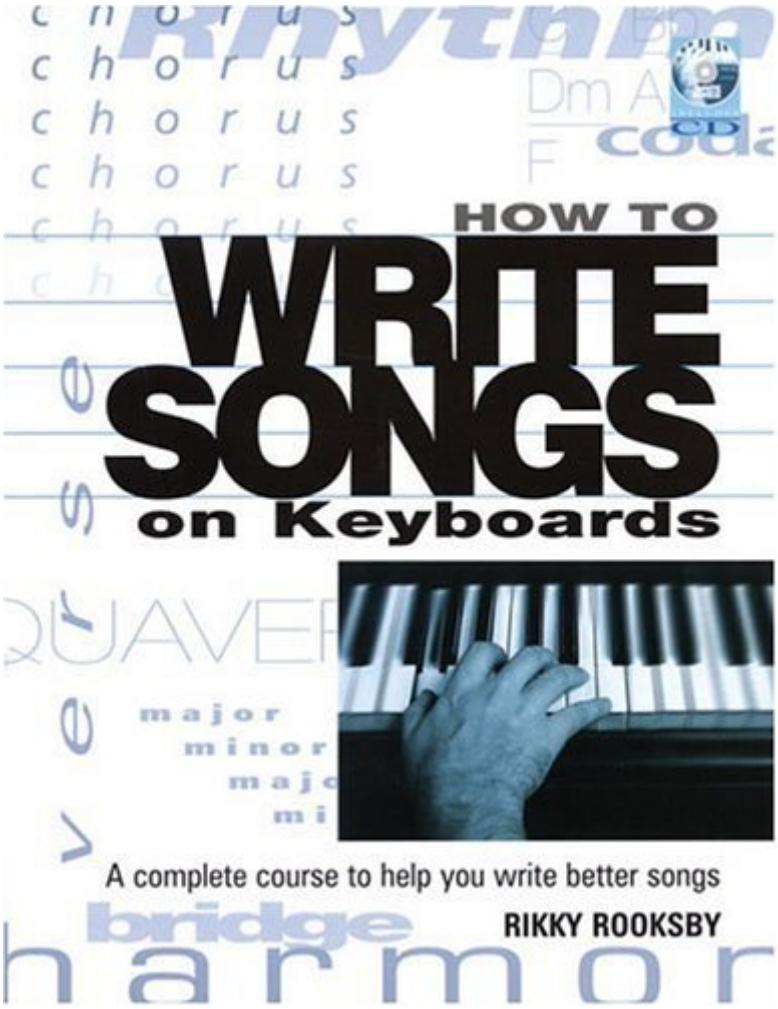
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How To Write Songs On Keyboards: A Complete Course To Help You Write Better Songs



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Synopsis

How to Write Songs on Keyboards helps both keyboard and guitar players find and develop interesting keyboard chords and chord sequences that they can use in their own songs. Rather than trying to teach intricate pieces of music, the book breaks things down into a simple style, concentrating on basic chords and ideas that can be gradually elaborated to create more complex structures. A visual system that virtually eliminates the use of standard music notation allows guitarists who are used to using guitar tablature feel totally at home. Songwriting issues are also analyzed, including key changes and writing songs in minor keys. The straightforward style of How to Write Songs on Keyboards will have musicians writing on a keyboard with ease Ã¢â ¬â • even if they never have before.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

APPEARANCES:After opening the shipping package, I found that this book is in a format of 8.5 inches (wide) x 11 inches (high) x 5/8 inches (thick) with a glossy double-fold paper cover. As I fanned the 256 pages of the book across my face to glance at it, I saw lots and lots of pictures.

