

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD SONG?

**Melody** –memorable, singable, builds with the lyrics.

**Lyrics** – interesting, clear, building to a high point corresponding to the high point of the melody.

**Hook** – the phrase that makes the song memorable. Often the title.

**Rhythm** – common rhythm such as 4/4 or 3/4.

**Harmony** – chord progressions that include the eleven barbershop chords with a predominance of major triads, dominant sevenths, and dominant ninths.

**Form** – a pattern of repeating 8-bar segments. Usually includes a 16-bar verse and a 32-bar chorus May also include a 16-bar bridge or interlude.

## THOSE ALL-IMPORTANT HOOKS!

Here are some really effective hooks that you're familiar with. Run these songs through your head and notice how many times the hook is repeated, both lyrically and melodically, and where those repeats occur. You will see a strong pattern correlating to the different song forms.

As Time Goes By (AABA form, hook at end of all A sections)  
Can't Help Lovin' That Man of Mine (AABA, hook at end of A sections)  
Tired of me (ABAC, hook twice at beginning and once at end of song)  
It Had To Be You (ABAC, hook twice at beginning and once at end)  
I Remember You (AABA, hook at beginning of first two A sections, slightly modified at beginning of B section, and at end of song)  
'Deed I Do (AABA, hook at end of A sections)  
I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas (ABAC, at beginning of A sections)

More strong hooks that are also the titles of the songs:

Unforgettable  
Oh, You Beautiful Doll  
One Voice  
Rock-A-Bye Your Babe With a Dixie Melody  
Blue Skies  
Tie Me To Your Apron Strings Again (Comes at the beginning and at the end of the chorus.)  
Look For The Silver Lining  
Bye Bye Blues  
I Write The Songs  
Fascinatin' Rhythm  
Singin' In The Rain  
Baby Face  
California, Here I Come  
If You Love Me, Really Love Me (One of those AABA hooks that doesn't come at the beginning of the chorus.)  
From A Distance  
God Bless America  
I'll Be Seeing You (Think about the movement of the lyrics and melody toward the climax of this song- very powerful.)  
Someone To Watch Over Me (Another hook that comes at the end of the A sections)  
Toot, Toot, Tootsie, Goodbye (What's the form of this song? Different!)

## A good song should...

*Tell a story.* The story should be simple and believable, and should be about a situation, event, or feeling almost everyone can relate to. It doesn't have to be unique, just expressed in a unique way. (How many songs say basically the same thing "I love you," "I'm sorry," "I miss you," "You're a rat," etc.) Even melodies can tell a story. You can tell from a good melody what the emotion of the song is.

*Have a strong musical/lyrical hook,* and repeat that hook to make the song memorable. The hook is what really makes a song effective. If the listener doesn't remember the hook long after having heard the song, it isn't strong enough. Writing a song is like fishing – you hook 'em, then reel 'em in a little, then let 'em out a little, then reel 'em in and land 'em.

*Have a definite form* (AABA, ABAC, etc.). Free-form songs make most listeners uncomfortable, and of course, are not suitable for barbershop. Determine what form you want to use soon after you begin to develop a melody and/or lyrics, whichever you do first.

*Go somewhere.* The lyrics and music of a good song will work together to move the listener forward to a climax. Jean Barford says that the strongest songs are so well linked musically and lyrically that she can interpret from the music alone, and the lyrics will fit the interpretation. That's musical/lyrical congruity at its best. An excellent example of a song that moves relentlessly forward, both musically and lyrically, is *You'll Never Walk Alone*.

*Evoke a reaction in the listener.* It may be an emotional reaction, as with a ballad that has a touching message, or a physical reaction, as with an uptune that makes the listener tap her foot. If the song elicits no reaction, it hasn't involved the listener and it isn't a strong song.

## Some things to remember when writing a song...

Keep the lyrics simple and to the point. Tell the listener what you're going to tell them (verse), then tell them (first part of chorus), then tell them what you've told them (second part of chorus). In other words, hammer home one simple message (like "Tired of Me," for example.) If you have more than one thing to say, write another song.

Rewrite. Songs are not sent intact from heaven. They are created, and creating is work. It takes trial and error and much editing. Don't get so involved with an idea that you can't improve it with some judicious editing. Don't use a single word that isn't really necessary either to tell the story or to reinforce the rhythm pattern.

## Tricks of the trade, or how to get started and keep going.

If you want to write an uptune, you might want to start with the rhythm rather than with the melody or lyrics. Get the rhythm going in your head, like a drumbeat, and then start playing with notes and words that fit the rhythm.

If you get stuck on a spot that you can't seem to work out, do something very left-brained for a while (like filing or cleaning up your desk), and don't think about the music. Very often, the solution will pop into your head when you're not thinking about it. When I get blocked, I do something like balancing my checkbook or paying bills. Using your left brain consciously gives your right brain a chance to work subconsciously. I also find that I get many of my ideas while walking or taking a shower.

