazzy! Many different chords, using chord extensions like 7ths. The chord sequence is important to the character of the music
- 


**RHYTHM**  
Syncopated but not accented, so the complex rhythms appear quite subtle. 88 bpm.
- 


**INSTRUMENTATION**  
Light, gentle sounds – acoustic bass, kit with brushes, jazz guitar, piano.
- 

**MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES**  
Sweet, expressive vocal, jazz chords, guitar / piano licks.


COUNTRY


like THE MAN COMES AROUND by JOHNNY CASH

 **STRUCTURE**  
Simple structure, with many repeated verses.

 **MELODY**  
Instantly memorable, easy to sing, very natural melodic shapes, often repeated, that fit neatly with lyrics.

 **HARMONY**  
Simple, chords from the key.

 **RHYTHM**  
Lose, simple and fluent.  
Approximately 100 bpm.


 **INSTRUMENTATION**  
Strummed acoustic guitar and lead vocal are at the core, with other acoustic instruments.


! **MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES**  
Lyrics and vocal delivery.


FOLK


like LIMBO by ELIZA CATHY

 **STRUCTURE**  
Simple structure, with many repeated verses.

 **MELODY**  
Timeless, folksong quality, typically ‘melodic’ and ‘modal’.

 **HARMONY**  
Mostly simple chords from the key with some ‘modal’ twists.

 **RHYTHM**  
Simple and lose – giving it a very natural, human feel. Approximately 104 bpm


 **INSTRUMENTATION**  
Simple, acoustic, plenty of space. Vocal quality is a big part of the aural identity.


! **MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES**  
Guitar licks and vocal delivery.





COMMERCIAL  
MUSIC  
AND ITS SUB GENRES


FILM MUSIC like TO KILL A KING by RICHARD MITCHELL

 **STRUCTURE**  
The structure of each musical cue is dictated by the action and drama, with dramatic dynamics. Structure, with many repeated verses.

 **MELODY**  
Melodies are ‘motifs’ – each associated with a character or dramatic theme in the story. Some are long melodic lines, others are short hooks.

 **HARMONY**  
Varied, experimental, using many classical music conventions.

 **RHYTHM**  
Varied, experimental, using many classical music conventions, often no obvious on-beat / off-beat feel or clear bpm

 **INSTRUMENTATION**  
Full orchestra and choir – using a large number of classical instruments, plus some unusual ones, like shakuhachi.

! **MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES**  
Textures, motifs, diversity of influences.



CASE STUDY

RICHARD MITCHELL

**How would you describe your job?**  
Film Music Composer, Arranger, Producer, Engineer, Musician.

**How do you usually start creating a piece of music?**  
I use many different approaches. If, for example a film needs a drum and bass score, I start with a drum loop. If it's a period piece, I may take just the rhythmic 'feel' or 'groove' of a piece of music that in some way either comes from or helps relate to the feel for the period. I might then then invent something that has an essence of that style but hopefully morphs into something totally different. If it's a traditional 'Hollywood' type score, the starting point may come from simply inventing a series of chord progressions that may represent a strong emotional aspect of the film, to which I might then attempt to write a simple melody around. Another aspect may relate to the 'geography' of the piece, so a sample of performance from an ethnic instrumentalist or vocal performance could be the basis for the composition.

**Which 2 pieces of musical equipment are most important in your work?**  
Keyboard and MIDI recorder.

**What, for you, are the 2 most important elements in a well-crafted piece of music?**  
For me, there are no '2 most important' elements for every piece, it depends on the job.



**If you consider you work within a genre, do you take influence/ideas from outside that genre?**  
Yes , I think juxtaposition creates the most interesting work.

**Do you like to collaborate with others in the composition process?**  
I've never really had much experience of this although I'm sure it's good for your creative learning process.

**Do you like to collaborate with others in your arranging/recording process?**  
Yes ..... otherwise you risk becoming completely stale. Performance is a huge part of my work.

**If you were to offer one piece of advice for writers working in your area of music what would it be?**  
Don't be trapped by the confines of only ever using 'off the shelf' drum loops and grooves. Force yourself into creating your own unique starting points for creativity so you never risk sounding like everyone else.

photograph supplied courtesy of **RICHARD MITCHELL**





CASE STUDY

**DAVE BAINBRIDGE** from Christian rock band Iona

**How would you describe your job?**  
Musician, composer, producer, arranger, artist

**How do you usually start creating a piece of music?**  
Lots of different ways, sometimes the concept shapes the way the music should proceed. Sometimes a melodic idea or interesting chord progression is a starting point. Often a lyrical idea, sometimes a poem or other literary idea is a good starting point. Occasionally an interesting sound sparks off a particular direction.

**Which 2 pieces of musical equipment are most important in your work?**  
Piano ( or keyboard ) & guitar are pretty important as they're my main instruments, but the ability to build up ideas on a audio / midi recorder has been invaluable for me. But the main equipment is one's imagination!!

**What, for you, are the 2 most important elements in a well-crafted piece of music?**  
Many different aspects are important, depending on the piece! But...melody & chord sequence are top of my list!

**If you consider you work within a genre, do you take influence/ideas from outside that genre?**  
Most definitely, otherwise you can end up with a blinkered outlook. Music from other genres can suggest ideas or ways of doing things that one might not otherwise come across. These can then be applied to one's own field, but can really sound new or fresh in their new context.

**Do you like to collaborate with others in your composition process?**  
Sometimes it can be very inspiring to have input from others, and this is often an essential part of working together in a band. However, it can be counter productive to incorporate everyone's compositional ideas. There's a place for both methods and to have time spent doing both is the ideal scenario.

**Do you like to collaborate with others in your arranging/recording process?**  
Certainly sometimes in the recording process. I find it most valuable, though, to collaborate with someone at the mix stage of a project, who is able to offer some outside objectivity and be able to bring new ideas.

**If you were to offer one piece of advice for writers working in your area of music what would it be?**  
Don't give up. If you feel you have something unique to offer that you have a real passion for, keep on pursuing it. Eventually, by honing your craft and developing your ideas, you'll find your niche.

photograph supplied courtesy of **DAVE BAINBRIDGE**



CASE STUDY

SIMON MAY

**How would you describe your job?**  
Composer/producer. ( Simon wrote the theme tune to EastEnders. )

**How do you usually start creating a piece of music?**  
Chord sequence or lyric idea.

**Which 2 pieces of musical equipment are most important in your work?**  
Piano and MIDI recorder.

**What, for you, are the 2 most important elements in a well-crafted piece of music?**  
Melody and arrangement.

**If you consider you work within a genre, do you take influence/ideas from outside that genre?**  
Yes.

**Do you like to collaborate with others in your composition, arranging and recording?**  
Yes.

**If you were to offer one piece of advice for writers working in your area of music what would it be?**  
'No' is spelt Y-E-S.

photograph supplied courtesy of **SIMON MAY**

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

LINKS

New Deal for Musicians has no responsibility for or control of the following sites. The inclusion of any site does not necessarily imply New Deal for Musicians approval of the site. To access any of the sites please type in the address into a browser or search using keywords from the name of the link.  
www.dfes.gov.uk/ukonlinecentres Find Internet access that's close to you.

HELPFUL LINKS ABOUT WORKING AS A WRITER OR COMPOSER

- ☐ **www.prsfoundation.co.uk**  
Performing Right Society Foundation  
PRS based charity to encourage, promote and sustain new music. Funding available.
- ☐ **www.britishacademy.com**  
British Academy of Composers and Songwriters.  
Trade association for the UK songwriting and composing community.  
Excellent site, lots of resources including information on songwriting competitions.
- ☐ **www.pcam.co.uk**  
Society for Producers and Composers of Applied Music  
UK trade association for producers and composers of music for advertising, television and film
- ☐ **www.bmr.org**  
British Music Rights  
Promotes the interests of composers, songwriters and publishers
- ☐ **www.alchemyaudiolab.com**  
Music, sound design and post - production services. See how the professionals do it.
- ☐ **www.bbc.co.uk**  
Radio 2 'sold on song site';  
Radio 1 One Music site;  
There are many BBC resources which are helpful!

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

- ☐ **Pop Music: The Text Book**  
Toby Bricheno, Peter Nickol, Julia Winterson  
Publisher : Peters Edition Ltd  
ISBN : 1843670070
- ☐ **Jazz : A crash course**  
Simon Adams  
Publisher : Simon & Schuster  
ISBN : 0684858347
- ☐ **New Sounds: The Virgin Guide to New Music**  
John Schaefer  
Publisher : Virgin Books  
ISBN : 086369375X
- ☐ **How to get the sound you want**  
Michael Prochak, P. White  
Publisher : Sanctuary Publishing  
ISBN : 1844920658
- ☐ **Electronica dance music programming secrets**  
Roger Brown, Martin Griesse  
Publisher : Prentice Hall  
ISBN : 0130836966

## MORE TASKS

### 1 Underscore spoken word

Use a sequencer or multi-track recorder to create a piece of music to underscore a spoken narrative. You could create your own spoken track, using a poem or extract from a book. Or you could find an example of a speech or narrative on the Internet.

- 1) Record or import a spoken word track into your audio recorder.
- 2) Summarise what the spoken word track is about.
- 3) Plan what your music is going to add – the moods, emotions and drama – and decide where the ‘turning points’ are (where your music will move to a new section).
- 4) Experiment with chords, sounds and melodies.
- 5) Develop a pool of musical ideas (themes) that support the spoken word.
- 6) Finish off your composition with arrangement ideas.

In order to undertake the underscore project, you should be competent at using an audio recorder, such as Cubase.

In order to create some suitable music for an extract of spoken word you need to have a clear understanding of the message. Think of this as music for a radio drama - or a movie, even though you are just working with sound! Summarise the message, moods and emotions, not just the obvious ones, but sub-plots, things that are hinted at in the tone of the spoken word. After all, you can say ‘show me the money’ in a friendly manner or a dark, threatening way.

