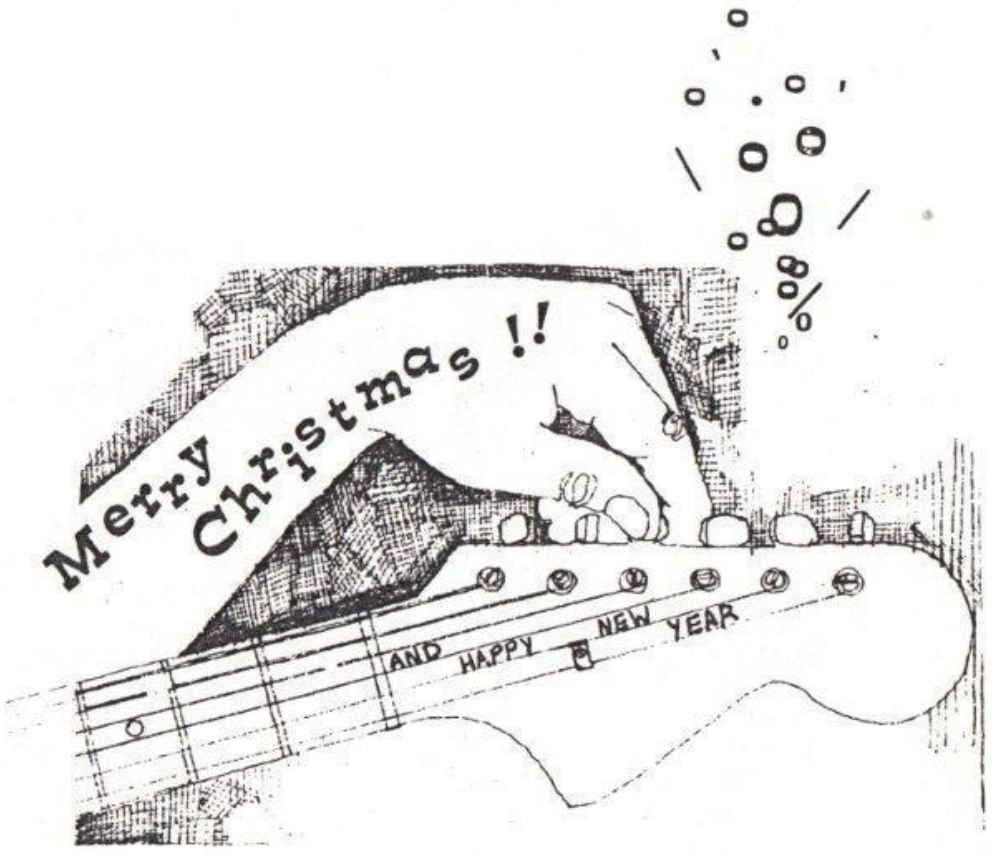
Songwriters Association

DEC. 1980 – NEWSLETTER

No. 5



Sound Sense — with Russell.

Continuing the article concerning the servicing of your cassette -recorder, Issue 4, there seems to be a little confusion over the location of the record/playback and erase heads, to clean and demagnetise them as described.

Here is a diagram of their location in the three most common formats.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES.

...From Al Block "The way that I write lyrics"

I like to listen to conversations and write down any odd phrase that strikes my fancy. Then when I am ready to write, I put down on paper anything I know about the particular phrase I have selected.

After this, I rearrange the words into lyric form, altering words and inserting rhymes. It is interesting to note that the great songwriter - Stephen Foster, who was found dead on a New York street in 1864, had a piece of paper in his pocket with the words, "Bear Hearts and Gentle People".

Another way I write lyrics is to write down on paper anything that comes into my mind; day, night, boy, girl, love, sky, etc.

One famous songwriter took the word "day" and asked himself, "What kind of day?" Answer, "a lovely day."
So he wrote three song hits; "It's a lovely day today", "it's a lovely day tomorrow", and "isn't it a lovely day?"

As an example a thought that comes into my mind is "Pick up the phone". So I extend that to "Please pick up the telephone", and I get:

"Please pick up the telephone and call
I'm sitting doing nothing at all
Waiting for a ring and wondring too
if you ar- also lonely and blue

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES cont....

