

Using Notation Software

By Dave Simons

Many of us who are songwriters have little use for reading or notating music, and why should we? Jot down a chord progression, add some words and a melody, and there you are. But let's say you wanted to add a horn part to your new song. Though you could play your idea on a keyboard for your saxophonist guest, writing out the section is far more efficient. But unless you're very skilled, putting the notes on paper, complete with all necessary rests, repeats, sharps and flats, could be quite challenging.

With music notation software, your computer does the job for you. This kind of software turns

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With this issue, the BMI Bulletin introduces a new series of articles designed to help you further your career through the expertise provided by Songwriter101.com, a website devoted to helping the next generation of songwriters learn the ins and outs of the business.

Articles will cover a broad range of topics, including music publishing, copyright, studio recording techniques and other areas, all targeted to helping you build a successful career as a songwriter.

Taylor Swift Wins Album of Year at 2010 Grammys

Taylor Swift capped off her past year of pop culture domination with four career-defining wins, including the coveted Album of the Year for *Fearless*, during the 52nd annual Grammy Awards, held Sunday, January 31 in Los Angeles. She and her producer, fellow BMI songwriter Nathan Chapman, took the stage, as Swift proclaimed how thankful they were to be able to take the trophy "back to Nashville."

A slew of Grammys are headed for mantle pieces in Music City, as several Nashville-based BMI songwriters and artists walked away with big wins in multi-genre categories: Kings of Leon's "Use Somebody" earned Record of the Year honors, while breakout



Taylor Swift

group the Zac Brown Band claimed the Best New Artist prize.

The Black Eyed Peas, Eminem and Rihanna walked away with multiple awards each, while Lady Gaga's "Poker Face" earned

Best Dance Recording honors and *Fame* was named Best Electronic/Dance Album.

Colbie Caillat, Jamie Foxx, T-Pain, Kanye West, Keith Urban, Lady Antebellum, Béla Fleck, Eminem, Rihanna, Carrie Underwood, Kurt Elling, Booker T. Jones, and many more also enjoyed big wins.

Wins from Taylor Swift, Lady Gaga, Zac Brown Band, and Colbie Caillat, as well as the dominance of John Legend, and most recently, chart-topper Ke\$ha, as well as so many others, underscore the arrival of a new generation of superstars, and also point to the successes of one of BMI's cornerstone initiatives. The organization has played an early role as connector and encourager

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Song Hall To Induct Leonard Cohen, David Foster

BMI legends Leonard Cohen (SOCAN) and David Foster will become members of the elite Songwriters Hall of Fame during the organization's 41st annual induction ceremony, slated for Thursday, June 17 at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in New York City.

Leonard Cohen has long-since defied easy categorization, receiving and surpassing recognition of his eccentric brilliance in stride, only to become one of the country's preeminent

musical creators. Already an established poet and novelist when he turned to music, Cohen has crafted unvarnished classics "Suzanne," "Bird on a Wire," "Sisters of Mercy," "Famous Blue Raincoat," "So Long, Marianne," "Hallelujah" and many more. His songs have been recorded by artists including R.E.M., Bob Dylan, Elton John, Judy Collins, Willie Nelson and, most recently, Justin Timberlake. A recipient of the 2010 Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award,

Cohen was inducted into the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame (2006) and the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame (2008), while his world tour, launched in May 2008, is still drawing sold-out crowd

Fifteen-time Grammy-winner David Foster is a songwriting giant. With unparalleled instinct and bottomless talent, he has garnered an unprecedented 46 Grammy nominations. Foster's profound legacy of song includes an extraordinary chain of #1

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What to Do Before You Record Your Demo

By Cliff Goldmacher

As a result of recording and producing literally thousands of demos, I've learned that it is always better to "Prepare and Prevent" than to "Repair and Repent." Here are a few steps you can take to help make your demo recording experience more successful.

It may sound obvious but make sure your song is finished. I can't tell you the number of times I've had clients come into the studio only to start rewriting a part of the lyric or melody. It is significantly less stressful (and quite a bit less expensive) to write a song when

you're not paying the studio an hourly fee.

You can also benefit from trying a few rough recordings at home before you get to the studio. The simple act of listening back to a song instead of performing it will reveal any weaknesses or issues that need to be dealt with before the studio clock is running. The last of these rough home recordings will become the definitive work tape.

This is any simple, inexpensive recording that you do on a hand-held tape recorder, mini disc player, mp3 recorder, etc. Generally a piano or guitar plus a scratch vocal will do the trick. The key here is not a

perfect recording but rather an accurate representation of the song structure. In other words, it doesn't have to sound great as long as the chords, melody and lyrics are correct. The purpose of this work tape is to provide the demo vocalist and session musicians with a final version of your song from which they can learn.

