**Songwriting - Lyrics and Music**

General thoughts / discussion points / starting points for workshop

**- Mood and setting the scene**.

Getting ready to write - rituals, headspace.

surroundings - sensory things … mood lights, smells …

- get in to habitat of doing automatic / stream of consciousness creative writing to clear your head, and get you in a good headspace.

- adapt this idea to be a 5 note melody. play with this idea and write one everyday.

**-Routines and habits**

make writing habitual. build it in to your life.

The more you practice the more likely you are to make and develop ideas you really are proud of.

set yourself quick exercises - writing a 15 minute song (like a sketch) and record it on phone.

* **separate the creative process (splurge) and the editing process (polish)**
* **(**if you are working in a digital-audio workspace especially) -get in to flow of ideas, and come back to it to develop and snipe later on. don't get bogged down in details at first you can always polish later

Finish what you start, but know when to put it down, and come back to it later.

* **Self-criticism vs quality filters** - thinking about balancing these responses / mindsets so they are helpful and not a hindrance. Trusting your musical ear and your instinct. Being protective of work when it’s in it’s fragile early stages. *Define an area as `safe' and use it as an anchor - why does this bit work well ? define which are the bits that aren't quite right and work out why they don't fit so well. try and refine the expression until it is as close as you can get it to what you want it to mean.*

**-Tools**

Carry Pen / notebook / use microphone / notes on phone etc.

Tech stuff that is fun and mobile- using apps on the go / - drum sequencers / mode sequencers / Thumb Jam etc

**The power of suggestion for stimulating ideas -**

* keeping ears and minds open - wide listening , across eclectic styles…
* finding the music in the environment around you ( sounds that suggest musical ideas, patterns that you hear as you go about your days.)
* **development of ideas and arrangement / rearrangement**

re-moulding things you like. - ie production techniques, instrumentation, chord patterns. deconstructing music that you appreciate and defining what it is that you like about it.

**Cross-discipline inspiration - look at other creative disciplines**

-working out what it is that you want to write about - (although I find, sometimes the meaning of what you have written becomes clearer after you've written it :)

- choose unusual perimeters for conceptual starting points. use visuals/ projection as a starting point for a piece of writing / melody. writing to a brief / for a specific purpose.

**Use random oblique strategies as a way to overcome creative block:**

for example - see here - http://stoney.sb.org/eno/oblique.html (Brian Eno made cards, but they have turned it in to a website.

* **Remember the potency of silence, and of dynamics.**

**Warm ups and exercises … could include things like:**

The orchestra of silly noises:

in a circle, one person starts with a movement and a silly noise, the others copy and then the next person takes their turn.

Vocal warm ups, exercises- if participants are happy/ confident enough.

Harmony work - splitting in to two groups and adding harmony to warm ups.

long random notes - everyone chooses a note at random to blast out and the only rule is you have to stick to it. take turns at conducting the ensemble (dynamics, texture, moving up and down etc)

-Selecting a small group of notes (limiting the pool of notes) - say 4 / 5- and working them in to melodies and phrases - would be interesting to give each participant the same group of notes and see what phrases they came up with.

-writing with instruments and then singing the melody - and writing with voice and then playing the melody.

* working with motifs and repetition - musical form. trying it backwards, forwards, extended etc.

**Example Exercise** ( to be developed):

Split group in to 2 (or possibly 4 depending on numbers) - could be adapted to work in pairs… depending on space to work in.

one will be thinking about melody/ chords, the other about lyrics.

Group 1 - melody

use cards with notes on - shuffle and assign a note to each person but 1 - campanology style- get the remaining person to rearrange the people singing each note in to a phrase that they like.

Group 2

Ask for suggestions of words phrases / cut interesting short phrases out of paper/ magazine - write on /stick to cards to have tools for randomly generating phrases.

together carve out lines / phrases that work as a short set of lyrics.

Or- using a phrase you choose as a starting point, build something around it from your personal experience.

(the idea here is that people can put as much of themselves as they want in to it - it can be personal, or a more anonymous exercise if they prefer.)

work and rework so the lyrics and melody work together.

work with something chordal - (piano/ guitar etc) until we get a consensus on how we want it to sound harmonically.

- the point of the workshop is to demonstrate- that lyrics and melody usually benefit from having a close relationship- they inform each other- and there will always be a bit of shift and compromise to make sure they fit each other well.

even when the big songwriting houses back in the early 20th century were working on lyrics and music separately, they were in the same building working closely together, usually at the same piano :)