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## CREATING, PRODUCING, DEVELOPING AND INTEGRATING SONGS INSPIRED BY LOVE INTO A CONCEPT ALBUM, '*SUMMER DREAMS*'

<sup>1</sup>Feng Yi, <sup>2</sup>Kamarulzaman Karim, <sup>3</sup>Mohd Azam Sulong

<sup>1</sup>Postgraduate Student, <sup>2</sup>Main Supervisor, <sup>3</sup>Co-Supervisor

<sup>1</sup>Department of Music and Music Composition

<sup>1</sup>Sultan Idris Education University, Tanjung Malim, Malaysia

**Abstract:** This article discusses and analyses 'Rainy Season', the fourth song from the author's concept album related to her master degree research, 'Summer Dreams'. The central theme of the album is 'Love', inspired by events from the songwriter's personal life. The author introduced three methodologies, including practice-based, practice-led, particularly autoethnography. Since the soundscape is employed in the song, it has been thoroughly detailed in this article. Furthermore, the songwriter's artistic process will be described, including her approach to songwriting, producing and how to export MIDI, export MIDI and soundscapes which utilised the software programmes Sibelius Ultimate and Logic Pro X in the creation of this collection of songs. Lastly, the author delved into the significance of the lyrics and musical instruments, including the song's theme and emotional connection. In this article, she hopes that by sharing her experience, readers will gain some practical strategies, skills and knowledge from the autoethnography style of writing, the creative process and the meaning of lyrics and music analysis she outlined and finally, discover their own uniqueness.

**Index Terms – Music Composition, Songwriting, Producing, Concept album, Autoethnography**

### I. BACKGROUND

My musical ideas for a concept album were inspired by memories of a man I fell in love with during my final year of 2015 as an undergraduate music student in Malaysia. The 'Protagonist' is someone I considered my first love and loved with all my heart. For various reasons, this relationship never progressed to the fully committed partnership I had hoped for, and I needed to end it this way. During this period, I experienced a broad range of unforgettable emotions, both positive and negative, that have since inspired many songs for this autoethnography research. My primary aim was to compose music that reflected my inner feelings about this particular life experience and communicated that with others through sharing my songs. The song 'Rainy Season' evolved because of the 'Heartache' I felt after realising I had lost someone I love during the monsoon season in mid-October 2015 in Malaysia.

The objectives of this research were to:

1. Produce a concept album based on my personal love story.
2. Use Western pop culture approaches to convey the theme of 'Summer Dreams'.

This article describes the creative process of writing the concept album, 'Summer Dreams', and introduces the fourth song of the collection, "Rainy Season". It draws a small quantity of material from an earlier paper that was presented at the 3rd International Music & Performing Arts Conference in Malaysia (Feng, Y., Johnson, W. A., & Karim, K., 2018).

### II. CONCEPT ALBUM

A concept album is a collection of songs that have a common theme running through them and "segue into one another" (Shuker, 2012, p.8). The themes may be about people, feelings, or nature. A concept album is a narrative work that allows artists to explore different musical contexts, cultures, and aesthetics, and more recently, genres (Shute 2013, as cited in Burns, L. 2016; Wener 2006). Notable examples of concept albums include Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (1967) by The Beatles, Tommy (1969) by The Who, The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars (1972) by David Bowie, The Wall (1979) by Pink Floyd, and American Idiot (2004) by Green Day. My composition, 'Summer Dreams' has a similar structure to a more recent concept album, 'Lemonade' by Beyoncé (2016), which features a one-hour film of storytelling that is divided into 'chapters', each conveying a particular emotion. Her first song, 'Pray You Catch Me', has the chapter title, 'Intuition', and the second, 'Hold Up' has the title, 'Denial'. In my concept album, 'Summer Dreams', the first song, 'In Our Most Beautiful Year' starts with the theme 'Hope', which

links to the second song 'Why', about 'Confusion and Madness'. The third song, 'How Could You', is about 'Sadness' and links to 'Rainy Season', which is based on the theme 'Heartache' and will be the main song discussed in this article.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Composition (and, by extension, songwriting) fits within three traditional methodologies. *Autoethnography*, *practice-based research*, and *practice-led* research are all examples of the article. In this article, I will introduce each methodology briefly. However, I will concentrate on explaining autoethnography. And share my own experiences using autoethnography, this kind of research method to writing your own stories and songs.

#### i. Practice-based Research

The term '*practice-based research*' has become popular in the field of creative arts research. Despite being present in academic contexts for more than 37 years, practice-based research has yet to achieve a settled status in definition and discourse. Simply put, practice-based research is an original investigation conducted to gather new knowledge, in part through practice and the outcomes of that activity. (Candy, L., & Edmonds, E, 2018).

#### ii. Practice-led Research

In the last two to three decades, the idea that arts practice might be considered a form of study has gained traction. The earliest conceptions of '*practice-led*' research appear in PhD studies (Pengelly 1996) and research publications, along with modelling the nature of research in art and design and the first significant investment through institutional funding (Rust 1998) (Smith, H., & Dean, R, 2014). The primary purpose of the study is to improve knowledge of practice or knowledge within practice. Such study is typically classed as action research since it includes practice as an integral part of its methodology. (Candy, L. 2006).

#### iii. Autoethnography

Anthropologist Karl Heider coined the term '*autoethnography*' in 1975 to describe Dani's own interpretation of what people do. Despite this, David Hayano (1979) is best remembered for founding (Ellis, C. 2004).

