

## **Hook, Line and Sinker: How Songwriters Get Into Your Head**

A Hume

Traut (2005) suggests that the notion of a 'hook' remains a troubling concept for scholars of popular music. Research has been limited in this area, except for Burn's 1987 article, 'A typology of 'Hooks' in popular music', in which he delves into how hooks are of the utmost importance in both commercial song writing and, in particular, the radio hit single. Kronengold (2005) suggests that sometimes the best 'hooks' even come from accidents and aren't always calculated. Whilst there is considerable material available, to the point of over-saturation, on how to craft a marketable sound and write a good song, the important questions I intend to address lie in the mechanics of song writing. How does a composer write to be recognised? How do songwriters craft that radio hit which can be fairly accurately predicted to be a chart smash? And, importantly, what sticks in people's heads and how do songwriters achieve this?

In order to accomplish that, I have applied certain theories and patterns, developed through my own recognition of their occurrence in popular music. The four key elements I have discerned are: vowel elongation, motivic reiteration, vowel repetition and use of prosodic devices. Using these as analytic tools provides an opportunity, within an academic frame, to investigate contemporary song writing through practice-based research. This paper will apply them to song lyrics in particular, and suggest that at least some of them are present in what might be considered *catchy* songs.

A number of songs that have performed well in music charts, including the UK Top 40 and the Billboard Hot 100 in the US, have been dissected into their component parts and tested to see if they comply with the models I have developed. The results have been very interesting.

In this paper I will take each of the four models (vowel elongation, prosodic devices, vowel repetition, and motivic reiteration) I have developed, and consider their applicability to the production of a hit (catchy) song.

### **Vowel Elongation**

One thing that I have noticed through analysing memorable pop songs like 'We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together' and 'Radioactive', and also through listening to the popular music charts for a number of years, is a certain feature that appears in just

about every song I've ever listened to. Whilst it is seemingly used most effectively in the pop genre, this factor is something that seems to appear throughout music in general. With regards to catchiness and memorability, what is it that makes the listener able to sing along to the song? It is that attribute, along with other factors concerning lyrics, melody and rhythm, that, in my view, is one of the most important. From my research I have found that one of the crucial factors in that is vowel elongation. Whilst, arguably, chart success may be influenced by a song having a streamlined marketing plan, its catchiness (memorability) requires more than that. Evidenced by its presence in so much music existing in places like the Billboard Chart or the UK Top 40, vowel elongation appears to be significant.

Vowel elongation concerns the lyrics of the song and how words are stretched, or drawn out, over longer note lengths than usual; it usually emphasises certain words, and can appear anywhere in a song. Don Traut (2005) touches on this with his work on accent patterns in songs, suggesting that emphasis on certain words can act as a hooking device through their standing out, comparatively, to the rest of the songs lyrical delivery. Elongation, as a form of emphasis, can enhance a song's hooking effect, by highlighting its emotional sensibility.

Vowels are elongated in words due to the inherent difficulty of attempting to elongate a consonant without the repetition of the consonant itself or it sounding unnatural. For example, the letter 'S' can be elongated to sound like a 'Hiss', but in a song this would be difficult to implement tastefully. Another example would be the letters 'N', 'M', and 'ing' sounds: whilst these can also be elongated, they suffer a similar issue as the letter 'S'. An example of repetition of the consonant would be '*C-C-Cold*'. These are forms of reiteration and elongation but in the case of '*C-C-C-cold*', consonantic reiteration. Vowel reiteration can also occur, as in Buddy Holly and The Crickets' 1959 hit song 'Peggy Sue Got Married' where the word is extended to five syllables and is sung like '*Understa-a-and*'. Whilst both are sub-forms of elongation, it is vowel elongation that is the most prominent in popular music. In '*C-C-Cold*' the 'C' is difficult for the tongue to elongate and so might be repeated in a faux-elongation of some kind.

