My Rock Song

Composition Portfolio

Year 9 Music
2015
Themes of Rock Songs

Rock artists are influenced by many different things, events, experiences and people when writing songs. Themes of rock songs can have varying topics and often reflect the artist’s personal life story.

Select a rock song that influences your musical style. Using a variety of sentences, write 3 paragraphs which discusses the theme and message of the song. Explain why this theme influences your rock song composition.

*Explain: Relate cause and effect; make a relationship between things evident; provide why and/or how.

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Self and Teacher Assessment

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Lyrics in Rock Songs

In the boxes provided, collect some lyrics from three different songs that you find inspiring for your own rock song. Be sure to acknowledge song title and artist.
Reflection:

Considering the lyrics that you have selected, write 3 paragraphs to discuss* the different ways that they inspire your own rock song composition.

*Discuss: identify issues and provide points for and/or against.
SELF AND TEACHER ASSESSMENT

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Structure in Rock Songs

The type of structure that is used in rock songs is called **Verse/Chorus Form.** The sections that can be used in this type of structure include:

**Introduction:**
- The introduction can be various lengths, however most commonly, the introduction will be 4 or 8 bars long.
- Some songs occasionally have no introduction.
- The material of the introduction is sometimes repeated between the chorus and the verse.

**Verse:**
- The main melody and lyrical development/’story telling’ of the song.
- The lyrics are different in each verse.
- Instrumental/vocal harmonic accompaniment is used in later verses to build climax and add variation.

**Bridge:**
- Links the verse and the chorus.
- Sometimes only instrumental.
- Not always used.
- Various lengths eg/ 2, 4 or 8 bars commonly.
- May be different bridges in a song.

**Chorus:**
- Usually related to the name of the song.
- Chorus is repeated throughout the song.

**Solo:**
- When an instrumentalist performs a solo (either composed or improvised).
- The solo is normally performed over the chord progression of a verse or chorus.

**Coda:**
- Ending of the song.
- Generally uses material from the chorus in the coda.
- Usually makes an obvious ending for the listener.

Examples of Verse/Chorus Structures
1. Intro – Verse 1 – Verse 2 – Bridge – Chorus – Verse 3 – Chorus – Coda.


Selecting a rock song of your choice, **outline** the structure of their sections (as above).

* Outline: Sketch in general terms; indicate the main features of.

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In your rock song, you can select any order of the sections to organise your Verse/Chorus Structure. Write the structure of your rock song below:

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________
Composing Lyrics

When composing lyrics, rhyme and rhyme groupings are important. Consider the following groupings:

Rhyme 1
Rhyme 1
Rhyme 2
Rhyme 2

OR

Rhyme 1
Rhyme 2
Rhyme 1
Rhyme 1
Rhyme 2

In the space provided, write the lyrics for your rock song. Follow the verse/chorus structure and a rhyming pattern.

Verse 1:
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Verse 2:
Variations to consider for your lyrics:
Some rock songs include a Pre-Chorus in their structure. Others use vocals in their Introduction and/or Coda sections too. Use the space provided to compose lyrics for these sections if you want to include them.
Creating a Chord Progression

A chord progression is essential for all rock songs. In rock songs, all verses contain the same chord progression. All the chorus’ also follow the same chord progression. However, the chord progression in the verses are usually different to those in the chorus.

Look at the example of a chord progression below. Using this same format of chords written above lyrics, write your own chord progression for your rock song.

```
Twist and Shout

D    G    A
Well shake it up baby now (shake it up baby)

D    G    A
Twist and Shout (twist and shout)

D    G    A
C’mon, c’mon, c’mon, c’mon baby now (c’mon baby)

D    G    A
Well work it on out (work it on out)
```

Verse 1:

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Verse 2:
Chorus:
Verse 3:

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Chorus:

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
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Rock Riffs

Many rock songs rely on their distinctive and catchy riffs. Riffs tend to be either two or four bars longs and frequently are based around the notes of the blues scale.

