

Adding The #1 Ingredient to Your Songs: EMOTION

Nobody "buys" a performance if it's devoid from emotion. At least a little. **Some heart.** If you want the songs that you play to actually touch someone, and not just pass by their ears – put yourself **IN** the music.

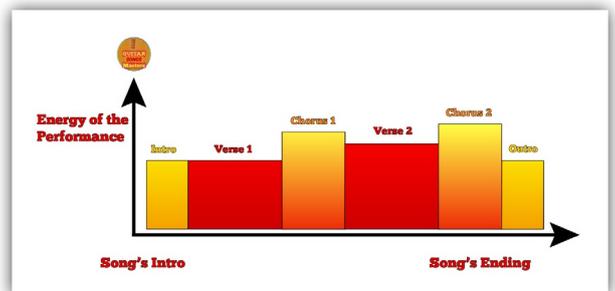
And it doesn't matter if you're playing to one person or 50,000.

The Main Takeaways from the Lesson

- Emotion is not just in the way you sing – even though it's the easiest and most obvious to "hear it" in the singing. Think of a guitar that's playing a song in a sad way, in an upbeat way in a "relaxed on-the-beach" style, in an "angry" way... *Examples for all of those will follow in the next page.*
- Every song is **a story!** For years I was missing out on a lot of that when I was playing songs on the guitar. Why? Because I was just basically looking at the chord charts, while "reading" the lyrics and strumming some chords along with them. But when I learned to try more to get **IN** the lyrics, and think about the original song and performance, and how the singer sings it, and what was the idea that it was written about – that's when playing songs became SO much more interesting.

And if it's a song that you like playing – its probably a song that touched you in one way or another, so think about **why** it touched you! If it did – I think that you see this song as **genuine**, and the emotions behind it as genuine, and there's a lot to give in a performance of such a song that you like.

- Don't forget that emotions are dynamic within an interesting performance of a song, and the emotions and energies can, and should, go up and down along the song. Be sure to check out the lesson about song's dynamics to understand it more deeply – and to learn how to do it practically.



Practical Ways to Start Adding That Emotion Into YOUR Song-Playing

- Start by **checking out some songs from the list below**, especially those that you don't know. First, try to listen to them without the prejudice of reading what I wrote about them. They're all GOOD examples to get you going on the quest for emotions in performances.
- Pay attention to emotion in your favorite songs. Give some of your favorites another listen, and try to **give a name** to the specific emotions that you hear in the singer's voice or in the guitar. Can you try to recreate that specific emotion in your own performance of the song?
- Pick a song that you want to play. (The list below can challenge you with interesting ideas) Now, before you play it – **read** the lyrics. Read them well, and **think** about them. Try to feel them and get into the state of mind that you hear in the original performer's version, or come up with your own "alternative version" for emotions that you think that might fit for this song.

Examples of Songs That Are Excellent Showcases of Certain Emotions

Jeff Buckley – Hallelujah (Chords) | You can clearly hear the sadness not just in Buckley's voice, but also in the way that he is delicately fingerpicking the guitar.

The Beautiful Girls – La Mar (Chords) | I hear this and I just feel like sitting on the beach with my friends on a weekend's afternoon. Especially when the singing comes in – so if you sing, pay attention to the singing here as well. Another good example of this: **Jack Johnson – I Got You**. (and other Jack Johnson songs)

Stevie Wonder - For Once In My Life (Chords) The king of happy singers! I believe that this one speaks for itself perhaps more than any other song here, when you listen to the lyrics and to the way that Stevie Wonder sings them. Also, the accompanying electric guitar sounds just as upbeat as him!



Jason Mraz – Rocket Man (Elton John cover) (Chords) | I think that this is a perfect example of a cover where you can hear that the cover artist has "done his homework". I listen to this and I totally believe that Jason Mraz is "The Rocket Man" from the lyrics, flying in space and longing to the people in earth.

A Great Big World & Christina Aguilera - Say Something (Chords) | I hear a lover that's almost letting go. I don't know about you, but I definitely "bought it." (the emotions in the performance, which you can hear both in the singing and in the piano playing)

Johnny Cash – Hurt (Nine Inch Nails cover) (Chords) | This was recorded a short time before Cash passed away, and I can definitely feel those feelings of "reflections about the end of the life".

John Mayer - Who Did You Think I Was (Tabs) | The guitar riff reminds me a sort of an awkward, "yelling at ya" feeling, that is in line with the song's lyrics. An ANGRY guitar-playing, and an angry singing to accompany it.

Stevie Ray Vaughan – Rude Mood (Tabs) | "Rude" guitar playing as well! (;