

# Creating Compelling Arrangements

By Nancy Moran and Fett

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# Nancy Moran and Fett

- Nancy
  - Singer/Songwriter
  - Touring Indie Artist (4 Bitchin' Babes, etc.)
  - Artist Development Coach
- Fett
  - Indie Producer/Engineer
  - Author
  - Nancy's Sidekick! 😊
- 30+ years of performing and recording together



# The “Why”

Q: Why do we write, perform and record?

A: To *create and maintain an emotional connection* with our audience

# The “How”

- Make the music *interesting* and *memorable* to listen to
  - Keep and enhance the audience’s attention/interest
    - Achieved through reinforcement and variation
- Make the music *enjoyable* to perform
- Both can be accomplished through *compelling arrangements*

# Compelling Arrangements

- Can be considered and used while
  - Writing
  - Performing
  - Recording
- Can be applied to
  - Artist releases
  - Film/TV compositions
  - Songs for publisher pitching

# Compelling Arrangements

- Can be applied to
  - Any instrument(s)
    - Even a single instrument, on a single song
  - Vocals
- Can be used for
  - Our own music
  - Covers
- Even a “set” at a gig can have its own “arrangement”

# Compelling Arrangements

- The more dis-similar two instruments are in an arrangement, the more dramatic the *contrast* is between them
  - Example:
    - 2 identical acoustic guitars
    - 2 different acoustic guitars (body style, wood, size, strings, etc.)
    - 1 acoustic guitar, 1 electric guitar
    - 1 acoustic guitar, 1 piano
- Don't be afraid to experiment - even try stuff that might “sound bad” or “should never work”
  - E.g., “dissonant” or “rubbing” chords, or half-step harmonies (a la The Story)
  - You just might come up with something unique AND magical!

# Compelling Arrangements

- The tighter your *chops* are, the more *impactful* the arrangement will be
- It really helps to “think in the Nashville Number System” rather than chord names
  - I.e., *everything* is “in the key of 1”
  - Much faster to conceive and implement arrangements
  - Helps prevent exploding brains! 😊



# Just some of what we'll cover...

- Chordal and melodic techniques
  - Doubling
  - Variation of chord voicings/phrasings
  - “Surprise” chords
  - Drones
  - Signature lines / riffs
  - Counter-chords or “contrast” chords

# Just some of what we'll cover...

- Rhythmic techniques
  - Strumming and picking variations
  - Dynamics
- Vocal techniques
  - Harmonies
  - Melodies

# Want to learn more?



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