Vowels, on the other hand, are much easier for people to elongate. For example, the word 'Hello' can be elongated in three places. When the word is divided into its syllabic components, the 'He-' part and the '-llo' part, the vowels can be elongated to draw out

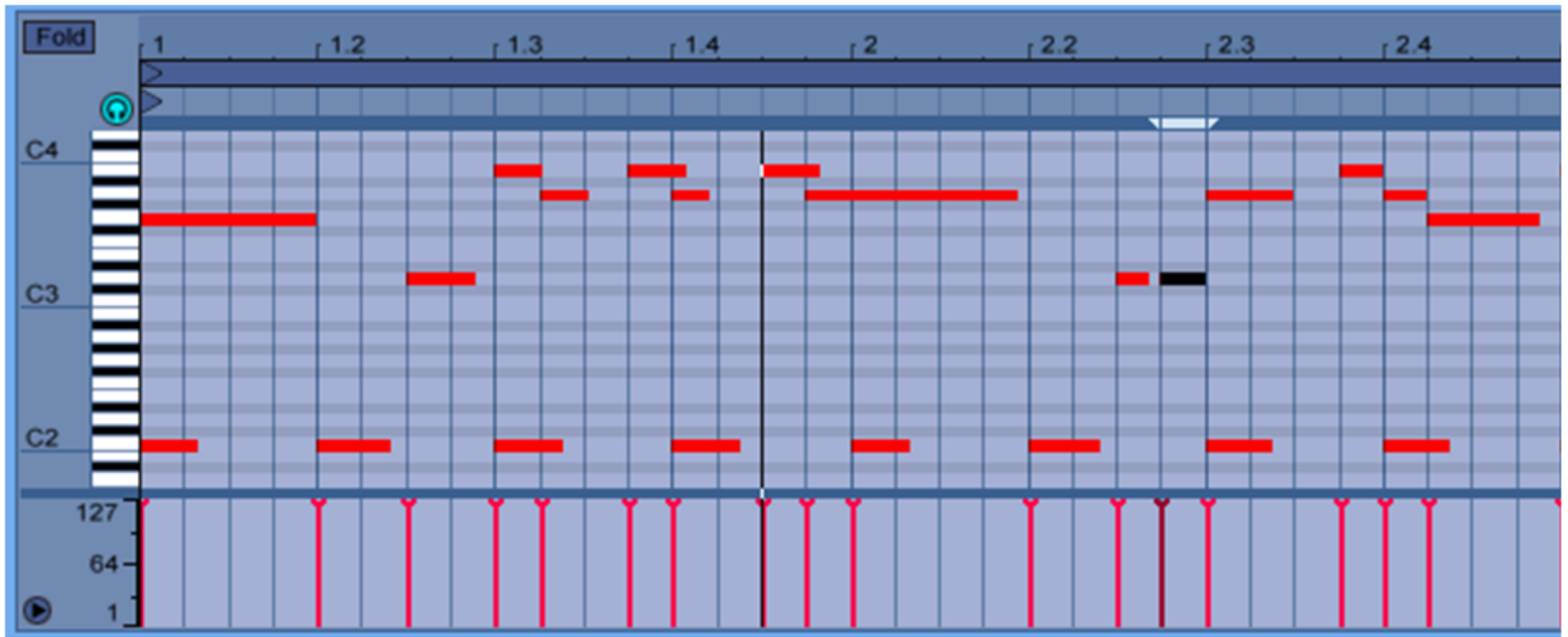
the words length. Although the consonant 'l's are stretchable, in this instance, if the 'l' is rolled, the elongation of the 'e' or 'o' is more likely.

One of the places in a song I've noticed vowel elongations used most effectively, to create a catchy song, is in the chorus. Figure 1\*, below, shows a visual representation of vowel elongation being used in Taylor Swift's 2012 hit, 'We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together'. The diagram shows not only the note values that Swift sings in that particular segment of the chorus, but also the note lengths and their timings in relation to the song's tempo. This way the elongation of chorus lyrics can be seen in a visual representation.

Vowel elongation is also present in many nursery rhymes, which is interesting because, according to Sizer (n.d.), nursery rhymes teach infants how their parent's language works and also acts as an aid for memory development. An indication of how well these devices work is the age of some nursery rhymes and how they are still part of many people's musical and linguistic repertoire. One, 'Baa Baa Black Sheep', was written in the early 1700s and has been taught in preschools around the world. Generation after generation have passed this nursery rhyme down to their children which features vowel elongation, varying rhythmic lyrical patterns, and an interesting lyrical rhythm. Vowel elongation is present in both the nursery rhyme and its sung variant's first line.

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\* Please note, all diagrams present in this paper have been designed and annotated by myself and are of my own creation.



Lyrics	We	are	ne---ver	e---ver	e---ver	get-ting	ba--ack	to--ge-ther
Note Length:	1/4	1/8	1/16 1/16	1/16 1/16	1/16 1/4 (slightly more)	1/16 1/16 1/16 1/16	1/16 1/16 1/8	

Note length in a visual medium represented by the red and black bars below the lyrics. Note lengths in musical terminology below the visually represented lengths.