Autoethnography is a qualitative method in that it provides subtle, complex, and specific knowledge about specific lives, experiences, and connections rather than broad information about vast groups of people. Rather than collecting demographic data and broad descriptions of interaction, qualitative research focuses on human intents, motives, emotions, and actions. Autoethnography gave me a way to investigate, comprehend, and write from, through, and with personal experiences in relation to and in the context of other people's experiences. It can do the same for you. [...] Autoethnographers pay attention to how narratives and tales are produced and told while researching and representing experience with narrative and storytelling. (Adams, T. E., Linn, H. J. S., & Ellis 2015).

Autoethnographers frequently use first-person voice or point of view in their writing, portraying the researcher as the story's narrator. Because the narrator describes what she or he sees, experiences, knows, and feels, the first-person point of view is clearly subjective, offering readers with "I" /eye-witness narratives. Second-person voice or point of view is also used by autoethnographers, in which the reader is addressed directly as "you." Second-person narrators invite readers to imagine themselves in the scene, event, or experience being described. To explain the experiences, thoughts, feelings, and actions of characters, autoethnographers commonly use third-person voice or point of view. Third-person narrators give a report a sense of neutrality, even anonymity. The storey appears to originate from the outside, as if someone is watching and assessing the event from the outside, presenting an "outsider's insider" perspective. (Adams, T. E., Linn, H. J. S., & Ellis 2015).

Autoethnography research demonstrates that the author is the 'expert' (I). I used the form of storytelling in my dissertation, article and songs to depict my varied emotional connections to the songs caused by the male protagonist, which is best articulated from a personal position. Next, I will go over seven practical strategic steps that I think will be helping people in writing their own stories through the autoethnography methodology.

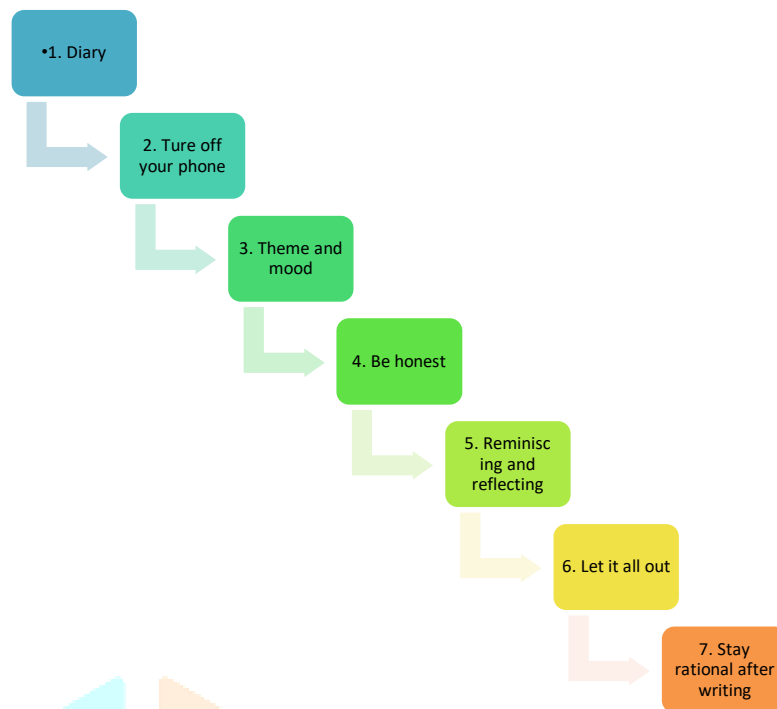


Figure 1. the seven strategic steps of autoethnography methodology

1. Begin writing your diary and choose the sentences that you want to be the lyrics.
2. Please turn your phone off or put it in aeroplane mode; I prefer this since I do not want anything or anyone to distract me when I am writing. You must maintain your focus and go deep with yourself and your emotions.
3. What is the song's theme and mood? It is something you should consider.
4. Be honest with yourself because what you write is based on your own experiences.
5. Reminiscing and reflecting are advantageous for writing, even though it hurts when you think about something bad about the past. Do not be scared to show your true self, even if it is the most vulnerable part of yourself.
6. You may become incredibly emotional when writing about the emotions and experiences of yourself. However, let it all out, trust me when I say that this will result in the best lyrics possible.
7. Certainly, you must stay rational after writing. You should not bring that intense emotion out of the time of creation after you finish writing the lyrics. Because life is beautiful, and we should enjoy it. I immerse myself in the process when I compose lyrics, melodies and instrumentations and frequently weep, especially when creating sad songs, such as 'Rainy Season'. When I am not writing songs, I organise activities such as going to fine restaurants or cooking at home, partying, and watching comedy movies with good friends. I have a lot of fun in my life.

#### IV. SOUNDSCAPE

"The term "soundscape" has been used by a variety of disciplines to describe the relationship between a landscape and the composition of its sound" (B. C. Pijanowski, L. J. Villanueva-Rivera, S. L. Dumyahn, A. Farina, B. L. Krause, B. L. Napoletano, S. H. Gage, & N. Pieretti, 2011, p. 203). The soundscape is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "the sounds heard in a particular location, considered as a whole." Two essential words stand out in this last definition: sounds and location (Farina, A. 2016, p. 3).

