FROM SONGWRITING TO PERFORMANCE

EXPLORING THE PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR TODAY’S SONGWRITER

Today’s songwriter finds themselves working in many different environments: collaborating with other songwriters to write for an artist, working in a studio with an electronic music producer, composing music for sync (film and television), and even writing songs for their own performances as singer-songwriters.

Spark Curiosity!

Have your students experience the process of songwriting with a focus on writing with the intention of promoting audience engagement.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify the various ways audiences participate and react to songs in performance (e.g. singing along, moving, identifying with the lyrics, etc.)
2. Articulate the techniques songwriters use to intentionally promote this audience participation
3. Effectively apply these techniques while songwriting

LESSON PLANS

Consider developing lesson plans to meet these learning objectives through the study of songwriting and performance. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Select either YouTube performance videos or create a playlist of current recognizable songs.
- While listening to each song in the playlist, have students determine the elements of the song that encourages audience participation: are there parts of the song that encourage the audience to sing along? If so, how are the melodies constructed? Are they simple or complex? Do the melodies utilize repetition? Are there “stacked” or background vocals during that part to suggest a sing along moment? Does the song encourage the audience to move in any way (clap hands, dance, move their head, etc.)? If yes, what is the BPM? What beats are emphasized? Is syncopation used? In the lyrics, is rhyming utilized to help make them memorable?
- Organize the class into teams. Have each group collaborate to write a song (or a song start) with the intention of encouraging some sort of audience participation (e.g. singing along, moving to the music, etc.)
- Have each group perform their songs for each other. Objectively assess if the songs succeeded in meeting their desired intention.

RESOURCES

*Popular Lyric Writing: 10 Steps to Effective Storytelling* by Andrea Stolpe, Berklee Press, 2007