The hyphenations in certain words show how they are broken up into syllabic parts and also show which vowel sounds are being stretched. The coloured bars below show the length of the elongation in musical terms. The lyrics are also placed in relation to their note values as shown in the MIDI note map above (Note: the lower rhythmic note on C2 every 1/4 note represents a kick drum beat and NOT the vocal melody which is above it.)

***Figure 1: Vowel Elongation in the chorus of Taylor Swift's 'We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together'***

As Figure 1 shows, there are only a few select lyrics that are elongated. The most noticeable are the 'We' and the second 'ever' which are elongated to a 1/4 note length, slightly more in the case of the 'ever'. 'We' is the first word to be elongated, through vowel elongation of the 'e', and also the first word of the chorus. This separates the chorus' lyrical rhythm when compared to the pacing and rhythm of the prior pre-chorus section.

The vowel elongation clearly and purposefully initiates the chorus, almost like an abrupt statement. After the initial 1/4 note length 'We', the lyrics that follow have shorter note lengths, a combination of a 1/8<sup>th</sup> and four 1/16<sup>th</sup> notes, which creates a different rhythmic flow, or lyrical rhythm. This contrast, from long to shorter, snappier, lyrical note lengths creates an interesting lyrical rhythm.

It appears that when vowel elongation is coupled with lyrical rhythm, and used tastefully (an outcome that is pleasing to the ear), the effect in popular music is a catchy, memorable song which the listener will be able to sing along to after hearing its chorus only a few times. It should be noted, however, that it could be the case that vowel elongation should only be used in moderation in a song, so that it does not become stale (hence the warning of its 'tasteful' use).

Vowel elongation is not just present in present day pop songs, but also those from just about every other era. It is present in The Beatles 1963 chart topper 'Twist and Shout', where elongation occurs at the end of lyric lines. It is also present in the memorable chorus of Aha's 1985 hit 'Take on Me', in lines such as '*Take on me*'. That song, in particular, is an excellent example of vowel elongation and how it can be utilised in a chorus to memorable effect.

Vowel elongation also appears to transcend genre, as it is present in everything from modern day electronic dance music (EDM) to seventies Motown music. An example of EDM using vowel elongation is in Swedish House Mafia's 2011 release, 'Save the World' (2011). In Motown music, an example would be The Jackson 5's 1969 song 'Want You Back'.

Vowel elongation is an aspect of song writing which appears in every genre, and can therefore be classified as a *primary hooking device*. It can be heard in song writing in

genres from pop to rock, and everything in between, in some shape or form. Whether the song writers of these songs knowingly used vowel elongation to enhance their songs memorability and catchiness is unknown, but the effect this technique has had on the song, in terms of listeners being able to recite a song's lyrics, is remarkable.

In ballads, vowel elongation features strongly. In an example taken from Adele's 2011 album *21*, 'Someone Like You', elongations occur throughout the song: here, vowel elongation (due to the process stressing certain words) really emphasises its emotional content. Part of the reason why elongation may influence the listener's ability to recite lyrics could be due to its contrast with the flow and rhythm of the song. If a song's lyrics predominantly uses combinations of 1/4, 1/8<sup>th</sup> and 1/16<sup>th</sup> notes in the verses, and in the chorus introduces an elongated vowel of, say, a dotted 1/2 note length, the contrast will be easy to see. That change in note length produces a different rhythm to the lyrics, punctuating them differently when compared to the smoother and more rhythmic verse that came before it. Vowel elongation is arguably one of the most powerful and easy to use tools that a song writer has when creating a catchy, memorable song.

### **Prosodic Devices**

A feature of catchy pop songs that appears to work in conjunction with elongated vowel sounds is the rhythm of the lyrics being sung. It is something that is present throughout the song and could be suggested as a crucial hooking device for lyrics, and one which may explain how song writers can get their lyrics stuck in the listener's head. Prosodic devices run through just about every song that contains lyrics, from classic rock ballads to nursery rhymes, and they are, in part, responsible for how lyrical passages of songs can get caught in people's heads, allowing them to remember them more accurately. Prosodic devices are present in the majority of pop hits played on popular music radio stations and, when used in conjunction with vowel elongation, enable those songs to have the most impact, allowing them to have a higher probability of the song's lyrics being memorised by the listener.