Krause, Bernie. (1987, p. 14-18) coined the terms 'biophony' to describe the composition of sounds produced by organisms and 'geophony' to describe nonbiological ambient sounds such as wind, rain, thunder, and so on, to describe the complex arrangement of biological and other ambient sounds that occur at a location. "This taxonomy of sounds is expanded to include 'anthrophony' or sounds produced by humans. Soundscape ecology thus can be described by our working definition as all sounds, those of biophony, geophony, and anthrophony, emanating from a given landscape to create unique acoustical patterns across a variety of spatial and temporal scales". (Pijanowski, B. C., Villanueva-Rivera, L. J., Dumyahn, S. L., Farina, A., Krause, B. L., Napoletano, B. M., Gage, S. H., & Pieretti, N. 2011, p. 204)

When I first arrived in Malaysia at the age of 21, the scenery of this tropical country captivated me. Therefore, it gave me ideas to add soundscapes to my songs. In my concept album 'Summer Dreams' I utilized three different categories of soundscapes (see Figure 2). I applied 'Geophonic' soundscape to Song 4 'Rainy Season', Song 7 'Glistening Ocean' and Song 10 'On the Beach'. Such as raindrops, ocean waves and wind. In Song 5, 'Before I Leave' and Song 9, 'Stay Forever in The Summer', I added the 'Anthrophonic' soundscape. Such as the sound of the door closing, footsteps and shaking coconut milkshake. In Song 10, 'On the Beach', I put birdsongs as the 'Biophonic' soundscape. Obviously, in this article, I will only concentrate on how I used the 'Rain' of the geographic soundscape in Song 4 'Rainy Season' on the section of the musical creative process.

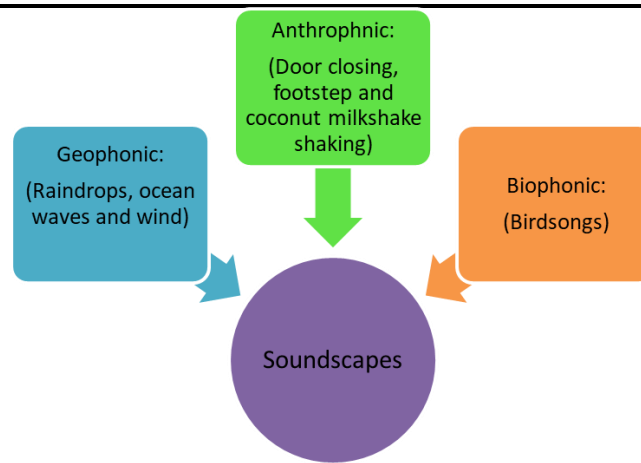


Figure 2. Three different categories of soundscapes

## V. MUSICAL CREATIVE PROCESS

The album consists of 10 tracks (Table 1), which are each linked to the next through various themes which are presented through the lyrics, instrumentation, and sound effects. Atmospheric background sounds such as soundscapes were employed to deepen the emotional impact of each song, increase resonance, and enhance the overall musical effect. Song 4, 'Rainy Season', primarily used piano patterns, guitar harmonics and a soundscape of raindrops to reflect the song's title.

### i. Table 1 List of Songs from 'Summer Dreams'

| Song (Date of Completion)               | Theme/Mood            | Length (Min) |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. 'In Our Most Beautiful Year' (2015)  | Hope                  | 4:06         |
| 2. 'Why' (2016)                         | Madness               | 3:19         |
| 3. 'How Could You' (2015)               | Sadness               | 3:39         |
| <b>4. 'Rainy Season' (2018)</b>         | <b>Heartache</b>      | <b>5:19</b>  |
| 5. 'Before I Leave' (2016)              | Expectations          | 3:37         |
| 6. 'In My Dreams' (2016)                | Fantasy               | 4:47         |
| 7. 'Glistening Ocean' (2018)            | Reminiscing           | 6:15         |
| 8. 'What We Had' (2019)                 | Forgiveness           | 4:13         |
| 9. 'Stay Forever in This Summer' (2019) | Nostalgia/Acceptance  | 4:49         |
| 10. 'On the Beach' (2020)               | Daydreaming/Moving on | 6:25         |

### ii. Overall Approach Songwriting and Producing

The songwriting and producing process began with the transcription of my own voice memos and script sketches into the scorewriting software Sibelius, followed by arranging each song into different styles. I then recorded, edited, mixed, and mastered the songs using DAWs, such as Pro Tools and Logic Pro X. I employed 10-step songwriting and producing process see down below.