Plan what your music is going to add. Very often the music provides what the words alone cannot say – hidden meanings hinted at in the tone, underlying tensions and feelings. It is likely that there will be various changes in the mood of the spoken word – perhaps swinging between optimism and despair, or love and hate, or anger and calm. Identify where these (often subtle) changes are and treat these points as new sections in your music (like the change between verse and chorus in a song). Probably the simplest way to structure your music is to record it to a click at a constant tempo, so choose a tempo that satisfies you and note how many bars there are in total and how many bars there are for each of the sections you’ve planned.

## MORE TASKS

Now down to the music! Experiment with musical ideas, just like you would writing a song. Try various chords, melodies, grooves and sounds to build up a pool of ideas. In experimenting with musical ideas to run alongside spoken word, you will quickly develop knowledge of how music can reflect (and manipulate) emotions. From the simple difference between major chords (bright, positive, optimistic) and minor chords (dark, sad) to the tension and release offered by clashes – combinations of notes that don’t sit together obviously.

When you have a bunch of ideas that seem to sit well with the spoken word, you should look at the structure of the music – this will be dictated by the timing of the drama. If you are recording in a sequencer you don’t even have to start at the beginning, but start at a point that inspires you, then move on to another until you’ve filled up the spaces! It’s a bit like doing a jigsaw – do the obvious bits first, then fill in the gaps.

### 2 New genres

You could argue that if you only write music to fit neatly within the parameters of a particular genre, then you are never going to create something genuinely new or unique. In practice, we often feel an affinity for more than one genre and our music takes on a broader range of characteristics that just one particular style – a hybrid.

Choose a genre that is far removed from your own style. Listen to at 3 least pieces of music from that genre and identify the main features. Now try to incorporate some of those features in your own music.

So, for example, you might marry some country-style slide guitar with an urban groove, or some r’n’b guitar riffs with an indie-style acoustic rock song. Experiment – there are no rules – and unique music often evolves from strange combinations! A new and appealing style might come out of it!

### 3 Ring tones

Pick 3 songs from your music collection. What would be the ‘ring tone’ for each song – the short but instantly identifiable element? Record these then see if your friends can identify each song.



RE MIX

ING

## WHAT IS IT?

In the old days (in the 1980s!), remixing literally meant to mix again, originally, taking the master tape and re-do the mix process through the desk in a recording studio.

Nowadays, it is seen as a reinterpretation of an idea, a track or a song, using what is deemed to be the “hook” or key elements of the piece.

## WHY DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS?

Remixing is used for marketing purposes – the aim being to make a track more accessible for a different market or territory.

A Record label will pay for a remix to make it more radio-friendly, or to appeal to new markets, such as younger or older people.

Remixing is a specialist job for people who combine an expert knowledge of music with creativity and technology – if that’s you, read on!



Read the TASKS section below.  
Then read the NOTES AND GUIDANCE section.  
Carry out the TASKS.

Answer these questions

1 What is the main purpose of a remix? Tick one or more boxes

- ☐ To make a track more commercial
- ☐ To appeal to a different audience
- ☐ To speed it up or slow it down
- ☐ To create an extra filler track on a CD single

2 Do some research into remixes and give examples here ( Give an example of a track which does this: )

A remix which made a track more accessible to another market

An older song with a modern flavour

A remix which appeals to a variety of dance music styles

A remix which uses an underground music style to give it 'street cred'

## A remix that crosses musical boundaries

3 Write down three different people or businesses that might commission a remixer:

4 Can you be a remixer? – work out your skills and see if you fit the bill.

Explain what skills you have and rate them with a mark out of 10

	mark
<b>MUSIC KNOWLEDGE</b> ( for example – excellent knowledge of current dance music )	/10
<b>COMMUNICATION SKILLS</b> ( for example – able to work easily with different people )	/10
<b>MUSICAL CREATIVITY</b> ( for example – ability to spot a good tune or ‘hook’ )	/10
<b>TECHNICAL SKILLS</b> ( for example – skilled programmer or turntablist )	/10

Go through these with your MOLP adviser.

5 As a remixer, you will be provided with song parts or source material on different types of ‘formats’.

Use the table below to list some advantages or disadvantages of the various formats.

FORMAT	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Multitrack tape		
Adat		
Dat		
Audio CD		
Data CD/DVD		
Hard disk drive		

6 Listen to some remixes and analyse them.

- Read the Notes and Guidance to find out where to find some remixes.
- What has been changed from the original?
- Listen to the interesting sections
- What works and what doesn't work?
- Analyse the following elements and list the things that work best: Rhythm, Drums, Key, Chord changes, Vocals and hooks.

Write your answers here :

7 Creating a brief.

Read the example brief in the Notes and Guidance and then create your own brief, as if you were working for a record label.

Which artist are you commissioning the remix for? ( Think of one of your favourite artists )

Write your brief here...

8 Create your own remix. Tick ( when completed )

- ☐ First, you need some ‘source material’ to start your remix.
- ☐ Follow the instructions in ‘Notes and Guidance’ for how to start a remix
- ☐ Now listen back and evaluate it yourself.
- ☐ Now play it to others and get some feedback!

9 Sample clearance. Answer the following questions.

Circle correct answer

1) Is it true that you don’t have to clear any samples that are just a few seconds long?

Yes / No

2) Do you need the permission of the label or the producer to clear a sample?

Label / Producer

3) Do you ALSO need the permission of the writer to clear a sample?

Yes / No

Now hand in this worksheet to your tutor.

Remember to take a copy of the song to your tutorial so that you can discuss your answers with your tutor.

Go to the ‘more tasks’ section for extra projects.

WELL DONE, THAT’S THE END OF THIS ASSIGNMENT CHECK IT AND HAND IT IN!

A close-up photograph of a DJ's hands on a turntable, with a blue overlay. The DJ is wearing a black and white striped shirt. The turntable has a clear dust cover and a black slipmat. The background is blurred, showing other equipment.

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A REMIX?

The aim of a remix is usually to make a track more accessible or suitable for a different market or territory. This is not necessarily always a dance mix, although this is often the case. A song can be given a “radio mix”, or even have a version that is designed to appeal to tastes in a different country (for example, a Latin mix).

Some mixes can be full of creativity and are thought to be better than the original. However, remixes are actually a marketing tool, designed to reach a wider audience or new market.

In recent years, we have seen big name acts demanding the services of the hottest remixer, almost as a ‘status symbol’ or to help maintain their profile. Acts that are trying to break into a particular scene will use a prominent remixer in that genre to give them a “leg up” into that fan base.



**PAUL OAKENFOLD**

Slane Castle, Dublin  
Supporting Madonna  
Sunday, 29th August 2004  
Photography © Marc Marot



# WHO WILL COMMISSION A REMIX?

It is normally a record label that will ask for a remix to be made, as it is the job of the label to market their product.

➤ WORKBOOK 1 – THE MUSIC INDUSTRY AND YOU – CHAPTER 2

It is not uncommon for an artist to dislike a remix and have it forced upon them by the label, who sees the possible sales benefits!

Where the label is less involved, it may be the manager or the act itself who will pick out a more suitable remixer.

Many remixes are commissioned through personal contacts of labels, managers, musicians, programmers and DJs – they are not normally advertised!

Sometimes, there could be a trade of mixes between artists, or a remix will be done as a favour that will be repaid with a share in the profits.

# WHAT KIND OF PERSON BECOMES A REMIXER?

Sometimes, it is a band who achieves prominence within a musical genre that become highly prized remixers.

Well known DJs are a popular choice to deliver the kind of mix they will play in their set. Many top DJ remixers started out by enlisting a programmer or musician. In the same way, a proficient musician may need to team up with a DJ to tailor their talents to suit the dance floor!

The key strength to have is knowledge of current trends and the target audience. This could be a radio show, cult fan base or a club crowd.

Unless you have a manager to get you work and speak to clients on your behalf, you will need to be a good communicator. Being excited about the project will help convince someone you are right for the job. You will need to motivate yourself to work hard on your own, managing your time to meet deadlines.

You may think that a degree of formal musical knowledge and ability to play an instrument are essential, but this is not the case!

## WHAT IS A COMMISSION?

A commission is a request for a specific job, to a specific brief, timescale and budget. There is usually a fixed fee for the work, although sometimes a remixer can share in the profits too.

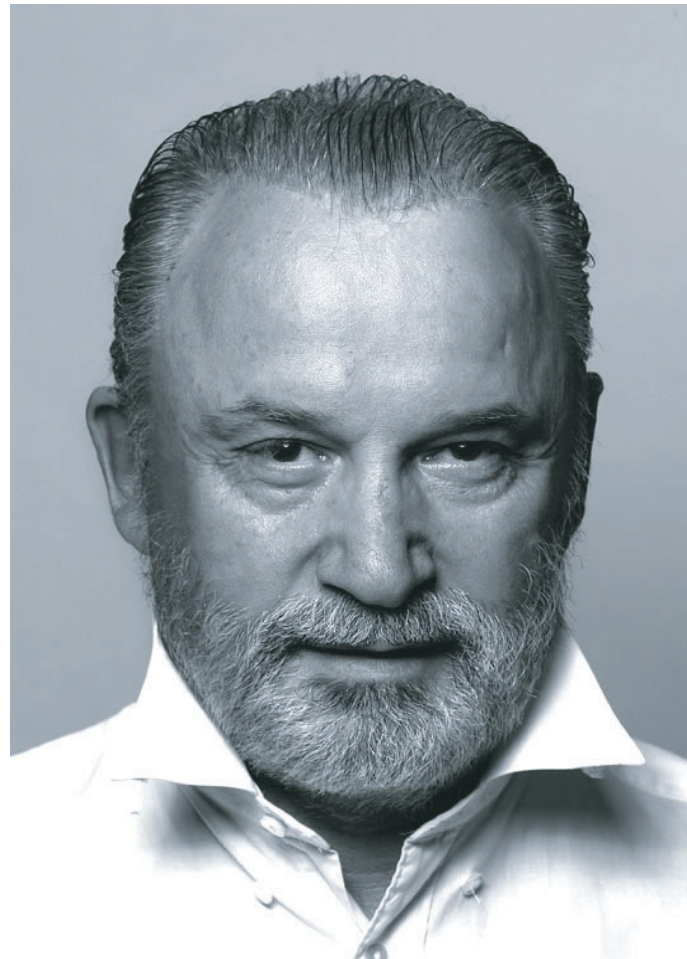


# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

It is useful to understand how remixing began, how it has developed over the years and what the current situation is.