### Ideas for creating melodies...

Any numerical sequence for scale tones – social security number, birthdate, credit card number. It may not make a good melody, but it gets you started with an idea that you can change and develop into something workable.

Take the melody of a ballad and play it as an uptune, or vice versa, or play it backward. You may suddenly get an idea of how to modify it into an original melody.

Play a series of chord progressions. This can stimulate melody ideas.

Melodies should have motion toward a high point, and good ones incorporate repetition and contrast.

Work hard at creating good melodies – a strong melody is even more important than strong lyrics. After all, you may not remember the lyrics of a song that you have heard once or twice, but if it's a good song, you probably remember the melody. Lyrics alone seldom evoke an emotional or physical response, but a melody certainly can.

Analyze the melodies you love best. See how they move forward toward a climax, and how they reinforce the lyrical hook of the song.

### Ideas for creating lyrics...

Use a cliché as the hook line of a lyric. Country music writers do this a lot. (*You win again*). Or take a familiar saying and change just one word of it for impact. One of my favorite examples is from a country song of several years ago that said, "The race is on and it looks like heartache, and the winner loses all."

Watch "Wheel of Fortune" to get ideas for lyrical hook lines. Listen to country music – many country songs use common phrases very effectively and generally have strong melodic and lyrical hooks.

## More tips...

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Ask “So?” Read the title of a song, and then say “So?” The answer could be the theme of another song. (“I’m All Alone” – So? Go find a new love. “Tired of Me” – So? I’m getting pretty tired of you, too.)

Take the title of an uptune and turn the idea into a ballad, and vice versa.

Use a rhyming dictionary to stimulate ideas you wouldn’t otherwise have thought of.

Use a word or phrase with a double meaning, like “Mean to me, why must you be mean to me...can’t you see what you mean to me?”

Try writing all kinds of music, if only for the practice. Write a country/western song, or a church song, or a children’s song. Who knows – someone might enjoy singing it.

Keep a notebook handy all the time, especially in the car. (DON’T WRITE WHILE YOU’RE DRIVING!). Keep some staff paper handy. You never know when an idea is going to pop into your head, and they can disappear as fast as they come if you don’t write them down.

Listen to what others tell you. Don’t be thin-skinned about your creation. It’s hard to hear criticism of something you’ve created, but if you listen and learn, you’ll be a much better songwriter for it. I’ve learned a lot more from what I’ve done wrong than from what I’ve done right, and it’s made my songs better and more singable.

If you write a song that you think may be performed, copyright it! Request Form PA from the Register of Copyrights, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20559. (You can download it from their website.)

Spend a little time every day – just five minutes or so – thinking about song themes and hooks. When you get a good idea, let it percolate in your brain for a few days before you start to work on it. Your brain will let you know when it’s ready to go to work. Let lots of ideas roll around in your head while you’re in the percolating stage, and don’t throw anything out. You never know what might turn into something really good.

Write something silly once in a while. It’s good for you.

Go on the Web! Type in “songwriting” and you will find dozens of good sights with songwriting tips, ideas, and books. I found so many that I gave up trying to list them all for you.

## Resources

### Books

Most big bookstores have many books on songwriting. Try the library first, though – it can save you a lot of money. Then you can buy the ones you really like. Here are a few:

*Beginning Songwriter's Answer Book.* Paul Zollo; Writer's Digest Books (WDB). This is a really good book, one of the best I've found.

*Creating Melodies: A Songwriter's Guide to Understanding, Writing and Polishing Melodies.* Dick Weissman; WDB. Another very good book.

*The Craft and Business of Song Writing.* John Braheny; WDB.

*Have a Nice Day – No Problem! A Dictionary of Clichés.* Christine Ammer; Plume Books. This will get your brain going for hooks.

*Melody In Songwriting.* Jack Perricone; Berklee Press. Berklee Press publishes many books on songwriting and music theory. This one is pretty technical.

*The Songwriter's Guide to Collaboration.* William Carter; WDB. Good ideas for working with someone else, which may work best for you if you're stronger with either lyrics or melody – or if you just enjoy working with someone else to stimulate your own creativity.

*The Song-Writer's Idea Book; The Craft of Lyric Writing; and Successful Lyric Writing.* All by Sheila Davis; WDB. Lots of good ideas.

*Songwriting: A Complete Guide to the Craft.* Stephen Cirton; Limelight Editions.

*Songwriting Fundamentals.* Dave Byers; contact him at [www.writingsongs.com/davebyers](http://www.writingsongs.com/davebyers).

*Songwriting Wrongs and How To Right Them.* Pat and Pete Luboff; WDB. Very good book.

*Song Writers' Market;* WDB. Primarily a list of music publishers, but it has some good general information about songwriting and a list of national and local organizations for songwriters. Don't buy it – use it in the library.