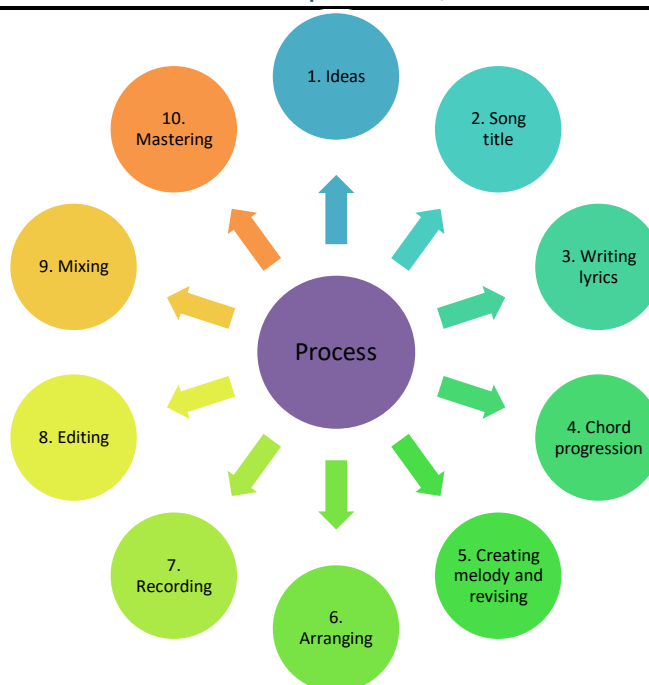


Figure 3. The overall process of songwriting and producing

1. The first step was creating the song's foundation, including the ideas of lyrics and melodies chords, styles.
2. The second step was choosing the song title, themes, and moods, which provided a solid foundation for writing the lyrics.
3. The third step was creating the lyrics as a whole and revising them.
4. The fourth step was to choose chord progressions that matched the mood of the lyrics.
5. The fifth step was creating the melodies based on the lyrics and chord progressions on guitar or piano while doing a 'part-by-part recording on my phone. As I completed recording the verses, I transcribed them into Sibelius and built the pre-chorus and chorus until the song was completed. I then played the song from beginning to end, making minor modifications where necessary. I listened to the song multiple times and continued editing it until I was satisfied with the final version.
6. The sixth step consisted of arranging the music in the style that I desired and incorporating my favourite Western classical and electronic instruments. I then created rhythmic patterns, solos, accompaniment, and countermelodies for each song. Figure 1 shows the chord progressions that the guitar plays in 'Rainy Season'.
7. The seventh step involved recording the instruments and vocals on Logic Pro X, starting with drums, followed by bass, piano, all other instruments, then finally, vocals.
8. The eighth step was editing, which included pitch and tempo correction.
9. The ninth step was mixing, such as adding reverb, soundscapes, compressors, and equalizers.
10. The tenth step involved mastering the track levels to achieve an overall consistency of sound. It was this production stage that had previously been a source of frustration for me as I encountered barriers and made numerous mistakes. However, I have gained much experience in this area because of going through this process. I was able to find solutions and fix problems by consulting professional musicians, reading relevant literature, and watching tutorial videos.

Certainly, I do not begin a song with a song title every time, such as 'In Our Most Beautiful Year', the first song in my master's thesis concept album. I decided on the title of the song after I wrote the lyrics. There are numerous methods to begin writing a song, including beginning with chord progressions, lyrics ideas, and melody lines. There are no restrictions.

### iii. Approaches of Exporting MIDI on Sibelius

In order to make the song more 'Rain' vibes, I added four different rain soundscapes to this song 'Rainy Season'. They are from light to heavy. The main purpose is to provide the audience a sense of vivid imagery and let them immersive in that kind of rainy atmosphere as the author feels, as well as to reinforce the song's authenticity and closeness to life. Moreover, to emphasise the main notion of love (emotion of heartache). Next, I will describe in-depth how I exported midi to Logic Pro X from Sibelius and added four different types of the 'Rain' soundscape.

1. Choose and right click 'File' on Sibelius
2. Choose and right click 'Export' on Sibelius
3. Choose and right click 'MIDI' (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) on Sibelius
4. Choose and right click 'Type 1' on Sibelius
5. Choose and right click 'Export' on Sibelius
6. Choose and right click 'Save' (choose a folder) on the computer



#### iv. Approaches of Creating an Empty Project and Import MIDI and Soundscapes on Logic Pro X

Above, I have detailed the actual operation of exporting a midi on Sibelius with steps. Next, I will describe how to create an empty project and import the midi and soundscapes into Logic Pro X.

1. Choose and right click 'Empty Project' on Logic Pro X
2. Double right click 'Tempo', 'Key Signature', 'Time Signature', 'Major' and 'Minor' on Logic Pro X to set the right tempo and key to the song.
3. Right click 'Choose'.
4. Right click 'External MIDI' and click 'Create', then you have an empty project to start the creation.
5. Drag the 'MIDI' from the file that you saved to Logic Pro X, then you have all instruments in this project and you can also replace the original instruments from library on Logic Pro X, there are so many options.
6. Directly drag the soundscapes that you downloaded to Logic Pro X. You can download free soundscapes from [www.zapsplat.com](http://www.zapsplat.com)

#### v. Approaches of Designing and Editing the Soundscapes of 'Rain' on Logic Pro X

I have outlined the methods for establishing an 'Empty Project' and dragging MIDI and Soundscapes in the steps on Logic Pro X above. I designed the soundscape's 'Flow' based on the overall dynamics of the song 'Rainy Season'. Next, I will describe how I designed and edited the four types of soundscapes to match the song 'Rainy Season' on Logic Pro X.

1. I chose a 'Rain-Lightest' highlighted with a yellow round rectangle and number 1 see (Figure 4) of the soundscape at intro. The rain's tempo is slow, and the volume is quite low, it matches with the acoustic guitar harmonic tones and ambient guitar swells.
2. At verse 1, I imported the second 'Rain' soundscape, marked with a yellow round rectangle and number 2 see. This soundscape has raindrop and thunder both sounds (Figure 4), and the thunder appears at the melody line of "it's the rainy season" it emphasises the vibe of the 'Rain'.
3. At chorus, I inserted 'Rain-Steady-1' highlighted with a yellow round rectangle and number 3 see (Figure 4), it fades in and goes light to heavier.
4. At verse 2, the instrumental and the mood of the vocal is increased. Therefore, I overlapped the 4th soundscape of 'Rain-Steady 2', marked with a yellow round rectangle and number 4 see (Figure 4) The rain's frequency is heavier and faster than 'Rain-Steady-1'. The main purpose of adding 'Steady Rain 2' here is to make the soundscape and the music integrated.
5. At the last step, I listened the song from the top for few times and used automation (see Figure 4, highlighted with number of 5) to edit the loudness of the soundscapes such as fade in and fade out etc. It all depends on personal musical aesthetic sense for the overall sound.