During the **70's**, disco became popular and long after this came "the remix".

Producers such as **Arthur Baker**, **Shep Pettibone** and **Giorgio Moroder** used the "reel to reel" master tape to create a new mix incorporating more stripped down, sparse sections, often laden with effects. Unusual arrangements and extended sections became popular with the rise of the 12" single.



The **mid-to-late 1980's** saw Acid House arrive in Britain from its Chicago roots. A new age of technology in musical equipment helped to create this scene, and dance music became so huge it began to fragment into many different genres. As well as "Acid" or "House", we were given "Techno", "Hardcore", "Drum and Bass", "Jungle", "Trance", "Chill-Out" and many more.

The record companies quickly latched on to the popularity of club music, with a good club chart position helping to gain all important first week sales. Top remixers could demand up to £15,000 per mix and royalties too! Although some of the big name remixers are recognised with songwriting and performance credits, most are not. An exception here is **Paul Oakenfold** who is now credited as the artist when he remixes.

**Nowadays**, remixing is returning to its underground roots. Single sales are falling and with the increasing popularity of downloads, sales cannot easily be boosted by a range of mixes. After all, it is hard to be an extra track on a download!

picture left :  
**GIORGIO MORODER** photography © Volker Corell  
picture right :  
**PAUL OAKENFOLD** photography © Marc Marot





**MARK COMPTON**

from FAF Productions was a guitarist in an act that was one of the first to mix rock and dance styles. This attracted remix work from other similar artists, also rock bands wanting a mix to play in clubs. This in turn led to work in a variety of other styles and eventually production work for major artists.

photography Ray Chan



**WHAT EQUIPMENT WILL I NEED TO MAKE A REMIX?**

All you will need, to begin with, is a computer with music software and a sound card, an amplifier and some speakers. This will be enough to explore the basics, whilst offering the opportunity of getting some good sounding results without the expense of a professional studio.

➤ **WORKBOOK 5 – RECORDING AND PRODUCTION**

# WHERE CAN I GET REMIX WORK OR SOURCE MATERIAL?

Before you can be a remixer, you need something to remix!  
This is your 'Source Material'.

You need what are called "Remix Parts". These are a recording of each instrument or element that made up the original track, saved as an audio file. Normally any EQ or effects from the original mix are left off, so as to keep the raw ingredient.

These files can come in a few different formats, for example:

**wav**

common on PC systems

**aiff**

common to Apple Mac systems

**Cubase, Logic Audio, Motu or Pro Tools** data files

**Non - digital**

files can be recorded onto tape or minidisk

The data files can be stored on a recordable CD, DVD or hard drive.

They can also be e-mailed or downloaded from a web site, but if you use the Internet, a broadband connection is essential!

Parts can also be recorded individually straight on to Mini-Disk, DAT or ADAT, though this is now less likely, as they need putting onto a computer and then moving one by one to be in time again.



If software such as Cubase, Logic or Pro -Tools has been used during recording, then the song file, along with mix information, MIDI and all audio files can be stored together and passed on very easily. However, compatibility between various formats has been the cause of many studio headaches!



## TIP

Take care when saving song files and the audio files that relate to it. Be organised, where possible keep them all in the same folder. This avoids losing important files and makes backing up a complete song straight forward.

Ask other MOLP musicians if you can share tracks to remix. Local acts or labels may be prepared to give you source material, especially if you are a DJ and can offer to play a track for them in return. You will need to put together a showreel of your work to help convince.

Failing this, there are plenty of web sites with samples to download, even acappellas (solo vocals) to experiment with.

There may be something lurking in your own record and CD collection that cries out for you to get stuck into!

note : Any details or photographs of equipment, software, manufacturers or suppliers do not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by DWP, but are intended to provide typical reference examples only.



# WORKING TO A BRIEF

When you do manage to secure some remix work, you will be given a brief to let you know what the purpose of the remix is. This will include a description of what your mix should sound like, what it is designed to achieve and who are its target audience. This would usually take place as a conversation as opposed to being written.

## SAMPLE BRIEF 1

Yo Dude, we have a country artist doin' big things Stateside and need a mix for European radio. Do you wanna have a shot at it, I'll send a hard drive with all the parts. Use what you want but try and lose some of the country twang. No real rush, we're just fishin' for ideas just now.



## SAMPLE BRIEF 2

... we need a commercial club mix for our newly signed boy band and thought of you. I can get you a CD with the vocal parts, but I must have the finished mix on my desk Monday morning for the cut.



## SAMPLE BRIEF 3

... these guys are one of the founding fathers of electro-pop, with a loyal fan base, so you'll need to keep the trade mark synth sounds as well as all the vocal. Their producer will send the "Logic" song with all the files, use that as a starting point, concentrate on giving us a more modern rhythm pattern and bass line.



Make your client feel part of the creative process whilst talking through your ideas; it is more likely they will like the result!

You might not be given a brief! Maybe you will have freedom to do whatever you like or the client knows what kind of mix you will deliver due to your reputation!

Record companies have tight release schedules to keep to, so your mix will have a deadline, also given in the brief.

Make sure you understand the brief so you can deliver what is asked of you. To avoid confusion, always try to talk to the same person, and make sure they have authority to speak about the project.





## CASE STUDY

**JOE ROBINSON** Producer and remixer for Badly Drawn Boy, Volovan, Stazi, I am Kloot and many more

### Where does the work come from?

I am approached either by the act or the label. If the project goes well, a good relationship generates more work. I used to have a manager, but now manage myself. It was nice to have someone dealing with the business end of things, but he takes his 20%. I would say if you have a manager who is finding you work then definitely keep them.

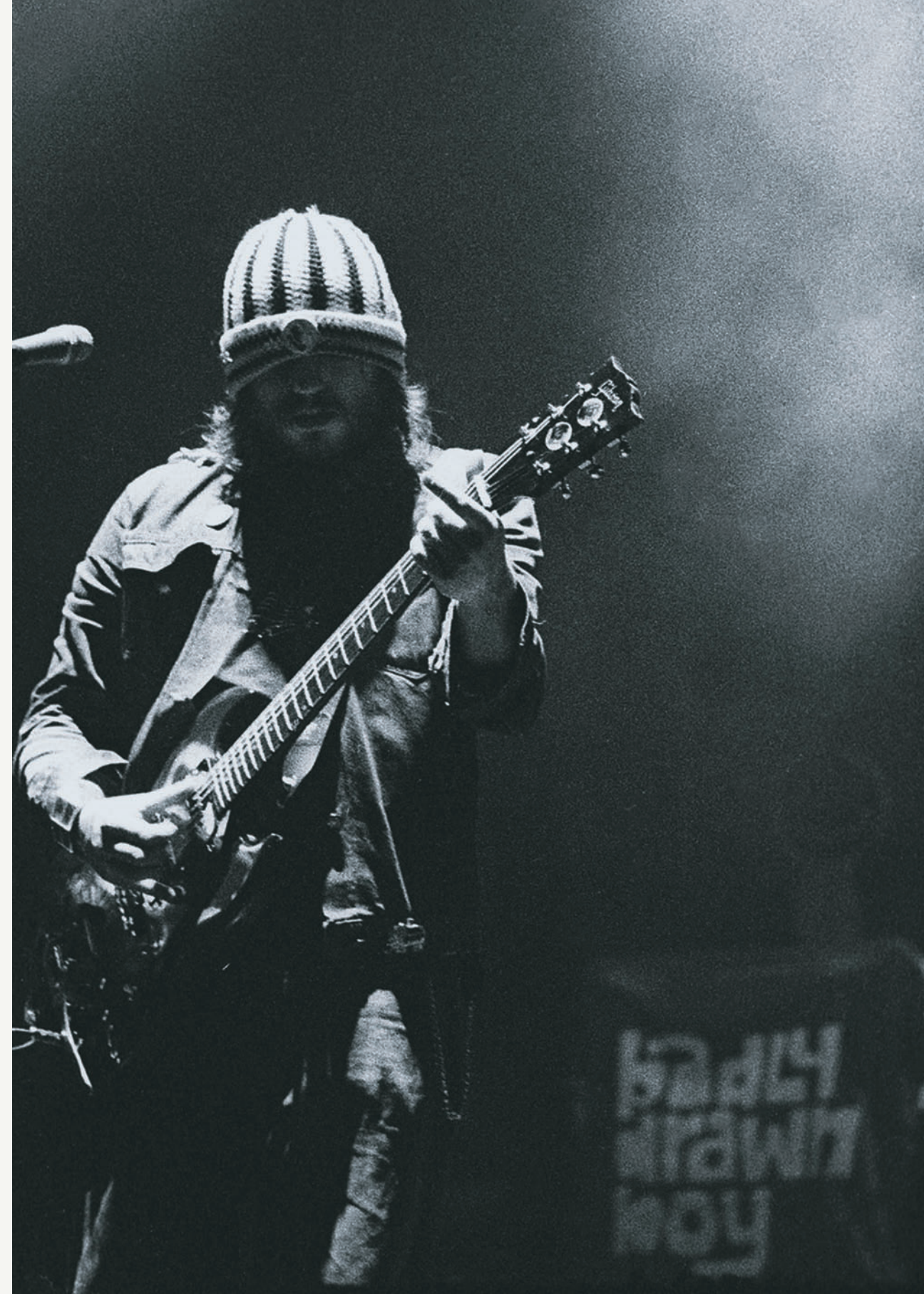
### How do you approach your work?

