

R&B Song Writing

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Hello, hope you're doing well today!

In today's handout, we're going to look at **the Ballad**.

What makes a song a ballad?

A ballad is classified as a form of narrative verse which can be poetic or musical.

Some of the musical characteristics that we attribute to the ballad in contemporary music are, a slow tempo and an emotionally evocative message.

Let's think of some famous ballads and consider these characteristics within them.

- Unchained Melody – The Righteous Brothers
- Yesterday – The Beatles
- Purple Rain – Prince
- Imagine- John Lennon

So these songs are four examples of obviously iconic ballads, everyone knows them.

But do they have the characteristics of the Ballad? Do they convey an emotional message of love? Pain? Hope? Are they slow in tempo?

Let's take a look at the song 'Imagine'

The lyrics inspire hope and unity. They allow us to fantasize about a utopian world where we live as a unified race with no borders or barriers.

A stand alone song that transcends age, gender and generation.

I invite you to sing the song and consider the lyrics and the meaning behind each of them.

Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion, too

Imagine all the people
Living life in peace

You, you may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you will join us
And the world will be as one

Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man

Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world

You, you may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you will join us
And the world will live as one

I would also like to invite you to use the template of your favourite ballad to try to come up with your own song.

Maybe begin with writing a lyric or a few words about something that means a lot to you.

Now try to sing them in the style of a ballad. Slowly and passionately.

Remember, writing music is just the marriage of 2 things: Your own life experiences in the form of lyrics. And a musical pattern.

Once these 2 things meet, you have a song.

Happy Song Writing!