



Anthem Challenge

Every year, organisations around the world are looking for anthemic songs to represent prominent events.

Where do we hear anthemic songs? What comes to mind first might include:

- Football matches
- Charity fundraising events and charity singles
- Olympic games etc.
- Public gatherings

What makes a song anthemic? The dictionary definition of anthemic is:

anthemic

anˈθɪmɪk/

adjective: (of a song) like an anthem in being *rousing* or *uplifting*.

If you think about your favourite anthems you would probably realise that they are indeed rousing and uplifting but of course written in many styles and genres. To really understand why these songs have the power to lift the spirits of huge crowds, listen critically to your favourites. Analyse the lyrical and musical content and try to identify the common denominators.

Ask yourself:

- How do they make you feel?
- Why?
- What techniques and devices have been used in these songs that can you also use to create similar emotions in your song?

Challenge

Write an anthemic song using the following criteria:

- Any genre
- Tempo above 90 bpm
- No longer than 3:00 minutes long
- Uplifting, unifying or inspirational lyric with a positive message
- Very simple and basic chorus lyric that is so easy to remember the listeners are able to sing along by the end of the first chorus!
- Use repetitive hooks
- Positive musical feel in a major key
- No more than 4 chords
- No more than three musical sections
- A rousing chant somewhere in your song e.g. whoa/yeah so people speaking any language can sing along!

TSA Tips

Don't just write what you think people might want to hear. Write something that genuinely makes you feel the super strong emotion you would like to evoke in a stadium full of people listening to your song for the first time. Be genuine with your lyrics and the emotion, and try plenty of melodies until you land on a winner!

Have fun!



Final Words Challenge

We believe the job of the songwriter is to evoke a strong emotion in the listener. When you think it through, in order to do that we have to feel a strong emotion ourselves when we're creating songs, whether it's happy, sad, excited, romantic or otherwise. If we don't feel anything, our listeners won't feel anything.

OK, it's understood that we don't necessarily wake up every day feeling something incredibly powerful. Sometimes we just meander through the day feeling pretty neutral, after all we are human. But, when we sit down to write songs it's important to be able to access the powerful feelings we store inside our hearts and minds, and that means tapping into either:

- Current feelings
- Memories
- Imagination

Challenge

Use your imagination and think about a conversation you may have in the future.

We'd like you to ask yourself this question:

"If I were approaching the end of my life and the person I loved the most were with me... what would be that last thing I would want to say to them?"

TSA Tips

Don't immediately think this will be a sad song. It could just as easily be an uptempo positive song celebrating life, an uplifting song passing on advice to someone younger, or just a simple "*thank you*" song. It all depends on how you look at it.

We suggest you think about all this carefully before picking up a guitar and launching into your song. Grab a pen first and brainstorm all the possibilities, the memories and the feelings and try to crystallise what would be the one final thought you would like to leave someone with.

Try to make it an important thought, honest, and although it's about a personal situation, remember the listeners who you hope to touch with your song. That means keeping the lyric universal, so people can relate to them and feel that you've written the song they wish they could have written themselves.

Good Luck!



Household Object Challenge

Believe it or not there are song ideas all over your house just waiting to be written, it just depends how you see things.

Some while ago I wrote a song called The Table. Sounds really boring doesn't it?

Well, I started by describing the table; How it was worn out and how the polish was cracked and faded from years of just being there. Then as the song moves on the listener discovers that the table is more than just a piece of furniture, it's where people come together, and when they have a problem they "put it on the table".

It's where family disputes are talked through, voices are raised and tears are shed until the problem is solved. The table then becomes less of an inanimate object and actually one of the most important things keeping people together. It's strong, dependable, always there and has emotional value.

I've also written a song about a door! Here, the significance was that a door is what people walk through when they leave...or when they come back, both of which are potentially powerful moments.

Giving an unexpected significance to an otherwise meaningless object is a powerful way of creating emotion in a song, both happy and sad.

Do note that this is a different technique to using something inanimate as a metaphor or simile for something or someone. This is more about illuminating in the song how relevant that object is in real life to something more personal.

Here are a few more examples of everyday items given importance:

Object: Coffee Cup

Emotion: Passion/Excitement or even Guilt

Story: Still has the lipstick on it from the night before...

Point: Excited about a new relationship...or...We shouldn't have done that!

Object: Wooden spoon

Emotion: Nostalgia/Family/Love

Story: What Mum used when we were kids to make cakes on a Summer afternoon

Point: I miss you...or...I miss the innocence of being a carefree child

Object: Trash Bin

Emotion: Empowerment

Story: Where I threw my wedding ring

Point: Get out of my life, I'm starting again!

Practising thinking laterally like this is a great way to develop the your originality as a songwriter.

Challenge

Write a song about a household object, in any style. Don't worry about production, just focus on a fabulous lyric, melody and harmony.

TSA Tips

Try and get the story clear before you start writing, make sure you know what the point of the song is and bear in mind that it's sometimes better not to give the meaning away too soon, much like the punchline of a joke.

Have fun!