

Lesson 2 – Song Production

100 points

Objective: Each individual and/or group must create an original (or cover) song using a combination of MIDI tracks, live tracks, and/or loops.

Requirements: The minimum length for the song shall be 2-3 minutes. At least 50% (or more) of the tracks used in the project must be MIDI or live tracks. Software loops should be used sparingly. Each project must include a harmonic diagram, similar to the one created for Lesson 1. Sections must be clearly marked on the diagram (see page 2). Also, be sure to include measure numbers in your written sketch.

Resources: Chord chart websites: <http://chordie.com> or <http://ultimateguitar.com>. Students may also choose to use song compilation books available in the music classroom.

Deadline: Wednesday, December 15th.

Names of Group Members:

Song Title and Artist (for cover songs only):

Intended style (if different from original):

Teacher Approval (signature required):

Elements of the Common Song

Introduction: The introduction is a unique section that comes at the beginning of the piece. It usually builds up suspense for the listener so when the downbeat drops in, it creates a release or surprise. In some cases, an introduction contains only drums or percussion parts which set the rhythm and "groove" for the song, or the introduction may consist of a solo melody sung by the lead singer (or a group of backup singers), or played by an instrumentalist.

Verse: In popular music a verse roughly corresponds with a poetic stanza. When two or more sections of the song have basically identical music and different lyrics each section is considered one verse.

Pre-Chorus: An optional section that may occur after the verse is the "pre-chorus". Also referred to as a "build" or "transitional bridge", the pre-chorus functions to connect the verse to the chorus with intermediary material, typically using predominant or similar transitional harmonies. Often when the verse and chorus involve the same harmonic structure, for example, the pre-chorus will introduce a new harmonic pattern in order to make the harmony reappearance of the verse harmonies in the chorus seem fresh.

Chorus: The chorus or "refrain" often sharply contrasts the verse melodically, rhythmically and harmonically (but not always) and assumes a higher level of dynamics and often with added instrumentation. When two or more sections of the song have basically identical music and lyrics these sections are probably instances of the chorus. Sometimes this can be repeated at the end and at the beginning. The chorus usually leads to either another verse, the bridge, or it closes the song. While there are a number of different ways to write lyrics for a chorus section, pop songs often tend to use simpler lyrics for the chorus, to make the chorus more catchy.

Bridge: In songwriting, a bridge is an interlude that connects two parts of a song, and which creates a harmonic connection between those parts. The bridge usually differs from the verse and the chorus in its harmonic structure (chord progression) and lyrics. Unlike a verse or chorus section, a bridge does not always contain lyrics. Prior to a bridge, the verse is normally performed twice. The bridge may then replace the 3rd verse or follow/precede it. In the latter case, it delays an expected chorus. Since the listener is expecting the chorus, when the bridge is performed (and when the bridge has a different harmony or lyrics than the chorus), the listener is pleasantly surprised by their expectations not being met. The chorus after the bridge is usually last and is often repeated in order to stress that it is final. If and when a verse or a chorus is expected and something that is musically and lyrically different from both verse and chorus is instead in its place, it is most likely the bridge.

Instrumental solo: A solo is a section designed to showcase an instrumentalist or less commonly, more than one instrumentalist. The solo section may take place over the chords from the verse, chorus, or bridge.

Outro: An outro is a short ending section to the song. The outro may occur over the tonic (root) chord, or perhaps over chord changes from the verse or chorus.