

HOW TO SPEAK “Musician”

A singer's guide to
PREPARATION
COMMUNICATION
THE GREAT AMERICAN
SONG BOOK

HOW TO SPEAK "MUSICIAN"

INTRODUCTION

Singers must rely on musicians in order to perform at their best. (Karaoke is nice, but will never replace the excitement of a live performance). Musicians, in their role of supporting a singer, must present the best rhythm, the best accompaniment, the best background possible so that the singer can build on that support, use it and present the best possible performance. If you think about a performance as an ocean wave, the musicians provide the ground swell and the base of the wave, and the singer sits atop that wave, sparkling in the sunlight, able to do whatever it takes to make the whole wave shine, secure in the knowledge that the foundation is strong and that the singer is free to make the best musical decisions.

There are many singers that excel at singing but have trouble communicating with musicians. Musicians do have their own language, (both spoken and unspoken) and a singer has to understand that language in order to get the best accompaniment possible. Therefore, the purpose of this book is to bridge the gap between singers and musicians - to eliminate any misunderstandings and help define exactly 'what' the singer needs in order to perform.

This book is not designed for beginners. It is designed for singers who already have professional experience and now need to understand what it takes to command musicians in order to deliver the best performance. The book is for singers who need to know "HOW TO SPEAK MUSICIAN".

HOW TO SPEAK “MUSICIAN”

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A SHORT HISTORY OF SINGERS, JAZZ AND THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK

In the late 19th Century and continuing into the early part of the 20th Century, the most popular male vocalists were "high tenors" and female vocalists were sopranos. Jenny Lind, "The Swedish Nightingale" and the most popular singer of her era, sang both opera and popular music. She was a soprano. There were so many Irish "high tenors", thanks to the potato famine in Ireland and the migration of the Irish population to the United States, that any tenor who possessed a high voice, regardless of his country of origin, was called an "Irish tenor".

The songs of the turn of the 20th Century were written to be sung by high tenors or sopranos. Some examples are "I'm Only a Bird in a Gilded Cage", "I Love You Truly", "Mighty Like a Rose", "Shine on Harvest Moon", "Sweet Adeline", "Wait 'Till the Sun Shines Nellie" and countless others.

The most famous of the "Irish tenors", George M. Cohan, whether he knew it or not, served as a bridge between the "high tenor/soprano" singers to the more modern voices - alto for females and tenor for males. George M. Cohan's songs, "Yankee Doodle Boy", "Give My Regards to Broadway", "You're a Grand Old Flag", "Over There", "Harrigan", "Mary, It's a Grand Old Name", originally written for Cohan's Irish tenor voice, were also suitable for tenors and tenor/baritones as well.

As Jazz began to develop in the United States and The Great American Songbook began to be written, it soon became apparent that altos for females and tenors for males were the voices of choice for vocalists. Altos and tenors were just more suitable to sing the new songs and so the transition from "high tenor" to tenor and soprano to alto began. Today almost all female singers of the American Song Book are altos and almost all male singers are tenors. Some notable "high tenors" survived, (Tony Bennet, Mel Torme), but no soprano popular singers have made it past the early 1930's.

Tin Pan Alley, a group of buildings on West 28th Street between 5th and 6th Avenues in Manhattan, New York City, was already established as the place for songwriters to create their melodies. The term "Tin Pan" is attributable to either the sound of many pianos playing at once or the "tinny" sound that those cheap upright pianos emitted. Tin Pan Alley finally gave way to The Brill Building, built in 1931. The Brill Building is on Broadway and 49th Street in Manhattan, north of Times Square and at the north end of the Broadway theater district.

It was in Tin Pan Alley and The Brill Building where the greatest songs of the American Song Book were written. Almost all of the songwriters were men. Therefore, most of the songs they wrote were written *by men* to be sung *by men*. Therefore, most of the songs of the American Songbook are written in "male" keys, or the "flat" keys, that is C, F, Bb and Eb. Altos who wished to sing these songs had to have the keys changed to fit the range of their voices, which usually meant the "sharp" keys, G, D or A. If you watch videos of the big band era, where a band had both a male and female singer, the band would play a song first, followed by the male vocalist who sang the song *in the same key*. Then the band would change keys to accommodate the vocal range of the female singer and the female singer would then sing a chorus. This pattern is consistent with every big band video I've ever seen.

In the 20th Century, there were only two singers and one vocal group that dramatically changed the nature and performance of popular music. The first of these was Bing Crosby.

Bing Crosby, a baritone, not a tenor, was the first major singer to realize that you don't have to "belt" songs out like Enrico Caruso, (the most popular operatic tenor of his day), in order to be successful. His "relaxed, informal" style, along with his use of a microphone and movie "close-ups", changed the way popular songs were sung. Crosby was called a "crooner", a term that started out as derogatory but ended up being acceptable and desired by singers of popular songs from the 1930's through the 1950's.

The second performer who changed the way music was sung was Frank Sinatra. Sinatra took Crosby's relaxed style to its "Nth degree", personalizing his singing so it sounded like he was singing to "you" and "you" alone. No singer before him ever personalized his/her vocal style the way Sinatra

did and after Sinatra started, every singer, male or female, imitated his style.

Sinatra also changed stardom roles. In the big band era, the bandleaders, (Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Glen Miller, et. al.), were the stars. When Sinatra's career was over, it was the singer who was the star and it didn't matter who played the accompaniment. Frank Sinatra was literally alone at the top of the popular singing "mountain". He dramatically changed the way vocalists approached singing the the interpretation of songs.

The last of the performers who changed the way music was written and sung were the Beatles. The Beatles introduced new instruments into Rock 'n Roll; they created songs in different meters, (sometimes more than once within the same song), and they invented new chord combinations and different and unusual note intervals into their music.

Now, in the 21st Century, music itself is fragmented. There doesn't appear to be any one, or any group, that could affect the entirety of popular musical performance the way Crosby, Sinatra and the Beatles did in the 20th Century.

Two events begin in the mid 20th Century that dramatically changed the way music was conceived and performed. The first was that the guitar replaced the piano as the instrument of choice for composers as well as performers of songs. Anyone who has ever played guitar knows that using the sharp keys (G, D, A, E) makes singing, playing and composing much easier than using the flat keys. This is one reason why so many new songs are written in the sharp keys. The second reason was that women figured out that they were as good at composing songs as men were. So, with these two events, songs written in the sharp keys became more common.

