



**«Discovering Songwriting Identity: A Personal Exploration Through
Collaboration»**

Shaping a songwriter's creative signature through the analysis of written
songs in collaborations

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Master's Degree Thesis

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Abstract

This thesis explores the transformative journey of a songwriter through collaboration. Over the course of this research, I collaborated with more than 11 producers and topliners from around the world, creating 13 songs across various genres. The aim of this study was to examine how collaboration, the exchange of creative ideas, and working with diverse collaborators shape artistic growth and songwriting style.

By analyzing reference tracks, writing lyrical sketches, and exploring recurring themes such as personal growth and relationships, I discovered the therapeutic power of songwriting as a means of emotional release. Working in different

genres, including Rock, K-Pop, and C-Pop, expanded my creative palette, introducing new techniques and approaches to music production.

This research reflects on my personal growth as a songwriter, highlighting the role of collaboration in pushing creative boundaries. The results of this project have laid the foundation for future projects, including creating and promoting my original music, while also contributing to the success of other artists through songwriting.

Language: English

Key Words: Personal and professional growth through collaboration, online and offline music creation process, Analysis of written songs, Therapeutic power of songwriting

EXAMENSARBETE

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Abstrakt

Denna uppsats undersöker den transformerande resan för en låtskrivare genom samarbete. Under denna forskningsperiod samarbetade jag med mer än 11 producenter och toplineare från hela världen, och skapade 13 låtar inom olika genrer. Syftet med denna studie var att undersöka hur samarbete, utbyte av kreativa idéer och arbete med mångsidiga samarbetspartner formar konstnärlig tillväxt och låtskrivarstil.

Genom att analysera referensspår, skriva lyriska skisser och utforska återkommande teman som personlig tillväxt och relationer, upptäckte jag den terapeutiska kraften i låtskrivande som ett sätt att bearbeta och frigöra känslor. Arbetet inom olika genrer, inklusive Rock, K-Pop och C-Pop, utökade min kreativa palett och introducerade nya tekniker och tillvägagångssätt för musikproduktion.

Denna forskning reflekterar över min personliga utveckling som låtskrivare och

belyser samarbetets roll i att tänja på kreativa gränser. Resultaten av detta projekt har lagt grunden för framtida projekt, inklusive skapande och marknadsföring av min egen musik, samt bidragit till framgången för andra artister genom låtskrivande.

Språk: Engelska

Nyckelord: Personlig och professionell utveckling genom samarbete, online och offline musikskapande, analys av skrivna låtar, den terapeutiska kraften i låtskrivande

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Tiivistelmä

Tiivistelmä

Tässä tutkielmassa tutkitaan lauluntekijän muutosprosessia yhteistyön kautta.

Tämän tutkimuksen aikana tein yhteistyötä yli 11 tuottajan ja toplinerin kanssa eri puolilta maailmaa ja loin 13 kappaletta eri genreissä. Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli tutkia, miten yhteistyö, luovien ideoiden vaihto ja monipuolisten yhteistyökumppanien kanssa työskentely muokkaavat taiteellista kasvua ja lauluntekijän tyyliä.

Analysoimalla viittauskappaleita, kirjoittamalla lyyrisiä luonnoksia ja tutkimalla toistuvia teemoja, kuten henkilökohtaista kasvua ja ihmissuhteita, löysin lauluntekijän terapeutin voiman tunteiden vapauttamisen välineenä.

Työskentely eri genreissä, kuten rock, K-pop ja C-pop, laajensi luovaa palettiani ja toi esiin uusia tekniikoita ja lähestymistapoja musiikin tuotantoon.

Tämä tutkimus pohdiskelee henkilökohtaista kasvua lauluntekijänä ja tuo esiin

yhteistyön roolin luovien rajojen työntämisessä. Tämän projektin tulokset ovat luoneet perustan tuleville projekteille, mukaan lukien oman musiikin luominen ja edistäminen, samalla kun se on myös edistänyt muiden artistien menestystä lauluntekijänä.

Kieli: Englanti

Avainsanat: Henkilökohtainen ja ammatillinen kasvu yhteistyön kautta, online- ja offline-musiikin luomisprosessi, kirjoitettujen kappaleiden analyysi, lauluntekijän terapeuttinen voima

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INTRODUCTION

I'm Anna Khodorovska, singer and songwriter. I've been working in the music business for 11 years, and my journey began with winning the TV show "The Voice" in 2013. This victory shaped my path and set the direction for my artistic development. Before pursuing music, I was a professional financier, but my passion for music led me to transition into being a full-time artist. I graduated from Ukraine's top music school, the Glier Music Institute, and soon after, I formed my own band, performing at various events and delivering unique versions of popular songs.

My career expanded further when I was selected for the lead role in the musical "Dracula," where I first experienced the depth and significance of musical theater. This role sparked my interest in how deeply lyrics can influence emotions. I went on to perform in several musical shows, honing my skills as a singer, dancer, and actress. I also participated in the national selection for Eurovision and performed as a backup singer for the top artists in Ukraine, while also touring with orchestras.

From the very beginning of my career, I knew that I wanted to write and perform my own music. My first songwriting attempts and basic arrangements began in 2018. Unfortunately, I was very self-critical and never released anything. I also dreamed of finding co-writers who could collaborate with me. It wasn't until three years ago that I started creating songs that I was proud of. A pivotal moment came with the migration due to the war in Ukraine. I held over 30 charity concerts across Europe, and during this time, I realized I could no longer rely on existing songs, I can't find anymore the senses that I want to express with somebody's songs, cause situation is extreme and I needed to create new ones, with my position. I started writing my own music, ignoring my inner critic, the goal was totally different now: not to create the banger,

create the words and music that will support and empower people in this situation. And I created my first song "You can't break us" ("Не зламати нас") in collaboration with a Ukrainian keyboardist and arranger, that you can find in Youtube. This song became a symbol of support for all those affected by war.

Through a fortunate coincidence, I discovered Musikmacarna, a songwriting school in Sweden, and participated in one of their camps. This experience opened my eyes to how collaboration with musicians can lead to unexpected and wonderful results. Finally I went on to join Novia+Musikmacarna's program, where I spent 1.5 years working on different styles, exploring creative tools I would never have considered if I had only focused on my favorite genres of soul, R&B, and jazz.