Any good thesaurus and rhyming dictionary. These really help when you're stuck with a lyric problem.

## Web Sites

[americansongwriter.com](http://americansongwriter.com) – They also publish a magazine – six issues for \$25.95.  
Ordering information is on the web site.

[lyracist.com](http://lyracist.com) – They have a chat room.

[musicconnection.com](http://musicconnection.com)

[musesmuse.com](http://musesmuse.com) – They have a free online newsletter.

[songwriteruniverse.com](http://songwriteruniverse.com)

[writesongs.com](http://writesongs.com) – web site of songwriters Pat & Pete Luboff.

[writingsongs.com/davebyers](http://writingsongs.com/davebyers) – Dave Byers, songwriter and author

The tonic tone, or *do*, is home base in whatever key the arrangement is being written. The triad built on that tonic tone is labeled the tonic triad.

Therefore, to establish tonic as the key or home base, all other chords are heard in their position relative to that tonic chord.

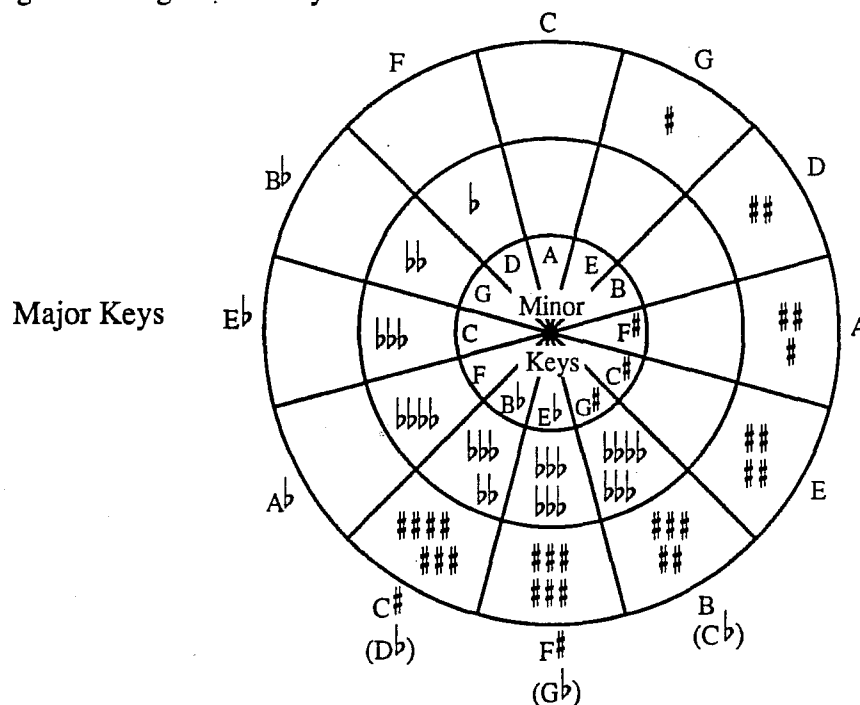
## PRIMARY HARMONY

Each degree of the scale has its own tonal function or its own part in establishing the tonal center of key feeling. Tonic (I), dominant (V), and subdominant (IV) are often called the tonal degrees of a major scale and are the mainstay of tonality. Dominant and subdominant seem to give an expression of support to the tonic. You'll remember that these three chords are the only major triads produced by the notes of a major scale.

In major scale tonality, the strongest root relationship is from the root of the chord built on the dominant note of the scale (V) to the root of the chord built on the tonic degree of the scale (I). These two roots are five scale degrees (a perfect fifth interval) apart. This strong dominant-to-tonic relationship is the basis for Bach's well known circle of fifths.

## CIRCLE OF FIFTHS

As you move around the circle of fifths counter clockwise, the progression is from dominant to tonic (V to I). All twelve keys are represented as you proceed around the circle, eventually returning to the original tonality.