Today, in the second decade of the 21st Century, the following seems clear:

1. Music itself is fragmented into many different styles. At the turn of the 20th Century, there was popular music, classical music and opera. Starting in the 1950's there was opera, popular music, Classical Music, Jazz, Rock 'n Roll (the child of Rhythm and Blues), and Country and Western. Now there is pop, Jazz, opera, Classical Music, Hip-Hop, Latin, Reggae, Salsa, Afro-Cuban, Religious, Country & Western, Broadway, Rap, Indie Rock, Gangsta Rap, Heavy Metal, Acid Rock, Klezmer and other musical styles whose names I can't remember. There is not one unifying musical force anymore. People don't even listen to different styles of music, only those styles they like. Therefore, there is not, at the moment, any one or any thing that can profoundly change the way music is written or performed the way Crosby, Sinatra and the Beatles did.

2. The Great American Songbook itself seems to be surrounded by a bit of controversy. Purists say that no song written for a Broadway show composed in the "modern" era (i.e. starting in the late 1940's with such shows as "Oklahoma" and "South Pacific"), should be admitted as a song of the Great American Songbook. This notion is a bit strange because some of the best American Songbook songs were written for the Broadway stage by some of the best American songwriters, (George and Ira Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Rogers and Hart and others). Those songs are literally too numerous to mention. Some of the post World War II songs written for the stage seem to have found a path into the Great American Songbook. Examples I can think of include "It Might As Well Be Spring" from "Oklahoma", "Matchmaker, Matchmaker" from "Fiddler on the Roof", "Hello Dolly" from the show of the same name, "Somewhere" from "West Side Story" to name just a very few. A good song from a good songwriter should be admitted into the Great American Songbook no matter when it was written and who wrote it.

3. I don't like to think of The Great American Songbook as a "static", finished document. Certainly the composers and lyricists who contributed their works to the Songbook had no idea that they were making such contributions while they were writing. If we say that the Great American Songbook is a closed and finished document, then we preserve it, study it but condemn it to a limited and, eventually, dusty shelf life.

I also believe that the contributions of some great international songwriters, (the ones I think of

right away are the brilliant Brazilian composer Antonio Carlos Jobim and the equally brilliant French composer Michel LeGrand), belong in the Great American Songbook. Our greatest documents, like the United States Constitution and Webster's Unabridged Dictionary (!), were designed to be fluid, meaning they can be updated and changed whenever circumstances dictate. I'd like to think of the Great American Songbook in such a manner. Adding new material that's good enough to withstand the test of time would make the Great American Songbook a living, international document and a living tribute to its root composers.

4. Historians generally agree that Jazz was the single greatest contribution The United States made to the world's culture. Certainly that is true. I would also like to add The Great American Songbook as a second such contribution. American songs became international starting in the early 20th Century, when record machines and talking pictures carried the melodies and words around the world. It's time to give The Great American Songbook its rightful place in the world's culture.

HOW TO SPEAK "MUSICIAN"

SONG CONSTRUCTION

There are many different ways to construct a song. This section describes the most common methods that composers used to construct songs that are part of the Great American Songbook. So, please note that although this section covers "most" of the songs, there remains a good number of songs whose construction is not described here.

1. VERSE: Most songs have what is commonly called the "Verse". The verse is an introductory section, usually sung ad lib, (i.e. without rhythm), which sets the stage for the main melody. An example of a great verse is from "I Left My Heart In San Francisco":

*The loveliness of Paris is somehow sad and gay,
The glory that was Rome was of another day.
I've been terribly alone and forgotten in Manhattan.
I'm going home to my city by the bay -*

I left my heart.....

Unfortunately, today's composers do not write verses. The good news is that the verses written for the American Songbook are generally strong and "survivable".

2. CHORUS The chorus, or main part of a song, contains the melody that most people associate with the song. Choruses are mainly written in three different ways, each of which will be described here:

- a. A,A,B,A: This usually consists of an 8 bar musical phrase (A), which is repeated (A). Then the middle part, (commonly called the BRIDGE - {B}), is played followed by a repeat of the original 8 bars (A).

Examples of songs that follow this pattern are numerous. Here are a few:

*I've Got Rhythm
Just One of Those Things
That's Why the Lady is a Tramp
Moonglow
..... and thousands more!*

Hum one of these songs to yourself. You'll hear that they all follow the A,A,B,A pattern.

- b. A,A: This usually consists of a 16 bar musical phrase (A) which is repeated in generally the same pattern (A). Examples of this type of musical construction are:

*L-O-V-E
Dream (When you're feeling blue...)*

- c. BLUES: The blues usually is composed in a repeating pattern of 12 bars.
The first 4 bars are in the key in which the song is composed.
The next 4 bars are use a chord closely associated with the first chord -
(NOTE: See Section on Chord Construction)
The next 4 bars uses the first chord, another chord, then ends back
with the very first chord.

Examples of songs written in blues style are also numerous. The most popular one, perhaps,
is *Kansas City*
Try humming it to yourself!

HOW TO SPEAK "MUSICIAN"

KEY SIGNATURES

The chord at the end of almost every song in the American songbook defines the key that it is written in. This is such a truism that you don't have to worry about the exceptions. So, if you want to know what key a song is written in, look at the very last chord in the music.

Most songs also start in the same key they are written in. However, this is not always true. A song like "Fly Me To The Moon", which is in the key of Cmajor, starts with an Aminor Chord. "Autumn Leaves" is in the key of Cminor but starts with an Fminor7 chord. It is generally true, though, that a song will begin and end in the key in which it is written

There are very few songs that start out in one key and end in another. The most notable exception is the song "Unforgettable", which starts in the key of G Major and ends in the key of C Major.

KEYS: Every song is written in a certain key. A key can have no sharps and flats (C Major), or have sharps or flats. Sharps and flats are never mixed together in a key signature.

Every Major Key has a Minor Key associated with it. That is, the Major key and the Minor key have the exact same number of sharps or flats. This is why the minor key is called the "Relative Minor". (Remember, if you want to know the key a song is written in, look at the very last chord. This will tell you whether a song is in the Major Key or the Relative Minor Key).



No sharps or flats:
C Major
Relative Minor: A Minor



One sharp (F#)
G Major
Relative Minor: E Minor



Four sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#)
E Major
Relative Minor: C# Minor



Two sharps (F#, C#)
D Major
Relative Minor: B Minor



Five sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#, A#)
B Major
Relative Minor: G# Minor



Three sharps (F#, C#, G#)
A Major
Relative Minor: F# Minor



Six sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#, A#, E#)
F# Major
Relative Minor: D# Minor



Seven sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#, A#, E#, B#)
C# Major
Relative Minor: A# Minor

HOW TO SPEAK "MUSICIAN"



No sharps or flats:
C Major
Relative Minor: A Minor



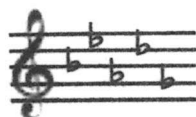
One Flat (Bb):
F Major
Relative Minor: D Minor



Four flats (Bb, Eb, Ab, Db):
Ab Major
Relative Minor: F Minor



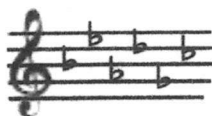
Two Flats (Bb, Eb):
Bb Major
Relative Minor: G Minor



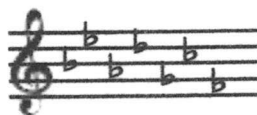
Five flats (Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, Gb):
Db Major
Relative Minor: Bb Minor



Three Flats (Bb, Eb, Ab):
Eb Major
Relative Minor: C Minor



Six flats (Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, Gb, Cb):
Gb Major
Relative Minor: Eb Minor



Seven flats (Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, Gb, Cb, Fb):
Cb Major
Relative Minor: Ab Minor

HOW TO SPEAK "MUSICIAN"

PRESENTING A SONG TO MUSICIANS

LEAD SHEETS

A lead sheet is a piece of music that is most often presented by singers to musicians. A lead sheet is an abbreviated form of music which can easily be read by musicians when accompanying singers.