Throughout my journey, I collaborated with producers from all over the world. These experiences led me to study the process of co-writing songs, which is the focus of this research. In this thesis, I will explore the models of songwriting collaboration and how both online and offline partnerships can lead to the creation of meaningful songs.

I will present demo versions of songs written in collaboration with various producers and artists:

1. "Who You Are" with Adam Barberg in Amsterdam
2. "Love Me or Leave" with Alexander Hindsberg and Maria Myer at Musikmacarna
3. "Until You Fall in Love" with Joel Sunkvist, Elon Nordlinder, and Liam Segerpalm, Alexander Ohnivetc
4. "Red Flag" with Ukrainian songwriter Vlada Birdsy and arranger Arsen Odabashian
5. "Hold Me" with artists from Saudi Arabia

6. "Better Me" written in London at the Shelly and Paul SPPS songwriting camp, finished with a Ukrainian arranger and keyboard player Kseniya Golubeva
7. "Run" written with Olga Bohaturenko and Emil Nordstrom for the Olympic Games camp
8. "Brainwash" created in a K-Pop camp with Emma Gale Kirkbride and Valente Villanueva
9. "No Drama" created at a C-Pop camp with Mika Keskilampi, Yusuf Mahdi, and Anita Maj
10. "Hooked Up and Love"
11. "Glory Crowned" written with Mika Paananen and Björn Johansson
12. "Another try" with ukrainian producer Eugeny Tregub
13. "Lies" created with finish producer Alexander Hindsberg, and topliner and songwriter Joel Sundkvist

Through songwriting networks, I've connected with various corners of the world, and each collaboration has been a unique experience. What surprised me the most was realizing that equally great songs can emerge when co-writing with partners in the same room or across continents. These collaborations have been crucial in my musical growth and have helped me break free from the constraints of perfectionism. I believe, as Joe Bennett states in his article "Collaborative Songwriting – The Ontology Of Negotiated Creativity In Popular Music Studio Practice," that collaboration brings more ideas to the table, resulting in something truly unique that can better resonate with the audience.

In my home country Ukraine, collaborative songwriting was not widely practiced until recently. Traditionally, producers or songwriters worked

separately, creating songs for artists for a fixed fee, which meant singer would still perform covers, songs that were written and produced by someone. This system limited the growth of original music and left the market in the hands of a few monopolistic entities. In contrast, collaborative songwriting emphasizes creating a large number of high-quality compositions, knowing that one of them might become a hit, allowing co-writers to share the financial rewards and elevate the overall quality of the market.

Through the process described by Bennett, I experimented with different models of songwriting partnership during my practical part of research to find the most effective for me, such as the "Nashville model" in London with Claire XX, we were writing with acoustic piano and minimal technology with song "Better me", which surprised me a lot with deep way of work with lyrics, senses and catchy melodies. The "Factory model" in Musikmacarna school, where professional writers worked full days to produce songs in 13–15 hours. ("Love me or Leave" and "Until you fall in love"). Also, I experience the "Svengali model" that united singer-performer with more experienced producers and top-liners, I still felt that my strongest part is performing, so I know what turns on and touches the audience, and collab with experienced producers that know how to implement all these music ideas give great results ("Red Flag"). In Saudi Arabia, we worked on "Hold Me" in the "Demarcation model," where I worked separately on lyrics, and the producer handled the arrangement, which can be nice if producer feels the market and can create a product highlighting the strength of artist, and topline (me in this case) can be focused on lyrics, but it was quite a difficult experience for me, because you need to feel style and music orientees of each other very good. Also, I experience my favorite model: the "A synchronicity," in which topline and producers work separately on a multi-track file, passing it back and forth, making iterative changes. This model allowed me to collaborate with producers and topline around the world fastly

and with all advantage feelings of collaboration ("Lies," "Brainwash," "Run," "No Drama").

In this thesis, I will analyze the songs I've written in collaboration, exploring the creative processes, emotional connections, lyrics, melodies, and harmonies, and how they contribute to the therapeutic impact of songwriting.

CHAPTER 1.

SONG “LOVE ME OR LEAVE”

Description of the Song

My journey into collaboration started at Musikmakarna with the song “*Love Me or Leave.*” I was part of a group with Alexander Hindsberg, a Finnish producer, and Maria Meyer, a Norwegian topliner, and me as the toplineers. We had just two days to write the song, and the next morning, we had to present our track to the group, where everyone else was busy creating their own hits.

I couldn’t imagine how we would write a song with people I had just met an hour ago. How do you create an arrangement you’ll actually like without knowing the producer’s style? How do you write lyrics and share emotions with a topliner you barely know? It was the start of a new and exciting challenge for me.

We began the session by defining the goal: who would perform the track we were about to create. My strength lies in performance, with over ten years of experience, and my aim was to develop original material I could perform on stage. The team supported me, and we decided to make the track for me as the lead artist. Since Maria is an incredible vocalist, we agreed to make it a *feat.* collaboration.

We started the session with 30 minutes of “get-to-know time,” listening to reference tracks and outlining the direction for the composition. I was so happy to meet musical soulmates because we shared a love for similar R&B and Soul tracks with expressive melodic lines and groovy arrangements. These tracks weren’t Billboard chart-toppers but more niche pieces, such as Ariana Grande’s “*pov*” and Raquel Rodriguez’s “*Miles High.*”

After listening to references, Alexander came up with a few bars featuring a distinctive drum pattern. Since Alexander is primarily a guitarist, the harmonic foundation was played on guitar. We with Maria started mumbling melodies over these bars, recording our ideas on a phone voice recorder. Later, we listened back to the recordings and chose the best, most catchy phrases for the verse and chorus.

Maria suggested the hook phrase “*Love me or leave,*” which became the anchor for the storyline. Brainstorming with Maria was amazing: we wrote line by line, building on each other's thoughts, basically, the melody conveyed a feeling of conflict, which we captured in the lyrics. While Alexander continued working on the arrangement, we moved on to recording vocals. This led to my favorite part: creating and recording background vocals, and the R&B genre often features rich, layered harmonies.