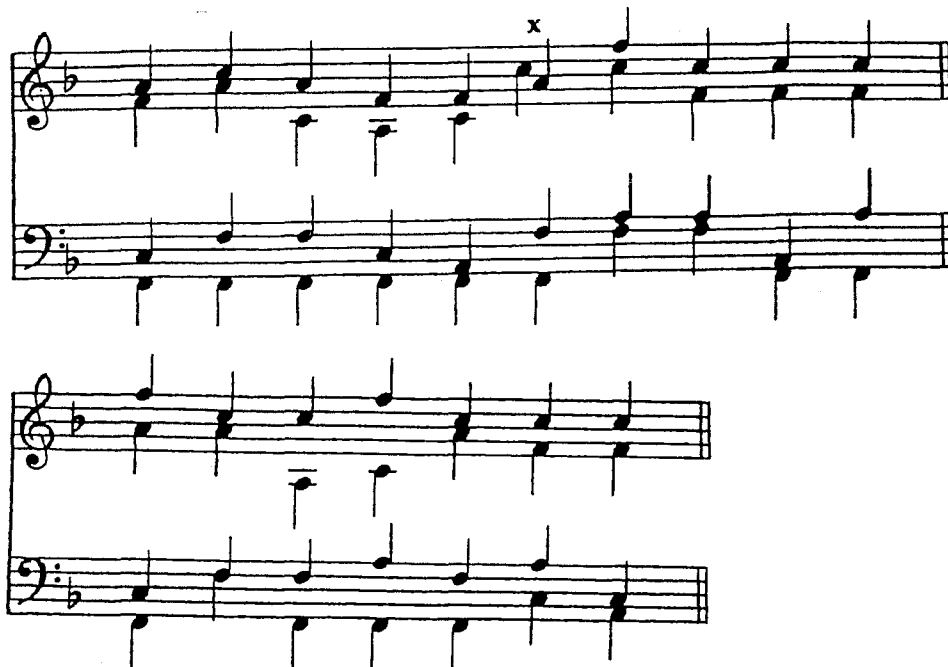
IN ACTUALITY, EACH OF THESE NOTES FIRST FUNCTIONS AS TONIC (I), THEN BECOMES THE DOMINANT (V) OF THE NEXT TONE.



# THE ELEVEN BARBERSHOP CHORDS

## and their strongest voicings

### Major triad



### Barbershop (dominant) seventh



## Barbershop (dominant) ninth



(Omit the  
root or  
the fifth.)

## \*Major sixth



## \*Major seventh



## \*Major ninth

(ALWAYS omit  
the seventh)



### Minor triad

The image shows a chord diagram for a minor triad in B-flat major (F, A-flat, C) on a treble clef staff. To its right is a two-staff piano reduction of this triad. The right hand (treble clef) plays the notes F, A-flat, and C in a sequence of eighth notes, while the left hand (bass clef) plays the notes F, A-flat, and C in a sequence of eighth notes. The key signature has one flat (B-flat major).

### Minor sixth

The image shows a chord diagram for a minor sixth chord in B-flat major (F, A-flat, C, G) on a treble clef staff. To its right is a two-staff piano reduction of this chord. The right hand (treble clef) plays the notes F, A-flat, C, and G in a sequence of eighth notes, while the left hand (bass clef) plays the notes F, A-flat, C, and G in a sequence of eighth notes. The key signature has one flat (B-flat major).

### Minor seventh

The image shows a chord diagram for a minor seventh chord in B-flat major (F, A-flat, C, G, B-flat) on a treble clef staff. To its right is a two-staff piano reduction of this chord. The right hand (treble clef) plays the notes F, A-flat, C, G, and B-flat in a sequence of eighth notes, while the left hand (bass clef) plays the notes F, A-flat, C, G, and B-flat in a sequence of eighth notes. The key signature has one flat (B-flat major).

## Augmented triad

The image shows the musical notation for an augmented triad in G major. On the left, a single staff in treble clef shows the chord with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/8 time signature. The notes are G4, B4, and D#5. To the right, a two-staff system (treble and bass clefs) shows a rhythmic exercise. The treble staff contains eighth notes: G4, B4, D#5, G4, B4, D#5, G4, B4, D#5. The bass staff contains eighth notes: G3, B3, D#4, G3, B3, D#4, G3, B3, D#4. Below the bass staff, three quarter notes are shown: G3, B3, and D#4, representing the chord's structure.

## Diminished seventh

The image shows the musical notation for a diminished seventh chord in B minor. On the left, a single staff in treble clef shows the chord with a key signature of two flats (Bb, Fb) and a 3/8 time signature. The notes are Bb4, D5, Fb5, and Ab5. To the right, a two-staff system (treble and bass clefs) shows a rhythmic exercise. The treble staff contains eighth notes: Bb4, D5, Fb5, Bb4, D5, Fb5, Bb4, D5, Fb5. The bass staff contains eighth notes: Bb3, D4, Fb4, Bb3, D4, Fb4, Bb3, D4, Fb4. Below the bass staff, three quarter notes are shown: Bb3, D4, and Fb4, representing the chord's structure.