Let's start with the demo vocalist: It's always a good policy to get a copy of the work tape and the lyrics to the singer a week or so before the session. There are several reasons for this. First of all, the singer can let you know what key the song should be in to best suit

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Taylor Swift Wins Album of Year *continued from page 1*



Kings of Leon

for these and countless other artists back when "up-and-coming" best described their careers. BMI's layered approach to songwriter development comprises educational, creative and promotional opportunities, including the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre, Jason Blume Songwriters' and Jazz Composers Workshops; 8 off 8th, Pick of the Month and Acoustic Lounge showcase series; and stages at premier

festivals including CMJ, Lollapalooza, SXSW, the Key West Songwriters Festival and the Austin City Limits Music Festival. From spotting and supporting a dynamic Lady Gaga when she first electrified small clubs, to championing the prodigious talent of a teenage Taylor Swift, whose songs somehow both belied her youth and embodied it, BMI has been there from the beginning, and will remain a steadfast and dependable supporter.

A stirring tribute to BMI Icon Michael Jackson

was one of the ceremony's highlights, underscoring the late legend's Lifetime Achievement Award. Fellow BMI Icon Loretta Lynn also received a Lifetime Achievement Award, along with Bobby Darin, David "Honeyboy" Edwards, Leonard Cohen (SOCAN), and Clark Terry. A-team heavyweight and first Nashville NARAS chapter president Harold Bradley and legendary producer Florence Greenberg also each received the Trustees Award.

Lady Gaga kicked off the Grammy telecast in electrifying form, segueing from a charged delivery of "Poker Face" into a duet with Sir Elton John (PRS), featuring Gaga's "Speechless" and John's "Your Song." Taylor Swift, Pink, Zac Brown Band, and many other BMI trendsetters also delivered dynamic live performances. □

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NEA Salutes 2010 Jazz Masters

The National Endowment for the Arts saluted the gilt-edged coterie of 2010 NEA Jazz Masters Award honorees on Tuesday, January 12 in New York City. As part of the celebration, BMI hosted a celebratory luncheon at the Sheraton New York Hotel & Towers.

An overwhelming majority of the honorees are BMI composers, including Muhal Richard Abrams, Kenny Barron, Bobby Hutcherson, Yusef Lateef, Annie Ross and Cedar Walton. Previous BMI inductees include such greats as Sonny Rollins, Miles Davis, Art Blakey, Max Roach, Lionel Hampton, Ron Carter and Dave Brubeck, among many others.

The NEA Jazz Masters Award is the highest honor bestowed on jazz artists. A tribute to the substantial career achievements and artistic breakthroughs each recipient has contributed throughout their entire lives,



Pictured at the BMI-hosted luncheon honoring the 2010 NEA Jazz Masters Award recipients are (standing) Wayne Brown, NEA Director, Music & Opera; Rocco Landesman, NEA Chairman; 2010 NEA Jazz Masters Award honorees Cedar Walton and Bill Holman; BMI President & CEO Del Bryant; and Robbin Ahrold, BMI Vice President, Corporate Communications and Marketing; with (seated) 2010 NEA Jazz Masters Award honorees Muhal Richard Abrams, Yusef Lateef, Annie Ross, George Avakian, Kenny Barron and Bobby Hutcherson, seated.

the retrospective honor applauds the pioneers of America's most original art form.

About NEA Jazz Masters
NEA Jazz Masters are selected from nominations submitted by the public and receive a one-time grant award of \$25,000,

are honored at a public awards ceremony, and may be offered opportunities for participation in NEA-sponsored promotional, performance, and educational activities under the NEA Jazz Masters National Initiative program. Only living musicians or jazz advocates may receive

the NEA Jazz Masters honor.

The National Endowment for the Arts has supported jazz artists and organizations since 1969, providing millions of dollars in grants and awards.

For more information on NEA Jazz Masters, please visit neajazzmasters.org. □

Key West Songwriters Festival Preps for 15th Year

The Key West Songwriters Festival will make paradise even sweeter during the event's 15th annual installment Wednesday, April 28 - Sunday, May 2, 2010. Presented by Better Angels Music and benefiting the Muzak Heart & Soul Foundation, the festival will feature more than 100 top-tier songwriters performing most-loved hits. Anchor-sponsor BMI will continue its widespread support of the fest.

Full band concerts will bookend the 2010 festival, as Universal South recording artist Randy Houser kicks things off with a free concert at the Ocean Key Pier on Wednesday, April 28, 6-8 p.m. The Raul Malo Band performs at the Ocean Key Pier Saturday, May 1; tickets are \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door, and go on sale February 2 at keystix.com.