One of the biggest revelations for me during this process was how quickly I recorded the lead vocal. At home, working alone, it often took me 5–7 hours to perfect each phrase, and my obsession with perfectionism sometimes resulted in robotic-sounding vocals. But the presence of my collaborators worked like magic. We nailed the recording in just two or three takes, capturing the emotions and essence. During the vocal recording, Maria's approach became a huge lesson for me. I realized how a studio vocal session doesn't have to be exhausting, and that recording in the studio doesn't require the same vocal power as performing on stage. Vocals delivered with a more moderate approach sound much more emotional and purer, especially in this genre.

After almost 10 hours in the studio without much of a break, we had completed the foundation of the track. It was an intense but deeply rewarding experience that reminded me of the power of collaboration in unlocking creativity and producing something truly special.

2.Lyrics Structure

Verse 1

Tonight I'm holding you tight

Just keep me uf satisfied

I love what you doing ya-ya

How you make me feel

Give me love

Not enough

u-u-u

Pre-Ch

**Boy, you can love me for an hour
or two**

**But frankly I got things that I gott
a do.**

Ch

I can't hold you hand

like your mother

Need to be me

Just wanna be your

little lover

Leave me to be

I walk out the door

like your father

Used to be free

I don't wanna be like another

Love me or leave

ta - da da

love me or leave

ta- dada

love me or leave

Verse 2

Baby you got me like aaah

I wanna make you go uuuuh

Maybe thats all I can do for you

Baby talk to me talk to me talk me

Pre-Ch

**Boy, you can love me for an hour
or two**

**But frankly I got things that I gott
a do.**

Ch

I can't hold you hand

like your mother

Need to be me

Just wanna be your

little lover

Leave me to be

I walk out the door

like your father

Used to be free

I don't wanna be like another

Love me or leave

ta - da da

love me or leave

ta- dada

love me or leave

[2x times]

Bridge

It breaks my heart

When you beg me to stay

Please don't blame me

For walking away

[Ch x 2t]

Lyrical Analysis

1. Themes and Emotional Core

The lyrics of our song, *"Love Me or Leave"*, explore themes of independence, self-worth, and the complexities of romantic relationships. At its core, the song reflects the narrator's struggle between desire and the need for autonomy. The repeated line *"Love me or leave"* serves as both a plea and an ultimatum, encapsulating the emotional tension of wanting love without sacrificing one's individuality. The duality of emotional vulnerability and assertiveness is a key strength of the song, making it relatable and emotionally resonant.

2. Narrative and Structure

The song is structured with two verses, a pre-chorus, a repeated chorus, and a bridge, followed by a repetition of the chorus. This structure creates a clear, cyclical narrative arc while maintaining a sense of momentum.

1. Verse 1 and 2: These establish the narrator's dynamic with their partner, moving between sensuality (*"I love what you doing ya-ya"*) and realism (*"Maybe that's all I can do for you"*). The second verse mirrors the first but adds a layer of self-awareness, reinforcing the narrator's inner conflict.

2. Pre-Chorus: The pre-chorus acts as a transition, with the narrator acknowledging the fleeting nature of the relationship (*"Boy, you can love me for an hour or two, but frankly I got things that I gotta do."*). This line underscores the tension between emotional connection and personal priorities.

3. Chorus: The chorus is the emotional and thematic centerpiece of the song. The narrator rejects traditional relationship roles (*"I can't hold your hand like your mother"*) while affirming their individuality (*"Just wanna*

be your little lover"). The phrase *"Love me or leave"* becomes an empowering mantra, reinforcing the message of self-respect.

4. Bridge: The bridge provides a poignant contrast to the assertiveness of the chorus, revealing vulnerability (*"It breaks my heart when you beg me to stay"*). This moment of emotional rawness adds depth to the narrative and invites the listener to empathize with the narrator's internal conflict.

3. Poetic and Rhetorical Devices

- Repetition: The phrase *"Love me or leave"* is repeated throughout the chorus and post-chorus, emphasizing the central theme and making it memorable.
- Contrast: The juxtaposition of parental roles in the lines *"I can't hold your hand like your mother"* and *"I walk out the door like your father"* adds a layer of psychological complexity, suggesting a deeper exploration of dependency and independence in relationships.
- Onomatopoeia: Sounds like *"ya-ya"* and *"ta-da-da"* add playfulness and rhythm, reinforcing the song's R&B groove.
- The conversational language: (*"Baby, talk to me, talk to me"*) makes the song feel personal and relatable.

4. Emotional Tone

The tone alternates between assertive and vulnerable, capturing the duality of romantic relationships. The narrator's confidence (*"Leave me to be"*) is tempered by moments of doubt and emotional pain (*"It breaks my heart when you beg me to stay"*). This oscillation keeps the song emotionally engaging and relatable.

5. Connection with Melody and Rhythm

The lyrics are tightly interwoven with the rhythmic and melodic elements of the song:

- **Rhythm:** Short, punchy phrases like "*Love me or leave*" align with the song's driving beat, creating a strong rhythmic identity.
- **Melody:** The use of melodic hooks in the chorus complements the lyrical repetition, ensuring the song's main message is both catchy and impactful.

6. Cultural and Genre Context

The song's lyrical style draws heavily from the R&B and pop traditions, with a conversational tone and intimate focus. References to family roles ("*mother*", "*father*") add a unique twist, setting the song apart from conventional love songs. This innovative approach makes it suitable for contemporary playlists while maintaining a timeless quality.

7. Interpersonal Dynamics

The lyrics reflect a power dynamic in the relationship, where the narrator refuses to conform to societal or personal expectations. By addressing issues like emotional dependency and personal freedom, the song resonates with listeners who value autonomy in relationships.

I love that we use a lot of **figurative language** in this song, it adds emotional depth, humor, and relatability. Through the use of similes, repetition, metaphors, and irony, the narrator's voice becomes clear and assertive, while the playful elements maintain the song's accessibility and charm. This skillful combination of figurative devices not only enhances the storytelling but also ensures the song resonates with listeners on multiple levels.