There are four types of lead sheets:

1. Lead sheets with chords only. There are no musical notes on this type of lead sheet.
2. Lead sheets with chords and music only. There are no lyrics on this type of lead sheet.
3. Lead sheets with chords, music and lyrics.
4. Lead sheets that are a part of a special arrangement for a singer. This type of lead sheet can have special intros, special endings, changes of keys and/or medleys.

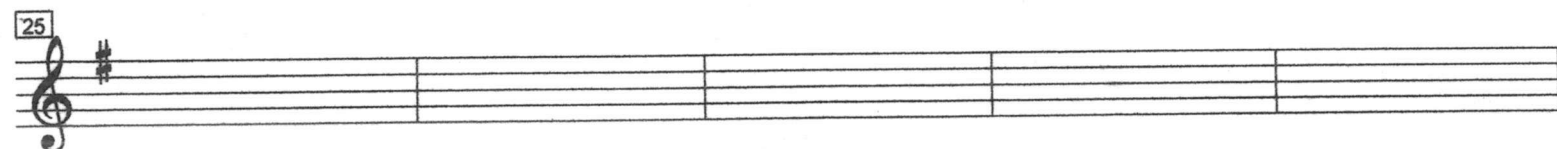
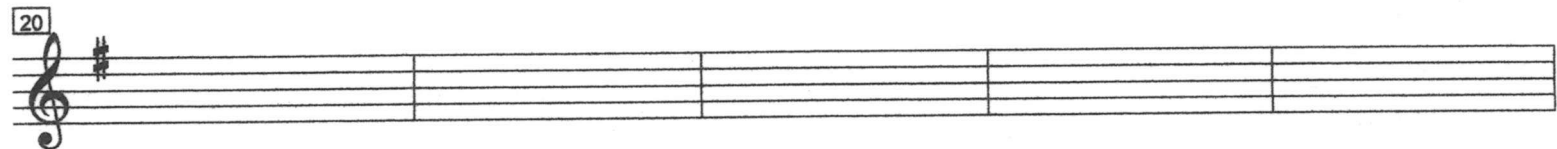
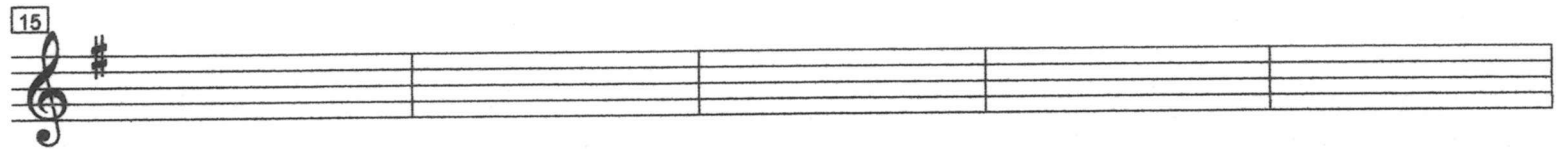
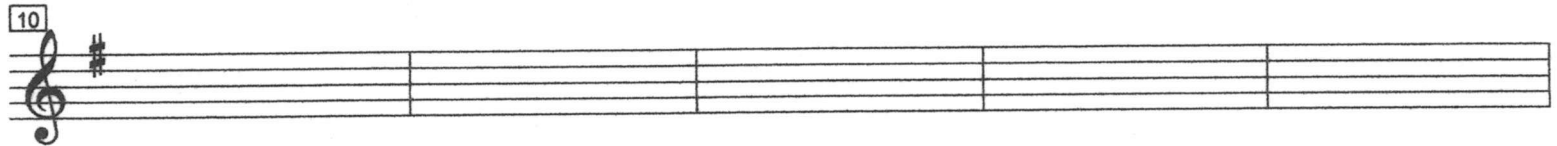
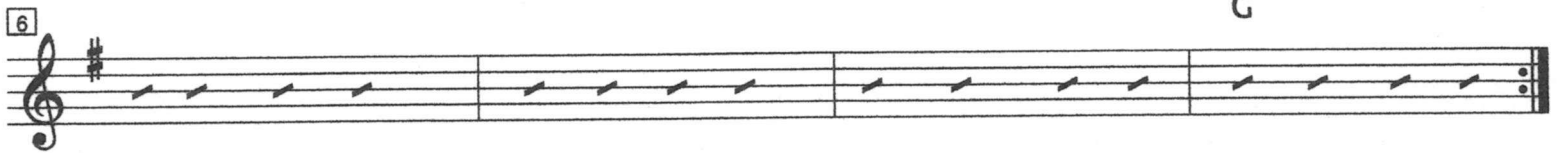
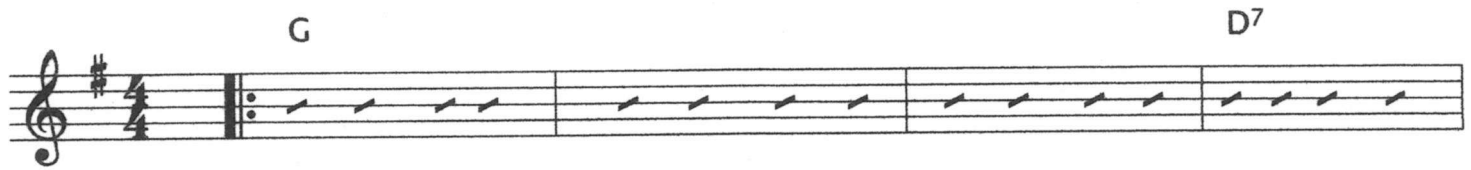
The following four pages show examples of lead sheets:

FAKE BOOKS: "Fake Books" started appearing in the New York City area in the early 1950's. Fake Books are compilations of lead sheets. Most of the lead sheets have music and chords, some also include lyrics. These books, when first published, violated copyright laws so were sold "under-the-table", hence the name "Fake Books". Now that so many copyrights have expired, Fake Books are sold legally and include all kinds of musical compilations.