Every project has a different starting point depending on various factors i.e. budget; style of music; timing. I like to be flexible & travel a lot, so a good working knowledge of different gear is essential Collaboration is the best part of my job. I am in the fortunate position of being allowed to "join" a band and work as a part of that creative team for a few weeks. One week I'm making slamming techno, the next acoustic singer / songwriter stuff.

### Any advice?

Keep at it. I was on the dole & doing rubbish jobs for years ( but always making music ) before I started making a living from music. Also - specialize, get very good at what you do best rather than trying to do everything and spreading yourself thin. Be aware that you are entering a tough industry that is over-saturated by talented young people.

picture top : **JOE ROBINSON** right : **BADLY DRAWN BOY** photography © Ray Chan



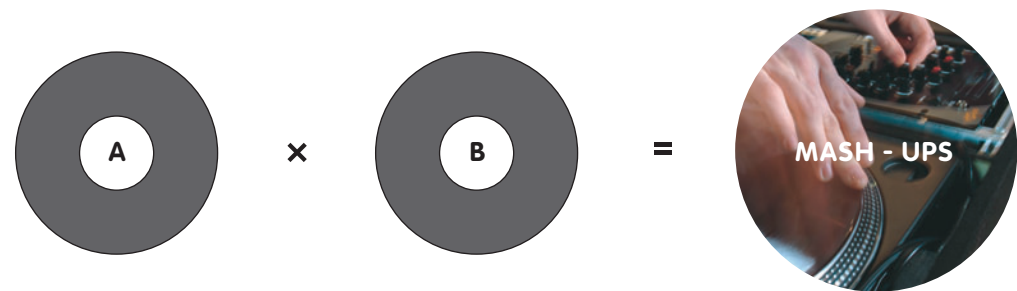


# HOW DO I LEARN REMIX SKILLS?

The best way to figure out how to remix is to listen to other examples and compare them to their original form. Then try matching up bits of different songs and playing them together.

## MASH - UPS

The current trend called “Mash-Ups” is where two records ( often total opposites ) are combined together, often giving surprising results. This phenomenon has become so popular that artists are holding competitions to find the best “Mash-Ups” involving their work.



e.g.  
**A : Kraftwerk** Numbers X **B : Whitney Houston** Wanna dance with somebody

You should also try programming drum loops or beats underneath the vocal or hook of various tracks.

Soon you will begin to understand what kind of things fit with others, as you become more aware of groove, tempo and the key of songs. You will also become more adept at editing or time stretching samples to be in time and in tune.



Music Technology magazines have interviews with top remixers, where they describe work they have done. They may give some useful tips and insight into their work.

# HOW SHOULD I PREPARE? WHAT STYLE OF MIX WILL I DELIVER?

Get together a selection of reference materials ( other recordings ) relevant to your mix. They can be used as inspiration, as well as a comparison for style and overall sound.

Collect a choice of samples, loops, keyboard presets, patches and effects that you can find quickly, these will act as a sound library.

Why not visit a club that plays music you are interested in? You will learn a lot from listening and then watching how the crowd react. Improve your knowledge by visiting a record shop and listening to cutting edge records.

It is worth noting that it may benefit you to establish a niche market or trend within your work as it develops. Potential clients will identify your sound as reputation grows. If you are a DJ your set could reflect this and you can play your own tunes!



Why not compete in a remix competition or attempt to get your work reviewed on the demos page of a magazine. This will give you the motivation to produce your best efforts.



photography Ray Chan

# HOW DO I BEGIN MY MIX?

Start with an analysis of the original piece.

What are the key elements or hooks? This is not always just the vocal. A bass line can be an integral part of a track, especially on a dance record.

Identify the hooks and the features you want to keep, check you have been sent these in the remix parts! Make decisions on what is better left out or recreated by you.

Start by listening to the key elements you have picked out and imagine what would work well with them. Refer to your reference material and sound library and then try a few things out.

Question the tempo and groove of the original. Could it be faster, slower or have a change of emphasis? Can you be creative with time stretching or editing skills, maybe cutting up a loop will get better results than just playing it in full? Experiment with different loops or try programming a few beats.

## TIP

Don't be frightened of using a lot of the original material if it works with your idea. The act will be pleased you haven't thrown all of their hard work in the trash and it will save you lots of effort replacing or trying to better it!

## BEGIN TO BUILD ON THE BASICS BUILD AN ARRANGEMENT

The rhythm pattern and bass line are usually the foundations that you will build the rest of the mix round. Get these wrong and everything can come crashing down very quickly!

Once you are satisfied with your basic groove, start to add features that are complementary. It is conventional practice to use instrumentation that supports the vocal, so you need to be aware of chord changes and key.

As the mix takes shape you need to think about structure and arrangement. Should you follow the dynamics used in the original or be more flexible? A club mix might benefit from a DJ-friendly intro and outro, where the track can easily be mixed with others.

Whatever your decision, moments of impact, crescendo and breakdowns should all be addressed. Again, check out your reference material for good ideas.

It is important to remember that there is not always a right or wrong answer in music, there is only taste and opinion. So be brave, an extreme idea is possibly just the thing that will make your work stand out, so experiment. Go with the flow, use your instincts, push boundaries, be confident with whatever works well for you.

# CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

During your work take time out to reflect on what you have done. Ask yourself if you are true to your original idea and in line with what the brief said. It may be useful to get some early feedback from the label, just to double check you are on the right lines. Sending an MP3 of work in progress can be an easy way of doing this.



Remember, sometimes “Less is more”. So don’t over cook things and keep piling on more bits. This is very tempting when working with computers.

When you get a finished mix be sure to check it out on different speakers. If it is designed to be played in a club, then try listening to it in a club. Can you get your work played to a crowd and gauge reaction? Play your work to others and make any necessary alterations.

## DELIVERY FORMATS

If it's not mentioned in the brief, you should check the format for delivery of the final mix ( T.V. pass, acappella, instrumental, vox up ). A vox up is a mix identical to the original but with the vocal up in volume slightly. This is due to the fact that over time you will have become accustomed to the vocal, giving a tendency to have it too quiet. So a “vox up” is a safety against this. Also, run off the other versions mentioned; if eventually your mix is to be performed as a club personal appearance or on T.V., you need a mix containing everything except the main vocal. Having this now saves recreating the whole mix later.



Apply some software mastering ( maximising / compression / EQ ) to your finished mix to make sure the overall level recorded onto a CD will not be much quieter than other CDs.



photography Oliver Kersh



## KEIR

from Inch Studio started out as an accomplished musician, who had deals with a couple of independent Labels. Gradually he became more interested in the recording and music technology side of the business and went to college to learn more. He secured a work placement in a large Manchester studio and began approaching people to get work as a remixer. After completing some mixes “on spec” he made enough money to fund his own studio, going on to remix and produce many artists in his own distinctive style.



# LEGAL AND MONEY ISSUES

Initially, it is likely that work will be undertaken on a speculative “On Spec” basis. This means that you will take on the work for free and if it is well received, you will then get paid.

Payment can be a fee, sometimes split into fee and costs. It can also be a royalty, referred to as “points”. An agreement to pay 3 points on dealer price means you get three percent of the money the label gets from the distributor. ( Not the value at retail. )

Your initial fee can be recoupable; you won’t get royalties until the amount paid as a fee has been recovered.

This gets very confusing where more than one mix is included and subsequent different formats. Your royalty share will depend on how many other tracks are contained. Other things to beware of are deductions for packaging, TV Ad campaigns and releases in other territories.

Bootlegs are common on the club scene, with many white labels being distributed containing samples. These are illegal, but this is usually only a problem if they start being successful and selling in number. Then the samples must be cleared or replaced, sometimes recreated. A record label may see an opportunity and agree for a release, where they clear the sample and get a hit record. They will only do this for a potential hit.

- » WORKBOOK 7 – COPYRIGHT, LEGAL AND MANAGEMENT
- » WORKBOOK 8 – BUSINESS AND MONEY – CHAPTER3

Clearing a sample before release can be very time consuming and you will certainly have to give away a songwriting share. Permission must be granted by both the writer and the owner of the original sound recording that the sample comes from. To protect labels from possible law suits, remix contracts ask you to give a declaration on sample usage.





# WANT TO KNOW MORE?

## LINKS

New Deal for Musicians has no responsibility for or control of the following sites. The inclusion of any site does not necessarily imply New Deal for Musicians approval of the site. To access any of the sites please type in the address into a browser or search using keywords from the name of the link.  
www.dfes.gov.uk/ukonlinecentres Find Internet access that's close to you.