"Admittedly, this is not a great lyric, because it is spur-of-the-moment and needs polishing up. However it illustrates how easy it is to transfer thoughts into lyrics.

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R.S.P.C.A. Contest

In the last issue we published news of a contest run by the R.S.P.-C.A. Enquiries have found that due to difficulties in promoting the contest, which resulted in insufficiant entries, and in the light of the substantial prize offerred- a new sedan, the contest will now be postponed until October 1981.

The winning entry will be considered for an advertising program to promote the R.S.P.C.A.
Now is the time to start preparing your entry be it a song, poetry, or any lyrical entry.

So many competition entries are rushed together at the last moment without the planning of professional entries. Watch for entry details as soon as they are available.

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Members will be interested in a monthly American publication called "Songwriters Magazine".

It deals with all aspects of songwriting including interviews with successful songwriters, publishers and other interesting people. Also featured are question/answer columns, technical articles for musicians and professional advice for lyricists, plus much more.

what we are building here Australia, and as such has a valuable information even t addresses and contacts are American.

To buy latest issues try large city bookshops or sub direct to:

Songwriter Magazine,
P.O. Box 3510,
Hollywood, C.A. 9002
U.S.A.

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DEMO DELIVERY !!

A company which guarant to listen to every demo-cas submitted to them is:

WHEATLEY BROS.
ENTERTAINMENT.

Send tape, lyric sheet and return post/packing to:

David Wyatt,
Wheatley Bros.
Entertainment Pty. Lt
88 Richardson St.
Albert Park 3206 Vic
(03) 699 5366

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//// FEATURE ////

One of our interstate members submitted some lyrics for appraisal.The following is an extract from the reply. It is reprinted here for interest to all members .....

Song writing is a great way to express your feelings at the time,and provides a moment of your history to look back on in later years.

Basically,any set of lyrics can be put to music,even if there is no set pattern or beat to the lyrics.
Whether the song is appealing to other people or not is a different thing and depends on a number of factors.

Firstly,to be serious about songwriting we have to have one or more aims.Do we want to write for the pleasure of reading our own poetic thoughts,and perhaps share them with sympathetic friends, or do we want to also try to climb the long ladder of success towards being a recognized songwriter and hopefully receive some financial reward for our efforts?

Both answers are valid and need some thought,before a decision is made because the second choice involves a need to develop an awareness of sound business principles,perhaps surprisingly.

I say this because the secret of Commercial success relies a lot on psychology !

We need to consider such concepts as :

1) Supply and demand,
2) Past,Current and Future trends,
3) Recording/Publishing industry requirements,
4) Investment to develop a product as cheaply and effectively as possible,
5) Promotion,
6) Presentation,
7) Interpretation of critiscism,
8) A committment to carry on and try again in the face of failure.

These points seem hard to accept when we're trying to develop an enjoyable hobby,but we must realize from the beginning that we are trying to compete with the best in the business,and the business is a multi-million dollar one.

There is a saying among successful songwriters."A hit song is not written,it is rewritten!"(and rewritten again until it has been made as perfect as possible to present to the public.)

Every word must be looked at critically until we're satisfied it deserves a place in the song.

At the same time be careful to use everyday language unle a special reason demands otherwise.Remember,we want people to i they can sing our song with as little effort as possible at any time during their daily activities.

There are always exceptions to the rules,but the carefree bright little song on the radio this morning during breadfast,w probably sweated over for many hours,from original concept to f production,and its writers are singing it all the way to the ba

They still thank their good fortune though,as this busine depends as much on lucky breaks at some stage,as all the above guidelines.

If a song is good enough however it will find its own way success,but all the production and promotion in the world won't help a bad song.Let's look at some of the points above briefly.

1) Supply and demand.

Love is the one subject everybody wants to relate,so obviously there are more sucessful love songs than any other subject.This situation is slowly changing and more diverse subjects are now succeeding where they wouldn't 20 years ago.The Beatles and Elv were the most successful performers in their time because of th appeal to so many areas of society.This concept will never chan

2) Trends.

