

Introducing Songwriting Concepts - The 'Intro'

Hi folks, hope you're well, safe and have been enjoying the sunny weather as much as is possible during this break from sessions at Core. The lockdown is easing but remember to stay safe - 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 at home and outdoors if you feel like venturing out :-)

Today we're talking about concepts within songwriting that you should definitely familiarise yourself and asking:

- **What is an 'Intro'?**

In songwriting and music when we say 'intro' we are simply using a shortened form of the word 'Introduction'.

I'm sure you can already begin to think what this might mean in the context of writing a song or a piece of music.

- **In music, the Intro is a section or passage of music that always appears and lives at the beginning of a song**

This section of music will usually contain one or more of the melodic, harmonic and rhythmic elements that happen throughout the rest of the song.

Also, an intro won't typically be as long as a verse and is usually closer in length to a Middle 8 or a relatively short chorus (4-8 bars in total length).

For example, the intro of a song might be made up of the chord sequence from the chorus played through twice but without any vocals or drum accompaniment.

Activity:

- Using the song you wrote before the half term break use the chorus chords to create an Intro no longer than 8 bars long

Think about how you could play these chords differently by simplifying the rhythm or dynamic energy so as that they differ from the chorus in a notable way.

- **The Intro of a song is incredibly important for a couple of reasons**

Firstly:

When we listen to a song or piece of music the opening moments (the Intro) will quite often dictate how we feel about listening to the rest of it.

Has our interest been grabbed and therefore our desire to hear more encourages us to listen on.

Or have we become bored and disinterested with little desire to hear the rest of the song perhaps not even being bothered to pay it any attention at all?

Secondly:

These early moments in the song or music can have a great impact on making us (the listener) feel a certain way.

The Intro can be used to encourage different emotional expectations from the music that are present in the rest of the song.

These expectations can then be played with to illicit different responses in the listener.

For example, imagine a song that begins with a slowly strummed guitar playing minor chords.

The listener might think that the rest of the song - or at least the next section of music - will follow in a similar style. This expectation could then be dashed by a sudden key shift to a major chord sequence.

- **What kind of effect do you think this would have on the listener?**

However, it is important to remember that a lot of the pleasure derived from listening to music is in having our expectations met in a pleasing and somewhat familiar manner. But as always in music - rules are there to be pushed, stretched and sometimes broken.

Activity:

1. Using the song you wrote before half-term write a new Intro that completely differs from the music in the rest of the song and feels like it doesn't belong in the song
2. Using the same song write another new Intro that differs from the rest of the song but feels like it does belong in the songwriting

Think about how dynamics, rhythm and timbre can be used effectively in this activity.

I can't wait to hear what you've been working on when sessions resume at Core.
Until next time, take care.
Sam :-)