Using of Figurative Language:

1. Simile:

1.1. *"I can't hold your hand like your mother"*

This simile contrasts my role with a nurturing maternal figure, rejecting a caretaking or overly dependent relationship. It highlights the narrator's desire for independence and equality in love.

1.2. *"I walk out the door like your father"*

This comparison evokes the imagery of abandonment, symbolizing the narrator's willingness to detach if the relationship does not meet their emotional needs. It adds a layer of emotional tension and a hint of irony.

2. Metaphor:

2.1. *"Need to be me, just wanna be your little lover"*

The phrase *"little lover"* is metaphorical, representing the narrator's desire for a casual, uninhibited connection. It contrasts with the expectations of a traditional, serious relationship.

2.2. *"Leave me to be"*

This metaphor conveys a sense of liberation and the need for personal space, further emphasizing the theme of independence.

3. Irony:

1.3. *"I can't hold your hand like your mother... I walk out the door like your father"*

The juxtaposition of these lines introduces irony, as the narrator contrasts two familial roles (maternal care and paternal abandonment) with their rejection of both. This creates a playful yet poignant commentary on relational expectations.

4. Hyperbole:

4.1 "Boy, you can love me for an hour or two"

This exaggeration underscores the fleeting and temporary nature of the connection, portraying the narrator's reluctance to invest deeply in a relationship that doesn't align with their emotional needs.

3. Melody and Harmony:

1. Harmony

The song is set in D minor, adhering to the traditional minor scale, with a clear and grounded tonal center. Emotionally, the key evokes a subtle, romantic narrative, painting a light blue mood that is introspective yet tender. The tempo of 81 BPM enhances this atmosphere, offering a relaxed and steady pace that complements the reflective nature of the composition.

Intro

Dm9 Em A

Verse:

Dm9 Em A

Dm9 Em A

Pre-Chorus:

Dm 11 |Em Emaj7/Eb |Dm9 |Asus A7#9#5|

Chorus:

Dm9 |Am7 G:||4 times

Bridge:

F Em Dm C

F Em Ebmaj Amaj

Extended Harmony: The use of 9th, 11th, and altered chords adds a jazzy sophistication.

Chromatic Motion: Subtle chromatic shifts (e.g., Emaj7/Eb in the pre-chorus, Em to Ebmaj in the bridge) create tension and intrigue.

Contrast: The interplay between diatonic (verse and chorus) and chromatic (pre-chorus and bridge) sections enhances the emotional depth of the composition.

R&B Influence: The harmonic language, rich with extensions and resolutions, reflects the genre's smooth, soulful aesthetic.

Harmony and Melody Interaction

The melody of the song is carefully crafted, gradually built around the pentatonic scale. This choice lends the melodic line an accessible yet

emotionally evocative quality, with symmetrical phrasing that moves stepwise and legato. The smooth, flowing motion creates a sense of intimacy, enhanced using notably long phrases, which contribute to a lyrical, almost narrative atmosphere.

In the chorus, the melody adopts a question-and-answer structure, reflecting a dynamic and engaging dialogue. The ascending phrases highlight the "questions," while the descending lines provide resolution in the form of "answers." This design not only enhances the emotional impact of the lyrics but also makes the melody inherently memorable and relatable. The conversational structure reinforces the hook-like quality of the chorus, ensuring it remains in the listener's memory.

The combination of melody and harmony creates a compelling contrast. The harmony consists of shorter, rhythmically precise phrases, while the melody features elongated, arch-shaped phrases with a legato flow. This juxtaposition adds depth to the composition, balancing rhythmic precision with lyrical expressiveness. Furthermore, the melody rarely emphasizes chord tones such as the root, third, or fifth in the chorus, instead weaving around the harmonic framework to create moments of tension and resolution.

The repetition in the chorus serves as a key element in establishing the song's hook. By repeating key melodic motifs, the song captures the listener's attention and ensures its catchiness. The melody's alignment with the beat, particularly its emphasis on downbeats, further reinforces the groove, making the song feel grounded yet fluid.

The harmony and melody together reflect the stylistic conventions of the R&B genre, with their smooth transitions, emotional depth, and intricate interaction. The melody, in particular, mirrors the meaning of the lyrics, with ascending

phrases accentuating curiosity and emotional longing in the "questions" and descending phrases resolving these emotions in the "answers."

Adding to the song's charm is the recitative-style melody in the second verse, which introduces a sense of boldness and playfulness. This change in melodic delivery adds variety to the track, giving it a modern edge and keeping the listener engaged.

The interplay between melody and harmony in this song achieves a delicate balance of groove and lyricism. While the pentatonic scale provides a solid foundation, the melodic lines and harmonic progressions work together to create an emotional and memorable experience for the listener. The use of question-and-answer phrasing, rhythmic alignment, and non-chord tone resolutions enriches the song's narrative and emotional depth, positioning it firmly within the stylistic conventions of the R&B genre while maintaining a unique and personal touch.

4. Instrumentation

Drum Section

The drum section serves as the rhythmic foundation of the track, emphasizing the second and fourth beats in each measure—a hallmark of R&B rhythm. The kit features a punchy kick drum that anchors the groove, a snappy snare that provides sharp accents, and hi-hats that introduce subtle syncopations. This rhythmic foundation is steady yet intricate, driving the track forward while allowing space for other elements to shine.

Bassline

The bassline is integral to both the harmonic and rhythmic structure of the song. It delivers a warm, rounded tone, tightly locked with the kick drum to create a deep, groove-heavy foundation. Occasionally, the bassline incorporates melodic

embellishments, such as slides and passing notes, adding a sense of fluidity and sophistication. This interaction enhances the harmonic progressions and supports the track's overall rhythmic momentum.

Synthesizer

Two distinct synthesizer layers contribute to the track's harmonic depth:

- **Bass Synthesizer:** This complements the acoustic bassline in certain sections, adding a modern, electronic texture.
- **Harmonic Synthesizer (Pads):** Soft, sustained pad sounds fill the harmonic space, creating a lush and immersive sonic atmosphere. These pads act as a bridge between the rhythm section and melodic elements, ensuring cohesion in the arrangement.
- **Magic Synth Layer:** A subtle "magic synth" adds an element of sparkle, offering *ear candy* moments throughout the track. These details elevate the listener's experience by introducing unexpected textures and enhancing the emotional resonance.

