

Introducing Songwriting Concepts - Verses

Hi folks, hope you're keeping well, safe and have been enjoying the sunny weather as much as is possible during this break from sessions at Core. As ever, try to make sure you're getting a bit of fresh air every day and remaining active - Core Sports have many excellent online and postal lessons for you to use and from Wednesday 13th May you can exercise outside and spend time in parks as much as you see fit :-)

Today we're talking about concepts within songwriting that you should definitely familiarise yourself with - namely the 'Middle 8'.

- **What is a Middle 8?**

In songwriting - A middle 8 is a section of a song that traditionally appears in the middle of the a song.

It will usually be 8 bars long and it will usually sound quite different - or have contrasting qualities - to the verse and chorus sections of the song.

However, there are more definitive and quantifiable characteristics.

- **Middle 8's developed their use as a way to break up the repetition in songs of Verse - Chorus - Verse - Chorus - Verse - Chorus**

They do this by introducing one or several new elements into a song - these elements can vary greatly:

For instance, the Middle 8 of a song may use a key change to introduce a new narrative to the song. This is where maybe a cheerful song in a major key uses a minor key for a middle 8 to emphasise an element of sadness within the narrative of the song.

- **Dynamic changes are also a way to utilise a Middle 8 to break up repetition in a song**

For example, a song that is predominantly loud and has many distorted timbral elements (such as distorted guitars and loud heavy drumming) might use a Middle 8 that is quiet and has soft and clean timbral elements (such as non-distorted guitars and light, gentle drumming).

- **Instrumental solos are commonly used as middle 8's too**

This may bring to mind a vision of some kind of blistering guitar solo - the musician shredding away on his instrument through a stack of distorted Marshall amplifiers.

But this doesn't have to be the case.

Changes in;

- the key of the music
- the arrangement of instruments playing
- the melody of the vocals
- the style or genre of the music

Are four examples of how a Middle 8 can developed.

Even by changing something as mystically straightforward as the groove of the song can be a fun, if challenging, way to implement a Middle 8

- **Lyrics can also be used in a middle 8 to reveal something new within the narrative of a song**

This can help to keep listeners interested in a song that has many verses and choruses. For example - when the listener feels that they may have heard and understood everything that is being said within the lyrics.

A middle 8 can be used to introduce an unexpected element or curve ball to the narrative before heading in to the last chorus. The listener may now be imbued with a sense that all is not what they thought the song had been about.

Activity

Write a new song with the following structure:

- Verse (16 Bars)
- Chorus (8 Bars)
- Verse (16 Bars)
- Chorus (8 Bars)
- Middle 8 (8 Bars)
- Chorus (8 Bars)

It can be instrumental or just lyrics (or both if you're feeling confident).

Most importantly:

- Really concentrate on the Middle 8 section and making it different from the rest of the song
- Feel free to use one or more of the ideas specified in this handout to aid in your writing of the Middle 8
- Have fun with it :-)

Can't wait to hear what you've come up with when sessions start back at Core :-)

Sam.