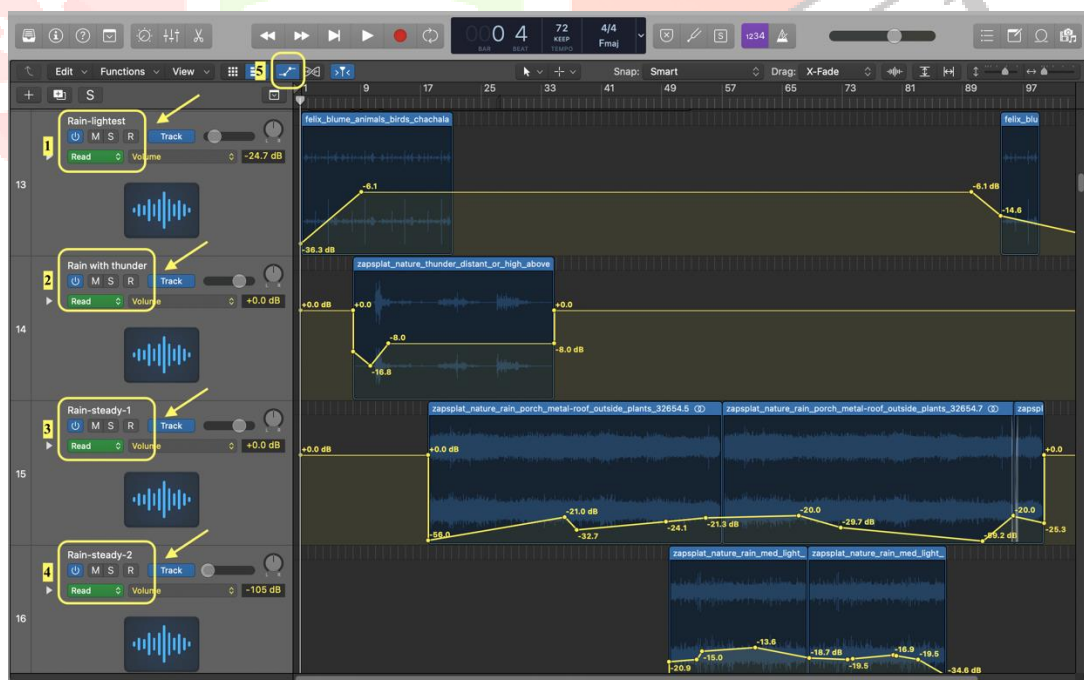


Figure 4. The soundscapes used in 'Rainy Season' on Logic Pro X

In my opinion, this section of the musical creative process is the most unique aspect of this article. Originally, my plan was to include a soundscape at the beginning of the song. When I tried it, the outcome did not achieve my expectations. Then, in the middle of the production process, I had a fresh idea. As a result, I experimented with different textures of rain soundscapes to match the emotional ups and downs of the voice and instrumentation of the song 'Rainy Season,' and I was ultimately pleased with the result, see (Figure 5) the whole screenshot from Logic Pro X.

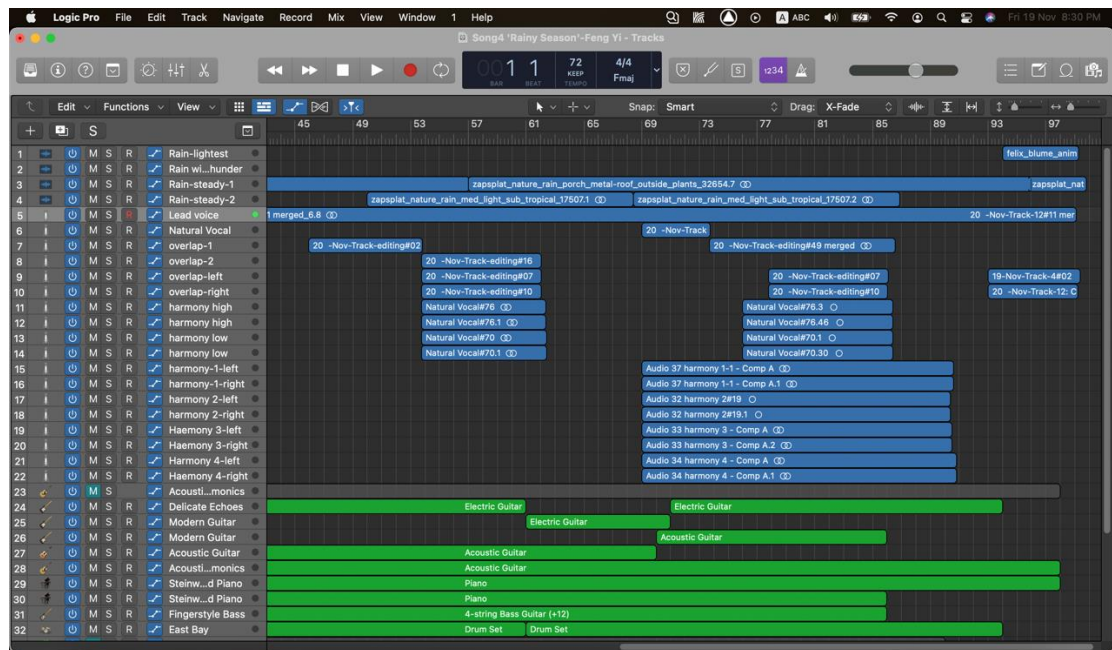


Figure 5. The combination of soundscapes, voices, and instrumentation in 'Rainy Season' on Logic Pro X

## VI. LYRICS ANALYSIS OF 'RAINY SEASON'

The lyrics of the rainy season mainly convey the author's heartache when she realises the loss of her love during the rainy season. The simile approach uses in the song to describe and the rhythm of the lyrics. The title of the song appears at the beginning of the song, the song's form is verse-chorus structure, and the theme of the song is 'Heartache'.