4.Funky Guitar

The inclusion of a funk-style electric guitar injects a vibrant, rhythmic quality into the arrangement. Characterized by short, syncopated strums and percussive muting, the guitar adds an energetic "bounce" to the track. It plays a dual role, supporting the harmony and reinforcing the rhythmic interplay between the bass and drums. This guitar line is quintessentially R&B, adding textural complexity without overpowering the other instruments.

5. Brass Section

The brass section is a defining feature of the track's instrumentation, adding energy and brightness to key moments such as the last choruses. These brass parts rhythmically and melodically accentuate phrases, amplifying their impact. By emphasizing crucial sections, the brass provides a dynamic push, elevating the emotional intensity of the track. Additionally, its interaction with the rhythm section creates a call-and-response effect that strengthens the overall groove.

Instrumentation Typical of R&B

This instrumentation embodies the essence of the R&B genre, where groove, harmony, and interplay between rhythmic and melodic elements are paramount. Each instrument complements the others, creating a balance between richness and spaciousness.

1. **Rhythmic Foundation:** The drums and bass provide stability and drive.
2. **Harmonic Support:** Synth pads create a warm, enveloping atmosphere, while the funk guitar adds texture and rhythmic interest.
3. **Energy and Expression:** Brass sections punctuate the arrangement, adding emphasis to climactic moments.
4. **Sparkle and Depth:** The subtle "magic synth" layer provides *ear candy* moments, enhancing the track's emotional and sonic appeal.

5.Dynamics

The instrumentation is arranged dynamically to develop the track progressively. The song begins with a minimalist approach, emphasizing the vocals and a few

key instruments. As the track builds, additional layers—such as the brass section—are introduced, increasing the energy and preparing the listener for climactic moments in the chorus. This layering technique ensures a dynamic arc that sustains interest throughout the track.

6. Back Vocals

In the R&B genre, backing vocals play an essential role in creating depth, texture, and emotional resonance within a track. Far more than simple harmonies, they act as a critical layer, enhancing the lead vocal and enriching the overall arrangement.

6.1. Harmonic Support

In this song, the backing vocals function as tenuto underlays, much like a string section providing harmonic depth beneath a primary melody. The combination of Maria's soprano voice and my mezzo-soprano creates a balanced and lush chord timbre, blending seamlessly to form a harmonious foundation. This interplay adds warmth and dimension to the track, making the vocal arrangement feel full and dynamic.

6.2. Emphasis on Key Phrases

Backing vocals in this song also serve to emphasize specific words and phrases, such as "*give me love*" and "*not enough.*" By repeating or layering these moments, the backing vocals amplify their emotional significance and strengthen the song's narrative impact. These accents not only highlight the meaning of the lyrics but also enhance their rhythmic and melodic presence, making them memorable for the listener.

6.3. Rhythmic Interaction

In the second verse, the backing vocals adopt a more rhythmic, staccato approach, tightly interwoven with the lead vocal line. This syncopated interaction adds energy and drive to the verse, contrasting with the smoother tenuto harmonies of other sections. This rhythmic variation keeps the arrangement dynamic and engaging.

6.4. Emotional Depth in the Bridge

The bridge showcases the most poignant use of backing vocals in the song. Here, they take on a role akin to a string or brass section, singing chordal underlays that create a soft yet emotionally resonant "cushion" for the lead melody. The tonal quality of the backing vocals in this section is reminiscent of the warm, mellow timbre of a flugelhorn, providing a deeply moving and intimate atmosphere. This orchestral-like function elevates the bridge, making it one of the most expressive moments in the track.

The backing vocals in this song are far more than a supporting element; they are an integral part of the arrangement, driving both its emotional and musical impact. From their tenuto harmonies in the verses to their rhythmic interplay in the second verse and orchestral-like qualities in the bridge, they add depth, texture, and a sense of sophistication. In an R&B song, where the interplay of voices often defines the genre's essence, these backing vocals not only complement the lead but also serve as a vehicle for heightened emotional storytelling.

9. Structure

The structure of this song reflects a modern pop and R&B composition style, designed to balance familiarity with dynamic progression. Each section

contributes to the song's narrative, emotional arc, and listener engagement.

The scheme of structure:

Intro - Verse 1 - Pre Chorus - Chorus - Post -Chorus (with the hook phrase)

Verse 2 - Pre Chorus - Chorus - Post Chorus

(Bridge Chorus +Post Chorus)* 2 times

10. Target Audience

The song is a powerful reflection of love, self-respect, and personal boundaries, resonating deeply with a specific demographic that values empowerment and emotional authenticity. It speaks to listeners who seek relationships built on mutual respect and pleasure, without compromising their inner values or sense of self. The track's modern R&B style, combined with bold, sophisticated production, ensures that it connects with a contemporary audience.

1. Core Demographic

The song is aimed primarily at individuals who value personal growth and emotional intelligence in their relationships. Its themes of self-worth and dignity appeal to:

Age Group: Young adults (18–35) who are navigating the complexities of modern relationships.

2. Emotional Connection

This song strikes a balance between vulnerability and strength, allowing listeners to connect emotionally. It resonates with those who have experienced:

1. The thrill of romantic attraction, coupled with the struggle to maintain personal boundaries.

2. Situations where self-respect and love were at odds, reinforcing the importance of personal dignity.

3. A desire to embrace love on their own terms, without sacrificing their individuality.

4. The lyrical themes of pride, self-respect, and emotional fulfillment in relationships inspire listeners to prioritize their well-being while navigating the highs and lows of love.

3. Genre and Production Appeal

The bold, modern R&B production appeals to an audience that values contemporary soundscapes with a touch of sophistication:

Musical Taste: Fans of artists like H.E.R., Summer Walker, or SZA, Raquel Rodriguez (our referent point), who blend soulful melodies with cutting-edge production techniques, will find the track captivating.

Aesthetic: The "fat" production—rich basslines, layered harmonies, and intricate textures—aligns with the preferences of listeners who appreciate high-quality sound design and stylish musical arrangements.

