



SO, YOU WANT TO BE A SONGWRITER? Doesn't everybody!

Breathes there a person with head so dead who never to himself has said, "I can write a song, certainly something better than the junk that assaults the ears on the radio each day?" I doubt that such a person does exist. Each of us has somewhere the dusty lyrics we wrote ourselves.

This Bearded One, with an extensive background in all phases of the phonograph record industry, will attempt to answer a few of the questions you should ask yourself before attempting this almost impossible feat--writing a popular song.

First, is your song musically sound? The melodic pattern must be fairly simple with a retentive quality. Your format most likely will comprise 32 bars of music divided into four 8 bar phrases. The second eight bar phrase is usually a repeat of the first. The third eight bar passage is the bridge differing melodically from the first eight. The fourth and last eight bar phrase is again a repeat of the first. So assigning letters to each of the eight bar segments that make up the 32 bar entirety, you would refer to the format as AABA. Thus you only need sixteen bars of actual music; eight bars of which will be repeated three times as the first, second and fourth phrases and the other eight bars which will be your bridge or middle.

AT THIS POINT, I would suggest that you look at a copy of the piano music for any popular tune. The most common variance from the above is the blues form, which consists of three eight or twelve bar segments. I suggest you listen carefully to the St. Louis Blues or any of the great standard blues songs for an example of this format.

Second, does the lyric fit into the musical

Women Out-learn Men

DAR ES SALAAM --Tanganyika women are making steady progress in this East African nation's battle to erase illiteracy.

Addressing the second annual conference of the Women's Union here, President Julius Nyerere said that of the 300,000 Tanganyikans who have learned to read and write in the past two years, approxi-

mately 225,000, or 75 per cent, were women.

WEST LAS VEGAS SCOUT LEADER EXHIBIT JUDGE

KERMIT R. BOOKER, the only Negro in the State of Nevada to hold the coveted Silver Beaver Award of the National Council, Boy Scouts of America, served as one of four judges for the big Boy Scout Exhibit held recently at Las Vegas Convention Center.

The exhibition consisted of displays of Scout skills by Cubs, Boy Scouts and Explorers in the Boulder Dam Council, which has jurisdiction over Scouting in this area.

Booker, who lives at 1531 W. Bonanza Rd., is a member of the Executive Board of the Boulder Dam Council. He also is a member of the Trail Blazers, the Council's staff of instructors.

An Eagle Scout in his own right, Booker has two sons who have attained that high honor. His wife, Ethel, holds the Den Mother's Training Award, highest honor open to a women in Boy Scouting.

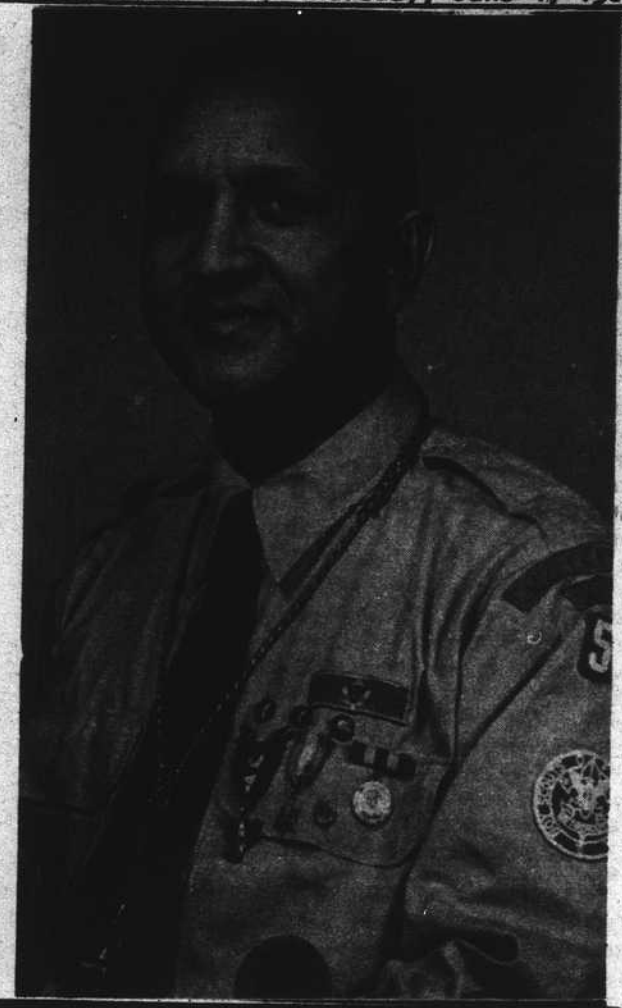
Booker is a member of the Order of the Arrow, a National Boy Scout Camping Lodge of the Missouri-Kansas Council. He was Assistant Scoutmaster of the National Scout Jamboree Troop from Region 12 at Fort Carson, Colo., in 1960, and has been Scoutmaster of Troop 67, Cub Scout Committeeman and Explorer Advisor of Post 67.

During his administration as Scout Leader in West Las Vegas, Booker's troop and post were tops in District and Council competition in Camporees and Council activities at large. His charges won the first Council Explorer Olympics Trophy at Nellis Air Force Base in 1962.

confines of the melody? The words to a song are where most of the amateur efforts are made, usually rhyming, June, moon, spoon and croon (possibly "toon"). Most neophytes make the mistake of writing the lyric first. (Yes, I know that many times the lyric is written first and then a melody provided.) The Star Spangled Banner is an example of a lyric poem that was poetry first and then set to a previously prepared melody. The awkwardness of our national anthem attests to my belief that the melody should come first.

Assuming you have a lyric and a melody, now what do you do?

The answers are many, varied and uniformly discouraging. One route is through an artist for whom the song may seem to be ideal. Another way is via the established publisher, most of whom are located in New York City and/or Hollywood. Most of the reputable publishing houses return unsolicited manuscripts unopened because so many so-called songwriters are merely interested in acquiring grounds for a suit based upon the stealing of an idea or a part of a lyric that the publishers feel that it is not worth the legal risk entailed to open your en-



velope.

The record companies have a man or group of men called artists and repertoire men. It is their job to find new material or to cull through old material for suitable songs for artists signed to their recording company.

HAVING DONE this work myself in the past, I can report first hand that the amount of material received each week is prohibitive and most of it not worth a second glance.

Today, much of the standard pop material that you hear on the so called "top forty" stations, is written and performed in person by the artist or group who will eventually record the selection. This process of refining and re-tailoring to the personality of the soloist or group makes for a spontaneity which, I think, is often the only redeeming feature of these recordings.

Space is short so we will continue this next week with the story of several of your pop song favorites, vocal and instrumental; how they came to be written, recorded and subsequently popular. Meanwhile, BEWARE the phony who offers to "publish" your masterpiece for a fee! Again!

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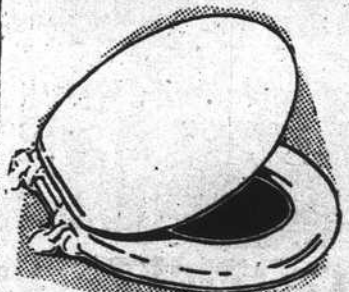
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