

"Where's The Hook?"

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Show 16) //////////////////////////////////////

Let's start things off with a fanciful song about, a free life, a life in the world of Peter Pan.

1 / Lost Boy / Ruth B.

Opener song comments

- Lost Boy by Ruth B. A minimal production song, and somewhat quiet. Nothing distracting us from Ruth's expressive voice, a beautiful melody, and an engaging story message.

WHAT'S THE GENRE

- And right out of the gate let's look at some songs from different genres. The challenge to you, is, what would you say, is the genre. And no pressure, to be naming it, correctly. Your own language will do just fine. But also, also, take note of how long into the song before you've kind of locked in to its genre, or style, or type of music. After our subdued opener, let's contrast it with upbeat. Not gonna name the artist, so I don't lead you on. And this one has a bit of a surprise to it, anyway.

2 / I Get a Kick out of You / Dolly Parton

- I Get a Kick out of You / Dolly Parton. She's a Country artist, but I put this song squarely into the Gypsy Jazz slot, including her vocal performance reminiscent of Edith Piaf. Gypsy Jazz isn't such a common genre to be heard. Maybe you couldn't name it, but I'm guessing you locked into the sound fairly quickly, still. Try this one...

3 / Lore Of The Loom / Rolf Løvland, Secret Garden

- Lore Of The Loom / Rolf Løvland, Secret Garden. Kind of a big, over the top production, maybe? at the end. But I'm guessing, you pegged this genre, as soon as the fiddle came in, to be something like Celtic, Irish Traditional, or something similar.

4 / Easy Living / Chet Baker

- Easy Living / Chet Baker. I'm not sure exactly what to call this one myself. What comes to mind is Soft 40's Pop, but maybe Jazz. And the producer made us wait for the genre with that movie-soundtrack-like opening. The sound though pretty quickly takes us to a smokey cocktail bar in post-war big city, Paris, New York, Toronto. What I'm leading up to here is the claim that we lock onto the genre of a song pretty quickly. Are you finding that? And with that, comes a big bag of expectations for how the song may unfold. Now this next one I think you'll lock onto very quickly.

5 / It Was Rainin' / Johnny Winter

- Dem's da blues, baby, ya! The opening guitar notes from the blues scale, and first chord change, instantly wake up our blues soul. We expect some heartfelt vocal lines with lots of repetition. We expect the vocalist to take liberties, with the melody, for the sake of expression. And we expect a song that is a string of song sections, the 12 bar blues form, one after another. And it doesn't surprise us when we hear the guitar gymnastics of the solo.

WHAT'S THE GENRE Continued

- We're listening to some different genre's. How quickly to you lock on to the song genre, or style, or type of music? Here's another easy one...

6 / Lively Up Yourself / Bob Marley & The Wailers

7 / I Walk the Line / Johnny Cash

- I Walk the Line / Johnny Cash I bet the characteristic bass line, and train drum groove, twigged you to that one even before Johnny starts singing. We lock into genre quickly. And with that come a set of expectations. And in the context of those expectations, live the hooks.

REQUEST - Dave, Toronto / FUNCTIONS

- Dave in Toronto, last week, sent me this next song. Think you'll like this one he said. Let's dig in. But I'm going to look at something new to us, the functional fabric of the ensemble. Hooks and expectations are all fine and dandy at the end of the day. But when you're just getting into it, like it's on your shoulders to make something of a song, how do you go about it. You got musicians, instruments and a song. One way or other, a recorded song is a combination of functions. Just like hooks, there are lots of functions, and the concept kind of overlaps with hooks, somewhat. This is our first look at this. So what are the basics? I'm hearing percussion Vocals. Harmony vocals. And a high pitched whistle like function that is provided by different instruments through the song. Not much in the way of guitars, or piano, or synth even.

8 / Breakin' Point / Peter Bjorn and John

- Percussion. Vocals. Harmony vocals. High pitched whistle. That's the band, more or less. And with that they performed all the other good things we've been looking at, the hooks. Thanks for the song Dave.

VOCALIZATIONS

- I've got a new hook to look at this week. Vocalizations. Something of an undersung hero in the world of hooks, often overlooked by newbie songwriters. This is, singing without lyrics. Anyone can sing along with these, which makes them easy to remember, which makes them, engaging. They show up in chorus' a lot. Listen for, 'Oh - ahhhhh', before she sings 'I want to be with you everywhere'

9 / Everywhere / Fleetwood Mac

- Selena Gomez has such good, and engaging vocal control. 'Ah-ooooo' on a vocal leap into head voice. 'I'm tryin tryin trin try'. 'Ah ma ma ma ma'. All vocalizations, and a big part of the hookiness of this song.

10 / Bad Liar / Selena Gomez

11 / Never Comin Down / Keith Urban, Shy Carter

DUETS

- As we head to the top of the hour let's take a little side trip to duets. So, in the language of functions, or the functional fabric of the record, we now have two accomplished lead vocalists to work with. And in this first example we also have the mix of two genre's - soft pop and hip hop.