Streaming Playlists: The song fits seamlessly into curated playlists for R&B, soulful pop, and empowerment anthems, making it a strong candidate for digital platforms like Spotify and Apple Music.

4. Lifestyle and Identity

1. Empowered Women: Women embracing their identity and self-worth in relationships, careers, and daily life.

2. Urban Millennials and Gen Z: Individuals who align with modern, progressive values and enjoy music that mirrors their life experiences.

3. This song also appeals to those who enjoy music as a form of self-expression and emotional release. Its relatable narrative encourages listeners to reflect on their own experiences, fostering a personal connection with the track.

11. Exploring the Therapeutic Influence of Songwriting

For me, this track was a true leap outside of my comfort zone. Collaborating with Maria led to lyrics I would never have written on my own. As we shared our personal experiences in relationships, the narrative of the song naturally unfolded. The result was bold, provocative, and, at times, unapologetically audacious. This process pushed me to grow as a singer-songwriter, allowing me to express thoughts and emotions that I might otherwise have kept hidden.

I see songwriting as not just a craft but a mission—to go into those uncomfortable emotional spaces and lead listeners through them. This track gave me the courage to articulate things that are often too difficult to say aloud, and in doing so, I realized how powerful music can be as a tool for connection and release. By giving voice to emotions that are hard to express, I believe we help others experience and process those feelings more deeply, ultimately letting go of them with greater ease.

This experience reinforced my belief in the transformative power of songwriting. It's not just about creating a song; it's about creating a space where vulnerability is shared, where emotions can be safely explored, and where both the artist and the listener can find a sense of resolution and healing.

CHAPTER 2. SONG “RED FLAG”

Original lyrics (ukrainian):

1.Red flag багато говорив про

колишню

ref flag

Red falg а я дала тобі знижку

ref flag

Red flag вільний час є тільки для

інших

red flag

red flag mm так багато red flag

Приспів:

А я в нього сильно сильно аж

знепритомніла

божевільна як не усвідомила

що вільний вільний він о як

болісно

і не винний ні

2.Red flag - ілюзія обману

як своїми фокусами він мене

побавив

Зачепив старі рани і створив нові

що тепер робити з тою клятою

любов'ю

Наче я квитки до твого кіна

купувала

розбивати серце - кожен день

йому мало

дівчата, як іграшки він навіть не

скриває

далі далі пошук пошук він не

вимикає

Я не зійду зума і не втрачу розум

Я можу все сама не збираюсь

топити в твоєму серці морози

Я не зійду з ума

ні ні ні

В мене давно є я

Я собі довела

Translation:

“RedFlag”

Lyrics:

Red flag — talked a lot about the ex

Red flag

Red flag — and I gave you a
discount

Ref flag

Red flag — free time only for others

Red flag

Red flag mm, so many red flags

Chorus: And I was so madly madly

with him..., I almost fainted

Crazy, as if I didn't realize

That he's “free, free”, oh, how
painful

And not guilty, no

2. Red flag — illusion of deception

How he entertained me with his
tricks

He touched old wounds and created
new ones

What to do with this cursed love
now

As if I bought tickets to his movie
Breaking hearts — a daily routine
for him

Girls are toys to him, he doesn't
even hide it

Further, further, search, search, he
won't stop

I won't go insane or lose my mind

I can handle it all myself, I'm not
going to harbor coldness in my heart
for you

I won't go crazy

No, no, no

I have myself long ago

I proved it to myself

General Description of the Song

This song is written in Ukraine in collaboration with Ukrainian producer Vlada Birdsy. The reference tracks were Lucky Daye's “Over” and Sinead Harnett's “If You Let Me.” The lyrics are based on my personal story. The creation of the

track began with a guitar lick, for which drum and bass parts were selected. Then, the lyrics were written, and the melody recorded, to which I added backing vocals. After extensive genre exploration, I feel that this style deeply resonates with me, allowing for an authentic narrative close to the listener and emphasizing the vocal performance's quality. The tessitura reveals the deep, gentle timbre of a mezzo-soprano voice.

1.Theme of the Song and Connection with the Author’s Emotional State

I always try to write songs based on my personal experiences and relevant emotional states at the time of writing, as I believe this has undeniable therapeutic effects.

2.Lyrics Structure

At the heart of this track is the image of a man: attractive, intelligent, and confident, fully aware of his worth. The girl falls in love with him, but he promised his heart not only to her—although he forgot to mention it.

The sentence lengths vary depending on the rhyme scheme—sometimes omitting subjects, with the main goal being to maintain the rhythm of the lyrical verse.

For example, “а я в нього сильно сильно” (“and I [fell in love] with him strongly”) omits the word “fell in love,” adding boldness and appeal to the phrase, making the text imperfect and closer to the listener.

Use of Figurative Language

2.1. Metaphors:

- *Gave you a discount* — trusted you, let things slide
- *Free time only for others* — I am not a priority

- *Entertained me with his tricks* — distracted me from the truth, clouded my judgment
- *Touched old wounds and created new ones* — hurt me, causing new psychological trauma
- *Breaking hearts is his daily routine* — he gets bored and seeks a new girl every day
- *Search, he won't stop* — keeps looking for new girls
- *Not going to harbor coldness in my heart* — not holding a grudge against you

2.2. The phrase “Red flag” — a symbolic, recurring element in the song, making it catchy and encouraging the listener to repeat the words.

2.3. Similes:

- *Almost fainted* — fell madly in love
- *Crazy* — completely lost her mind from love
- *As if I bought tickets to your movie* — he acted as if in a role, and she believed him
- *Girls as toys* — disrespects people, uses and discards them like dolls

2.4. Irony:

- *Free, free* — a lie; he had a girlfriend
- *Not guilty, no (of course not)* — the heroine uses irony to soften the situation for her psyche

3. Melody and Harmony

I believe this song exemplifies the concept described by Allan F. Moore

in his article *"The Persona-Environment Relation in Recorded Song"* (2005). The tension between the demanding accompaniment and the lyrically performed melody serves to contrast with the persona's situation, creating a dynamic interplay between the vocal expression and the musical environment. This complexity adds depth to the interpretation of the song, enriching its emotional and narrative impact.