Achy Breaky Heart

(Lead Sheet with Chords Only)

1

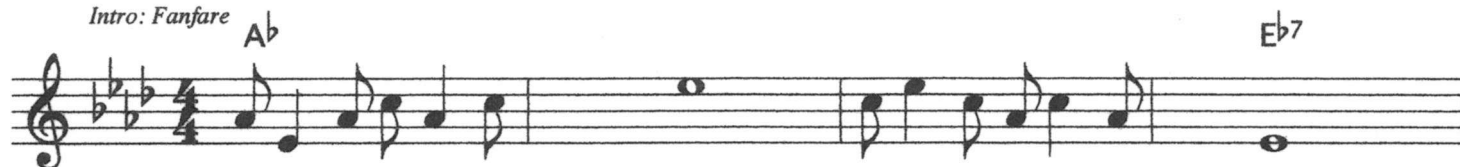


Bourbon Street Parade

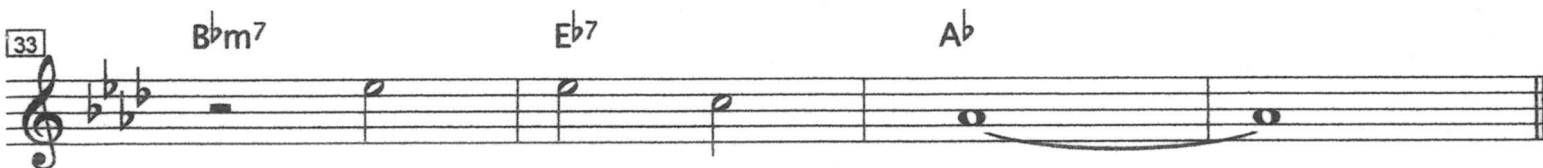
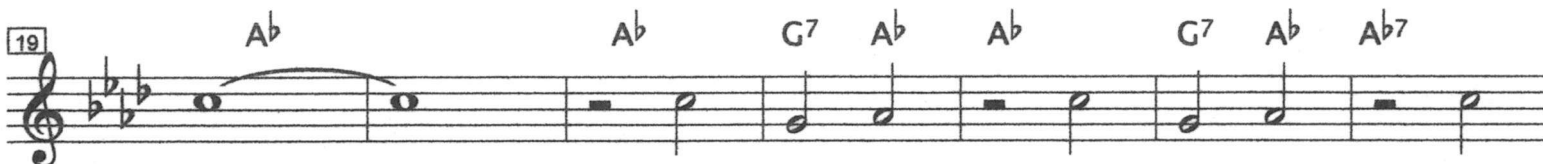
(Lead Sheet with Chords and Music Only)

1

Intro: Fanfare



Chorus:



CHEEK TO CHEEK

(Lead Sheet - Chords, Music & Lyrics)

Moderately

Words and Music by
Irving Berlin

Heav - en I'm in Heav - en. And my

heart beats so that I can hard - ly speak. And I

seem to find the hap - pi - ness I seek. when we're

out to - geth - er danc - ing Cheek To Cheek

Heav - en I'm in Heav - en. And the

cares that hang a - round me thru the week. Seem to

van - ish like a gamb - ler's luck - y streak. when we're

out to - geth - er danc - ing Cheek To Cheek. Oh, I

Love to climb a moun - tain and to reach the high - est peak. But it

CAST YOUR FATE TO THE WIND

(Lead Sheet - Special Arrangement)

1

month of nights a year of days Oc - to - bers drift - ing in - to Mays
shift my course a - long the breeze won't sail up - wind on mem - o - ries the

set my sails when the tide comes and just cast my fate to the wind
em - ty sky is my best friend

1.

F G7 C F G7

HOW TO SPEAK "MUSICIAN"

TEMPO - COUNTING OFF

Singers should know how to "count off". This establishes the rhythm that the singer wants, not what the musicians think it ought to be. "Counting off" is easy if you follow these basic rules:

1. Always count off two measures, except for BALLADS (See below).
2. Count aloud but snap your fingers (if you can) on beats two and four.
3. Count as follows: (NOTE: This works for songs that are in four-quarter time or the vast majority of songs in the American songbook. Three-quarter time {waltzes} have a slightly different count-off routine). Count:
"ONE, (Snap), TWO, (Snap), ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR".
Some people prefer to add an "Ah" to the count, as follows:
"Ah-ONE, (Snap), Ah-TWO, (Snap), Ah-ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR".
4. Either way works fine and both are acceptable and preferred by musicians.
5. If you can't snap your fingers, don't try! Just do the count-off.

BALLADS

Ballads, or slow tunes, have slightly different counting-off rules. Because the song is slow, the singer only needs to count off one measure instead of two. It's usually "ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR."

If you are about to sing a ballad that has no rhythm, tell the piano player either "It's AD LIB" or "It's Rubato", or "There is no rhythm; just follow me". Any competent pianist will understand what you are trying to do.

WALTZES

Waltzes are different because, in a waltz, there are only three beats per measure, not four. You still want to count off two measures, only say: ONE, TWO, THREE, ONE, TWO THREE. There is no need to snap your fingers.

VERY FAST SONGS

Some songs (e.g. "Just One of Those Things", "I've Got Rhythm"), may only have two beats per measure, not four. Even so, it's best to count off two measures as follows: "ONE, TWO, ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR". Because the song is fast, there is no need to snap your fingers.

METRONOMES

Metronomes are great for you to use, (you can get a free app on your smart phone or iPad), to calculate how fast you want a song to go. Generally speaking, musicians cannot translate metronome numbers into real rhythm, except when they have an iPhone or iPad right next to them and can quickly get the correct metronome marking. It's best for the singer to work out the rhythm in advance and be firm when telling the musicians how fast or how slow the singer wants to sing a song. The easiest way to get the correct tempo is to sing the song quietly in your head. You can then translate that tempo for the musicians.