*Anything Can Be a Song!*

Animals	How Much is That Doggy in the Window, Old Gray Mare, Tie Me Kangaroo Down, Red Red Robin, Yellow Bird .
Furniture	Old Spinning Wheel, Mother's Rockin' Chair, Old Parlor Piano.
Instruments	I Love a Piano, Big Brass Band, Banjo's Back in Town, Mister Accordion Man, Trumpets on Parade
Water	Down By the Old Mill Stream, Old Man River, By the Sea, On Moonlight Bay, Up a Lazy River
Above Us	Moon Over Miami, Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, Lucky Old Sun, Are the Stars Out Tonight
Stage	Broadway Baby, You Can Have Every Light on Broadway, Chorus Line, Opening Night on Broadway
Lies	Don't Tell me the Same Things Over Again, How Could You Believe Me (etc.), Little White Lies
Places	Swanee, If There'd Never Been and Ireland, Last Night on the Back Porch, In My Room
Seasons	April Showers, September Song, In the Good Old Summer Time, Marshmallow World, Autumn Leaves
War	If He Can Fight Like He Can Love, Mother Kiss Your Boy Goodbye, Green Green Grass of Home
Peace	Let There be Peace on Earth, Harmonize the World, There Will be Peace in the Valley
Oppression	Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen, Sixteen Tons, We Shall Overcome
Patriotism	You're a Grand Old Flag, God Bless America, Proud to be an American
House/Home	My Old Kentucky Home, This Old House, Little House Upon the Hill, Home on the Range
Holidays	My Funny Valentine, Easter Parade, White Christmas, Old Lang Syne
Names	Mary is a Grand Old Name, M-O-T-H-E-R, Charlie My Boy, Oh Suzannah
Characters	Sweet Georgia Brown, Ragtime Cowboy Joe, Redhead, Hard-Hearted Hannah, Big Bad Bill
Jazz	Jazz Baby, Jazz Came Up the River, Jazz Holiday, Jazz Me Blues
Desires	Will It Be Me This Time, Over the Rainbow, I Can Dream Can't I, When You Wish Upon a Star
Nostalgia	Old Phonograph Records, Alive Blue Gown, Old Teddy Bear, Whatever Happened to the Old Songs
Friends	I Wish I Had My Old Pal Back Again, My Buddy, Old Songs Old Friends, Side by Side
Loneliness	Oh How I Miss You Tonight, I'm All Alone, Mood Indigo, T'in Roof Blues
Attraction	The Moment I Saw Your Eyes, Oh, You Beautiful Doll, Million Dollar Baby, Zing When the Strings
In Love	Can't Help Lovin' That Man, You're the Cream in My Coffee, It Had to Be You, I'm in Love Again.
He vs. She	Cry Baby, Times Medley, Who's Sorry Now, Anything You Can Do

Breaking Up	Kiss Me One More Time, Masquerade is Over, Cry Me a River, Strangers
Marriage	Love and Marriage, Hawaiian Wedding Song, Second Time Around
Activities	Take Your Girlie to the Movies, Row-Row-Row, Sailing-Sailing, Football Hero
Events	Here Comes the Showboat, Georgia Camp Meeting, When I Fall in Love, The Great Race
Happiness	Blue Skies, This is My Lucky Day, Everthing's Coming Up Roses, I'm Sitting on Top of the World
Singing	That Old Quartet of Mine, Sing-Sing-Sing, I'd Love to Teach the World, How We Sang Today
Dancing	Happy Feet, Charleston Back to Charleston, Original Dixieland One-Step, Ballin' the Jack
Mother	Pal of my Cradle Days, My Mother's Eyes, I Miss Mother Most of All, Old-Fashioned Lady
Father	Papa Won't You Dance with Me, Daddy I'm Saying Goodbye, Oh My Papa, Papa Can You Hear Me
Child	Time Flies, Sonny Boy, The Child I Used to Be, Queen of the Senior Prom, Little Boy Blue
Growing Old	Silver Threads Among the Gold, When I Leave the World Behind, Where Did the Time Go
Inspirational	I Believe, Climb Every Mountain, You're a Winner, Here's to the Winners
Irish	My Wild Irish Rose, If There'd Never Been an Ireland, Same Old Shelaleigh
Drink	Java Jive, Tiny Bubbles, Scotch 'n Soda, Cool Water
Wall Flower	Lonesomest Girl in Town, She's Only a Bird in a Gilded Cage, All by Myself
Work	I've Been Working on the Railroad, Hi-Ho, Hi-Ho, Whistle While You Work
Hospitality	Consider Yourself at Home, If I Knew You Were Comin', You're as Welcome as the Flowers in May
Evening	Twilight Time, Red Sails in the Sunset, When You Come to the End of a Perfect Day
Morning	Oh What a Beautiful Morning, Oh How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning
Church	Little Brown Church in the Vale, Crying in the Chapel, The Three Bells
Laughter	I Love to Laugh, Laughing on the Outside, Laugh Clown Laugh
Smile	Let a Smile be Your Umbrella, Smile, Smiling Through the Years, A Certain Smile
Crying	Cry Me a River, I Cried for You, Cry, Little White Cloud that Cried
Weather	Singin' in the Rain, Stormy Weather, Let it Snow, Hail to the Chief (gotcha!), Blue Skies
Railroad	I've Been Workin' on the Railroad, Wabash Cannonball, Chattanooga Choo-Choo

.....there's never a lack of subject matter! .....

