

R&B Songwriting

Tutor: Natalie Duncan

Date: 30/04/20

Hello and welcome. I hope you are feeling good and ready to look at another songwriting exercise!

Today, I would like you to take part in a thinking exercise.

Learning about how songs work using their structures will in turn, inform your own creative writing.

So today, I would like us to study a device known in many popular songs as the **pre chorus**.

The pre chorus is the bit before the chorus which comes just after the verse.

What is the purpose of the pre chorus?

It is a set up for the chorus and it pulls the ear into a brand new melody after the initial verse which in turn keeps your interest and gets you excited to hear the chorus.

Many popular songs are written around the ideas of 'build' and 'drop'. This technique has been used for decades and continues to be used in modern music. The pre chorus is a variation of this.

Here is a classic example of the pre chorus. (Highlighted in red)

'Son of a preacher' – Dusty Springfield

Verse1

Billy-Ray was a preacher's son
And when his daddy would visit he'd come along
When they gathered round and started talkin'
That's when Billy would take me walkin'
A-through the backyard we'd go walkin'
Then he'd look into my eyes
Lord knows to my surprise

The only one who could ever reach me
Was the son of a preacher man
The only boy who could ever teach me
Was the son of a preacher man
Yes he was, he was
Ooh, yes he was

Being good isn't always easy
No matter how hard I try
When he started sweet-talkin' to me
He'd come and tell me everything is all right
He'd kiss and tell me everything is all right
Can I get away again tonight?

The only one who could ever reach me
Was the son of a preacher man
The only boy who could ever teach me
Was the son of a preacher man
Yes he was, he was
(Ooh...) Lord knows he was
Yes he was

Have a think about how the words and the change in melody set you up for the chorus.

Have a think about other songs that use the 'pre chorus'. How many can you think of?

See if you can find a pre chorus in other popular songs and give some thought to how you could apply this device could to your own song!