

# **Poetry And Music - Or How To Begin Developing Poetry To Be Used With Music**

Hiya folks, trust you're keeping well, safe and socially distancing during this break from sessions in the practise rooms and studio. Try to make sure you're getting a bit of fresh air every day and remaining active - it's very important :)

Today we're talking about developing poetry so as that it can be used easily with music or as the starting point to develop new songwriting skills.

- **Why poetry and music?**

Poetry and music have been linked for thousands of years. In Antiquity (or the ancient past) poems were often sung. Early poems in the Eurasian continent evolved from folk songs such as the Chinese Shijing and some of the first lyrical poets in Ancient Greece performed their work while being accompanied by a small, stringed U-shaped instrument called a lyre (pronounced 'liar').

- **Sometimes it can be hard to squeeze the free-form nature of poetry and prose in to what can seem like the very rigid structure of music. This can be alleviated by spreading the syllables of words across different beat subdivisions.**

Write out 4 lines of “1 2 3 4” on a sheet of paper with each number about 2 inches apart. Then write out a line of poetry on a separate sheet.

Now try and fit the syllables of the poetry to the two lines of numbers by writing the lyric underneath the numbers.

Think of the numbers as the second hand of a ticking clock - with each tick-tock another number passes by as should your syllables and words.

- **How does it sound when you read it out?**

Using this activity you may find your lyric has become almost robotic and lacks rhythm and motion.

That's because - as with poetry- timing and space are essential palettes that are utilised within music to create tension, dynamics, and a sense of movement and narrative.

- **Try the same activity again but this time write out 8 lines of “1 2 3 4” on a sheet of paper - spaced as before**

Use your lyric and fit it to the numbers as if you were reciting it with the natural pauses and dynamic accents that you would normally utilise.

You should find that these pauses and accents are represented by some of the numbers having no words attached from your lyric.

- Using the following segment of a poem called 'The Raven' by Edgar Allan Poe (first published in 1845) try and map out the words to the notes on the stave underneath

"Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,  
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore"



I look forward to seeing and hearing what you've come up with once the sessions start back up.

Take care,  
Sam Wilkinson