## The Theme

"What's It All About, Alfie?" (I never did figure it out!).

A good song has focus! The songwriter begins with a single concept or message. The lyrics (in their entirety) and the other components of the song are all structured to support that message.

- Keep it simple and easy to understand
- One thought or one "angle" on the subject (theme of the song)
- What sells?
  - Is it meaningful/exciting to you?
  - Is it meaningful/exciting to others? (buy-in)
  - Will it evoke a reaction in the listener?

## The "Hook"

The "Hook" of the song is the repeated melodic or lyric line that demands the attention of the listener. It's the easily-recalled part of the song, the song's "calling card", so to speak. The lyric hook is often the title of the song. A good melodic hook stays with the listener ("can't get it out of my head!"). The most successful songs marry the lyric and melodic hooks. A strong or unique rhythmic treatment can also serve as a hook.

- Is it the title of the song?
- Is it obvious?
- Does it attract the listener's attention? (Is it "catchy"?)
- Will it be retained? (The "whistle test" per Joni Bescos)
- Does it occur early on?
- Is it repeated?
- Is the lyric hook a summary of the entire lyric?

## What comes First?

Probably the title! After that, is it the words or the music? While there is no set rule, the words are the logical starting point, as they spring from the theme of the song. The melody, harmony, and rhythm are then suggested by the lyrics. However, some experienced songwriters are adept at creating the entity rather than dealing with the components separately.

### 1. LYRICS

The lyrics are, simply put, the words of the song - the means by which the songwriter tells the story or reinforces the message he/she wishes to convey to the listener.

Lyrics are the extrapolation of the "idea" of the song and should, therefore, support the premise of the song in an obvious, logical fashion. (The most successful songs support a single thought or idea.)

A lyric, in American popular song, is a POEM, so a good lyricist will necessarily be a good POET. The poem constructed to tell the story should have an easy rhythm of words, exhibit an obvious rhyme scheme, and be grammatically correct in the current mode of language.

In constructing the poem, the lyricist will need to consider "singability" factors that the poet does not, as certain words will be called upon to carry a sustained tone.

Factors to consider in lyric construction:

- A. The Poem
  - What's the "hook"? (main idea or statement)
  - Where's the "hook"? (options)
  - Standard four-line poetic construction
    - Adheres to acceptable song form
  - Easily identified rhyme scheme
    - Adjacent line rhyme
    - Alternating line rhyme
    - Internal rhymes
  - Grammar is not stilted to accommodate a rhyme
  
- B. The Story
  - Obvious, meaningful message (evokes a reaction)
  - Story unfolds in logical sequence, moves to climax
  - Always reinforces the "hook"
  - Simplicity
  - Has a beginning and an end
  
- C. Lyrical/Musical/Rhythmic Congruity
  - Pulse points in words will match pulse points in music
  - Lyrical climax coincides with melodic climax of song
  - Poem suggests the melody and rhythm of the song
  
- D. Singability
  - Words must be singable at intended tempo of song
  - Vowel and consonant usage to sustain the tone
  - Smooth flow of words
  - Breathing places
  
- E. Social Factors
  - Not offensive to any moral or ethical standards
  - Grammar reflective of current, but correct, language



- F. Performance Factors  
Do the lyrics suggest interpretation or visuals?  
Gender-specific?

*Lyric Examples:*

**JUST A BUNDLE OF OLD LOVE LETTERS**

Verse: Here in my hand I'm holding  
Stories of days of old,  
Keepsakes of mem'ry unfolding,  
No one knows what they mean to me.

Chorus: Faded and worn, fingered and torn,  
Just a bundle of old love letters; f the song in an obvious, logical fashion. (The most successful songs support a single thought or idea.

I kiss each one, although I'm pretending.  
It's a beautiful play - with an unhappy ending.

Weary and blue, I read them through;  
They're all I have to remind me of you.  
Teardrops of mine beneath every line,  
Just a Bundle of Old Love Letters.

**TIRED OF ME**

Verse: You brought the sunshine into my heart;  
You made the whole world fair.  
Then all at one time, you took the sunshine,  
Leaving the shadows there.

Chorus: Tired of me, tired of me.  
"Sorry" is all you say.  
Just like a toy children enjoy -  
Loved, but then thrown away.  
Somebody new looked good to you.  
Happy I hope you'll be.  
I love you still, and I always will,  
Though you grew Tired of Me.

## 2. MELODY

The melody is generally suggested by the lyrics. A good melody is constructed in such a way that it sings easily, supports the lyric content (paints a musical picture of the words of the song), and falls into a logical, predictable pattern of harmonization based on the "circle of fifths" (see Harmonization).

The melody, while only equal in importance to the lyrics, is probably the most-remembered element of a song - especially the melodic "hook."