Prosody is defined as the patterns of rhythm and sound used in poetry, but also refers to the patterns of stress and intonation in a language. Prosody is something that human beings use on a regular basis in everyday life when talking, which can, and is, used to emote in conversation and song. For example, the many ways the word 'Hey'

could be articulated in different circumstances will depend on the prosody used. If one were to greet a friend, the tone would be vastly different from that of the way a police officer would address a criminal running away. In one, the tone may well be friendly, communicating an underlying subtext of familiarity, whereas the other would be sterner and more urgent in order to get the other person's attention. The subtext which, in the latter, would communicate urgency and a seriousness is not present in the former. The stress on the '*Hey*' used in the police officer's circumstance changes the emotion attached to the word, and also its delivery.

Prosodic devices are not just reliant upon the rhythm of the lyrics being sung, but also concern:

- Melodic patterns
- Pauses
- Extensive melodic leaps

In my view, the main aspect of prosodic devices are the timing of the lyrics and their rhythm in relation to the instrumentation behind the vocal. The rhythm of the lyrics being sung is reliant upon other factors, like pauses in the lyrical flow, which create space and rhythm in themselves. If the voice were to be perceived as an instrument, instead of something used to deliver the musical worded message of a song, the varying note lengths, pauses and rhythm of the lyrics would form the body of prosodic devices. The variance in note length and the use of pauses create a rhythmic hook, the lyrics sung providing a melodic hook. Those two combined features create a powerful hooking device that becomes even more powerful when coupled with vowel elongation. Vowel elongation forms the slower parts of the line, while the shorter, snappier lyrics sung in a mixture of  $1/8^{\text{th}}$  and  $1/16^{\text{th}}$  notes, create a rhythmic prosodic device. Adding pauses in and amongst those note sequences will create different rhythmic patterns in the lyrics.

Adorno (1941) criticises the simplicity of the lyrical content of popular songs, yet appears to overlook the aspects we have been discussing. He states that the difference between 'popular' and 'serious' music '...can be grasped in more precise terms than those referring to musical levels such as "lowbrow and highbrow", "simple and complex", "naïve and sophisticated" (76). This could imply that the music people listen to could be a reflection of social class and possibly even intelligence, which

would be quite a claim. He goes on to say that standardization and non-standardization are the key differences between popular music and “serious” music, where popular has the ‘negative’ attribute of being ‘standardized’.

Lyrics could be chosen for their syllabic content. I define ‘syllabic content’ as how many syllables a word contains. For example, the word ‘*Understand*’ contains three syllables, and come in the form of ‘*Un*’, ‘*der*’ and ‘*stand*’. Whilst emphasised lyrics and syllables, or accent patterns, as described by Traut (2005), also have an effect, albeit more an emotional one, they could still have an impact on the memorability of a song. The accent pattern could be used in the word ‘*Understand*’ in a way which emphasises the ‘*un*’ and the ‘*stand*’ part of the song, leaving the ‘*der*’ un-emphasised, which results in ‘*UN-der-STAND*’.

The use of emphasised lyrics creates emotional energy in the word which could, in and of itself, act as a hooking device. Extensive melodic leaps may be utilised here to improve the chances of the hooking effect. The first two syllables of ‘*un-der-stand*’ could be used to set up a large melodic leap in the final syllable. An example of that is used to great effect in the song ‘Chandelier’ from Sia’s 2014 album *1000 Forms of Fear*, where the final syllable ‘*lier*’ is used in high head voice, contrasting greatly with the previous syllables. ‘*Chan-de*’, which cover three notes, A#3, C4 and C#4, where the final syllable jumps to an elongated F#4. This melodic jump adds to the hooking effect of that particular song line, in part due to the fact the note is so high, but also because this note only occurs in the chorus.

Although there is no particular golden arrangement of notes, in terms of melody or note length and placement with regards to timing, when combined with tasteful melodies appropriate for the song they are being applied to, the more catchy songs use a mixture of 1/8<sup>th</sup>, 1/16<sup>th</sup>, and 1/4 notes, and some dotted variations of those note values.

For example, ‘Hey Jude’ (which is analysed later in this paper), along with ‘We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together’, employs both prosodic devices and vowel elongations. As these two popular songs are from different eras, it can be argued that prosodic devices have been used in song writing throughout the modern popular music age, and probably even further back than that. This would help explain how there are so many songs which are different in terms of key, genre and tempo, are memorable



and are deemed “catchy”. It would also explain, conversely, how some songs sound very similar and corroborate views that *all pop music sounds the same*. This latter point implies that there is a similarity in the prosodic devices being used in the contemporary pop music scene. However, commerce can greatly improve the performance of a song in a chart. Record label backing, and the perks they provide with regards to promotion and distribution, both in terms of advertising in physical and digital formats, all impact a song’s chart success.

