

Take this, print it out, and refer to it often when finalizing a song....

1) The Message

What is your song about? Your message can be anything, but is it clear to the listener? Is it going to stick with them after they're done listening? A lot of writers may think that the message is clear, but most of the time it's clear only in their minds. This is the biggest part of making your song really stick.

Question to ask : What is this song about in one sentence?

2) Continuity Of The Message

Even if you have a message, it's easy to get off of it. Make sure you stick to it throughout the entirety of your song. Avoid going down an unnecessary rabbit trail and stick to your main point from start to finish. Keep it simple!

3) Lyrical Alliteration

Lyrical alliteration, simply means you use consonance in a single phrase or lyrical hook. In other words, make your lyrics not only fit to a nice melody, but make them interesting and fun to say and sing with the use of similar consonants. Here's a famous example (perhaps an overstatement!):

peter piper picked a peck of pickled peppers

Warning: Use wisely!

4) Assonance and Near Rhyme

Like alliteration works with consonants, assonance works with vowels. This is very important for sing-ability and lyrics that get stuck in your head.

People often fall back on overused lyrical phrases because they feel obligated to have a perfect rhyme. Break out of that elementary way of songwriting with near rhymes and assonance.

Exercise: Get the lyrics to a good hip-hop song and just read through them. These guys are masters at assonance and near rhyme.

5) Repetitive Devices

Using repetitive devices like *anaphora* and *epiphora* can make your lines stand out and become more easy to latch on to.

Take, for instance, the famous Christmas song *Silver and Gold*. Did you know that phrase is sung more than 10 times in the song?

It works. Why? **Because this is music; not journalism.**

6) Repetitive Melodies

If you have four lines in a chorus, and they each have a different melody, you will most likely lose people. If you have a melodic hook, repeat it at least twice.

Example: The chorus of “Rude” by Magic

7) Singable Syllables

This is very important if you're writing songs you want other people to sing. If you're trying to write a hit pop song, you're gonna want to make it easy to sing. Period.

Syllables in songwriting is all about one thing: How you line up the syllables in your words to the rhythms in your musical phrases.

It's best if you don't have a lot of rhythms to sing over a word with fewer syllables. Unless it's one syllable with a resonating vowel sound like ah or oh.

Example: "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious" from Mary Poppins

8) The Melody-With-No-Instruments Test

I love this one. This test is best used in the early stages of a song, before you get too attached to it emotionally.

Will the soul of the song still be there when sung a cappella, or does it need musical accompaniment? If so, your song may not be strong enough.

9) Figures of Speech

Imagery, symbolism, metaphors, and so on, are all very powerful ways to communicate a story or a thought.

A little goes a long way, so don't over use them. It's like salt and pepper in your song's lyrics. Use figures of speech strategically, to convey your message in a unique way. It will make a big difference.

10) The First Impression Test

You should always run the song by someone you respect. Play it for someone who's never heard it before and ask for their honest first impression.

This is huge. Take notes. Feedback from people you trust matters.

For more detailed information in each of these areas visit <http://theindependentmusician.com>