MORE INFORMATION AND LINKS	SITES FOR FREE SAMPLE DOWNLOADS	SPECIALIST SITES FEATURING COMPETITIONS	BOOKS
<div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.remixmag.com">www.remixmag.com</a> news, reviews, features and links to other sites. Includes features on equipment aimed at djs and remixers.</div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.djmag.com">www.djmag.com</a> features on club culture and new releases. Links to related shops, radio and contacts.</div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.futuremusic.co.uk">www.futuremusic.co.uk</a> specialises in modern music technology, reviews, tips and techniques. Occasionally will contain competitions. Links to equipment manufacturers. Second hand gear listed.</div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.soundonsound.com">www.soundonsound.com</a> more general studio equipment and techniques. Reader's ads for second hand gear. The "Search" for articles from past issues is very useful.</div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.computermusic.co.uk">www.computermusic.co.uk</a> good info on the basic computer based set up for music. Tutorials on music software. Reviews of readers demos.</div></div>	<div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.cobwebaudio.co.uk">www.cobwebaudio.co.uk</a> (acappellas available)</div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.djsamples.com">www.djsamples.com</a></div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.peaceloveproductions.com">www.peaceloveproductions.com</a></div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.audio360.com">www.audio360.com</a></div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.musicshareware.com">www.musicshareware.com</a></div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.samplenet.co.uk">www.samplenet.co.uk</a></div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.samplecraze.com">www.samplecraze.com</a></div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.acapella-heaven.tk">www.acapella-heaven.tk</a></div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.slsknet.org">www.slsknet.org</a> File share site for samples.</div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.panasonic-europe.com/technics/">www.panasonic-europe.com/technics/</a> Has a section about the history and importance of turntables and DJing., with a year by year break down.</div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.discogs.com">www.discogs.com</a> Discographies for any artist or remixer.</div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.samplearena.com">www.samplearena.com</a> Free samples and links to other sample sites.</div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.soundhunter.com">www.soundhunter.com</a> wav files of sound FX.</div></div>	<div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.remixfight.com">www.remixfight.com</a></div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.raveindex.com">www.raveindex.com</a></div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.breakbeat.co.uk">www.breakbeat.co.uk</a> (drum and bass)</div></div> <div><div></div><div>MAGAZINES</div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div>Remix Interviews with DJs and remixers, features on high tech equipment.</div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div>DJ Mag Aimed more at DJs than remixers, but gives up to the minute news about the dance music trends.</div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div>Future Music All the latest hi tech equipment is reviewed, plus studio and remixing tips.</div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div>Sound On Sound More general studio technology features. Good tips and techniques from professionals.</div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div>Computer Music. Magazine specifically for making music with computers.</div></div>	<div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="#">Last Night A DJ Saved My Life – Frank Broughton and Bill Brewster</a> Publisher : Headline ISBN : 0747262306 The history of the DJ. Covers most dance music genres.</div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="#">Burning Down The House</a> Eliot Van Buskirk Publisher : Osborne / McGraw Hill ISBN : 0072228792 Techniques and tips from DJs and studio engineers.</div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="#">The New Beats</a> S.H. Fernando Junior. Publisher : Anchor Books ISBN : 038547119X Highly recommended for those interested in the Hip Hop and Old School Rap scenes.</div></div>
<div><div></div><div>FOR MORE GENERAL INFO AND REGULAR COMPETITIONS</div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/onemusic">www.bbc.co.uk/radio/onemusic</a></div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div><a href="http://www.xfm.co.uk">www.xfm.co.uk</a></div></div>			

MORE TASKS

- 1 Choose a track from the current top 10 and describe a valid remix alternative. Write down which elements of the track you would keep and which you would discard. Then outline new parts you would add and how you would tailor the mix to suit a new market.
- 2 Find out about some top name remixers and place them within a table to show their specialist genre or market. List the attributes or traits in their mixes and the differences which set them apart. How many are famous DJs and do they work with an engineer or musician? Can you find any remixes that specialise in markets outside of the “dance arena”?
- 3 Approach a local act or label for some remix materials, preferably a vocal. Offer to complete a remix for them on a no fee basis. Alternatively find an acappella on the net. Find or programme some drum loops, which will fit with this vocal, using time stretching or editing of the elements where necessary.
- 4 Find six tracks to use as reference materials for your mix. List the labels that released these tracks. Is there a label that specialises in your scene? Can you approach them to do a mix?
- 5 Find an example of tracks that became hits, but were originally released as a “bootleg”( illegal white label ) due to problems with sample clearance issues.
- 6 Try to reproduce your favourite element of a track. Find similar sounds to those used and move on to programme a copy of the original. You can learn new techniques by attempting this with a few different tracks.
- 7 Imagine someone is going to remix one of your songs. Record each part of your track as an audio file, remembering to put down any instruments played from your midi sound sources. Organise these files for delivery to the remixer.
- 8 Visit a club to hear how devices such as drum fills, drop downs and effects are used and how they work with an audience. List examples, mentioning tracks where they were used. Incorporate these devices into your mix.
- 9 Write an itinerary for completing a mix, listing the stages you will work through. Can you estimate a time scale for this process? Draw up a simple table to show time allocated for each stage in the process.
- 10 It is common to deliver the following versions of a finished mix. Define each of these terms and explain why it is useful.

Vox up                      TV pass                      Instrumental                      Acappella

ARRANGING



ARRANGING



## WHAT IS IT?

When you arrange a piece of music you are creating new features for an existing idea.

You're responding to an existing composition, you're fleshing it out, you're giving it new dimensions, making it bigger. An arrangement might be created in a live room by a band, or with a midi and audio recorder (like Cubase) or on paper (using notation).

The line between writing and arranging is very vague – where does writing stop and arranging start? Essentially the writing elements are the melodies, chords and lyrics – anything after that is arrangement, but this is not a strict rule as there are many ways in which music evolves from basic idea to finished product.

## WHY DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS?

We very rarely hear music in a completely 'raw' state. When we listen to music we expect it to have some arrangement - additional musical ideas that support it. These could be grooves, bass lines, riffs, counter melodies or vocal harmonies. An arrangement can make a basic song bigger, more 'colourful', more satisfying.

Arranging skills can often put the vital gloss on a song.



YOU MUST HAND IN YOUR WORK BY TO



**HOW LONG**  
should this assignment take?

Every person works at his / her own pace. As a guide, spend 2 hours reading, listening and making notes, another hour to write your answers and a further hour to discuss them with your tutor.



**HOW**  
will I be assessed?

Your tutor will assess your work. He / she will give you feedback on how you have done. If your work needs further work to be passed, then you will be given the chance to do further work to bring it “up to scratch”. For more details, please refer to your MOLP's own guidance.



**WHAT**  
do I do now?

Read the TASKS section below.  
Then read the NOTES AND GUIDANCE section.  
Carry out the TASKS.

TASKS (Read the notes and guidance section for help).

1 Choose a piece of music from your own collection – it’s best to use the song you analysed in chapter 1 (‘songwriting’).

1) What’s it called and who’s the artist?

2) What instruments/sounds/voices are used in the arrangement?

3) Which of these would you say are ‘core’ sounds and which are ‘additional’?

4) If the music includes bass and drums, in what ways do these instruments work together?

5) Which instruments / sounds play chords in the arrangement?

6) Which instruments / sounds provide rhythm and grooves?

7) Which instruments /sounds play riffs and melodies?

8) Listen each time a section is repeated ( like each verse or chorus ); does anything different happen ( such as adding or taking away instruments, voices or sounds )?

9) Do any of the arrangement features contribute to changes in intensity?

10) Do you think this arrangement was written down ( notated ), created with a sequencer, or developed in a live room?

11) Was this arrangement done by the artist / band, or were other people brought in with specific arranging skills ( like a brass arranger, or percussionist )?



# THE BACKGROUND TO ARRANGING

Arranging takes on different meanings, depending on the context or genre of the work. However, one thing remains central - the arrangement is the setting for the song or idea. Think of it as the way in which the music is presented to the listener. Arranging involves structure and instruments.

Arrangements and structures tend to follow a pattern that the target audience expects to hear. There is a formula we adhere to, without thinking about it, an order in the introduction of instruments and the way they are grouped.



## CLASSICAL

The arrangement is thought of as the whole written score. A part of the score is produced for each instrument in the orchestra to follow. String sections can be scored for use in soundtracks, rock or dance music too.



## JAZZ

Some Big Band or Jazz arranging is thought of in a similar way. There are many Jazz “standards” such as “Mack The Knife”, which are covered time and time again. Each rendition is different due to differences in the arrangement, but it remains the same song regardless of how radical the style of delivery. This is also demonstrated in cover versions across the musical spectrum.



## URBAN / R'N'B / DANCE

In more modern, computer driven song writing environments, arranging usually takes place as an idea is developed, it is part of the writing process. In fact it can be the foundation over which a song is written, or the framework upon which ideas are hung.



## POP / ROCK

For a band, arranging is what happens in rehearsal, where decisions on instrumentation and dynamics are made. Further arranging will happen in the studio, extra layers will be played on top of what was rehearsed. Look at how George Martin’s extra features worked on Beatles’ albums, or how studio techniques and additional players gave so much depth to Pink Floyd material.