As well as vowel elongation, Figure 1 also shows the variance in the prosodic devices used in Taylor Swift’s song ‘We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together’. Regarding the prosodic devices of this chorus passage of the song, the variance of note lengths and pacing of sung notes are complimentary to the song. The diagram demonstrates that a mix of 1/4, 1/8<sup>th</sup> and 1/16<sup>th</sup> are used in a tasteful rhythmic pattern which gives the chorus an almost nursery-rhyme style flow. This nursery-rhyme style comes from the 1/8<sup>th</sup> and 1/16<sup>th</sup> note combination as Swift sings ‘*are never ever ever...*’, where the particular arrangement of 1/16<sup>th</sup> notes in conjunction with their note changes in the middle of the words ‘*never*’, ‘*ever*’ and the second ‘*ever*’ (where the note changes occurs during the syllabic transitions, as in ‘*ne-ver*’, where the hyphenation shows the syllabic content of the word itself and also the point of a note pitch change) may also contribute to the hooking, catchy aspect of this chorus line, making it even more memorable.

This lyrical flow is emphasised when used tastefully with elongated vowels, like the ‘*We*’ that begins the chorus, which is a 1/4 note in length. The contrast in note lengths, in conjunction with tasteful melodic choice in terms of vocal melody, could make the hooking aspect even more potent and be more likely to cause the listener to remember the lyrical melody and words. Figure 1 also seems to show a possible pattern in this line of Swift’s chorus. The lines ‘*We are never ever ever...*’ and ‘*getting back together*’, which immediately follows the initial phrase, use similar prosodic devices.

Prosodic devices are what I class, in this paper, a primary hooking device. Songs from every genre employ a primary hooking device in some way, shape or form within their lyrics, whether knowingly put there by the song writer or not. The differences between the songs that are deemed catchy and flowing, compared to ones that are not, will be down to how well the song writer uses, among other factors, prosodic devices. The

way that flowing choruses can be created utilising  $1/8^{\text{th}}$ ,  $1/4$  and  $1/16^{\text{th}}$  notes, with vowel elongations at the ends of a lyrical phrase, is something that song writers have been doing throughout many hit songs over the years (Bruno Mars' 'Just The Way You Are' and Maroon 5's 'She Will Be Loved', for example).

The key aspects of prosodic devices are their impact on the rhythm aspect of the lyrics, the melodic progression those lyrics take, and whether they are musically fitting to the song. Other aspects involve attributes such as pauses and significant leaps in melodic notes. Pauses provide room for the instrumentation to shine through, and the musicality of the song to breathe, preventing the listener from getting bored of the vocal element, which also creates a rhythmic element all on its own. The extravagant leaps in melody contrast with what the listener is used to listening, especially in comparison to the rest of the song. That could be used as a hooking device due to the sheer contrast, which may in turn make the song more memorable. Overall, all four aspects of prosodic devices can play a role in creating a catchy song.

Vowel repetition is when a song utilises the vocal more in the way of an instrument rather than that of a human voice. The way this is done is by using vocal sounds which have little to no emotional or communicational meaning, words like 'Woah' or 'Ohh'. These vocalisations are usually made with a particular rhythmic pattern which creates an interesting lyrical rhythm and is often compounded with vowel elongation. With regards to the melody of these vocalisations, they usually follow a lead instrument-style flow. An example of this in action is the Kaiser Chief's 2009 song 'Na Na Na Na Naa'.

Since this type of vocalisation is monosyllabic, in order to draw out the sound the vowels have to be elongated, by proxy, in order to sustain the sound. This means that the word can be as short or as long as the song needs it to be, which is why backing vocals like this can fit any song: they act like an instrument in the background of the song, hence the term "backing" vocal. This type of vocalisation can act as filler if the song needs a vocal line in between a pre-chorus and a chorus, where the lyrics would not fit the criteria.