12 / See You Again / Wiz Khalifa, Charlie Puth

- Vocals are a heavy-hitter in any song. With two strong vocalists intertwined, we don't need much in the way of instrumental accompaniment, a lush pad and simple snare drum beat, will do

13 / Baby It's Cold Outside / Virginia To Vegas, Alyssa Reid

FOLK

- What is Folk? Folk music. Folk is a quiet genre. Usually minimally produced. Tempos are generally at a comfortable walking pace. The storyline is usually a big player in our experience. And, most times, the lead singer also provides the principal accompaniment. In our North American experience I would also say that the guitar is the royalty of folk instruments

14 / Fire and Rain / James Taylor

- As a quiet genre, licks, or cool finger work. on the principal instrument have a big presence in providing the hooks that keep us engaged. When James Taylor's song, Fire And Rain, first came out it was hailed as a masterpiece in guitar virtuosity. Everyone with a new guitar for Christmas wanted to learn the song. The production on the record, actually includes many other instruments, but the presence of the guitar, nevertheless is captivating throughout. James' composition of the guitar accompaniment is filled with hooks, including melodic hammer-ons, that is, fast little finger flicks, and interesting chord harmony, borrowed a little from Jazz.

- A big part of the feel of Folk is that it's kind of what you would play sitting on your porch after a long hard day at work, or at an ad-hoc kitchen gathering with friends. Pick up the guitar and sing a song. The songs are often simple in structure, predictable, and so, easy to play along with. And, similar to Jazz jams, there's often a standard set of songs that most everybody knows. People can join in on another instrument, or singing harmonies, clapping, and stomping the floor. But with the minimal instrumentation, it leaves the world of vocal expression wide open. Here's Elizabeth Cotten with vocals like a bird fluttering around a majestic and strong guitar groove.

15 / Going down the road feeling bad / Elizabeth Cotten

16 / If I Were A Carpenter / Tim Hardin

- If I Were A Carpenter / Tim Hardin. With Folk we hear every word of the story, hear every vocal inflection. Many of the hooks are in the lyrics. Honesty is important. And hooks embedded in good lyric writing are important - rhyme, unexpected line lengths and repetitions. And there's something quite powerful in a refrain line, that's a line, usually the song title, that repeats many times, usually once per stanza, or song section.

- I'd like to play a live Joni Mitchell song now. A song we likely all know from the record. Here she is on stage with very minimal functional fabric to the ensemble, just her voice and her guitar. How does she keep the song interesting? She was already a big radio star at this point. So, much of the attraction is seeing her in person, this person we know so well from the record. But still, it's just her voice and a guitar. Like Elizabeth Cotton, she lays down a solid guitar background, and lets her voice flit around it unpredictably. Joni has her signature vocal leaps to work with, lots of them. And in this live performance she also pushes the timing around from that which we know from the record. She uses both anticipations, jumping ahead of time, and delays, holding off late on the lyric.

17 / Both Sides Now - Live / Joni Mitchell

18 / Clay Pigeons / John Prine

- John Prine. Honestly. Interesting rhyming. Simple but solid guitar work, with some catchy finger flicks. A bit of humour thrown in there with the pictures he paints, and his signature word play. And a story that we follow from start to end.

- Ani diFranco, is cued up next with her song, Grey. There's that guitar again. Minimal production, nothing to get in the way of the story, with lyrics, that rip your heart out.

What kind of paradise am I looking for?
I've got everything I want and still I want more

What can I say
I'm wired this way

Regretfully
I guess I got three simple things to say
Why me
Why this now
Why this way

19 / Grey / Ani DiFranco

SONGWRITING

- Let's pick up, on the Songwriting theme, that I started last week, with a little taster. The songwriter's job is to create the core of a song that includes melody, song form, harmony (or chord progression), a story, lyric structure, and rhythm (or groove). And all of those things

filled with as many hooks as possible. How do songwriters do this? Alanis Morissette's approach seems, to me, to be very, lyrics first, in a prose fashion, then sung with passion, to a solid pattern of chords. And with her amazing vocal leaps and huge vocal range, she makes it sing.

20 / You Learn / Alanis Morissette

- Bob Dylan has some deep roots in Folk. He uses the Folk, repeated verse-with-refrain form, a lot, capitalizing on that strong hook of the refrain. By the second verse, we've got the refrain, and start singing it in our heads, as we hear it coming up in the next verses. We think of Bob as an excellent lyric writer, but his melodies are under-acknowledged, as we have here in Red River Shore. He's using a two part verse, first half leaving us hanging on the 5 chord, then answered by the second half that brings us back home to the key chord and refrain line. The instrumentation is fairly subdued here but it does build as the song develops. There's a story here. But we do have to figure it out, while the interesting rhymes hold our attention.

21 / Red River Shore / Bob Dylan

- And sometimes in the songwriting process, groove comes first. Groove and a catchy repeated title line. What more do ya need?

22 / Waterfalls / TLC

23 / Can't Say I Ain't Country / Florida Georgia Line

- Can't Say I Ain't Country / Florida Georgia Line. Songs are written, to make sense within themselves to express, emotion. But sooner or later a songs exists for an intended audience. And if that's a Country Song audience, it helps a lot to have a story that includes, trucks, drinking on Friday night, work hard and play hard, mountain dew, rednecks, and beer

Final Song and Goodbye

- I have Lukas Graham taking us out tonight with 7 Years. See y'all next week.

24 / 7 Years / Lukas Graham

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Playlist

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Request and Functions

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Songwriting

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Out

24 / 7 Years / Lukas Graham

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Extras

25 / Like I'm Gonna Lose You (feat. John Legend) / Meghan Trainor, John Legend

26 / Worth It (feat. Kid Ink) / Fifth Harmony, Kid Ink

27 / Mary Jane's Last Dance / Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers

28 / Just Give Me a Reason (feat. Nate Ruess) / P!nk, Nate Ruess

29 / Thinking out Loud / Ed Sheeran