## COMMERCIAL

Soundtrack writers have to consider other factors when arranging. They have to match the musical features to fit with what happens on screen, or to add drama to the dialogue.

photography Ray Chan

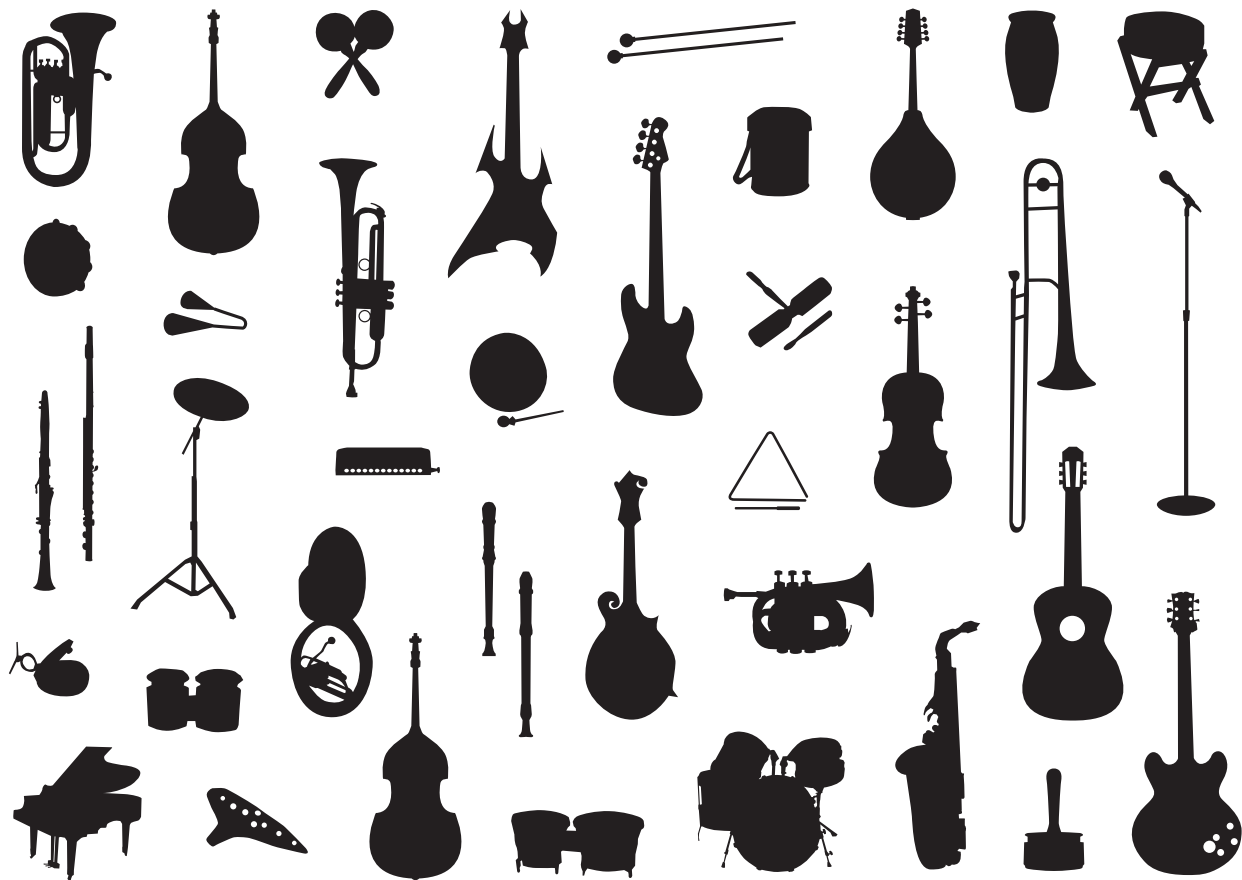


# IDENTIFYING INSTRUMENTS AND WHAT THEY DO IN AN ARRANGEMENT

On first listening to a piece of music it’s easy to miss some of the instruments used when they make only a small or subtle contribution. But if there’s a sound in there, however minimal, then it’s making a contribution to the arrangement and we should know about it.

As you list the instruments, make some judgements about the sound, playing style, interaction with other instruments and what they add to the arrangement.

So don’t just make a list, but describe characteristics.



**For the sound of an instrument here are some words that you might use:**  
electric, acoustic, heavy, distorted, light, bright, mellow, distant, chorused, fat, thin, abrasive, soft-edged, warm, metallic, hazy, clear.

**For the playing style you might use words like:**  
tight, loose, energetic, delicate, aggressive, gentle, simple, advanced, bending, sliding, understated, sequenced, sampled, quantized.

**For interaction with other instruments you might use descriptions like:**  
in unison, tight with, bouncing off, responding to, harmonising with, going against, doubling up.

**For judging what each instrument contributes to the arrangement, try:**  
melody, rhythm, chords, harmony, counter-melody, riffs, sustain, fragments, off-beat, figures, broken chords, drone, staccato, high, middle, low.

## Shooting Star’ by Tinman

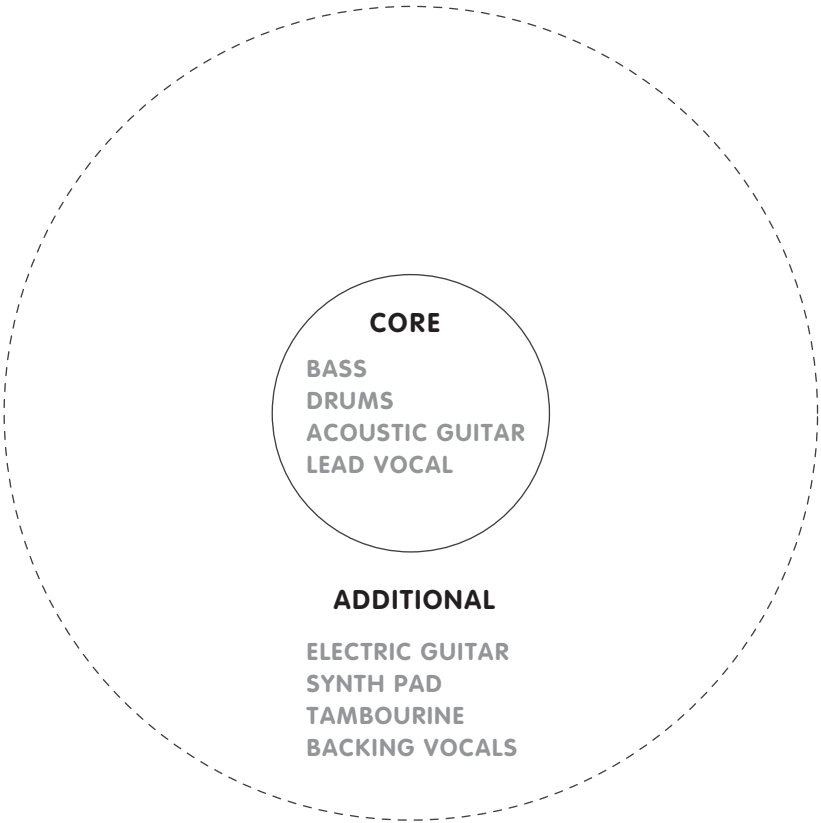
In the song Shooting Star by Tinman ( the example used in chapter 1 ) there’s clearly an electric piano. But when we listen more closely we can hear other keyboard parts – a more distant, floaty electric piano in the verses and a high, subtle string line that’s in the intro, chorus 1, verse 2 and outro. There are many other arrangement techniques in this song that make it a well-crafted production. Listen to the pizzicato strings in the choruses that provide a counter melody to the lead vocal; listen to verse 2, where bass and drums drop out for 4 bars, helping to shape the journey of the song. The scat bvs are quite different in each chorus, so although we enjoy the repetition of the hooky chorus there’s always something that’s evolved. There aren’t many drum fills, in fact drums often drop out at the end of phrases where you’d expect a fill – this arrangement uses reverse cymbal where a drum fill might have been.

Download the song online at [www.citycol.com/rfrecords/cds/olm/tinman\\_shootingstar.MP3](http://www.citycol.com/rfrecords/cds/olm/tinman_shootingstar.MP3)

CORE OR ADDITIONAL?

Which instruments are the stars, which are the extras? This will vary from song to song, but it would be fairly typical for bass, drums, guitar and vocals to be at the core of a rock song, with additional bits coming from backing vocals, keyboards, percussion, brass.

In an RnB tune the core might be vocals, backing vocals, drums, bass and piano, with extras coming from percussion, strings, brass.



BASS

The instrument that everything else sits on is the bass. A bass line can come from a bass guitar, double bass or synth bass. It generally plays single notes - the root note of the chord, but may also provide quite melodic lines and riffs. This is important, as often bass is one of the main elements we are aware of when listening to a tune, even if we don't notice it as consciously as the lead vocal or lead guitar. If you've ever stood outside a club and heard music in the distance you'll know that bass is one of the instruments you can still hear!



DRUMS

The main elements of the drum kit are kick, snare and hats. Kick and snare 'bounce' off each other ( on-beat / off-beat ), while hats provide continuity and fluency. Toms are often used for fills, crash cymbals to accent and ride cymbal for a more ringing alternative to hats. Much of what we hear as drums in music has come from loops, samples or synths.

How Bass And Drums Work Together

Bass and drums form the main part of a 'rhythm section' in most styles of music. They will often lock together with their rhythms ( particularly the bass with the bass drum ) and phrase to emphasize the on-beat, off-beat and any syncopation.



GUITAR

There are numerous types of guitar but essentially just 2 categories – acoustic and electric. Guitars are versatile, able to provide melody ( lead lines ), accompaniment ( chords ) and rhythm ( strumming and picking ). Guitar is at the heart of many pop/rock songs.



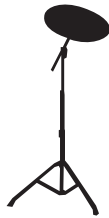
**PIANO**

Like the guitar, the piano comes in 2 main categories – acoustic and electric – and is as versatile as the guitar, providing melody and harmony to arrangements. Because it can’t sustain like a lead guitar, it is often used either for more gentle music or for chords and riffs. The digital piano has become so well refined that it has virtually replaced the traditional acoustic piano.



**KEYBOARDS AND SYNTHESIZERS**

The variety of sounds and textures that can be generated by keyboards and synths is awesome. They are often used in arrangements to provide alternative sounds to the core elements (like guitar and bass), giving a song an extra dimension or extra ‘colour’



**PERCUSSION**

Percussion is often added to an arrangement as an after-thought. But percussion can do much to vary the textures and intensities of an arrangement. Doing something as simple as adding tambourine to a chorus can create a significant lift.

**SKILLS YOU NEED TO ARRANGE**

Specialist players can bring the techniques, styles and possibilities of their own instruments – this might typically be a brass player or percussionist.

**THE FIXER**

Rather than enlisting just one musician, you may feel a song is crying out for a string section or a full gospel choir. For this you may need someone to manage the whole process. A string "fixer" can find an arranger for you, book the musicians and even the studio.



Be creative with use of pedals, effects and styles, for example U2 and Rage Against the Machine use guitars that sound like other things. Develop your own style!

