

Research Assessment # 13

Date: 1/29/2021

Subject: How to Write Interesting Songs

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Ewer, Gary. "Songwriting: How to Avoid Moving In a Bad Direction." *The Essential Secrets of Songwriting*, 10 July 2017, www.secretsofsongwriting.com/2017/07/10/songwriting-how-to-avoid-moving-in-a-bad-direction/.

Assessment:

In the world of music, creating an interesting and unique piece of music can be a very daunting task. As we listen to modern day pop, oftentimes we feel like it is missing some sort of key element which would make it a more entertaining and fluid listening experience. This article details the most important steps to take when writing a captivating song, and most importantly the things songwriters must avoid.

When writing "I Saw Her Standing There", Paul McCartney of the Beatles first came up with the line "She was just 17" (Ewer, 1). After this, he made the direct choice *not* to finish the line with the phrase "beauty queen". He saw it as too mainstream, and knew that the audience would be expecting it (Ewer, 1). This simple decision displays one key aspect of songwriting; the idea that logical and predictable ideas are not always the best. As exemplified by "I Saw Her Standing There", making unique decisions within our songwriting process and production process ensures that the listener maintains focus and interest throughout the entire song. The Beatles also portray the idea that, while it is important to follow the influence of the artists you find inspirational, we must also make our own spin on the process of creating a song. It is apparent that the music of the Beatles used many elements of their favorite music, especially from artists such as The Everly Brothers, Buddy Holly, Roy Orbison, and Elvis Presley (Ewer,

2). With that said, though, the Beatles are very famous for the new sorts of sounds and production styles that they put to use in their songs. This can be exemplified by the songs “Maxwell’s Silver Hammer” and “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds”. Their choice to bring something new to the music scene is the reason for their mass success throughout the 1970s and 1980s. As mentioned in Ewer’s article, giving the audience the “same old thing” for every lyric and every component of a song creates a repetitive cycle of boredom. In making distinct choices, such as the aforementioned choice to refrain from including “beauty queen” in “I Saw Her Standing There”, Paul McCartney and the Beatles changed music forever.

As a musician studying this phenomenon, I can take away one very concrete and important lesson; the key to creating impactful and entertaining music is to defer from the ordinary and the expected. Throughout my journey in ISM this year, specifically as I begin working on my final project, I will keep in mind the absolute importance of taking a second glance at things and ensuring that there is some sort of unexpected element, in order to make the songs more fun! Specifically, as advised by Ewer, I will listen to my songs multiple times and, if things start to feel boring, identify the point at which it happens and make a change. I am excited to see how this knowledge will help this year in ISM.