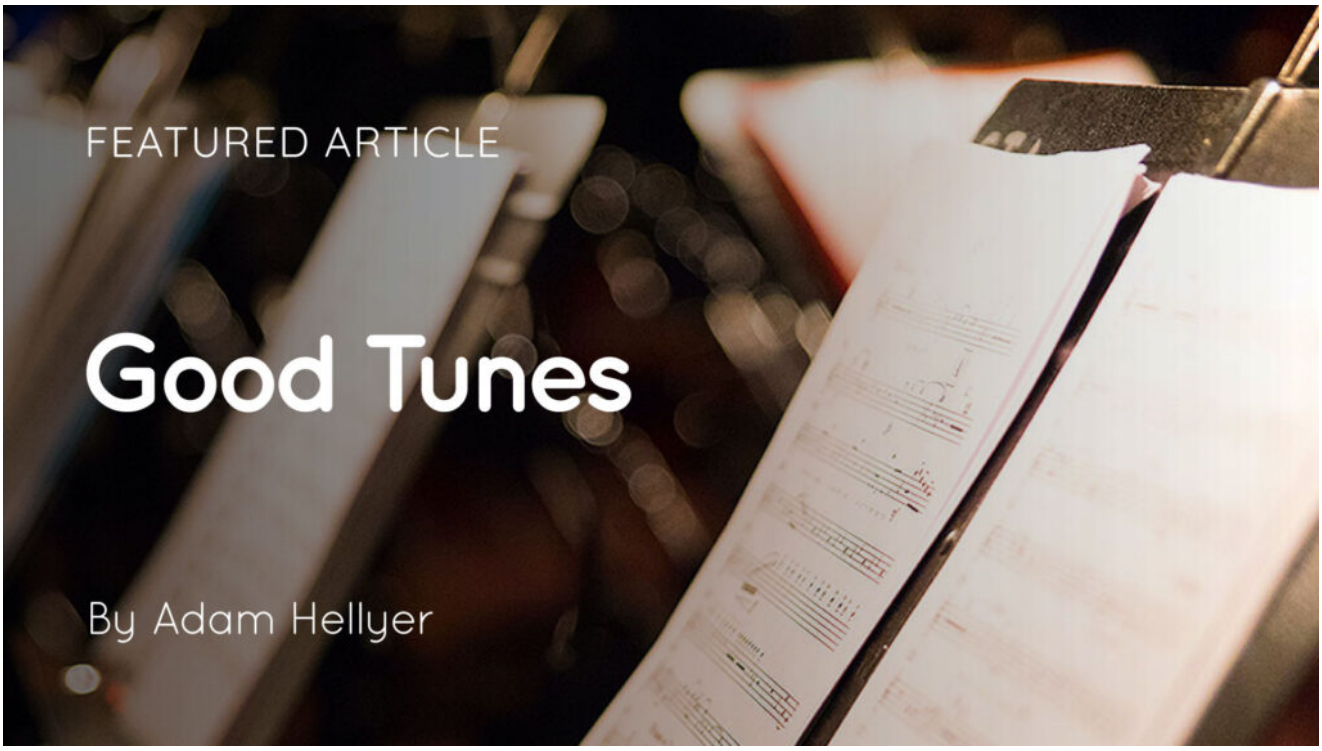
Good Tunes

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It is almost impossible to define what makes a good tune but it is possible to look at tunes that work and draw lessons from them.
When we look back into music history certain tunes stand out. There is Beethoven's **Ode To Joy.** Another classic is the French folk melody, **Ah! vous dirai-je, maman** which inspired the Louis Armstrong classic **What A Wonderful World**, but is better know in English as Twinkle Twinkle Little Star. And of course there is the much loved **Brahms' Lullaby** by Johannes Brahms.

These tunes have been popular for literally 100s of years, are known the world over, and are simple enough for even a child to sing. Let's look at two key things they have in common.

1. **They use very few notes.**
2. A limited number of notes is good as it makes the melody easier for those who are not trained singers. These tunes all sit within an octave and contain mostly stepwise motion (tones and semi tones) and small jumps (fifths and thirds). Big jumps are hard for untrained singers to pitch and more difficult to remember.
3. **They contain repetition.**
4. Repetition is your friend. Don't imagine that the tune needs to provide all the drama in the song. A repetitive tune is easy to sing and therefore easy to remember. Musical interest can

be brought in the musical accompaniment. If you listen again to popular worship songs, like **Shout To The Lord** or **How Great Is Our God**, you will realize how repetitive (but not boring) aspects of their melodies are.

In addition to these two keys, here are some other things to consider when writing a melody:

5. **Chorus is higher than verse**
6. Usually in a worship song the melody for the chorus will be higher than the melody for the verse. This helps bring the lift the Chorus needs, but don't jump up too high. Remember the people you are writing for are not trained singers.
7. **Limit the range**
8. Try and keep your whole melody within an octave range (the eight notes of the scale). This way there won't be parts that are too high or too low. If you keep it within an octave then most men and women will be able to sing it happily together.
9. **Avoid excessive syncopation**
10. It's ok to have a bit of rhythm in your melody. But extreme syncopation, or complex rhythms, are just going to confuse people.
11. **The melody should match the words**
12. Don't try and fit happy words to a sad tune and don't use a candy-floss bubble-gum tune for contemplative or sombre words. We need people to connect with the words through the music, so the music needs to express the emotion and theme of the words.
13. **Make sure you didn't steal it!**
14. In music, stealing is called plagiarism, and is punishable by law. Having half a line that reminds you of something else might be ok. But if it's a whole line, several lines, or the whole melody, that is a big problem. There are so many songs we hear that we didn't even know we've heard. It is very easy to regurgitate a song you heard off the radio and think it is your own. The only time that borrowing or copying is okay is when the original work is in the public domain (outside of copyright protection). To avoid plagiarism sing your song to your friends and don't be offended if they point out where your inspiration came from. If you stole it, change it and make sure it is your own.

There is a lot more that could be said, but the most important thing is to get writing. Have a go and see if people enjoy singing what you come up with.