Performances will feature an award-winning collection of the world's top songwriters, including Raul

Malo Band, Randy Houser Band, Robert Earl Keen, Kim Carnes, Jamey Johnson, Dean Dillon, Hugh Prestwood, Scotty Emerick, Shawn Mullins, Dallas Davidson, Chuck Cannon, Chuck Jones, Marty Dodson, Rebecca Lynn Howard, Kylie Sackley, Jon Mabe, Chas Sanford, Dave Pahanish, Sherrie Austin, Natalie Hemby, Luke Laird, Bonnie Bishop, Jaida Dreyer, Sunny Sweeney, Kelly Archer, Tim James, Ashley Ray, Heather Morgan, Emily Shackelton, Will

Bowen, Casey Musgraves, Bobby Tomberlin, Molly Reed, Dan Adams, Joel Shewmake, Todd Wilkes, Josh Thompson, David Adam Byrnes and many, many more.

Specific lineups, venue and additional ticket information will be announced soon.

For a complete list of sponsoring hotels, local businesses and participating songwriters, please visit keywestsongwritersfestival.com. □

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everything from simple solos to entire horn sections into high-quality printable transcriptions, allowing you to share your music with others in a flash. Good software packages offer a number of methods for getting the notes onto the page. For instance, you can enter the notes manually, using a keyboard or mouse. You can connect a MIDI instrument directly to your computer and play the passage yourself, or output the part to be transcribed from pre-recorded audio (that has been saved in MIDI format). And like a word-processing program, notation software allows you to make edits and other adjustments to your work once the passage has been entered into the computer, such as relocating notes on the scale or transposing entire sections should you choose the wrong key.

Not to be confused with music-production software packages such as Digital Performer or Cubase (which are mainly used for the processing of instruments and sounds), notation software serves as a "virtual music typewriter," says

Tom Rudolph, director of music for the Haverford School District, Haverford, PA. "Notation programs have many helpful tools for creating scores and parts such as adjusting the look of the printed page, adding text, lyrics, chord symbols, changing the size and shape of the music, creating guitar tab, scanning in printed music and much more."

Two of the more popular notation software programs are Sibelius from Avid Technology and MakeMusic's Finale (the newest version, Finale 2010, was released this past June). Others include Encore, Notion and Overture. Some packages come in "entry-level" or "lite" versions, though may not include many of the top features found in the original. Most are compatible with both Windows and Mac operating systems.

Using the computer's keyboard and mouse is the easiest way to get started with your notation software. In Finale, for instance, a "Simple Entry Tool" lets you key in notes one at a time, as well as adding rests, grace

notes, accidentals, time signature and other fine detail. Once your notation is complete, you can hear it back using the desired "virtual" instrument (most programs come with a library of different instrument voices); you can also isolate individual parts for playback as well. If you make a mistake, you can easily adjust the part by grabbing the wrong note with your mouse and moving it into the correct position.

To get the job done even faster, enter the notes from a MIDI-equipped keyboard, or any instrument that uses an external MIDI interface device. Using this method, your music appears on the page instantaneously as you perform the part (again, you can make adjustments afterwards using the keyboard and mouse, if necessary). The latest version of Finale allows brass or woodwind players to enter notation by playing the part through a microphone, and with no MIDI interface required.

Though it is a convenient and flexible tool, notation software, like all computer

aids, shouldn't be considered a substitute for acquiring and developing basic ear-training and music-theory skills. While learning the software, take some time to refresh your understanding of alternative chord voicings, root inversions, relative minors, and related concepts — all of which can only help you broaden your perspective as a songwriter. □

Song Hall To Induct Cohen, Foster

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singles from the '80s, including Chicago's "Hard To Say I'm Sorry," Peter Cetera's "The Glory of Love" and John Parr's "Man in Motion" (*St. Elmo's Fire* soundtrack), as well as later hits "After The Love Is Gone," "I Have Nothing," "Look What You've Done To Me," "The Prayer" and "You're The Inspiration." In 2007, Foster was inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame, while recently, he produced two top ten albums on the Billboard Top 200 Chart: Michael Bublé's *Crazy Love* and Andrea Bocelli's *My Christmas*. □

What to Do Before You Record Your Demo continued from page 2

their voice. This way, if you end up recording instrument parts before the singer does their part, you'll know the correct key. Secondly, the more time the singer has to learn the song, the less time he or she will take to sing the song when the studio clock is running.

