

## TALENT QUEST TALK WITH ALISON HAMS

### CHORD CHARTS AND TIMING:

For a usual Talent Quest, bear in mind that the band is being handed *at least* 45 songs in a day, not just yours, and if your chart isn't up to scratch, they are relying on maybe having already heard the song, using common sense, and listening to you to get your song right. Ideally measures, or "bar charts" are better, then they know when to change chords, but a lyric sheet is ok, so long as the chords are on top of the correct word, the chords are correct, and in the right key!

If you work out your chords playing guitar with the capo on, and don't know how to transpose it into the correct key, don't be afraid to call up any one of us, the people who you see around the industry, performers and backing bands, and we'll gladly help. Unfortunately capo chords don't help bass players, pedal steel players, keyboard players etc... and transposing "on the spot" after a long day can get a little hard.

*Another interesting tip is – if you are in a "flat" key, write the chords out as "sharps", that way the guitarists CAN use a capo if they choose – for example – A flat, then C sharp, then E flat can be written as G#, C# and D# - these are called enharmonics – and allow a capo to be used on the first fret.*

As far as timing is concerned, learning to count in your own song is a MUST! Ask a drummer to show you how. 4/4 timing written on a chart doesn't tell the drummer if it's fast, or slow, whether it's a swing or a rock beat. Counting "a1, a2, a1234" indicates a shuffle feel where as "1 2 3 4" would indicate a rock beat. Waltz times can be counted in as "1 23, 2 23," and 2/4's are generally "1,2, 1234". Again, in 2/4 there is polka time, and train beat – so ask a drummer what kind of "feel" your song is, and how to count it in.

If you are still not confident with counting, come on stage, go STRAIGHT to the drummer, and sing him a bit of the Chorus of your song – he or she can then count you in (verses don't give a true indication of the meter or feel) - the judges won't start judging you until you turn to the microphone and start introducing the song – something I'll touch on in a future column.

*Just one last tip with your chord charts – red and green print can sometimes disappear under stage lights, bold print and yellow highlighters work best!*

Just remember talent quests are just another opportunity to get up, sing a song, and gain experience and exposure – winning a prize is a bonus!!

NEXT MONTH: Rules and Regulations!!

If you have any questions about what I've written here, please email me on [ali@alisonhams.com](mailto:ali@alisonhams.com) I'd love to help, or discuss your opinions too!

Cheers, **ALISON HAMS.**



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