

## THE CYNICAL VIEW

These points are included as a counter-balance to the other tutorials where I've encouraged people to write music. It portrays a less theoretical and more realistic viewpoint of what can be expected. Of course, what actually happens is not always as pessimistic as I have painted it here, but it is as well to be aware of this side too.

### What you must remember when you write music

If you are writing **popular** music which is designed to be commercial, ie. make money, then there are certain stylistic things to keep in mind.

1. Do not use rich harmonies, except 13ths and the occasional 9th . The pop idiom is very much rooted in the triad sound. The public has been spoon-fed simple harmonies since the 1960's pop revolution did away with more complex harmonies.
2. Keep to the basic notes of the chords, except for blues notes in the melody.
3. Use a lot of repetition, even more than you think you should.
4. The rhythm should not be complex or contain any colla voce or broken-up sections. Most people want to jump up and down to it, even if it is being played in a restaurant. Um-cha, bang bang bang bang, and dickie-dickie-dickie-dickie rhythms predominate.
5. Ballads (unlike jazz ballads) should be loud or very loud, including everything but the kitchen sink in the orchestration, and a lot of shreaking to represent deep emotions.

If you follow these guidelines, you could make a lot of money and be a celebrity,

If you are writing **classical** music, be prepared for your music never to be played at all, if you are trying to break new ground. If it is played you may have to wait for 20 or 30 years and then, most people will not like it or appreciate it. The public on large likes its classical music to be nostalgic and not to frighten the horses. The only chance of success is if you can get to write music for films. Then you are at the mercy of the director and producer and tea-maker, and much of your best work may be delegated to the cutting-room floor, or its computer equivalent.

Classical writers never get rich, but they do get some kudos, whatever good that does.

If you are writing **jazz** music, odds are that noone will like it: not your family, your friends, fellow musicians or the audience - unless you are already famous as a jazz musician. Big names have a magical appeal in the jazz world. If you are not well-known, you are totally insignificant and your music is valued as worthless. Your only hope is to write tunes based on the chord progressions of standards (which I regard as cheating) but it does enable players to play their old licks and your music may even get played. However if you have an urge to write jazz music, be prepared for you being the only person who will play it. You have been warned!

Ordinary jazz musicians never get rich and they do not get any public recognition either.

A few odd conclusions can be drawn from this:

1. Writing music involves the very same procedure, whatever the style. You start off with a blank piece of manuscript and gradually add notes, chords and expression marks to it. However the C7 you write in a pop tune will earn you a lot of money, whereas it will probably earn you nothing in a jazz piece.
2. It does not pay or benefit you in any way except self-gratification to be original.
3. In classical and pop music the notes you provide will be strictly interpreted. In jazz, they only serve as a vehicle for others to express themselves. Some jazz players actually turn their noses up at any written music or refuse point-blank to play it as written. In some circles there is almost a stigma attached to being able to read as some people mistakenly believe that it detracts from being a jazz musician. This is codswallop.
4. To get the same effect that classical musicians want to achieve by using millions of notes, it is possible just to indicate what you want to a good jazz musician and it will be just as good, if not better. There are also some classical pieces written for solo instruments which are all about exploring the instrument's potential which receive tremendous acclaim by critics and the general public. A solo performance played by a jazz musician can similarly explore an instrument's potential, but very rarely is the player given anywhere near the same credit.