HOW TO SPEAK "MUSICIAN"

HAND SIGNALS

Over the years, instrumentalists have developed a set of hand signals which the leader of the band uses to tell the rest of the musicians 'what to do next'. Hand signals are also helpful for the singer, who might need to communicate to the band members while he or she is singing. Here are some of the most common hand signals:

1. GOING OUT: Raising one hand straight up, with your fingers making a fist, and holding it up until everyone sees it, is the universal musician's signal for "going out". This means that the end of the part you are currently playing is the end of the entire song.
2. KEEP IT GOING: Raising one hand, with your index finger pointing up and making a continuous circular motion means that you want the song to keep going.
3. BACK TO THE TOP - (DA CAPO): Tapping your hand on the top of your head means that you want the band to return to the top (i.e. the beginning of a song) when the current part is finished.
4. STRETCHING (OR TAG): Moving one hand horizontally across your body (usually the waist) tells the musicians to stretch the part they are coming to. This is usually applied at the very end of a song to signify elongation or a "tag". For example, by stretching your hand at the end of "When You're Smilin'" means that you want to put a "tag" at the end of the song....."the whole world smiles, the whole world smiles, the whole world smiles with you". NOTE: If you want a tag at the end of a song, it is advisable to tell this to the band when you're presenting the song to them. Just saying "there's a tag at the end of the song" is usually sufficient.
5. CONTROLLING SOLOS: Pointing to a musician usually means that you want that musician to play a solo. Pointing to yourself means that you, the singer, will take musical control of the song at the next logical place.
6. CHANGING KEYS IN THE MIDDLE OF A SONG: This doesn't happen very often. Usually a key change is noted in the music or discussed when presenting the song to the musicians. However, knowing the hand signals for key changes could come in handy, especially on a song where changing keys becomes effective (e.g. "Mac the Knife", "Just a Closer Walk With Thee", etc.). Key changes are controlled by the fingers of one hand. Finger (or fingers) pointing down indicate Flat Keys; finger or fingers pointing up indicate sharp keys). For example, pointing one finger down indicates one flat or the key of F Major; pointing two fingers up means two sharps or the key of D Major. NOTE: Don't do this unless you really know what you're doing, otherwise you'll confuse the musicians.

HOW TO SPEAK "MUSICIAN"

PRESENTING A SONG TO MUSICIANS

The very best thing singers can offer instrumentalists who are to accompany them is the music itself. If you give them sheet music, you've solved a lot of problems immediately.

Here is how you present a song to a group of musicians. Follow these steps in the order they are given.

1. Go to the leader of band. The leader, and the piano player, are the most important people in the group as far as you are concerned. If you don't know who the leader is, go to the piano player.
2. If you have music, give it out (e.g. piano first, then bass, then drums, then others if you have them).
3. Talk to the leader and/or piano player. Do this whether you have music or not. Tell them:
 - a. We're doing (name of song).
 - b. It's in the Key of - (see separate sheet on Key Signatures).
 - c. Here is the tempo - (tap out a few bars - see separate sheet on Tempo).
 - d. Talk to them about how many times the song will be sung and "who" will take the lead.
For example: "We'll do the song two times through. I'll sing one complete chorus, then there will be a piano solo. I'll pick it up at the bridge and sing it out."
 - e. Now talk about anything special they need to know about this particular song.
This includes such items as: Intros, ad lib parts, special endings, etc.
 - f. Ask if they have any questions. NOTE: If you have done your job correctly, there should not be any questions.
4. At this time, you've talked over the major points of your presentation with the musicians. Now you need to take charge of the performance. Make sure you do the following:
 - a. Count off to start the band.
 - b. Point to soloists just before you want them to take solos.
NOTE: Most solos follow this sequence:
 - 1) Front-line players first (Trumpet, Saxophone, Clarinet, Trombone)
 - 2) Rhythm section (Piano, Bass, Guitar)
 - 3) Drums last. This could be a total drum solo, or "Trading Fours". Trading fours means that an instrumentalist takes a four bar solo, followed by a four bar drum solo, then another instrumentalist solo, a four bar drum solo, etc., etc., until the end of the chorus. Trading fours is usually followed by a repeat of the chorus - then out. Singers usually do not participate in Trading Fours.
 - c. Make sure, with hand signals, that everyone in the band knows what's coming.

HOW TO SPEAK "MUSICIAN"

HOW TO SING A SONG

A. GENERAL RULES: (Which means that these rules may not apply to all occasions; they're just a good way to approach singing a song.) After you've learned your craft well, then you can experiment. Remember, even Picasso didn't paint figures with eyes sticking out of their noses until he really knew how to paint in the classical manner).

1. Think of a song as building a house. The first thing you want to do is establish a good foundation. That means that the first time you sing the chorus, you want to sing it pretty much the way the songwriter wrote it. This establishes the facts that you are familiar with the song and can sing it in a straightforward manner, i.e. you've built the foundation.

2. The second time (or third time, if you choose), you can play around with the melody and words:

- a. Stretch out a tone beyond what the music calls for.
- b. 'Slide' into a tone by starting out a bit flat.
- c. Add extra words or phrases.
- d. Scat (if you're really good).

3. The last part of a song should be sung 'straight out' to re-establish the foundation.

4. Give solos to the members of the band where appropriate. Do not give too many solos because you'll find yourself on stage just listening. Remember, a vocal performance is primarily for the singer, not for the backup musicians.

5. Try singing songs that may not seem appropriate for you. If you have a Broadway stage voice, try singing a soft ballad. If you've been trained operatically, try singing jazz ballads.

6. Try singing when you're seated. This works for ballads. Sitting down is a way of relaxing. The audience, (whether they know it or not), becomes relaxed, too.

HANDLING A MICROPHONE

1. When you're doing your opening number, keep the microphone on the stand. If you're going to take it off the stand, wait until the second time the song is performed.

2. Remove the microphone from its stand when you sing ballads. Bringing the microphone closer to you face indicates 'closeness' which is something you want to incorporate into a ballad.

3. Keep the microphone beneath your chin. Today's multi-directional microphones can pick up your voice from any angle. Besides, people want to look at your entire face when you sing, not you from the nose up!

4. Be careful about moving a microphone around while you sing. Keeping the microphone in one place is best.

HOW TO SPEAK "MUSICIAN"

SPEAKING TO A DRUMMER

This whole chapter is written for singers who do not have drum music. If you have drum music, and you find a drummer who knows how to read music, the music should explain the exact nature of the song you're about to perform. Otherwise, read on.....

Drummers are great people. Most of them only want to do two things: play drums and eat! There are times, though, when you must speak directly to the drummer in order to specify exactly what you want as accompaniment to your performance.

Speak directly to the drummer when:

1. There is a change in tempo somewhere within the song. An example of this is a song which you are going to sing without rhythm (rubato), the first time, followed by the second chorus in a rhythm of your choosing. Take the song "Autumn Leaves", where you, the singer, sing the first part with piano accompaniment only and want everyone to join in the second time in a "Bolero" rhythm.

2. You want the drummer NOT to play certain sections of the song. Therefore, you must tell the drummer "when to come in" or "when to lay out". (N.B. "Lay out" is the proper term to use when telling a drummer not to play). An example of this kind could be a song where you establish the rhythm just with voice and piano and don't want the drums to play until the "bridge".

3. When there is a change in the kind of rhythm played within the song. For example, many rhumbas start out with a rumba rhythm but will change to a cha-cha rhythm at the bridge. Another example is the song "I've Got You Under My Skin". You can tell the drummer that, in the beginning, you want a "2-feel" and, at the "bridge", change to a straight 4/4 time. In this case, the tempo doesn't change but the type of rhythm accompaniment does change.