### i. Song Title

The lyrics of 'Rainy Season' reflects the heartache through tears. The song title appears in an area other than the others where the title appears at the first line, at the beginning of the song, see (Verse 1 below).

#### [Verse 1]

*Middle of October, it's the rainy season  
Late night, by myself, holding the phone  
I swallowed my pride, I followed my heart  
So I text you, I miss you, but you don't*

### ii. Theme of 'Heartache'

This song 'Rainy Season' is in theme of 'Heartache'. Heartache is an "Emotional anguish or grief, typically caused by the loss or absence of someone loved" (Lexico Dictionaries n.d. November 13, 2021). The theme 'Heartache' is interconnected to the phrases, "So I'm getting drunk with myself, need to numb this pain, but the more I drink, the more I feel it clearly". It demonstrates the sensation of being heartbroken and trying to use alcohol to numb the pain, regardless of the fact that it is counterproductive. In the second pre-chorus, the phrases "We were so close, but now we are far apart" and "We look like strangers, so why did things go this wrong"? Depict the emotion of heartache of the author remember being so close to each other in the past and realise being outsiders to each other now.

### iii. Simile

"Put simply, a simile is an explicit comparison in which the thing of primary concern at a given moment [x] is likened to something else [y] of secondary concern, often using the formula "[x] is like [y]". The purpose of the comparison is to explain something about the nature of [x]. So one song tells us that love [x] cuts like a knife [y]. This is not literally true, but a moment's reflection makes sense of it - the physical pain of being cut is an analogy for the way that love can hurt our feelings" (Rooksby, R, 2006, p. 67). For example, in the second and fourth lines of the chorus, the lyrics, "My tears drop down like rain from outside my door/My tears flow down like rain from the window", is exaggerated and a direct simile to show the tears [x] (the primary concern) which are likened to the nature of rain [y] (secondary concern).

### iv. Rhymes

"The advantage of rhymes is simply that they make songs easier to remember, and they provide material that makes the singer's work easier. If we take a lyric that contains four lines for each verse, the obvious place for the rhymes to occur is at the end of the lines. Theoretically the songwriter could make lines 1 and 3, or 2 and 4 rhyme, or 1 and 2, or 3 and 4, or 1 and 4 and 2 and 3" (Weissman, D, 2010, p. 33).

In the chorus of 'Rainy Season', lines 1 the word 'floor'; and 2 the word 'door' rhyme, as do the final words 'cold' and 'window' of lines 3 and 4, as they have the same diphthongs. See (Chorus below)

### [Chorus]

*Oh I stumble and fall on the bathroom floor  
My tears drop down like the rain from the outside my door  
How could you be so uncaring and cold?  
My tears flow down like the rain from the window*

## VII. Musical Analysis of 'Rainy Season'

'Rainy Season' is a pop ballad, which is in the key of F major, simple quadruple time as 4/4, at a tempo of 72 beats per minute, with a *mezzo-piano* dynamic. The style is consistent with American popular ballads that are typically slow, with intimate, personal (often 'I-You'), romantic lyrics and expressive melodies (Horn, D., & Shepherd, J, 2012, p. 32).

### i. Chord Progression

"Chord progressions can be evocative and provide a tonal environment in which other more vital elements of the songwriting process—melody and lyrics—can thrive. Combined with a rhythmic groove, chords can generate melodic ideas that would not otherwise occur to a writer" (Perricone, J. 2018, p14). The main chord progression (Figure 6) F5- Cadd4- Bb(add9)- Dm7 /C(sus4) in roman number of I- V- IV- vi/V of furious guitar strumming reflects the intense grief of tears to the theme of 'Heartache'.

Figure 6. The chord progressions that the guitar plays in 'Rainy Season'

### ii. Song Hook

The melodic or rhythmic pattern that is catchy and 'hooks' or attracts the listener to want to listen to the rest of the song, and, more importantly, want to hear repeated playings (Shuker, R. 2002. p. 168). The chorus section of the song contains the song's catchy melody lines. The author refers to this fragment because she was weeping while creating and recording these melody lines (Figure 7) It expresses how overwhelming the sensation is.

Figure 7. The hook of the song 'Rainy Season'

### iii. Song Structure

A song's structure is the skeleton that gives it shape." A clear structure is essential in a song, especially if you aim to be commercial, i.e. make money with your song [...] there are two primary sorts of song structures: verse-chorus and verse-bridge. (p. 18-19) Zollo (1993) In *Beginning Songwriter's Answer Book*, Zollo interviewed several well-known American and British songwriters, including Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, and Neil Young. Based on his personal experience, "[...] the two most common song structures—those you will hear in most songs that are on the radio or on records today—are the verse/chorus structure and the verse/bridge structure". (p. 42) Most of my songs are in the verse-chorus structure. including 'Rainy Season'.



