

Making sure your song is finished and the best it can be

- Create a work tape right away
- Let it sit for a while - until you've written another song (or several songs) - then go back and listen to your work tape. Does it still evoke your initial emotion?
- Bring in your editor hat (if you haven't done so already).
- Which point of view? Are the pronouns consistent in the song?
 - Is the song in 1st person (I, me, you, us, we) - lyrics about your own point of view
 - Or -2nd person - lyrics about the person you are talking to
 - Or - 3rd person (he, him, she, her, they, them)
- Do the verb tenses agree and make sense or are you switching back and forth in time, potentially confusing the listener?
- Is there a clear song structure - maybe verse chorus verse chorus or verse pre-chorus chorus verse chorus bridge chorus (the most common modern structures)?
 - Do each of those sections melodically sound different from each other and say something different from each other lyrically?
- Do you need a bridge or not?
- Is the rhyme scheme consistent from verse to verse?
- Is the rhyme scheme in the chorus different from the verses?
- Do the rhymes seem real and conversational or contrived just for the sake of a rhyme?
- Is the first line of verse enticing, so that it motivates people to keep listening to the song?
- Does the song develop as it goes down?
- Does a song represent one main idea?
 - Lucy: When I first started songwriting, I was writing with a published writer - and I had brought in a lyric - and when he looked at that lyric, he said, that I had two songs in there... so we worked on the strongest idea and worked it up into a song.
- Does the lyric present the idea in a fresh and interesting way?

- Does the first verse set up the context, character(s) and setting?
- Does the chorus lift or differentiate itself from the verse and pre-chorus, melodically, rhythmically and lyrically and present the main idea of the song?
- Is the set up line for the hook strong and does it flow naturally into the hook?
- Are there any words you stumble over when you're singing it? Or that seem like there's too many words in a line or two few for the melody?
- Are there words in there that don't really say anything and can be replaced or left out?
- Are there words in there that you think could be made stronger by using another word instead?
- Does the melody of the song match the lyrical feel of the song and vice versa.
- Have you gotten feedback from friends or other songwriters or established songwriters or music industry people (publishers)?
 - Can they listen to the song and tell you what it is about?
 - Can you tell if they are pulled into the song by the first line?
 - Does the emotion of the song reach them?
- When you play it out, can you feel the reaction from the audience? What is the feedback you get from the audience?
- How do you feel when you are playing the song or the recording for an audience or someone in the industry? Any cringey parts?
- **It all starts with the song!**
- **“Rhythm draws you in. Melody keeps you there... and lyrics bring you back again and again”...Paul deMarco**