When speaking to a drummer, always use this sequence:

1. Tell the drummer the name of the song. If he knows the tune, you're more than halfway to success already.

2. Tell the drummer the main tempo of the song. Use terms like: "It's in 4 quarter time" or "It's a Jazz Waltz", or "It's a Bossa Nova", etc. etc. etc. (N.B. It's best to know this information well in advance of speaking to a drummer). It's also a good idea to give the drummer two measures ("count off", using your voice and snapping your fingers), which will give the drummer a really good idea of the main tempo of the song.

3. Now tell the drummer about any "special circumstances" (change in tempo, change in rhythm, laying out, etc.) that may be tied to this performance.

Here are some terms that, when you use them, will endear yourself to drummers. Use them when necessary:

1. "IT'S A TWO FEEL" : Many songs start out with a "two feel" even though they're written in 4/4 time. Listen to Frank Sinatra sing "I've Got You Under My Skin". That's an example of a song, written in 4/4 time, that starts out with a "two feel".

2. "IT'S IN FOUR QUARTER TIME" or "IT'S IN COMMON TIME": Most songs in the American Song Book are written in 4/4 (Four Quarter) time, hence the term "Common time". Make sure you know, in advance, what the time signature for your song(s) is.

3. "I LIKE A HEAVY BACKBEAT": The back beat, in a 4/4 tune, occurs on the second and fourth beats of each measure. Asking the drummer for a "heavy backbeat" means you want those two beats accented. (N.B. Listen to any up-beat tune sung by Bobby Darin). Telling a drummer you want a "heavy back beat" will bring a smile to his/her face.

4. "PLAY ON TOP OF THE BEAT": Many singers like their drummers to (very slightly) anticipate the rhythm. This is called "Playing on Top of the Beat". Drummers who do this well create tension in the song because of the interplay between the drums (on "top of the beat") and the bass player (who plays right "on the beat". This is very effective, especially in latin music where the interplay between the rhythm instruments is essential in creating exciting rhythm. It also works well in straight jazz.

5. "LAY BACK": Telling a drummer to "lay back" is the opposite of playing "on top of the beat". The drummer will be ever so slightly behind the rhythm, creating a different kind of tension than when a drummer plays "on top of the beat". Telling a drummer to "lay back" usually occurs when singing ballads.

6. "KICK IT" or "KICK IT UP": This is when you absolutely want the drummer to "push the band". "Kicking it up" usually occurs towards the end of a song when you want generate excitement.

7. "USE BRUSHES": Brushes are very effective not only for ballads but for many up-tempo songs as well. Brushes generally give a "lighter" feel to the accompaniment as a whole. You may want the drummer to start out a song using brushes and switch to sticks at an appropriate point (to make the arrangement build to a more exciting finish). N.B. Brushes are hardly used in today's music (shame).

VIBRATO

Vibrato is a pulsating musical effect produced by the rapid reiteration of emphasis on a tone. Vibrato is very effective when singing opera and only somewhat effective when singing theatrical (stage) songs. Vibrato is probably least effective when singing songs from the American Song Book.

Most musicians, (saxophonists and trumpeters mainly), have given up playing vibrato. This means they can produce a vibrato on a tone but choose not to do so. NOTE: You cannot get a vibrato effect on a piano or on a set of drums.

Jazz singers should use vibrato in a very limited fashion. Vibrato should only be used when singing long tones, (at least two beats long), during ballads. Vibrato should only be invoked after the tone is first sung in a flat, 'straight-out' manner, at very end of the note. Vibrato is most effective when singing the very last tone of a ballad.

So, singers, be wary of using vibrato. It is definitely not in fashion.

HOW TO SPEAK "MUSICIAN"

A GLOSSARY OF TERMS.

A CAPELLA: Sung alone, without accompaniment.

AD LIB Without rhythm (the same as Rubato).

ARPEGGIO: Usually abbreviated as *arpeg*. A series of rapidly played single notes, played in ascending order, usually played on a piano. Arpeggios usually are played at the beginning of a song or at the beginning of a specific area in the music or to signify a key change.

BACKBEAT: Usually the second and fourth beats of a song written in 4/4 time. Backbeats can be accented by the drums when requested.

BLUES: A specific chord pattern found in many songs around the world.

BRIDGE: The middle part of a song, usually a song written in the A,A,B,A pattern. The "B" part is the bridge.

CHORD Usually, three or four notes struck together to give a harmonious sound.

CHORD PATTERNS: Many songs are written to specific and recognizable chord patterns. A blues is a chord pattern, as is 1,6,2,5 (a popular chord pattern of early Rock 'N Roll music).

CHORUS: The main part of a song - the melody usually associated with a song.

CLUB DATE (or GIG or SOCIAL): A job for musicians.

COUNTING OFF: Starting the tempo of a song by counting two measures before the band starts.

DA CAPO: Back to the "top" or chorus of a song.

ENDINGS: A singer can specify the type of ending he or she prefers for the song being performed. The most common types of endings are "TWO BAR", "FOUR BAR" or "TWO BAR then FOUR BAR DRUM SOLO then TWO BARS AND OUT. Most musicians immediately understand endings when a singer specifies them in this manner.

FADE: A type of ending where a few measures are played over and over again and the band gets quieter and quieter until the song stops.

FAKE BOOK: A compilation of lead sheets now sold legally.

GIG See CLUB DATE

GIG LIST: A list of songs arranged in the order that a singer is going to perform them.

HOLD: or Fermata or "Bird's Eye" - A suspension of the tempo in order to dramatize a note or series of notes. A hold is recognized by a half-circle with a dot in the middle of half-circle (Bird's eye

INTRO: Short for "introduction". The very first part of a song. Often intros are not included in songs. Also, intros might be very short (a single keynote), or a single chord, or an Arpeggio, or longer (usually 4 or 8 bars). Musicians recognize the following terms (Standard intro and/or 1-6-2-5 {referring to specific chords within a key} or "use last 4 bars as intro" or "use last 8 bars as intro").

KEY: (or Key Signature) - Signifies the 'base' (also known as the "Tonic" for a song, including the chords, and whether certain notes will be played with either a sharp or a flat. Key signatures either identify a Major Key (generally happy-sounding) or its relative Minor Key (generally sad-sounding).

KICK IT UP: A term used to request a drummer to "push" the rhythm, which usually occurs towards the end of an arrangement.

LAY BACK: A term used to request a drummer not to be aggressive when playing. It's the opposite of "Kick it Up".

LEAD SHEET: An abbreviated form of music presented to musicians in order to accompany singers. Lead Sheets could have chords only, chords and music and/or chords, music and lyrics.

MEDLEY: A group of songs especially arranged for a singer, usually song without pauses in between. Medleys are usually constructed around a theme. Examples include A Broadway Show Medley, A World War Two Medley, A Medley of songs by a favorite famous singer.

