

Basics of Songwriting with Patty Clayton

1. GETTING STARTED: flying solo or co-writing: finding your strength and weaknesses

A. Lyrics

1. only
2. with an instrumentalist to compose a melody

B. Melody

1. only (on any instrument)
2. with a lyricist to compose the story
3. with a poet to compose the poem

C. Lyrics & Melody: which comes easier for you?

1. write the lyrics then fit a melody to the words and meter
2. write a melody then fit lyrics to the beat
3. write the lyrics and the melody at the same time.

2. INSPIRATION AND WHERE TO FIND IT: it's everywhere!

A. Clichés

1. Last Call (for alcohol)
2. If Wishes Were Horses (then beggars would ride)
3. Back in the Saddle
4. Another Day Another Dollar
5. My Bucket's got a hole in it
6. On the Road again

B. Stories you have heard or read

1. true (Her Pride)
2. windy tales
3. diaries (Worship in the Prairie Wind)

C. Lines you have read

1. Business Signs (Astraddle A Saddle)

D. Witnessed or experienced something remarkable

1. Personal (Ben & Ole's Land)
2. Regional (Red Buffalo)(Saga of the Man and the Mountain)
3. Newsworthy (Leaves of Summer)(El Niño Story)

E. Purely from your imagination

1. let your mind be your inspiration (Pale Horse Pale Rider)
2. become one with the horse(write from THAT point of view)

F. There are even apps out there to help you write

1. phone and ipad apps
 - a. Songwriters Pad
 - b. Song Writers HD
2. computer software
 - a. TuneSmith
 - b. Finale Songwriter
 - c. Notion Progression

3. THE BASICS, what to cover, but they don't all have to be included..where to go if stuck!

A. Who

1. who it's about man, woman, animal or object

B. Where

1. here or there

C. What

1. active or passive, descriptive or assumed

D. When

1. past present or future

E. How (or Why)

1. emotions (how does it make you feel, happy, sad, etc)
2. from who's point of view

4. GET IT DOWN NOW! What to do when you do get inspired..fast!

- A. carry a recorder
 1. leave yourself a voice mail on your phone, any recorder, ipad, computer
- B. carry a pencil
 1. or pen and a notebook or pad, napkin, coaster, your hand, your arm..

5. RHYMING AND METER

A. Rhyming

1. several patterns of rhyming exist (let's assume a 4 line structure)
 - a. 1st and 3rd lines end in rhyme, 2nd and 4th lines end with different

rhyme(abab)

- b. 1st and 3rd lines do not rhyme, 2nd and 4th lines end in rhyme (xaxa)
- c. 1st and 2nd lines rhyme, 3rd and 4th lines end in different rhyme (aabb)
- d. all 4 lines end in same rhyme (vary line length) (aaaa)
- e. 1st, 3rd and 4th lines rhyme, 2nd line does not (axaa)
- f. 1st and 4th lines rhyme, 2nd and 3rd rhyme only with each other (abba)
- g. 1st and 4th lines rhyme, 2nd and 3rd do not rhyme with each other or with 1st

and 4th.(axxa)

2. Rhyming resources

- a. rhyming dictionaries by book, online or apps for your phone
- b. by numbers of syllables, or not
- c. by phonetics or by spelling
- d. internal vs end line rhyming

B. Meter or timing structure

1. If a word doesn't fit, try another one; pay attention to number of syllables
 - a. thesaurus
 - b. dictionary- look at synonyms
 - c. all available by book, online or apps

6. PAINT A PICTURE WITH LYRICS

A. add character and color to your picture

1. regional or cultural slang
 - a. use vernaculars or parts of a native dialect specific to an era or region
 - b. BUT...don't offend, be politically correct and respectful
2. details
 - a. over describe down to the little details

7. CREATE A HOOK

A. attracts attention

1. repeat thru out the song

8. POETIC LICENSE

A. grammar doesn't have to be correct ok to use slang

1. common language seen vs saw, gonna vs going to, wanna vs want to

9. PROTECT WHAT YOU CREATED

A. Copyright

1. secured automatically once it leaves your head, in fixed form on paper or recording, not when published with copies
2. Copyright can be registered and documented for your protection, with a form PA
3. online at <http://copyright.gov> from the Library of Congress
4. other resources that will register for you for a nominal fee
 - a. copyrightitnow.com
 - b. gocopyright.com

- c. legalzoom.com
- d. legalarrow.com
- e. clickandcopyright.com
- f. copyrightregistrationservice.com

10. GIT 'ER DONE!

- A. Keep your eyes and ears open
- B. Allow your creative energy to flow
- C. No time limit, it's done when it's done
- D. Get started....write something down you've been thinking of
- E. finish something you've started

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