



HIGH SCHOOL

8 Week Program

Theme: Pop/Commercial Music with an Emphasis on Original Song



Abstract

This 8-week modular course for high school students focused on the intricacies of pop/commercial music, including songwriting, recording, stage etiquette, and music business. We at the Ventura Music Festival feel that this is a great way to provide a comprehensive understanding of the music industry. The course will culminate in a showcase where students can present their original songs.

Week 1: Introduction to Songwriting for Pop/Commercial Music

- *Objective:* Understand the structure of pop songs and the basics of songwriting, including theme, melody, and lyrics.
- *Activity:* Analyze popular songs to identify common structures (verse, chorus, bridge) & themes.
- *Interactive Element:* Begin writing lyrics or melodies in small groups, focusing on a common theme.

Week 2: Advanced Songwriting Techniques

- *Objective:* Dive deeper into songwriting techniques, such as hook creation, lyrical storytelling, and melody harmonization.
- *Activity:* Workshop on creating memorable hooks and effective storytelling in lyrics.
- *Interactive Element:* Students revise their group songs with a focus on improving hooks and lyrical content.

Week 3: Introduction to the Recording Studio

- Objective: Learn about the recording studio environment, including roles (producer, engineer, etc.), equipment, and the recording process.
- Activity: Virtual or in-person studio tour. Introduction to recording equipment and software.
- Interactive Element: Record a simple cover song using basic recording equipment or software to understand the process.

Week 4: Recording Techniques and Studio Etiquette

- Objective: Explore advanced recording techniques (multi-tracking, overdubbing) and understand studio etiquette.
- Activity: Workshop on microphone techniques, software instruments, and the importance of communication and behavior in the studio.
- Interactive Element: Small groups practice recording parts of their original songs, focusing on etiquette and technical skills.

Week 5: Stage Presence and Performance

- Objective: Learn about stage presence, live performance techniques, dealing with stage fright.
- Activity: Masterclass on stage presence, including movement, audience interaction, and visual aspects of a performance.
- Interactive Element: Mock live performance where students practice introducing their songs and performing with confidence.

Week 6: Music Business Basics

- Objective: Introduce the basics of the music business, including copyright, publishing, distribution, and marketing.
- Activity: Guest speaker from the music industry or a virtual workshop on music business.
- Interactive Element: Develop a simple marketing plan for their original song, considering social media, streaming platforms, and local music venues.

Week 7: Finalizing Original Songs and Preparing for Showcase

- Objective: Finalize original songs for the showcase. Focus on polishing recordings, performance rehearsals, and marketing strategies.
- Activity: Recording studio session to finalize songs. Group rehearsals for live performance. Properly register each song with a PRO. (BMI/ASCAP etc..)
- Interactive Element: Finalize marketing materials (e.g., posters, social media posts) for the showcase event.

Week 8: Showcase of Original Songs

- Objective: Present original songs in a live showcase, demonstrating songwriting, recording, and performance skills learned throughout the course.
- Activity: Live performance event, either in-person or streamed online, where students perform their original songs. Recorded songs are made available online.
- Interactive Element: Post-showcase discussion and feedback session. Reflect on the process, performance, and what was learned during the course.



Additional Components for Each Week:

- **Warm-Up Activity:** Start each class with a music-related icebreaker or a quick creative writing exercise to stimulate creativity.
- **Homework Assignments:** Assignments might include writing song lyrics, researching music business topics, or practicing recording techniques at home.
- **Peer Feedback Sessions:** Regularly scheduled time for students to share their work-in-progress and receive constructive feedback from classmates.

This course is designed to offer students an authentic and holistic view of the process from inception to completion. From creating to recording...then performing, and promoting, this course encourages creativity, collaboration, and practical application of skills, culminating in a real-world project that students can use as a stepping stone for future musical endeavors in pop/commercial music.

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