ORIGINAL KEY: The key a songwriter assigns to a musical composition and the key which is published with the song.

PLAY ON TOP OF THE BEAT: A term used to request that a drummer slightly anticipate the rhythm, which will generate an exciting tension between the drums and the rest of the rhythm.

PICKUP: Notes at the beginning of a song that take up less than one full bar or music. An example of a pickup is: "*At last my love has come along*" where the word "At" is a one note pickup. In this example, the word "last" is defined as the first "Stressed" word. Another example is "*Hap - py birthday to you*" where the word "Hap-py" is a two note pickup, "Birth" is the first stressed word.

RUBATO: See Ad Lib.

SET: A SET is a pre-determined amount of time, e.g. a 30 minute 'set', an hour 'set', etc. A gig list should define all the songs to be played with a 'set'.

SOCIAL: See CLUB DATE

STRESSED WORD: Usually the first word in a song, except when a song has pickup notes(s). See PICKUP.

TAG: An elongation of the end of a song. For example, at the end of the song "Won't You Come Home Bill Bailey, the tag would be:"*Bailey won't you please come, Bailey won't you please come, Bill Bailey won't you please come home*".

TONIC: The "Root" chord of a Key. (See KEY).

VAMP: A repeating musical phrase played while a singer is engaged in other activity. For example, a vamp might be played while a singer is walking out on stage, or during a song while a singer is explaining or telling a story about the song or a related incident. Vamps are usually played by piano only or piano and rhythm.

VIBRATO: A pulsating musical effect produced by the rapid reiteration of emphasis on a tone.

VERSE: The introductory part of a song, usually sung Ad lib (or Rubato).

WALKING BASS: A bass that plays on every quarter note in a four-beats to a measure song.

HOW TO SPEAK "MUSICIAN"

GIG LISTS

A "Gig List" is a list of songs that will be performed for a special occasion. Gig lists are created so that everyone knows 'which' songs will be played in a set. There are two types of Gig Lists:

A. SIMPLE GIG LIST: A list of songs that will be performed. This list includes the name of the song and, (sometimes), the key that the song is in. This type of list is usually created for an "informal" club date (wedding, party, etc.), where the choice of songs can easily change based upon requests or other events (e.g. 'First dance at a wedding or Cake cutting ceremony or anniversary or unexpected performer, etc.).

B. EXPANDED GIG LIST: An expanded gig list is usually created for a performance where some (or all) the musicians have not played for the performer and no music is available for most of the musicians. An expanded gig list contains:

1. The order in which songs will be performed.
2. The Key that each song is in.
3. The Tempo that each song is in.
4. The Performance of each song:
 - a. The intro
 - b. How the first time thru should be sung/played.
 - c. How the second time thru (if there is a second time) should be performed.
 - d. Who takes solos and when.
 - e. What happens at the ending.

NOTES: It is good to have a gig list for every member of the band, even those who have music. See the page at the end of this section for an example of an Expanded Gig List.

CREATING A PERFORMANCE GIG LIST

This section describes how to build a gig list for a performance. It is not intended as a gig list for a "regular" club date (i.e. a wedding or a party).

NOTES: a. For a singer, a performance in a club or on stage is different than singing as part of a chorus or performing a Broadway show. The difference is this: In a performance, you want the audience to be "drawn into you", to become part of the performance, to "ride" along with your performance. With a chorus, or a Broadway show, there is an actual "wall" between the performers and the audience. In a club, you want to break down that wall; to draw every audience member into your performance.

b. In your performance, limit your use of humor. Be "soft" in your approach to humor, especially in the first portion of your performance. People are there to hear you sing, not to tell jokes. As a general rule, do not use humor until you are at least 15 minutes into the performance. When you do use humor, it is best to incorporate that humor into a story (e.g. a story about yourself or a story connected to a song you are about to sing).

The following is a gig list for a night club or a stage performance.

1. Decide "which" songs you are going to do and place them in the order you wish to do them. Remember that timing counts. For example, you don't want to put an 8 minute medley right after a 9 minute medley.
2. Write down the song order and see if it fills the allotted time. (NOTE: For a two hour performance you need to allot at least one 10 minute intermission).
3. Decide "when" you are going to talk to the audience between songs. NOTE: It is not necessary to talk to the audience between every song. Frank Sinatra used to sing 3 or 4 songs after he was introduced and never said a word between the songs.
4. Decide "what" you are going to talk about. The best topics are:
 - a. Yourself (life history, family stories, etc).
 - b. The song you just sang or the song you are about to sing (Songwriters, date song was published, was it from a movie?, are there any anecdotes associated with the song?).
5. Decide "where" you are going to place the talks and put it into the gig list.

GIG LIST FOR A ONE HOUR PERFORMANCE (EXAMPLE)

1. OPENING NUMBER - This is generally a fast tune and one that runs no longer than 4 minutes. You want to show the audience that you have an abundance of energy. you are musically talented and that you are happy to be where you are - performing.
2. SECOND NUMBER - This should be a slower-tempo song. Do not speak to the audience yet.
3. THIRD NUMBER - Usually another moderate or up-tempo number
4. NOW - TALK TO THE AUDIENCE - Talk about your life (where you were born, when, siblings, parents, schooling, etc.) NOTE: You've already shown your musical capabilities in the first three songs. Now you want to draw the audience into your performance by "personalizing" yourself. Talking about yourself, who you are, where you came from, is the first step in such a personalization.
5. SPECIALTY NUMBER - Now is the time for a "specialty" number either a medley or a "tribute to" or something special that you've done to a song to make it different.
6. TALK TO THE AUDIENCE AGAIN - This time, either talk about the song (medley) you've just sung or about the song you're about to sing. Many songs have anecdotes associated with them. Do the research, (use Wikipedia, it's a great source for material), and talk to the audience. It's another way to draw the audience into your performance.
7. FIFTH NUMBER: Singer's choice.
8. SIXTH NUMBER: Singer's choice - no talking between songs.
NOTE: At this point, twenty-five to thirty minutes should have elapsed.
9. TALK TO THE AUDIENCE: Thank the musicians - individually. Then thank whomever gave you the opportunity to perform, thank your parents, thank the venue for ample free parking, thank the bartenders for making good mixed drinks, etc. Now is the time to use some "easy" humor. You might want to talk about your next number, too.
10. SEVENTH NUMBER: Singer's choice. This is a good place for a ballad.

11. EIGHTH NUMBER: Singer's choice.

12. NINTH NUMBER: This is a good place for another medley, especially a tribute to your favorite singer.

13. CLOSER: Pick an up-tempo song, one that shows that you still have strength after an hour of singing.

NOTES ON A TWO HOUR PERFORMANCE:

1. The first song after the intermission should either be a novelty song, a funny song or anything that might be considered by the audience to be a "surprise". Examples include "Lost Again in Margaritaville", "Love and Marriage" or a special, humorous arrangement.