Melodic and harmonic construction of the song go hand-in-hand. While it is possible to create the lyrics and melody separately (this is how some songwriting teams work), the melody and its harmonization are nearly inseparable. Thus, someone writing for the barbershop idiom would want to become familiar with the harmonies and chord progressions central to the artform. However, melody must remain uppermost; if the composer becomes too engrossed in chord development, the "tune" will suffer, and the resultant piece of music is likely to be an arrangement rather than a song.

Factors to consider in writing a melody:

- A. Establish a melodic "hook"
- B. Simplicity
  - Simple, but musically interesting
  - "Catchy", easily-recalled, repeated musical themes
  - Moves inexorably to a musical high point
- C. Singability
  - Smooth rise and fall of melodic line — Few wide interval jumps, especially in uptunes
  - Minimum of accidentals and chromatics
  - Singing range of average lead singer (10 scale steps)
  - Singable at the intended tempo
  - Breathing places
- D. Lyrical Congruity
  - High point coincides with lyric high point (climax)
  - Climax falls near end of song
- E. Harmonic Factors
  - Based on the diatonic major scale
  - Verse or bridge may be written in minor mode
  - Implies varied, but logical, harmonic patterns

- F. Rhythmic Congruity
  - Supports the pulse pattern of the words
  - Allows words to be sung as they are spoken
  - Implies a rhythmic style
  
- G. Artistic/Performance Factors
  - Supports the style of the song
  - Does it suggest/reinforce interpretive plan?
  - Does it paint a musical picture of the words?
  
- H. Conforms to accepted popular song form

WHERE'S THE LYRIC HOOK IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING SONGS?

*I Don't Know Why*

*Side By Side*

*September Song*

*Lullaby of Broadway*

*Me and My Shadow*

*Over the Rainbow*

*Lonesomest Girl in Town*

*All of Me*

*Easter Parade*

*My Mother's Eyes*

*When I Leave the World Behind*

*I've Heard That Song Before*

*Harmonize the World*

*I Can't Believe I'm Losing You*

*Unforgettable*

*I'll Be Seeing You*

RATE THE FOLLOWING MELODIES FOR SINGABILITY:

*Oh How I Miss You Tonight*

*My Wild Irish Rose*

*Stardust*

*Rockabye Your Baby with a Dixie Melody*

*I Don't Know Why*

*Pal of My Cradle Days*

*How Could You Believe Me When I Said I Love You, When You Know I've Been a Liar All My Life?*

*Smoke Gets in Your Eyes*

STRONG MELODIC HOOKS! Recognizable in the very first notes . . .

*One Voice*

*Toot Toot Tootsie*

*Bye Bye Blues*

*California, Here I Come*

*Strangers*

*God Bless America*

*Cry Baby*  
*Baby Face . . . what are some others?*

IDENTIFY THE FORM OF THE FOLLOWING SONGS (first three answers given):

<i>My Wild Irish Rose</i>	A-B-A-B
<i>Tired of Me</i>	A-B-A-C
<i>Over the Rainbow</i>	A-A-B-A
<i>Just One of Those Things</i>	
<i>It Had to Be You</i>	
<i>Deed I Do</i>	
<i>I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas</i>	
<i>Easter Parade</i>	
<i>If You Had All the World and Its Gold</i>	

### 3. HARMONY

Just before the turn of the century (1900), American popular songs took on certain characteristics - lyric, melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic that distinguished it from popular songs of other countries. It became a discrete musical entity that flourished from 1890 - 1930 and continued to show up in some of the music of the Big Band era in the 1930's and 40's.

The harmonic structure of these songs was based on the diatonic major scale and utilized a predominance of certain chords—major triads, dominant sevenths and dominant ninths. (We so identify with these chords in our harmonizations that the dominant 7<sup>th</sup> and dominant 9<sup>th</sup> chords are often referred to as “barbershop 7<sup>th</sup>” and “barbershop 9<sup>th</sup> chords.)

Additionally, the harmonic progressions (which chords follow other chords) fit a predictable pattern of chord resolution known as the Circle of Fifths.

Melodies that implied this dominant-to-tonic type of chord progression and a predominance of the chords mentioned above were eminently easy to sing and to harmonize...thus the “public” rushed out to buy sheet music after hearing these songs performed in the music halls of the day.

Factors to consider in harmonizing a melody for barbershop:

- A. Harmonic Flavor
  - Chords musically correspond to, enhance the melody
  - Based on diatonic major scale (Western tonal harmony)
  - Minor mode acceptable for verse or interlude
  - Chords reinforce major sound (M3, dom.7, dom.9)
  - Flavor supports the theme and mood of the lyric

- B. Harmonic Progression  
Based on dominant-to-tonic resolution (Circle of 5ths)  
How often do chord changes occur?  
Does the melody require it  
Singability  
Uptunes vs. ballads  
Repetition - how much is enough, too much

#### 4. RHYTHM

Rhythm might be described as the combination of pulse, meter, and tempo which contributes to the forward motion of a musical piece. A song's "rhythm" is an underlying component that determines the flow of the song and characterizes its mood or flavor.