Be aware of current styles of successful songs.They suit curren needs or they wouldn't be hits,but also listen to older songs. They can teach us a lot about changing styles which might be applicable to future trends.

3) Industry requirements.

Bear in mind the length of hit songs. 2½ to 3 minutes is averag for Top 40 and middle of the road music,leaving programmers roo for commercials.Other standards are important too.

4) Investment.

A demo tape is not cheap but simple quality is more important to publishers than a philharmonic orchestra in the background. A note-book or pocket tape-recorder? It's up to you.

5) Presentation.

It's self explanatory and is most important,every step of the w

6) Critiscism.

Well meaning friends probably don't know what they're talking a ut,but their less obvious reactions can tell you a lot.If they are being polite they're wasting your time and theirs.Usually professional opinion is the most constructive and useful and so is your own. — be critical.

7) Try again.

It's a long road but it's worth it.

Book Review –

Aspiring jingle writers.
A publication designed for the media industry, could be your key to success. Known as "THE BROADCAST AND TELEVISION YEAR BOOK" it contains, amongst other valuable information, a section listing all of Australia's Advertising Agencies and their clients. You could try composing a jingle for a product which you haven't seen advertised for awhile, and look up an address from this book, for the Agency to present your work to.

Who knows? You may be the next Mike Brady or Mojo team. New writers are needed all the time in the Advertising Business.

One of our Victorian members is Winifred MacGregor. She writes about ....

SONG TITLES

There is a lot of controversy re the title of a song. Like the chicken and the egg- does the title come before the song is written, or after?

With experience, you'll find there are no rules, because it's an individual choice.

Songwriters are always on the look-out for inspiration and a chance word, phrase or sentence can give a sudden idea as being suitable as a song title, and one then begins to build a song around this. Or it may be a situation when watching a film, or reading a book, and one has the material to build a song. When complete, there comes the choice of a title, when the lines have to be perused to pinpoint the essence of the situation.

So it all "boils down" to the fact that a song can be built both ways- around a title, or after the nucleus of an idea is worked out.

Further to inspiration - former singer/writer/guitarist Jimi Hendrikx always had a notebook handy for jotting down ideas for songs, even though it might only be one word, and this is an excellent thing. There may not be the time or need to use the material immediately, but it is recorded there to refer to when in a writing mood.

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Winifred is an active lyric writer and would like to hear from musician/composers on the basis of creating lyrics and music as the song progresses. i.e: working together.

If interested, write to:

Winifred MacGregor,
122 Foam st,
Rosebud. 3939

Notes

Sammy cahn, the world renowned American Songwriter whose work includes "MY KIND OF TOWN", "CALL ME IRRESPONSIBLE" and "COME BLOW YOUR HORN" says...

"The difference between a poem and a song lyric is singability. A poem is read by the eye, transferred to the mind and then to emotions.

A song is heard by the ear, transferred to the mind and then t the emotions. There is a difference between what the eye and ear actually transmits to our brain. Some genious poets like Shakespear, for example would have made poor songwriters, becau the words they chose would not be singable .....!

oooooooooo

Congratulations to Russell Zimmer and David Myer

They both won a commendation from the judges of a recent song contest with prizes of a record album each for their sep entries. As David is one of our younger members at 15 years ol we feel that he could be a name to remember.....

COLLABORATION

Anyone looking for a collaborating partner is asked to submit name and address (telephone No. where available) with all rele particulars to the Newsletter Department for publication in t newsletter. Potential collaborating partners are then able to contact each other and make appropriate arrangements for coll ation. In the past the Secretary has received lyric submissio from various members. It is rather difficult to assess what ty of music the individual lyric writer prefers for his/her lyric and it is therefore felt that the direct contact between lyricists and musicians, as suggested above, would be preferabl and more beneficial to all parties concerned.

WANTED.

Collaborating partner/musician for keen lyricist.

Jenni
62/100 High Street,
NORTH SYDNEY. 2060

Contact tel.No. 929-7088 (bus.hrs. only)

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