- **Verse/chorus Structure**

Several observations on the verse-chorus form (Figure 8) by Zollo (1993) relate to the songs in this research.

1. The song typically begins with one or two verses, followed by the chorus.
2. With one or more verses and a new chorus, the structure repeats itself.
3. The verses have the same melody and rhythmic structure but different lyrics each time.
4. The chorus is repeated after the verses and is the same each time. (Page 43)

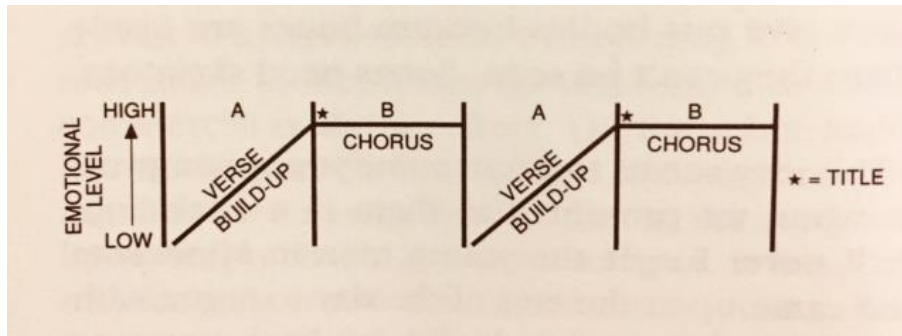


Figure 8. An outline of the emotional level of the verse-chorus structure (Luboff, & Luboff, 1992, p.18)

- **Overall Outline Structure of 'Rainy Season'**

The outline of 'Rainy Season' follows a verse-chorus form (with a bridge between the second and third chorus and end up with an outro). I developed a table below to show in detail the overall structure of the song 'Rainy Season' and which instruments feature in different sections of the song.

**Overall outline structure of 'Rainy Season'**

| <i>r. Mark</i>     | <i>Summary</i>   |
|--------------------|--|
| <i>Intro 1</i>     | Acoustic guitar plays harmonic tones lightly to a bit heavier                                  |
| <i>Verse 1</i> A   | Melody with the ambient guitar swells  |
| <i>Pre Cho 1</i> B | Ascending piano notes in the last bar  |
| <i>Chorus 1</i> C  | Repetitive four-handed piano pattern   |
| <i>Intro 2</i>     | New chord progression with the same repetitive piano pattern                                   |
| <i>Verse 2</i> D   | Repetitive four-handed piano pattern   |
| <i>Pre Cho 2</i> E | Bass and drum rise in the last bar   |
| <i>Chorus 2</i> F  | Acoustic guitar, bass and drum play heavily  |
| <i>Breakdown</i>   | Electric guitar solo   |
| <i>Bridge</i> G    | Vocal harmonies from light to heavy  |
| <i>Chorus 3</i> H  | Full four vocal harmonies with full instruments  |
| <i>Outro</i>       | Ambient swells in guitar with light drums, ending with new melody line and light piano pattern |

#### iv. Singing Style

“Discussions of the role of the voice within popular music have focused on the relationship between lyrics, melodic types, and the singing styles (vocal timbres) of various genres and performers. A key semiological notion is the ‘grain’ of the voice (very broadly, its ‘feeling’), as opposed to the direct meaning of lyrics, and the way in which particular styles of voice convey certain sets of emotions, often irrespective of the words they are singing” (Shuker, R. 2002, p. 309). The verse of melody line's range is quite low in this song, using a lot of chest voice to express the disappointed emotion and when at the chorus section, melody arises higher to depict the intense feeling. This whole song portrays the concept and emotion of 'Heartache' in a low to high melancholy singing style. See (Figure 9)

Figure 9. The low and high melody lines of verse and chorus in song 'Rainy Season'

#### v. Vocal Harmonies

Vocal harmonies are usually sung a third or sixth above or below the lead voice and can move in parallel motion with it. As passing notes they can move by other intervals to land on the notes of a chord at the end of a vocal phrase (Rooksby, 2007, p. 159-160). In this song, vocal harmonies (Figure 10) are employed to complement the lead vocal while also creating chords and harmonic textures. Furthermore, to thicken the melody and emphasise the emotion of the song.

Figure 10. The vocal harmonies in song 'Rainy Season'

#### vi. Acoustic Guitar Harmonic Tones

Harmonic tone is “A tone produced by suppressing the fundamental tone and bringing into prominence one of its overtones.” (Dictionary.com n.d. November 13, 2021). The harmonic guitar tones (Figure 11, bars 5-8,) slowly repeat throughout the song, mimicking the sound of raindrops falling and it plays the role of background sound to reinforce the vibe of the ‘Rain’.

Acoustic Guitar *mp*

5 (loop throughout song)

A. Gtr.

Detailed description: This figure shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is for Acoustic Guitar, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It begins with a melodic line marked *mp*. The bottom staff is for Acoustic Guitar (A. Gtr.), starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It begins with a chordal accompaniment marked *mp* and includes a bracketed section labeled '(loop throughout song)' starting at measure 5.

Figure 11. The acoustic harmonics tones of the intro in 'Rainy Season'

### vii. Ambient Guitar Swells

Ambient guitar swells mixed with delay and reverb effects can create a pad sound that helps to keep the tone consistent. The main goal here is to draw the audience into this environment. The use of basic triologies and five chords (Figure 12, bar 1-8, p. 88-89) makes the song both romantic and melancholic. The guitar swells are ethereal.