Meter refers to the structured beat pattern of the song, i.e., the configuration of alternating strong and weak pulses. The pulse pattern of the words of the song indicate meter; songs used in the barbershop idiom generally fall into one of three meters or pulse patterns:

2 - beat pattern            1 - 2 - 1 - 2 - 1 - 2 - 1 - 2

4 - beat pattern            1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4

3 - beat pattern            1 - 2 - 3 - 1 - 2 - 3

Two or four-beat patterns are often referred to as "marches" or "fox-trots", while three-beat patterns are called "waltzes." The beat pattern is notated in the time signature at the beginning of the written music.

Tempo is simply the speed at which the song is sung.

Barbershop songs typically fit into one of three categories with its accompanying rhythmic factors:

Uptune = Strong, fast, steady beat (usually 2 or 4)

Ballad = 3 or 4-beat pattern, sung rubato or ad lib style

Swing = Strong pulse, 4-beat, tempo not as fast as uptune

Uptunes and swing tunes sometimes employ a displaced beat pattern known as syncopation or "back beat" rhythm, where emphasis is deliberately placed on a normally-weak beat of the measure. This rhythm pattern is often found in songs seeking a jazz or blues "feel."

The successful songwriter capitalizes on the rhythmic flow of the lyric and, indeed, bears the underlying rhythmic factors in mind when creating the lyric and the melody.

5. FORM

Form refers to the manner in which the individual parts of the song are put together and also to the structure of those individual parts. Typical parts of a song include:

- Verse            Introductory part of the song, a "background" story of sorts that prepares the listener for the message to come in the chorus.
- Chorus  
(Refrain)        The main theme of the song, contains the lyric, melodic, and rhythmic "hooks". The chorus repeats the trademark melodic passage a number of times.
- Interlude        Introduces a musical theme different from that of the verse or chorus and is used to further explain the story (a musical "flashback" of sorts). Only occasionally used, it generally shows up between two choruses of the song.
- Intro & Tag      An opening musical thought and a closing musical thought to "package" the song. The intro and tag are not generally parts of the song itself, but parts of the arrangement of the song.

Song appropriate to the barbershop style are composed in increments of four or eight measures. We refer to an eight-measure increment as a "phrase". Common phrase patterns for sections of a song are:

Verse            Four eight measure phrases        =        32 measures

Sometimes a verse contains 16 or 24 measures and, rarely, 20. It is important that configurations other than 16 or 32 measures retain the right arithmetic "feel of completeness."

Chorus           Four eight measure phrases        =        32 measures

Rarely deviates, as the repeated musical elements necessary to call it a "chorus" require 32 measures for completion.

Chorus Construction:

The chorus is comprised of four eight-measure phrases. Certain of these phrases are similar in melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic pattern. This pattern of repetition is referred to as the "form" of the chorus and is described by using letters of the alphabet.

*My Wild Irish Rose* is written in the A-B-A-B form.

- |            |     |   |
|------------|-----|---|
| 8 measures | (A) | My Wild Irish Rose, the sweetest flower that grows.                               |
| 8 measures | (B) | You may search everywhere, but none can compare to my Wild Irish Rose             |
| 8 measures | (A) | My Wild Irish Rose, the sweetest flower that grows.                               |
| 8 measures | (B) | And some day, for my sake, she may let me take the bloom from my wild Irish Rose. |

*The White Cliffs of Dover* is written in A-A-B-A form.

- |            |     |   |
|------------|-----|---|
| 8 measures | (A) | There'll be bluebirds over the White Cliffs of Dover tomorrow, just you wait and see.                                   |
| 8 measures | (A) | There'll be love and laughter and peace ever after, tomorrow when the world is free.                                    |
| 8 measures | (B) | The shepherd will tend his sheep, the valley will bloom again; and Jimmy will go to sleep in his own little room again. |
| 8 measures | (A) | There'll be bluebirds over the White Cliffs of Dover tomorrow, when the world is free.                                  |

*Sweet Rosie O'Grady* is written in the A-B-A-C form.

- |            |     |   |
|------------|-----|---|
| 8 measures | (A) | Sweet Rosie O'Grady, my dear little Rose.               |
| 8 measures | (B) | She's my steady lady, most everyone knows.              |
| 8 measures | (A) | Soon when we are married, how happy we'll be.           |
| 8 measures | (C) | I love Sweet Rosie O'Grady, the Rosie O'Grady loves me. |

Songs that fit these standard patterns of musical repetition are good candidates for the barbershop artform. Songs in AAAA form would lack musical interest, and songs that are ABCD tend to lack cohesiveness and are often referred to as "through-composed."