2. After your first song after intermission, it is advisable to sing at least two ballads in a row. If possible, the stage should be dark with only a pin-spot shining on your face. It is at this point, if you are successful, that the audience will fully take you into their hearts and make your performance a winning one.

3. Do more talking than you did in the first set.

4. Try singing songs that you might not ordinarily do. This shows the depth of your talent. For example, if you have a strong male voice, try singing a novelty song.

HOW TO SPEAK "MUSICIAN"

CARING FOR YOUR SHEET MUSIC

Here is the best way to preserve your music, (whether it's sheet music purchased at a music store or music written especially for you), so that it will last a long, long time:

MASTER BOOK: Create a master book of all the music you sing.

1. Use a three-ring binder.
2. Preserve the music paper by putting the music in acetate folders.
3. Keep this book in strict alphabetical order.
4. Create a table of contents and keep the table of contents in the front of the book.

NOTE: This book is never to be given out to musicians. It is a singer's master book to be used by the singer only.

GIG BOOK: This is the book you will give to the musicians when performing.

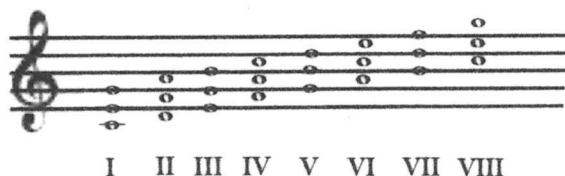
1. Use a three-ring binder.
2. Go to a store that deals in paper and buy a ream of "65 pound" paper.
3. Make a copy, onto the 65 pound paper, of the songs you are going to perform using the music from the Master Book.
4. Place the music into the Gig Book in the order that you are going to perform them.
5. Do not protect this music using acetates. (Sometimes acetates reflect light, making the music inside hard to read.
6. If the music for a song is more than one page long, do the following:
 - a). For a two page song, present the song as if it were two adjoining pages in a book. That is, the first page is on the left; the second page is on the right. In this manner, a musician will not have to turn a page in order to accompany you when you perform.
 - b) If a song is greater than two pages, use BOTH sides of pages 2 and 3, 4 and 5, etc. and present in book form. In other words, when a musician opens this song, page 1 is still on the left; page 2 is on the right. When the musician turns the page, page 3 is on the left; page 4 is on the right (just like reading a book).

Create a Master Book and a Gig Book for every instrument (piano, bass, drums, etc.), for which you have music.

HOW TO SPEAK "MUSICIAN"

CHORDS

Chords are usually three or four notes, struck together, almost always creating a pleasing sound. Chords are categorized by Roman numerals. The numbers correspond to the distance that particular chord is from what is known as the "Root". The Root is the main chord within a Key Signature. For example, if we are in the key of C Major, the chord C is The "Root", also shown as a I, Dminor is II, Eminor is III, F is IV, G is V, Aminor is VI, Bminor is VII. The following also illustrates:



Notice that each chord uses the First, Third and Fifth notes. These are the simplest of the chord structures.

When you look at a piece of music, you will notice chords such as C6, or C9. The numbers always signify the distance the number is from the root. In a C6 chord, you have the three notes that comprise the chord, (C, E and G) *plus* you add the note that's 6 notes above C (in this case A). Therefore, a C6 chord contains the following 4 notes: C, E, G, A. Likewise, with a 9th chord, the notes would be C, E, G, and D (nine notes above the original C).

There are other conventions used when describing 'which' chord should be played. They are:

1. When you see a chord like this: C7, the 7th note is always played as a flat. So, a C7 chord would be C, E, G, Bb.
2. Sometimes you will notice a chord such as C-9 or Cb9 or C(b9). These are all the same chords, just depicted in different ways. In this case we have the C Chord (C, E, G) *plus* the 9th note (D) played as a Db. So the entire chord is C, E, G, Db.
3. You may see chords such as C11 or C13. Just keep counting from C to see which notes are to be added to the basic chord.
4. If you see a chord written as Cdim, that is a diminished chord. This means that the 3rd and 5th notes are flat and the sixth note is added. A Cdim chord is C, Eb, Gb, A all played together.
5. If you see a chord like this: C+5, it means that the 5th note is to be played as a sharp. This chord includes C, E, G#. A plus mark (+) always indicates the note is to be played as a sharp; a minus sign (-) or flat sign (b) indicates the note is to be played as a flat.

We will not get more complicated than this. Try, however, to play some songs and figure out the chord structure. The more you practice, the better you'll get.

HOW TO SPEAK "MUSICIAN"

CHOOSING THE RIGHT KEY FOR YOUR VOICE

The songs that comprise the Great American Songbook were written from the late 19th Century until the advent of Rock 'N Roll (mid 1950's). Every song, naturally, was written in a specific key which has become known as the "Original Key" for that song.

Most of the songs of the Great American Songbook were written *by men for men*. Also, the predominant instrument used in the creation of songs for the Great American Songbook was the piano. Flat Keys (F Major, Bb Major, Eb Major) along with C Major were the keys of choice for these songwriters. Additionally, the singers of choice changed over time. In the late 19th Century until the 1920's the voices of choice were sopranos for women and high tenors for men. As the music changed the voices of choice changed from sopranos and high tenors to altos and tenors/baritones.

As Rock 'N Roll took its place as the pre-eminent voice in American music, the guitar became the instrument of choice to use when writing songs. On the guitar, Sharp Keys (G Major, D Major, A Major, E Major), are easier to play in (and compose to). Also, as more and more women became songwriters and performers, more and more songs were written in Sharp Keys.

All of these facts present problems for singers when they try to decide the best key(s) for them to sing songs. Here are some general rules to follow when you are trying to select the perfect key for your voice:

SOPRANOS: The original keys seem to work well for sopranos. If a soprano needs to change a key in order to sing a song, the new key doesn't stray far from the original key.

ALTOS: Most jazz singers (most female singers of the American Songbook) are altos. Altos, i.e. women who sing in the alto range, have the hardest time with original keys. The best rule of thumb for an alto to find the correct key is to move the key and sing in a key that is "a fourth lower" than the original key. For example, if a song's original key was F Major, an alto should try to sing that song in the key of C Major (lowering a fourth - F, E, D, C). If a song was written in Ab Major, lowering it a fourth brings it to Eb Major (Ab, G, F, Eb).

TENORS: There are high tenors (Tony Bennett) and tenors (Mel Tormé) and low tenors/high baritones (Frank Sinatra). Most tenors have no trouble singing songs in their original keys.

BARITONES/BASSES: Baritones and Bases also seem to have very little difficulty singing songs in their original keys. It is, however, unusual to hear a baritone or a bass singer singing songs from the American Song Book.