Ambient swell

Electric Guitar *mp*

5

E. Gtr. *sim.*

Detailed description: This figure shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is for Electric Guitar, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a series of chords with a swell effect, marked *mp*. The bottom staff is for Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.), starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a series of chords with a swell effect, marked *sim.* and starting at measure 5.

Figure 12. The ambient guitar swells during the intro to 'Rainy Season'.

### viii. Four-handed Piano Accompaniment

The piano is the main instrument of this song, and most of the whole song has this four-handed piano accompaniment. "Keyboards are the most potent instrument there is for filling a mix," says Rooksby (2007). This is due to their wide pitch range, ability to sustain notes, and the ability to play up to ten notes in a chord. You may have a bass line, melody, and chords all in one keyboard part (p. 99). In the chorus section, the four-handed piano patterns appear (Figure 13, bar 53-56,) and play rapidly to simulate nonstop heavy rain. The notes have been tightly packed and appear like raindrops on the window. I mostly see rain as a perception of aesthetics. The main chord progression F -C- Bb- Dm/ C used in the 8th interval performs by the left hand, and the 6th interval plays by the right hand of another piano accompaniment. The main goal is to keep the accompaniment's consistency.

53 **F**

Pno. *ff*

Pno. *ff*

Pno. *ff*

Pno. *ff*

Detailed description: This figure shows four staves of musical notation for piano accompaniment. The top two staves are for the right hand (Pno.), and the bottom two staves are for the left hand (Pno.). The music starts at measure 53 with a key signature change to one flat. The right hand plays a rapid, repetitive melodic pattern, while the left hand plays a chordal accompaniment. The dynamics are marked *ff* throughout.

Figure 13. The four handed piano patterns of the chorus in 'Rainy Season'

### ix. Drum Patterns

The combination of crash cymbal, Hi-hats, toms, and bass drum pattern increase in volume to reveal the heartache of the researcher (Figure 14, bars 55-56,). In the second part of the chorus, the bass drum and tom drum rhythms simulate a thunderous echo (Figure 15, bar 61-64).

55

Detailed description: This figure shows a single staff of musical notation for a drum pattern. It starts at measure 55 and features a complex rhythm with various drum sounds indicated by 'x' marks and note heads. The pattern is dense and rhythmic, typical of a heavy rain simulation.

Figure 14. The drum pattern of the second chorus in 'Rainy Season'



Figure 15. The kick drum and tom drum pattern of the bridge in 'Rainy Season'

Through this process, I have gained a deeper understanding of how to arrange music with a clear grasp of which chord progressions, instruments, musical genres, style, and effects to use in songs. I discovered a new way to express myself through using a combination of classical instruments, electronic instruments, and soundscapes, as well as ways to write lyrics that minimize repetition. In addition, I am also proficient in the use of DAW Logic Pro X to produce. Importantly, I have learned how to view life in a more positive light as a result of my research, as heartbreak can be an inspiration for songwriters and composers.

## VIII. CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION

In this article I have discussed my approach to creating songs for a concept album which convey my heartfelt emotions related to my experiences of dealing with heartbreak. This research has increased my understanding of how to describe my music in formal writing and advance the narrative aspects of writing lyrics. This research may assist other emerging songwriters in developing a concept album of their own.

The primary goal of this article is to musically describe the writing process and produce the song 'Rainy Season' of the concept album called 'Summer Dreams' in order to manifest the most genuine feeling based on the author's own personal experiences and artistic consciousness.

The entire process began with the transcription of the author's voice memos and script drafts to Score Writer software such as Sibelius, then arranging each song to different genres and styles and 'Rainy Season' is in the genre of the Pop ballad, and lastly using DAW software such as Logic Pro X to record, edit, mix, master, and so on.

According to the author, the actual operation is required in improving the creative process of song composition, and the more you practice composing, the better you get. Furthermore, the author wishes to share additional skills. Always choose a song title that is rarely used, because you don't want people to hear your song and think of another artist because they released the same song title before you. The best instruments for songwriting are the guitar and keyboard, because you can easily play melody and chord progression both together in these two instruments. After you have written your song, you can plan the arrangement for it, such as what instruments you want to use, what sound you have in mind, and what style or genre will be in the song and write it down. It can help you generate more ideas and complete the arranging process more quickly. Certainly, this process will be demanding, and there will be many obstacles; however, you must understand that making mistakes is a necessary part of the learning process. When things go wrong, please don't give up; instead, take a break and try again. If something goes wrong again, as the author did, she recommends always seeking solutions and answers by consulting professionals, reading books, surfing the internet, and watching tutorial videos.

This article supplemented the author's understanding of how to express her lyrics and music in formal writing. By telling a story, the experience has also increased the narrative components of lyric writing. Musically, the author has gained a better understanding of how to create and arrange songs, as well as expanded her knowledge of what styles and effects to add to songs. The addition of instruments has increased knowledge of the instruments and the capacity to write and arrange them. Furthermore, she strengthened and expanded my skills by using computer music applications such as Sibelius and Logic Pro. Especially the utilization of a combination of diverse soundscapes of the 'Rain' and musical instruments is the finding in this article. The combination of the two can readily lead the audience to the artistic conception that the author wishes to convey. Previously, the songs were written entirely on their own as voice memos and manuscript books.

This article taught the author to comprehend the grief and release it altogether truly. The article's benefit is that 'Heartache' can be a blessing, especially for songwriters and composers, as she said, "We never waste time if we can create something when we are miserable; instead, we accomplish something meaningful". The author gained perspectives in more constructive ways on life through this article.



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