If you are arranging for a group of musicians you must understand the role of each instrument used and how best to incorporate its sound. You will also need to be able to communicate your thoughts to this group of people. This requires a whole range of talents in itself!



If you are creating a score to do this, then you must be able to write musical notation.

If an arrangement is being generated using computer software then you’ll want to be proficient with it to get the best out of it. Knowing the sounds available to you from a synth, or from patches available on your computer, and what kind of part they are suited to, is the same as understanding conventional instruments.

# TECHNIQUES USED IN ARRANGING

## COMPUTER, HEAD OR PAPER?

Just like composing music, there are different ways of working on an arrangement, and each approach has its own advantages.

arranging...	 pros	 cons
with a computer	... offers a fantastic environment in which to develop music. Record your ideas with midi and audio like a notepad for musicians: edit, delete, copy, paste, sit back and listen.	... can be a bit clinical, difficult to capture the energy of live performance. Your music can become over - arranged because it's so easy to keep recording ideas. Also sequencing encourages repetition, whereas music needs evolution.
in a live room	... is a real, natural organic, team thing. If music is about spontaneity and responding to others then turn up and rock.	... has limitations, depending on who's in there with you. Musicians are prone to forget what they did last week.
with notation	... let's you work in minute detail, getting every note exactly right, with a system that let's you communicate complex ideas to large numbers of musicians.	... requires substantial formal training and access to musicians who can read music.

# GENERAL ARRANGEMENT TECHNIQUES

A piece of music will have a structure before you consider arrangement features but an arrangement can do much to help support and shape the journey of a song, emphasizing the highs and lows, keeping the sound interesting and always evolving.

A typical arrangement technique is to add something to the 2nd verse or 2nd chorus, giving a sense that the song has evolved and we're not just hearing the same thing again. The opposite is also a useful technique – take instruments out of a section and it has a strong impact.

If there are 4 choruses in your song, try to get some variation in your arrangement so we're always listening to something new. Maybe chorus 2 gets added bvs ( backing vocals ), chorus 3 has no bass, chorus 4 gets a new organ line and extra percussion.



# CHORD AND STRUCTURE CHARTS

You don’t have to use traditional notation to write down something useful! You can create a 1 or 2 page chart that will be immensely helpful in communicating your ideas to others, whether you are developing an arrangement in a live room, or for a recording.

The chart should contain the sort of information that you want to communicate and your musicians want to know: things like, song structure (verse, chorus, solo etc), chords, where instruments come in or drop out, breaks and maybe lyrics. Much of this information musicians will quickly memorise, but the chart takes some of the confusion out of communicating ideas, and means there’s something to refer to when you rehearse again next week.

Here’s an example of a chord and structure chart for Shooting Star by Tinman.

Shooting Star by Tinman

132 bpm, syncopated, slightly shuffled 16s feel.  
Bass, percussion, electric piano, synth strings, pizzicato, harp, lead vocals, backing vocals.

Intro	Am9	/	Dm9	G13	Am9	/	Dm9	G13
	Am9	/	Dm9	G13	Am9	/	Dm9	G13
	Am9	/	Dm9	G13	Am9	/	Dm9	G13
Verse 1	Am9	/	Dm9	/	Am9	/	Dm9	/
	Am9	/	Dm9	/	Am9	/	Dm9	/
Chorus 1	Am9	/	Dm9	G13	Am9	/	Dm9	G13
Link	Am9	/	/	/				
Verse 2	Am9	/	Dm9	/	Am9	/	Dm9	/
	Am9	/	Dm9	/	Am9	/	Dm9	G13
Chorus 2	Am9	/	Dm9	G13	Am9	/	Dm9	G13
	Am9	/	Dm9	G13	Am9	/	Dm9	G13
Middle 8	Fmaj7	/	G13	/	Fmaj7	/	G13	G#dim
Chorus 3	Am9	/	Dm9	G13	Am9	/	Dm9	G13
	Am9	/	Dm9	G13	Am9	/	Dm9	G13
Outro	Am9	/	Dm9	G13	Am9	/	Dm9	G13
	Am9	/	Dm9	G13	Am9	/	Dm9	G13

**Intro** electric piano, strings and vocal scats. Add pizz riff and percussion. Add bass  
**Verse 1** main lead vocal, simpler drum groove, held piano chords, spread harp chords.  
**Chorus 1** double tracked lead vocal, pizz riff, busier drum groove.  
**Link** bass and percussion like the chorus, piano chord, syncopated sample.  
**Verse 2** bass and percussion drop out for 1-4bars, then come back in 5, playing as in verse1. Extra high string line.  
**Chorus 2** as chorus 1 ( but double the length )  
**Middle 8** busy, syncopated piano and bass, Big harp fill in last bar.  
**Chorus 3** as chorus 2 but syncopated piano ( like the middle 8 ). More scat vocals.  
**Outro** lead voc stops, leaving just sparse scats. High string line reappears.

# DANCE AND URBAN ARRANGEMENTS

- Drums and bass play a bigger role
- The intensity will build slowly rather than chop and change
- A repetitive, uninterrupted groove is better to dance to
- An intro and outro of drums is often used so DJs can sequence records easily



## DRUMS IN DANCE AND URBAN ARRANGEMENTS

Drums play a major part and using them to give dynamics to your arrangement needs extra thought.

Drum fills in dance or urban music are as much about leaving things out than adding more. For example, if you leave out the bass drum for the last bar of a verse, it will sound like a lift when it returns for the chorus.

Where a sampled loop is used this can be chopped up to give variety, there is even a programme ( Recycle ) which will do this for you. You can edit or move notes to give more options for fills and breakdowns during your arrangement.

Sounds may become fashionable for a period of time and are an important commodity if you want to be in the correct style.



Drums can sometimes be heard on their own and sampled as a loop. This loop can be edited to give individual hits; this will make recreating the style you want easier to begin with.



## PERCUSSION IN DANCE AND URBAN ARRANGEMENTS

Percussion is really an integral part of the drum programming and will usually be thought of at the same time. Many layers of instruments will be fitted around the basic pattern and then introduced gradually as the arrangement progresses. This will add to the intensity of certain sections, sometimes at the expense of tuned instruments.



photography Ray Chan



### BASS IN DANCE AND URBAN ARRANGEMENTS

In dance records where a 4/4 bass drum pattern is used, like most house, techno or trance tracks, the bass normally plays the root note of the chord it underpins and is used between bass drums, in a very regimented fashion. The bass sound is often a throb or “sub bass”, which is very effective through a club P.A.

In urban styles such as RnB, the current trend is for there to be no bass line or a very subliminal one.

Simple patterns locked tightly to the drums and repeated throughout the song is a feature of this genre.



### “REAL INSTRUMENTS” IN DANCE AND URBAN ARRANGEMENTS

Guitar is not much used in dance or urban styles, unless it is highly processed.

A good example of this would be in Madonna’s collaborations with Mirwais. An acoustic guitar recorded, edited, moved, even reversed, then played back in from a sampler using a keyboard. Alternatively, small sections of audio file are manipulated to give the same odd result.

In other examples real instruments are sampled or recreated by sound modules.

Similarly sampled loops of instruments are used to give interesting textures or features. An ethnic instrument can give an effective combination of styles.



### SAMPLERS, SYNTHS AND KEYBOARDS IN DANCE AND URBAN ARRANGEMENTS

Due to the lack of real instruments, these are the main tool for building your arrangement.

Sound sources are sometimes made to be genre specific, modules such as the EMU Mo Phatt contains sounds to suit urban productions. So shop around and find the equipment to cater for your needs. Many “soft” synths are available and have the advantage of being saved with your song, making setting up easy.



A solo of any description is a rarity in these genres and generally thought of as un-cool!



### VOCALS IN DANCE AND URBAN ARRANGEMENTS

In the RnB genre in particular, arrangement can be solely about the vocals and vocal harmonies. Many layers are introduced in key areas, whilst the rest of the instrumentation remains comparatively flat.



## EFFECTS IN DANCE AND URBAN ARRANGEMENTS

These are usually regarded as being used during the mix process, but effects available to a computer using musician cover much more than simple reverb, delay and chorus type presets.

They will be used mainly as features within the arrangement. There will be many more radical processes, some an instrument in themselves.

Due to most ingredients being generated digitally, it is sometimes good to mess up a sound using distortion, overdrive or bit crushing. This will give older, dirty sounds rather than clean and cold ones.

You will probably have heard effects that are designed to do a particular job, being used in an extreme manner and being made a feature not an enhancement. Auto Tune ( or “vocoder” ) is one such example. It was designed to correct timing imperfections on vocals. However, used at its most “full on” setting, it causes a bizarre, robotic singing voice. ( For example on the track by Cher – ‘Believe’ )

Another common technique is “filtering”. This is where an instrument or group of instruments is passed through a filter, removing a frequency range to make the sound less full. As the filter is opened the sound opens out, feeling like it is growing. This can be a great way of adding dynamics to your track without removing or adding parts. Some arranging can be achieved after production of the finished mix! Sections of the whole track are stretched, altered or treated and used as fills, breakdowns or features.

## OVERALL - DANCE AND URBAN ARRANGEMENTS

When using tape as the recording media, you commit each part of the arrangement as each instrument is recorded. You can not easily go back and add or take out a few parts once they are put down.

However arrangement is always ongoing when using sequencers or sequencing software and is changeable right up to and during the final mix. The flexibility and open ended way of working might lead to more time being spent on arrangement, but it enables you to throw in as many ideas as you want and pick the best combinations. It is tempting to keep on changing things, just be careful not to spoil the flow.

It is also easy to be lazy and copy huge blocks of parts from one section of the song to another. This repetition shapes the types of music where computers are used. Odd numbers of bars are seldom heard, instead we hear definite multiples of four or eight bars. Also, new parts tend to come in at the beginning of each section, it is noticeable that things are triggered on the first beat of the bar. It is easy to see the development of a track by looking at the building blocks on the computer screen and it is even possible to colour code a song structure.