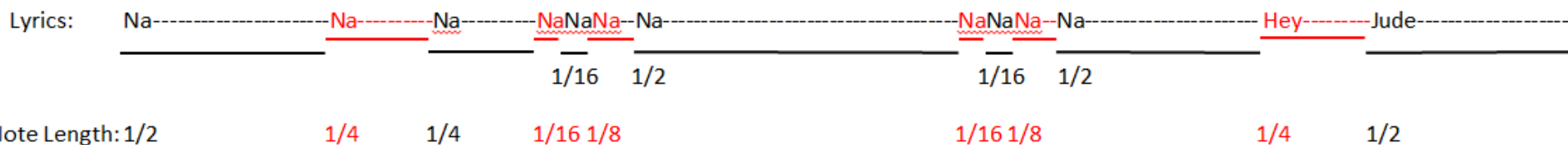
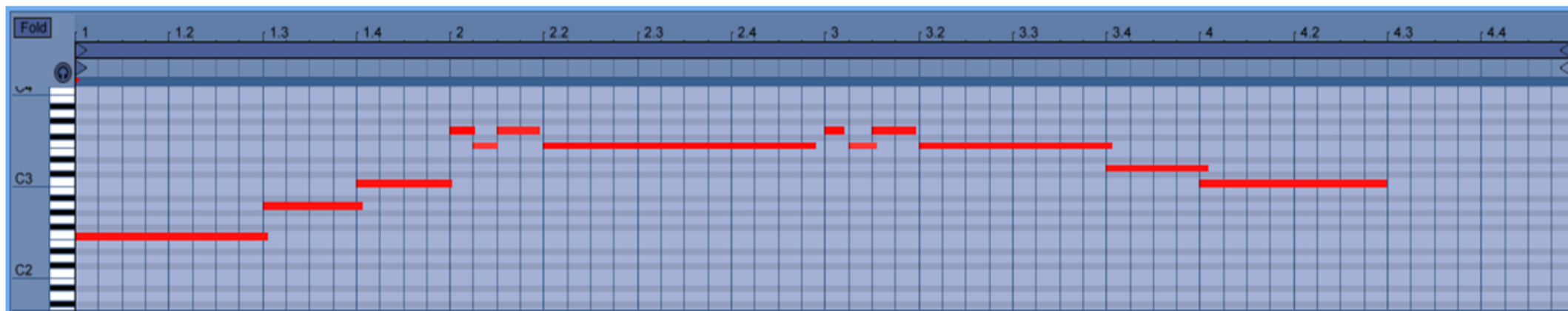
Examples of the use of this technique in popular song writing can be found in songs from the present and the past, with one example being 'Hey Jude'. The first instance of vowel repetition occurs at 1 minute 22 seconds into the song, and lasts until 1 minute 29 seconds. Here, there a series of 'Na's used to follow the piano melody being played behind it, where vocal harmonies are used to reinforce the lyrics. The chorus of this song also utilises vowel repetition at 3 minutes 8 seconds until the song fades away at 7 minutes 3 seconds. The lyrics here are '*Na na na, na na na na, na na na na, hey Jude*', and are repeated in the back ground of the song as instruments and free form vocal improvisations are added over the top. In this case, the vowel repetition has morphed from being a lead vocal line into a hybrid backing/lead vocal line.

The advantage of this kind of song lyric is that it does not have a linguistic meaning, since it is simply a vocalisation (it could be suggested that this kind of lyric is only part of a word and has no implicit meaning). Additionally it can be sung by people from places where English is not the native language. The vocalisation can be recognised by people as just a noise that the singer is making, which does not necessarily have to be translated due to the word having no emotional or linguistic meaning. This means that someone who knows no English can still sing along to the 'Hey Jude' chorus by imitating the '*na*' sounds being sung. It is also a good example of how a vocalisation, instead of a worded lyric, can be used as a hooking device in a chorus and, theoretically, anywhere else in a song's structure. Figure 2 shows a visual representation of how vowel repetition is working in 'Hey Jude'. This means, potentially at least, that the part of the song where vowel repetition techniques are used could be universally catchy, regardless of the listener's native tongue, since no act of translation is necessary to process the lyrics. This may also explain how some songs, by English-speaking bands, have been worldwide hits, not only to English-speaking audiences, but also in countries where English is not a primary language.

Figure 2 is a great example of how vowel repetition is made to create a catchy chorus as 'Hey Jude' also uses vowel elongation and lyrical rhythm, in conjunction with vowel repetition, to further enhance its catchiness. As Figure 2 shows, the chorus is made up of a broad spectrum of note lengths including 1/2, 1/4, 1/8th and 1/16<sup>th</sup> notes, which form an interesting rhythm.

Vowel repetition is something which can appear in just about any genre, just like motivic reiteration. It can be found in pop records, rap, and punk rock, where it has been used to profound effect, creating a memorable part of the song which sticks in the listener's head, enabling them able to sing along to it. Like motivic reiteration, it is also a secondary hooking device and, as such, does not appear in every catchy song. Nonetheless, it is utilised in others to great effect. Even without vowel repetition, songs can be deemed catchy - however, it can enhance the audience's ability, and the likelihood of it happening, to sing along during the song segments where it is present.