Roughly, I saw about three or four paragraphs of text on the left pages and mostly diagrams on the right pages. I saw NO ["en", "oh"] musical staff with traditional musical notes though! A 90-track CD is included and well protected in a plastic pocket on the inside back cover. The book comes with a 1-page preface, 5-page introduction, 12 sections of mostly chord progressions, and a 14-page appendix which includes technique page references, chord diagrams, chord formulas, and a glossary of terms and concepts.Each of the 12 sections begins with its title and a famous quote printed on the left (even) page with a black background which helps to segregate itself from other sections visually. On the facing (odd) page, there is a discussion of a new concept or a special notation, followed by a series of techniques which are numbered the same way as their corresponding CD tracks.MY SUBJECTIVE OPINION:If you are like me (taking a year or so of piano lessons during your elementary years, being overwhelmed and bored with music theory in high school, forming a garage band, being able to read *some* music but mainly lyrics with chord tabs, attempting to expand your artistic traits by writing a song of your own, and being a VISUAL learner), this book is for you.If you are looking for a book on how to play keyboards, this book is NOT it. Go on with something else! If you expect a traditional way of learning music, beginning with music history, musical notations, concepts, techniques, examples, and exercises, this book is NOT for you, either. As mentioned above, you will NOT find a single musical staff with traditional musical notes in this book. None! Nada! You can stop reading this review and move on with another book!As Rikky Rooksby emphasizes his intentions in the Preface, he begins with "The simplest way to write a song is to put some chords together and then sing some words on top." He later continues, "You don’t need to read music. Everything is laid out in easy-to-read diagrams..." The book is exactly it! The book has 256 pages and contains a total of 90 chord progressions, and you start finding the first diagram on page 15 and the last diagram on page 215. So, the chord progressions alone take 201 out of 256 pages which are 78.5% of the book. Good or bad is subjective!Each progression has a bar layout of a series of chords to be played (the song structure) and their corresponding keyboard diagrams of the chords. In these bar layouts, the author uses non-traditional but easy-to-understand notations for counting beats and measures, indicating intros, choruses, verses, bridges, repeats and ending, and representing chords or chord inversions. The chord diagrams intuitively show how you place your fingers on a keyboard to form the needed chords. Also, each progression is accompanied by a sound clip and is labeled clearly with a 3/4-inch-tall number corresponding to the track number on the included CD.So, the way I use this book to write a song is first to have some ideas or messages that I want to convey. Second, I turn to page 244 (Easy Page-Reference Table of Techniques) and look for a few techniques of expressing

my mood. Some examples of such techniques are "how to make a blues bluesier", "how to make chords more romantic", "how to make minor chords threatening", "how to make progressions sound sophisticated", and so on. Third, I play the selected progressions while listening to the sample sound tracks. Fourth, I modify the chord sequence to fit my own mood while I am humming along for melody and rhythm. Fifth, I replace my humming with words and phrases while searching for extra syllables or using slurs if I'm short of syllables. Finally, I come up with a good title for the song. Voila! It's pretty much it! (Well, I use a MIDI keyboard hooked up to my PC with a MIDI software package to capture my music, and I play it back via the same keyboard or a MIDI-controlled sound module. The software helps me to print out the music sheets.)**********IMPORTANT NOTE:**********You must read the Preface, the Introduction, Section 1, the discussions of the remaining sections, and Section 10 in their entireties, or you will miss the point and get lost!PROS AND CONS:* Pros: This book helps me to "express my feelings" through chord progressions when I am writing music for a song. There are a lot of sample chord progressions for me to start with. The sound clips on the CD have a lot more going on in the music, much more than what are written in the book.* Cons: This book needs to expand more in the areas of creating melody, rhythm, lyrics, and rhymes to be qualified as a book of "how to write songs." Its focus is only on one aspect of writing songs--accompaniment--although it is an important one. Also, it would be nice if Rikky included the "traditional" musical notations of the progressions in the appendix to attract a larger musically inclined audience. In addition, if he included the MIDI files of the progressions on a data CD or posted them on the web, his readers would be able to import them into their computers to play them at different speeds, to print them out in the traditional musical notations themselves, or to use them as their springboards to write their own songs.RECOMMENDATION:Although some chord progressions may not be new to you, the work of collecting all those techniques in one place as a reference book is worth the money! If you have reached this line in my review, I strongly recommend you to buy this book. This book is for you! Otherwise, you would have been long gone since my fourth paragraph! :D

If studied faithfully, this course can transform your ability to look at chord progressions/harmonic structure objectively, and also highlight a mood in a song which can form the direction of the overall song. When you consider that 80%+ songs are originally written on keyboard (including Bruce Springsteen's Born to Run; the entire album), this book is a mainstay in any songwriters library. Having studied music formally, it is the overall understanding of harmony (chords) which will either make or break a song, or piece of music. In my daily practice regime (2-4 hours daily) I spend about

30 minutes with this book hashing out tried and true examples of chord progressions which I can use for songs (at this writing, 45 songs). The added ability and strength of this book is that it will increase your curiosity for music theory, without bombarding you, eg. learning your keys to write some interesting songs, ie. a song written in G major is going to sound completely different in mood if it's transposed to Bb. For anyone willing to spend the time studying this book, the return in the command of harmonic theory and songwriting prowess will be a reward worth waiting for. 10/10.

Admittedly, I'm no bona-fide expert at music theory or songwriting by any stretch of the imagination, which is why I find this book to be just flat-out awesome on so many levels! I definitely appreciate the diagrams that walk you through all the various turnaround techniques as well as all the unique inversion tricks that make coming up with new chord progressions and melodies a snap!I don't know if it's the best music theory book out there, but if you're struggling to make heads and tails of it all and would like some simple, down-to-earth explanations that never go over your head, this is the book to get!

A good book that will open up your imagination on chord patterns that create emphatic melodies. Takes sections step by step, from simple to advanced. These are chords you have heard time and again with popular hit songs. You just didn't know why they worked. Buy this book and you will understand the paths taken by others, in addition to forming new paths of your own.

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