All of this gives a tendency to watch your arrangement move by on the screen. Try switching the monitor off, forcing you to listen to your track. Do this a couple of times and write down your ideas so you don’t forget them. Only then should you switch back on to programme the fresh thoughts.

Bringing arrangement techniques together.

As more and more rock songs are recorded using computer hard drives instead of tape, so some of the usual computer based arranging techniques can be used. Many ideas can be thrown in and manipulated just like blocks of MIDI parts.



# WANT TO KNOW MORE?

## LINKS

New Deal for Musicians has no responsibility for or control of the following sites. The inclusion of any site does not necessarily imply New Deal for Musicians approval of the site. To access any of the sites please type in the address into a browser or search using keywords from the name of the link.  
www.dfes.gov.uk/ukonlinecentres Find Internet access that's close to you.

## MORE INFORMATION AND LINKS

- ☐ **www.berkleeshares.com**  
American college of music, has free lessons in arranging and composition to download. A bit stuffy but free!
- ☐ **www.jazzwise.com/shop/index.html?target=p\_16.html&lang=en-gb**  
Another list of books for arranging split into “film scoring” and “composing and arranging”. Heavy jazz influence.
- ☐ **www.tweakheadz.com/tweaks\_bookstore\_comp-arr.html**  
Lists loads of music related books, this link gives arranging and composing.
- ☐ **www.soundonsound.com**  
Use the search engine to find articles on arranging.
- ☐ **www.finalemusic.com**  
Free musical notation software.
- ☐ **www.ralphpatt.com**  
jazz guitarists’ paradise
- ☐ **www.musicteachers.co.uk/resources/**  
Download a variety of blank musical manuscripts. Some other useful links.
- ☐ **www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/onemusic/**  
and
- ☐ **www.bbc.co.uk/learning/library/music.shtml**  
or use the bbc search engine to locate articles on musical arrangement.
- ☐ **www.musiciansunion.org.uk**  
Locate people who can arrange for you.
- ☐ **www.petethomas.co.uk/composition-form.html**  
Musician’s own web set with loads of notes on arranging and composition across different styles.

## BOOKS

- ☐ **Rock, Jazz and Pop Arranging : All the Facts and All the Know-how**  
Daryl Runswick  
Publisher : Faber Music Ltd  
ISBN : 0571511082  
Advice on every aspect of jazz, pop and rock music arranging for musicians and composers at all levels.
- ☐ **Arranging Techniques for Synthesis**  
Eric Turkel  
Publisher : Music Sales Limited  
ISBN : 082561130X  
Covers acoustic instruments too, in spite of title. Looks at each part of a song structure and gives tips on each. Aimed at amateur or pro. Published in 1988 so synthesis part will be out of date!
- ☐ **Inside the Music : The Musician's Guide to Composition, Improvisation and the Mechanics of Music**  
Dave Stewart  
Publisher : Backbeat UK  
ISBN : 0879305711  
Explores scales, chords and rhythm and how they fit together, giving a better understanding to aid composition and arranging. Tips for keyboards, guitar, drums and computer based musicians.
- ☐ **The Reel World: Scoring for Pictures**  
Jeff Rona  
Publisher : Backbeat UK  
ISBN : 0879305916  
As well as tips and examples on orchestration, also discusses technology and business angles.
- ☐ **The Guide to Midi Orchestration**  
Paul Gilreath  
Publisher: Music Works ; 2nd Rep edition  
August 1, 1997  
ISBN : 0964670526  
How to replicate acoustic/classical instruments using midi.
- ☐ **Complete Guide to Film Scoring**  
Richard Davis  
Publisher : Berklee Press Publications  
January 1, 2000  
ISBN : 0634006363  
Interviews with professionals, with details of techniques used and business insight.
- ☐ **Instrumentation and Orchestration**  
Alfred Blatter  
Publisher : Schirmer Books; 2nd edition  
May 1, 1997  
ISBN : 0028645707  
Descriptions and uses of all instruments found in an orchestra, could help using the samples more effectively.

BOOKS

- ☐ **Arranging Music for the Real World**  
Vince Corozine  
Publisher : Warner Brothers Publications  
ISBN : 0786649615  
Comes with audio cd with examples. Principles of arrangement, but from a traditional view point.
- ☐ **Composing for the Jazz Orchestra**  
William Russo  
Publisher : University of Chicago Press  
October 1, 1973  
ISBN : 0226732096  
Understanding jazz instrumentation and arrangements.
- ☐ **Jazz Arranging and Orchestration**  
Leslie Sabina  
Publisher : Wadsworth  
ISBN : 0534585906
- ☐ **Instrumental Arranging**  
G White  
Publisher : McGraw - Hill Education  
ISBN : 0697354326  
Step by step exercises aimed at varying abilities. Primarily a teaching aid.
- ☐ **Arranging in the Digital World**  
Corey Allen  
Publisher : International Music Publications  
ISBN : 0634006347  
GM techniques using electronic/digital instruments – BAD REVIEWS
- ☐ **Arranging for Large Jazz Ensemble**  
Pullig And Dick Lowell Ken  
Publisher : Hal Leonard Corporation  
ISBN : 0634036564  
Recommended for brass arrangements.
- ☐ **David Baker's Arranging and Composing, for the Small Ensemble: Jazz - R&B - Jazz & Rock**  
David Baker  
Publisher : Alfred Pub Co  
ISBN : 0882844695  
Hard going and jazz based...!
- ☐ **Arranging Concepts Complete: The Ultimate Arranging Course for Today's Music**  
Dick Grove  
Out of print, but mentioned several times on third party sites. Had his own college running degree courses in arrangement. Old school, traditional musicianship.  
Publisher : Alfred Pub Co  
ISBN : 0882844849
- ☐ **Principles of Orchestration**  
Nikolay Rimsky - Korsakov  
Publisher : Dover Publications  
ISBN : 0486212661  
Fundamentals of classical orchestration from a past master.

## MORE TASKS

### 1 New tunes from old songs.

Check the music charts for this week; how many of those songs are re-makes of older songs? There's a good chance that you'll find an example.

Re-working an existing tune is very common. The tune might not obviously suit the artist but with a new arrangement it will take on a whole new identity. This might be done by using elements of the original recording (like Remixing - Chapter 3) or starting from scratch.

Can you find examples in your music collection of re-arranged tunes? Do you have 2 versions of the same song (by different artists)? List the differences.

Now find a tune and try your own new arrangement. Start by getting to know the tune really well – it's best to choose something simple that doesn't have too much arrangement in it already, maybe an acoustic song. It doesn't have to be something well known – you could use a song of your own or one by a friend or colleague.

### 2 What instruments do.

Find some recordings that include 'uncommon' instruments; maybe orchestral instruments (like strings, brass or woodwind), or ethnic instruments like pan flute, sitar or shakuhachi. Describe their characteristics and what they do best in an arrangement.

Now find synth or sampled versions of those instruments in a computer sequencer or on a keyboard and try creating music lines that suit the sounds. Do these instruments have a practical range (lowest and highest notes) outside of which they don't sound effective or natural? What sort of things do they do best in an arrangement?

### 3 Arranging with notation – score writing software.

Arranging is about generating musical ideas, but to communicate your ideas to other musicians, notation is still a useful tool. Can you name 3 software packages used by musicians to notate music? Is there one to which you have access? Cubase has a useful notation editor; experiment with turning some musical lines in midi into notation, print some out and see if you or your colleagues can perform them.

## MORE TASKS

### 4 Recreate an existing arrangement

Covering an arrangement you admire is a great way to get inside the music. By copying every aspect of the track you go through a similar sort of process as the original musicians and get a feel for their approach to making music.

You can do this in a live room with a group of musicians or by yourself on a computer with a sequencer. Listen to the track many times to get to know it, make yourself a chord and structure chart then start building up. If you are working in a computer programme like Cubase, import the original track as an audio file, match up the tempo and play along. That way you can easily check if you are copying the music accurately. This is a skill that can provide work opportunities.

There is work available in producing backing tracks, re-recordings or notation of existing tunes. There are many areas of the music industry that commission this sort of work, for example singers in pubs and clubs, karaoke companies, theatres and cruise ships. Where would 'Stars In Their Eyes' be without musicians being able to copy existing arrangements!

### 5 Build your own string arrangement

Pick a track of your own or part of someone else's that would suit a string arrangement.

Using a MIDI sequencer and some string samples or sounds, build up layers of string parts. Listen to real examples first, find out the role of each instrument and what register they tend to occupy.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These materials have been developed by ARMSTRONG LEARNING, working with City College Manchester.

Art direction and design LULU BUTTERFLY

Cover & chapter titles :

Art direction and design LULU BUTTERFLY, Photography Ray Chan, Model Sheree Willis

## **NEW DEAL FOR MUSICIANS CREATING**

© Crown Copyright 2005 except photographs where stated.

This material must not be copied in whole or in part without the prior written consent of the Department for Work and Pensions.

Special thanks go to all who have contributed to the development of the workbooks including:

The New Deal for Musicians Steering Group

The Open Learning Materials Steering Group

Department for Education and Skills

Teacher Training Agency

All those who have contributed to the case studies.

Music Open Learning Providers and Music Industry Consultants who have piloted the materials.

Sound Advice

MU Musicians' Union

MPG Music Producers Guild

AIM Association of Independent Music

PRS Performing Right Society

MCPS Mechanical - Copyright Protection Society

MMF Music Managers Forum

BPI British Phonographic Industry

MPA Music Publishers Association

PPL / VPL Phonographic Performance Limited / Video Performance Limited

MIA Music Industries Association

PAMRA Performing Artists' Media Rights Association

BBC Radio 1

British Music Rights

British Academy of Composers and Songwriters