This is partly due to the fact that when words like '*Ohhh*' or '*Ahhh*' are used in songs, the voice is being used instrumentally rather than linguistically. Emotion can be derived from the delivery of the vocalisation or such sounds being sung; this means that vowel repetition, delivered in songs like 'Hey Jude', can be interpreted regardless of the listener's native tongue. The song may be sung in English and the lyrics may make no linguistic sense to a non-English speaking listener, but they may understand the emotions due to the delivery of the vocal and the tone of the singer's voice, even more so when the '*Na-na na-na*' vowel repetition section comes around, because those vocalisations are not words with linguistic meaning. They transcend the language barrier since they have no linguistic message, which, in turn, means that any person of any language could, arguably, sing along by listening to the melody and rhythm of the vocalisations; just repeating the vocalisation of the singer.



Note length is represented in a visual medium by the red and black bars below the lyrics. Musical terminology for the note lengths are written below the aforementioned bars.

The hyphenations in the lyric line represent the 'Na' sound being elongated, the length of which are determined by the amount of hyphenations, by the coloured bar beneath the lyrics and also by the note length below that. The lyrics are placed in relation to the sung note, so the first 'Na' is represented by the F2 note played at the start of bar 1.

**Figure 2: Vowel Repetition in the chorus of The Beatles' 'Hey Jude'**

## **Motivic Reiteration**

Motivic reiteration is another secondary hooking device, like vowel repetition, that can act in tandem with the primary hooking devices, vowel elongation and prosodic device of lyrical rhythm. Motivic reiteration really becomes effective when the phrase being repeated has vowel elongation and an interesting lyrical rhythm integrated into it. Therefore, when repeated, with two primary hooking devices already working in it, it will further amplify the memorability of the phrase. Motivic reiteration could be defined as a four bar phrase which is repeated one or more times. The length of the bar being repeated doesn't appear to matter too much, so long as the phrase isn't too long. The song's tempo is a factor that could, potentially, make a four bar phrase too long or too short for the listener to remember, or sing along to.

Motivic reiteration does not appear in every pop song, hence its status as a secondary hooking device, but elements of it are present in the majority of them. The repeating element may be instrumental. In EDM, for instance, repeating synth patterns are commonplace, along with drum loops, especially in the song's chorus. The repeating element of a song doesn't necessarily have to occur in quick succession. A chorus repeating in the same manner after a 16 bar verse is still a repeating phrase.

In *The Manual*, Cauty and Drummond (1988) discuss how to create a number one hit. They highlight the process they went through to produce their hit song 'Doctor in the Tardis'. As part of that process, it appears, commerce is a factor that needs to be considered when creating a song which is catchy. Even though the music industry has changed since the time of writing of *The Manual*, with the advent of platforms including YouTube and SoundCloud (amongst others) where the work of artists can be heard, the process of how record labels promote songs may have very similar foundations as are described in *The Manual*. Cauty and Drummond suggest a song writer aspiring to write a hit should '...watch Top of the Pops religiously every week and learn from it. When the time comes it is through TOTP that you will convince the largest cross-section of the British public to go out and buy your record' (18). Such a sentiment would indicate that a sense of business is needed in the manufacture of a number one hit, requiring song writers to create something their audience will experience with some level of familiarity.

If a band is pushed by a record label, then they will get more airplay, more time on TV playing live, and more opportunities to play at festivals and venues which will, consequently, increase their reach, far more than if an indie band had a catchy song but only played on the club circuit. The promotional advantages of a record label backing a band is distinct and will, more than likely, impact sales in a hugely positive way; meaning that more people hear the band and become fans as a result. If there was no promotion and the band were only touring around one county of the UK, they may only end up charting with their catchy song after a longer period of time than if a record label were backing them, and funding them, through national and/or international promotion. On the internet, sites like SoundCloud, YouTube and VEVO may also affect how a band is heard. In a YouTube setting, the band may be stumbled upon through a related video, or through a promotional advert on VEVO – pushed by the band's record label.

