



# 2025 International Client Seminar

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### Three Chords & The Truth: Music's Lessons for Trial Lawyers

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## Harmony in the Courtroom: Lessons from Music and Music Theory for Trial Advocacy

Abstract: This outline explores the profound parallels between music and trial advocacy. By examining structural, emotional, and communicative principles of music, it highlights how trial attorneys can enhance their persuasion, storytelling, and courtroom presence. Drawing on examples from popular songs and music theory, this outline provides actionable insights for attorneys aiming to connect with juries effectively.

### I. Program Description

Jury trial advocates and witnesses must employ effective strategies to communicate with the jury clearly and persuasively. These strategies include telling a clear, compelling, and dynamic story; ensuring that witnesses and exhibits are in harmony with that story; and, maintaining the rhythm and tempo of trial presentations to keep jurors engaged. This outline draws inspiration from music to explore these principles, with examples from popular songs and music theory to illustrate how attorneys can find creative ways to refine their trial skills.

### II. Presentation Overview

#### 1. Introduction with "Mr. Jaws" by Dickie Goodman

- As attendees enter, "Mr. Jaws" sets the tone with its playful and creative storytelling.
- This introduction exemplifies how blending narrative and engagement keeps an audience—or jury—attentive.

#### 2. Staying in Key: The Importance of a Clear Message

- Example: "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" by Iron Butterfly. Originally intended to be "In the Garden of Eden," the lead singer's slurred delivery led to a misunderstood title. This underscores the dangers of unclear messaging.
- Lesson: Craft and rehearse a clear and coherent story that resonates with the jury.
- Interactive Element: Play clips of misunderstood lyrics (e.g., "Excuse me while I kiss the sky" from Jimi Hendrix's "Purple Haze").

#### 3. Harmony: Unified and Cohesive Presentation

- Example: Crosby and Nash harmonies demonstrate how individual parts can come together beautifully.
- Lesson: Collaborate with corporate witnesses and experts to ensure they understand and consistently present the themes of your case.
- Exercise: Role-play witness preparation to align messages across team members.

#### 4. Lyrical: Conveying Indirect Messages

- Example: Miles Davis' jazz highlights the significance of what is left unsaid.
- Lesson: Develop underlying themes that resonate with the jury without being overtly stated.

#### 5. Rhythm and Tempo: Pacing the Trial

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- Example: Songs with crescendos, such as Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody," build intensity before returning to softer moments.
  - Lesson: Plan trial pacing to captivate and sustain jury attention.
6. Expression and Dissonance: Evoking Empathy
- Example: Minor chords often create a sense of sadness or tension, as in Adele's "Someone Like You."
  - Lesson: Use empathy strategically in personal injury or emotional cases, transitioning back to "major chords" to inspire resolution.
7. Dynamics: Controlling Volume and Tone
- Use vocal modulation to emphasize key points and avoid monotony. Practice varying intensity to reflect the emotional arc of your case.
8. Melody and Texture: Crafting a Cohesive Narrative
- Example: Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" references the interplay of major and minor chords to evoke emotion.
  - Lesson: Weave a consistent narrative that ties every piece of evidence into the "melody" of your case.
9. Improvisation: Thinking on Your Feet
- Example: Jazz improvisation highlights adaptability within a structure.
  - Lesson: Develop strategies to respond effectively to unexpected developments in the courtroom.
10. Perspective: Seeing Through the Jury's Eyes
- Example: Covers of songs like Greensky Bluegrass's version of Pink Floyd's "Time" reinterpret familiar pieces in new ways.
  - Lesson: Reevaluate your case through fresh perspectives to avoid lawyer myopia.

### III. Practical Exercises for Attorneys

1. Rhythm Exercises: Practice varying pacing in arguments and witness questioning.
2. Dynamics Drills: Record and analyze vocal modulation.
3. Improvisation Games: Simulate unexpected scenarios in mock trials.
4. Storyboarding: Map out your case narrative using a musical structure.

### IV. Conclusion

- Recap of how music principles enhance trial advocacy.
- Encouragement for attorneys to embrace creative, interdisciplinary approaches to improve their craft.