

# R&B Songwriting

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Welcome back you guys! Hope you're doing well.

We've been looking at lyrics quite a lot over the last few handouts so today we're going to look at melody and rhythm.

Let's think about the famous song by the late Bill Withers:

## **Ain't No Sunshine.**

I invite you to have a go at singing the melody of the first verse to yourself.

Let's consider each phrase.

- 1. Ain't no sunshine when she's gone.**
- 2. It's not warm when she's away**

These 2 lines both have exactly the same melody and they also each have the same number of syllables.

1    2   3    4    5    6    7  
**Ain't-no-Sun -shine-when-she's-gone.**  
1    2    3    4    5    6 7  
**It's-not-warm-when-she's-a- way**

Count the number of syllables in each line, you should count 7.

Now take note of the identical melody in each phrase.

**'Ain't no Sunshine...'**

**'It's not warm when...'**

This melody goes up in 4 notes and are the first part of the pentatonic scale.

Then move on to the third and 4<sup>th</sup> lines consider how the number of syllables in these lines are exactly the same as the first 2 lines and therefore the rhythm is the same.

Also notice that the melody goes up but it still follows the pentatonic pattern.

**Ain't-no-sun-shine-when-she's-gone**  
**And-she's-always-gone-too-long**

Melody comes back down for the 5th line...

**Any time she goes away.**

Now use the structure of 'Aint no sunshine' to write your own melody.

Think about how the first 2 lines are the same rhythm and melody, then the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> lines change in melody, then it falls back down for the 5<sup>th</sup> line.

When constructing your own original melody with personal lyrics, consider the amount of syllables in each line. Try to make them all the same amount. This will mean that your song will sit well within the rhythm of a drum pattern.

Sort out your rhythm first and this will be a good basis for the melody which you can create afterwards.

Remember, repetition of melody and words and rhythms are things that differentiate between songs and poems.

**Happy Songwriting!**