Key and Harmony: The track is written in E minor, creating a slight sense of melancholy. The harmony uses the chord sequence is

Em / Am / B7 / Em / Am / C / B7

and this chord provides a sense of direction and movement adds feeling of drama during of resolution to the track.

This chord progression represents a full sound characteristic of many musical styles and includes interesting harmonic transitions that create emotional tension and expressiveness.

1. First Chord (Em):

- It begins with the E minor chord (Em), which sets a melancholic and deep mood. This chord serves as the foundation for further movement and creates a sense of introspection.

2. Second Chord (Am):

- Transitioning to the A minor chord (Am) brings a touch of light and warmth, adding nuances to the overall atmosphere. This movement is a natural continuation that creates harmonic unity with the previous chord.

3. Third Chord (B7):

- The B7 chord introduces an element of tension into the progression. As a dominant chord, it creates an expectation for resolution, contributing to a sense of dynamics. The use of B7 prepares the listener for a return to the tonic.

4. Return to Em:

- Returning to the Em chord completes the first cycle, emphasizing its emotional foundation. This moment resonates with the first chord, allowing the listener to realize and experience all the characteristic emotions.

5. Repetition of Am and Transition to C:

- The repetition of the Am chord again adds depth, but the transition to the C major chord introduces freshness and a new shade into the arrangement, creating a contrasting effect within the progression.

6. Final B7:

- The last B7 intensifies the tension before the final resolution, adding dynamism to the conclusion of the phrase. It serves as a connecting link that leads to a cyclical repetition of the chords or to potential musical development.

This progression Em / Am / B7 / Em / Am / C / B7 demonstrates a smooth transition of emotional states, creating a layered musical image. The use of the dominant chord B7 for resolution to both the minor (Em) and major (C) chords enriches the sound and promotes the development of the musical narrative.

This sequence creates an emotional depth by combining the simplicity and ease of major and minor chords. The interplay of major and minor sounds makes the track expressive yet accessible to the listener, evoking a sense of sincerity mixed with mild sadness and hope, making it suitable for ballads, pop compositions, and melodic genres focused on strong emotional impact.

4. Rhythm

The track uses a pulsing rhythm with an emphasis on beats 2 and 4, in 4/4 time. This creates a swinging effect that maintains the track's energy level while also giving a relaxed feel. Syncopated bass parts add an element of surprise, enhancing the groove.

5. Texture

The arrangement is minimalist. The guitar part with a repetitive lick is at the center, subtly enhanced by the warm sound of the bass and acoustic drums. These layers harmonize with the voice and backing vocals, which mimic string sounds in their articulation, creating a gentle background for the lead vocal.

6. Timbre

The softly shimmering riff of the electric guitar adds intimacy and sincerity while also emphasizing the lyrics' demanding tone. The acoustic drums sound soft, maintaining rhythm and enhancing the groove, while mezzo-soprano tones in the vocals add warmth to the composition. Timbre-wise, the piece sounds very simple yet stylish and modern.

7. Dynamics

The intensity of the track gradually builds towards the final chorus through the addition of layers of backing vocals and increased expressiveness in the vocal part. Overall, the track captures attention with its groove; the recitative melody supports this concept, with no significant peaks in intensity.

8. Structure

The composition follows a verse-chorus structure, making it memorable. Each chorus becomes brighter with the addition of new backing vocal layers, enhancing the euphoric feeling.

9. Target Audience

This song will resonate with anyone who has experienced betrayal or suffered

from unrequited love. It is also for those who, having gone through the stages of despair after a breakup or betrayal, seek to regain their strength and dignity, focusing on personal growth, respecting their own boundaries, and choosing healthy relationships. The song provides support, inspiration, and a sense that the listener is not alone in such circumstances.

10. Exploring the Therapeutic Influence of Songwriting

Healing Through Creativity

This song, as a form of self-expression, has personally helped me understand and process my emotions. Knowing that the person who inspired this track, with whom I would never discuss this topic directly, will hear it gives me strength and enables me to let go and start a new chapter in my life.

CHAPTER 3. SONG “LIES”

Verse 1:

Your eyes

Is the place I wanna get lost

Even if it comes with a cost

Wanna stay blind

Wanna make the most of this
moment

Imma' go wherever you're going

Pre Chorus:

I notice every lie

See through from a million miles

You know I realize

You know I do

You know I do (2x)

Chorus:

If you break my heart I...

I'll put the pieces back in no time

I'll play pretend if you want me to

Cuz no one has ever made me feel
like you do

Just wanna stay blind

Verse 2:

I might be wrong for taking the
chance

But baby I don't need to
know where you stand

I just wanna take off

I don't care where we land

I wanna ride the wave for as long
as it feels right

Ignorance is bliss right?

Pre Chorus

Cuz I notice every lie

See through from a million miles

I'll put the pieces back in no time

You know I realize

I'll play pretend if you want me to

You know I do

**Cuz no one has ever made me feel
like you do.**

Chorus

Just wanna stay blind

If you break my heart I...

General Description of the Song

This song was written in collaboration with Finnish producer Alexander Hindsberg, who created the arrangement, and Finnish lyricist-songwriter Joel Sundkvist, with whom I wrote the lyrics based on my melody.

I proposed a number of references: Allen Stone - "Brown Eyed Lovers," Jordan Rakei - "Freedom," JP Cooper - "Call My Name," focusing on an overall musical concept of neo-soul and hip-hop fusion with elements of gospel like in the last reference track. However, in the end, the references were hardly utilized.

Producer Alexander sent me the groove of the verse and a suggested chorus. Following that, I came up with a melody for these sections.

So, piece by piece, we created a demo and all structure. Then Alexander continued working on the arrangement, and we had a separate online session with Joel Sundkvist.

1.Theme of the Song and Connection with the Author's Emotional State

We started to create a concept of the track and decided to look at phenomenon of “lies” from a different angle and remove the crushing burden of accusations and indignation from its shoulders, highlighting cases when lies can be constructive and blissful and offer chances for development. This is how the words of this romantic track were born.

