

## **Composing a Song using GarageBand or Acid Music Studio**

### **By Tom Rudolph**

There is no “one way” to compose a song. Composers use many different approaches. Since in the CD Project, you have already created the words (lyrics), below are some suggestions for creating a song.

1. Decide on a basic song form. The most common include:  
(Reference for a tutorial on measures and bars:  
[http://www.musictheory.net/lessons/html/id12\\_en.html](http://www.musictheory.net/lessons/html/id12_en.html) )
  - a. Two sections : ABA Usually songs are in 8 measure (bars) groups. The A section would be one style with the B being slightly different.
  - b. Another common form is AABA with each section being 8 measures or bars long. The total song length would be 32 bars.
  - c. Include an introduction and an ending. This is something that sets the style and gives the singer the starting pitch.
  
2. Start by creating the backing tracks. These include:
  - a. Drums
  - b. Bass
  - c. Piano
  - d. Other sounds and effects
  
3. Create a drum track that has some variety.
  - a. Create or find a loop patten to use for the A section.
  - b. Find a slightly different rhythmic patten for the B section.
  - c. Overdub (record) additional drum patterns and fills.
  
4. Add a Chord or Keyboard Part
  - a. Most songs are based on a chord progression that repeats throughout the song. If you are familiar with playing the keyboard, experiment with chords from songs that you know. If you don't play the keyboard, experiment with piano/keyboard loops that come with your GarageBand or Acid Music Studio software.
  - b. Be sure the chord progression matches the style of the drums. If you are using a specific form, be sure to make a variation in the keyboard style.
  
5. Add a Bass part
  - a. The bass part should work with the piano and drums already entered. Be sure that the style of the bass is the same as the other parts. If you are using a specific chord progression, make sure the bass plays the roots or bottom notes of the chords.
  
6. Adding other sounds to the song
  - a. After the three basic tracks have been entered, you can add other parts to compliment the song. These may include:

- i. Additional percussion tracks to add fills, cymbals and other percussion sounds.
  - ii. Other sounds and sound effects.
- 7. The Melody: Some composers start with the melody. In this project, you will first create the backing tracks and then create a melody. See [songwriting2.doc](#) for information on creating a melody to accompany your backing track that you are creating in this lesson.