When you get to the session, it's wise to have printed lyric sheets for the engineer, musicians and

vocalist. The lyrics should be typewritten and have each chorus written out in full. The reason for this is that you'll be using these lyric sheets to mark spots that need fixing (or spots on certain takes that you like) and having "Repeat Chorus" written for the second and third choruses won't allow you to take good notes. The better the notes you take on the lyric sheet while the

vocalist is recording, the easier it will be to tell the vocalist what works and what needs to be fixed.

The session musicians do not need a work tape in advance. They will be learning the song from your work tape when they get to the session. You can save a little time by writing a chord chart of the song if it's something you're comfortable doing. If not, the session musicians

should have no trouble doing it for you quickly using the work tape you bring to the session.

After that, it's up to the singers and musicians to bring your song to the next level. There's nothing more fun than listening to world-class musicians and vocalists record a song you've written. The more you prepare in advance, the more you'll enjoy your studio experience. □



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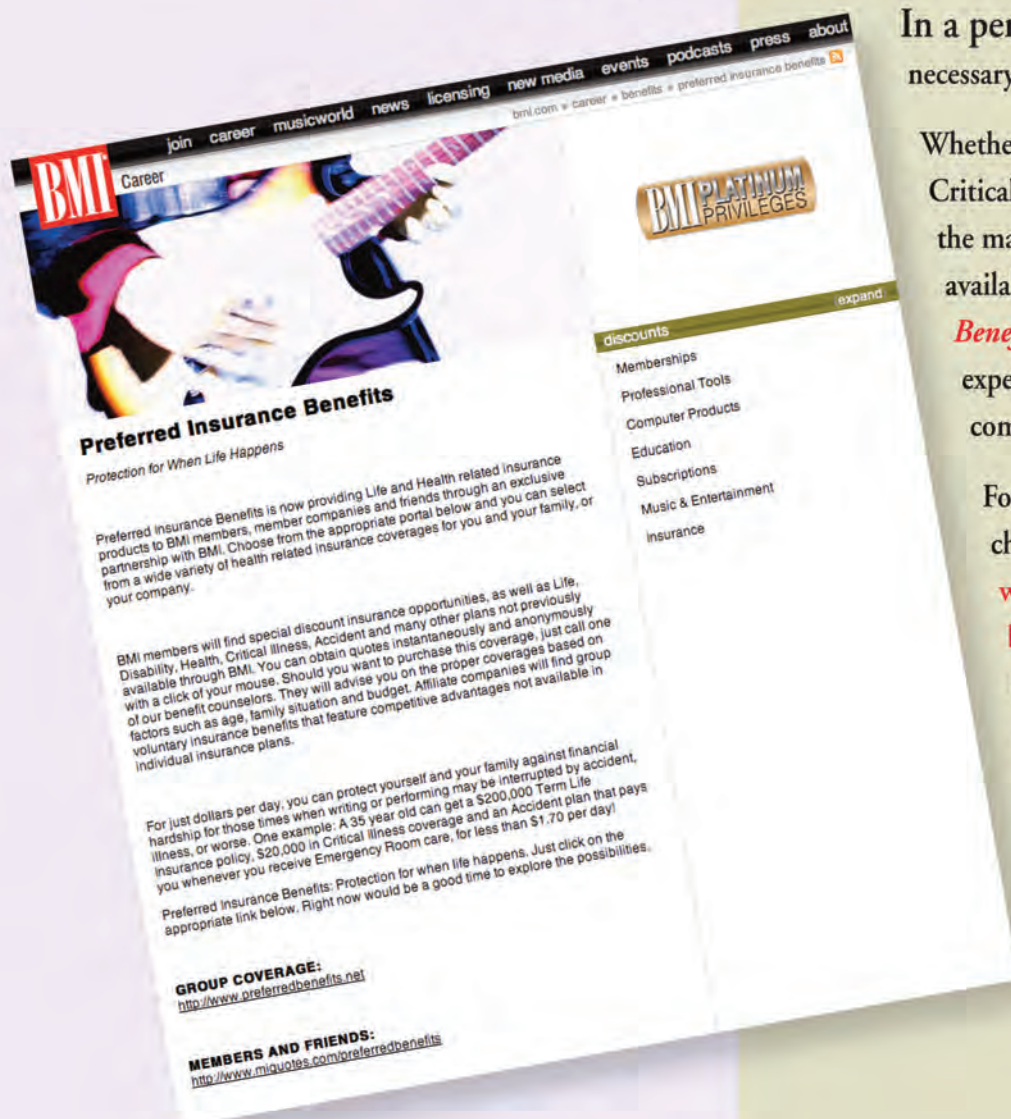
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