C Blues Scale:

Riffs are most commonly used in two ways in rock songs:

- As part of the introduction and chorus as a hook
- As harmonic accompaniment for the vocal line during verses

Using Garageband, create a 2 or 4 bar riff over your chord progression in the sections of the song that you would like it to occur.

Use the space below to draft your ideas:
Setting rhythm to your lyrics

Now that you have your lyrics, before we can compose the melody we need to create the rhythm for your lyrics using a combination of note values. The most important step in this process is determining the strong points/strongest syllables in the lyrics.

For example, the lyric line “When I sang at the concert” has two strong points: “When I sang at the con-cert”.

When determining the strong points in the lyric syllables, some simple rules can help:

- The strongest point (“sang”) can usually be placed on the down beat (1st beat) of the first bar.
- The second strongest point (“con”) can either be placed on the 3rd beat of that same bar or on the 1st beat of the second bar.
- When a strong point is a short sounding syllable (“con’), syncopation can be used.

Look at some examples below:

e.g. music
   2 syllables: mu+sic
   the two woulds are the same length

   mu - sic

   e.g. mathematics
   4 syllables: ma+the+ma+tics
   there will be 4 notes
   sounds are the same length
   they are quite short

   ma – the – ma - tics

   e.g. clarinet
   3 syllables: cla+ri+net
   there will be 3 notes
   the first two notes are short
   the last note is long

   cla – ri - net
Taking your lyrics for a verse and a chorus, highlight the strong beats in every line. There may be more than two strong points in each line.

**VERSE**

Lyric Line:

_____________________________________________________

Lyric Line:

_____________________________________________________

Lyric Line:

_____________________________________________________

Lyric Line:

_____________________________________________________

Lyric Line:
Looking at the note values and note value combinations below, write a rhythm to match your lyrics for a verse and a chorus. Consider where the strong beats in each line are that you’ve highlighted. Long sounds= long note values; Short sounds= short note values.

<table>
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VERSE

Lyric Line:

__________________________________________________________

Lyric Line:

__________________________________________________________

Lyric Line:

__________________________________________________________

Lyric Line:

__________________________________________________________

Lyric Line:

__________________________________________________________
Composing a melody for the Chorus

It is the melodies of rock songs that make them memorable—particularly the melody of the chorus’.

Using your chorus rhythm from Page 22, compose the melody for your chorus using Sibelius.

Add the lyrics to this melody. Glue your notation in the box below.
Listening Analysis

Listen to your rock song composition and **describe** how you have used each of the concepts of music in your composition. In your descriptions, provide specific reference to the sections within the compositions and the instruments themselves.

* Describe: provide characteristics and features.

**Structure:**

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**Pitch:**

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

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Dynamics and Expressive Techniques:
My Review

Using the scaffold provided, write a review about your rock song. Your review needs to be 500 words in length.

Review Scaffold

Purpose: to summarise, analyse and respond to a composition or performance.

Structure:

| Context | The context provides background information on the performance:  
| o What do I know about the composition? Eg. composer, type of work, instrumentation, style, genre, period. |
| Description of the performance in relation to its context | The description describes the main characteristics of the composition:  
| o What concepts of music have been used?  
| o How have the concepts of music been used?  
| o Provide specific examples from the composition to support your response. |
| Judgement | The judgement provides an evaluation of the composition by giving an opinion and making a recommendation:  
| o What is my opinion about the composition as a whole?  
| o Support this with reasons.  
| o How effective is my rock song in representing the stylistic characteristics of the chosen rock style?  
| o What needs to be done to improve the rock song?  
| o How could I have improved how I worked in completing the rock song? |

Write using a variety of correctly structured simple, compound and/or complex sentences. Organise your work in paragraphs which begin with a topic sentence.
SELF AND TEACHER ASSESSMENT

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Self Assessment

Using the report criteria below, self assess your composition skills by **highlighting** your areas of achievement on the E – A scale.

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