Another example of a song which utilises motivic reiteration is Two Door Cinema Club's 2010 song, 'This is the Life'. This particular song's chorus is made up of five repetitions of the title line of the song, as shown in Figures 3a and 3b. The melodic structure and rhythm of the title line is repeated until the fifth time, where it becomes 'This is the life then who'd argue?' and uses the a familiar pattern of notes: 1/4 note, 1/8<sup>th</sup> note, 1/8<sup>th</sup> note, 1/4 note, adjusted to 1/4 note, 1/8<sup>th</sup> note, 1/8<sup>th</sup> note, 1/8<sup>th</sup> note, 1/8<sup>th</sup> note, 1/8<sup>th</sup> note, dotted 1/4 note, and finally a dotted 1/2 note. This variance is used to bring the chorus line to a musically appropriate ending. The reiteration of the title line in the same melody and rhythmic pattern could be argued as being the primary hooking points, which helps the chorus become more ingrained in the listener's mind. It would appear that a common factor between more recent pop songs is such a pattern in the chorus.



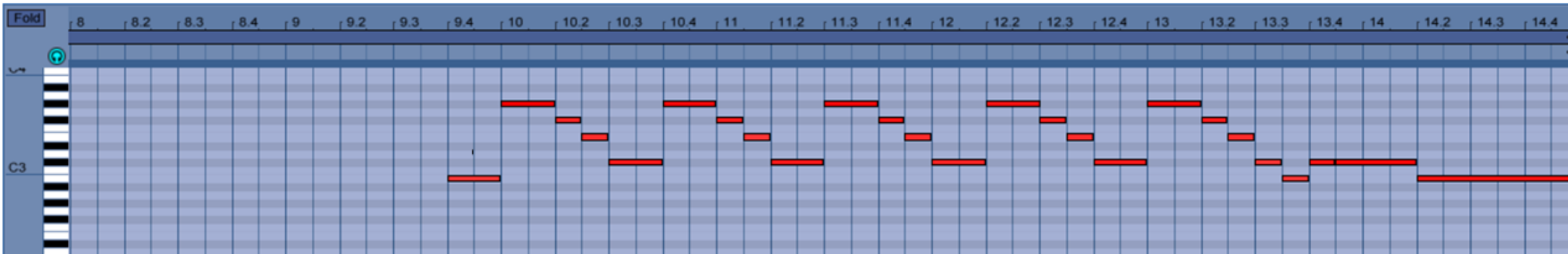
Lyrics:

cos if thi---s is the li---fe thi---s is the li---fe thi---s is the li---fe thi---s is the li---fe thi---s is the life who'd

then ar-----gue-----

Note length:

1/8 1/8 1/4 1/8 1/8 1/4 1/4 1/8 1/8 1/4 1/4 1/8 1/8 1/4 1/4 1/8 1/8 1/4 1/4 1/8 1/8 1/4 1/4 1/8 1/8 1/8 1/8 D1/4 D1/2  
1/8



Lyrics:

cos if thi---s is the li---fe thi---s is the li---fe thi---s is the li---fe thi---s is the li---fe thi---s is the life who'd  
then ar-----gue-----

Note length:

1/8 1/8 1/4 1/8 1/8 1/4 1/4 1/8 1/8 1/4 1/4 1/8 1/8 1/4 1/4 1/8 1/8 1/4 1/4 1/8 1/8 1/8 1/8 D1/4 D1/2  
1/8

**Figure 3a and 3b: Vowel Repetition in the chorus of Two Door Cinema Club's 'This Is The Life'**



Motivic reiteration is something which appears across songs in just about every genre, from pop songs to indie rock (as can be seen from the examples examined earlier), and is used to great effect in modern music when creating a song which stands a good likelihood of being deemed catchy to listeners. As a secondary hooking device, it doesn't necessarily appear in every single song that is deemed catchy. Although a song can be quite infectious without blatant lyrical motivic reiteration, melodic motivic reiteration is present in the vast majority of songs. For instance, it is likely that a verse and chorus will have a chord structure that repeats for a certain amount of time over a series of bars, which is a type of repetition, or even a chorus melody which is reiterated for a few bars. When the segment is repeated, the listener has already heard it and is more likely to remember it. In lyrical terms, reiterating a phrase, as in the Two Door Cinema Club example, is a great way of getting a chorus melody to stick in a listener's head, and is a very simple effect to achieve.

The melody doesn't necessarily have to stay the same. In Mark Ronson and Bruno Mars' 'Uptown Funk' the melody for the first two vocalisations of '*Don't believe me just watch*' have the same melody; although the second two are higher in pitch, both are very similar in terms of prosodic rhythm. This is, arguably, one of the most basic tools song writers can use in order to create a song which has the potential to be memorable.

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