We often find ourselves distrusting life, with our minds conjuring up countless reasons to worry and resist. Our subconscious, in an effort to protect us from potential trauma, keeps us within the boundaries of what feels safe and familiar. Yet, the heart of this song lies in the deliberate act of casting aside those doubts, choosing instead to step boldly into the unknown.

The lyrics explore the transformative power of embracing life fully—relinquishing fear and allowing ourselves to experience all that life has to offer. By pushing beyond the perceived limits of what is possible, we create space for growth, expansion, and deeper fulfillment. This message serves as a reminder that life is meant to be lived boldly, with courage and joy, even in the face of uncertainty. It is through these fearless experiences that we truly learn, evolve, and savor the beauty of existence.

2.Lyrics Structure

So we discussed the main concept with lyric-writer Joel Sundkvist during our online session, switched off our mics, and started to write the lyrics, sharing the results and discoveries in the App Session Studio meanwhile, so everybody understands where we are, on the same page. This is a fragment of our general brainstorm list, where we tried to put the catchiest phrases or words relevant with our topic:

“Brainstorm:”

Two hearts

on different roads

Crossroads

Are we gonna keep walking together

Or keep walking in separate directions

[Pre-Ch]

I still can't realize

I shut my eyes but your lies

like echo in my mind

Love conquers all

And every time you call him

all you get his busy phone

You held all the cards when it comes to me

I was thinking we 're forever

see our future children however

Don't take me for granted

In just three hours, the lyrics were complete. I played the role of the idea generator, while most of the lyrics were written by Joel. For me as an artist, it was an incredible experience to be part of the idea generation and the structural foundation of the scenario. Since I likely intend to perform this track, it is essential for me to sing lyrics that align with my mindset and vision. This lyric-writing collaboration evolved into a cohesive and meaningful creation.

The **structure of the song** is as follows: **Verse** → **Pre-Chorus** → **Chorus** → **Verse 2** → **Pre-Chorus** → **Chorus**.

The **narrative is told in the first person**, making the song intimate and allowing the protagonist to closely align with the performer, establishing a deep emotional connection with the audience. This approach is reminiscent of iconic hits like Whitney Houston's "*I Will Always Love You*." Additionally, the lyrics include direct references to the second person, the protagonist's romantic partner, adding another layer of personal engagement.

In the **first verse**, the protagonist describes how deeply they've fallen in love. They are immersed in a state of blind bliss, choosing to overlook imperfections or red flags. Trusting the situation entirely, the protagonist follows their emotions, recognizing that true love is a rare encounter.

In the **pre-chorus**, underlying reasons for worry become evident, as the protagonist openly communicates their concerns to their partner. Despite this, they express a desire to fully embrace love, surrender to the relationship, and give it a chance. They accept that nothing is perfect and choose to turn a blind eye to "lies," prioritizing their feelings over doubts.

Ultimately, the song is, in my opinion, deeply **ironic and caricatured**—it captures the way we lose ourselves when falling in love, refusing to take off rose-colored glasses, and indulging in the bliss of infatuation, no matter the risks. I love that the theme is **provocative**, likely sparking questions and reflections among listeners: What are we willing to compromise for love? Should we rigidly defend our boundaries, or should we let go and see where love takes us? If our rules are violated, should we stay or leave?

This song challenges the listener to explore these questions, ensuring it leaves no one indifferent.

Use of Figurative Language

The song employs a rich use of figurative language to emphasize emotions and create vivid imagery. For example:

1. Metaphores:

1.1. Your eyes is the place I want to get lost – love you so much, you are my home

1.2. Comes with a costs – maybe later I'll pay for this blind love and you 'll break my heart

1.3. Stay blind – trust you and in our feelings unconditionally

1.4 Go where you 're going – trust you and ready to build up life together

1.5. See through a million miles – you can't fool me

1.6 Put the pieces back in no time – ready to *померпеть крушение*

1.7. I don't need to know where you stand – I don't want to know the truth

1.8. I just want to take off/don't know where we land – trust the life

1.9. Ride the wave for as long as it feels right – will continue to trust in this love till the feelings will be right

2. Irony:

1. Ignorance is bliss – Author happy to be fooled

3. Melody and Harmony

The melody of the composition unfolds within a minor key, spanning nearly two octaves (from E in the small octave to C in the third octave). This wide range contributes to the dynamic character and developmental arc of the track. The melodic movement exhibits a dual nature: smooth and stepwise in the verses, reinforcing a narrative and reflective mood, and leaping and expressive in the choruses, infusing the track with heightened emotional intensity.

The melodic phrases are notably elongated, sustaining the storytelling quality of the composition, while the use of syncopation injects sharpness and a touch of intrigue. A standout melodic motif—rhythmically aligned with the rhythm section—seamlessly transitions from the pre-chorus into the chorus. This motif not only serves as a bridge but also proves to be highly memorable, anchoring the song in the listener's mind.

Furthermore, the chorus melody, with its strategic use of repetition and variations, works its "magic." This technique ensures that the melody embeds itself firmly in memory, enhancing its potential to resonate with a broad audience. By skillfully combining these melodic elements, the song positions itself as a strong contender for becoming a true hit.

Harmony:

Verse:

Em7 | Dm9 Gm7| Cmaj9

Bm7 B7alt/D#| Em7 :||

Pre - Chorus:

Em |Dm7 G| Cmaj7

Bm7 B7alt/D# |

Esus11 | Asus13|

A7 D |

G7 Cmaj Em7

Chorus:

Am7 B7 |Em7 Dm7 G7 |

Cmaj | B7 Em7:||

4. Harmonic Analysis of the Composition

In this composition we demonstrate a sophisticated application of jazz-influenced harmonic language, incorporating extended chords, modal mixture, and chromatic progressions to create a rich and engaging harmonic palette. The following analysis examines the harmonic structure section by section.

Verse

Chord Progression: Em7 – Dm9 – Gm7 – Cmaj9 / Bm7 – B7alt/D# – Em7

The verse begins in E minor, establishing a tonality that serves as the foundation of the composition. The progression quickly moves through a series of extended chords that deviate momentarily from the home key, creating harmonic variety. The Dm9 and Gm7 introduce modal mixture, lending a colorful departure from E minor. The subsequent Cmaj9 provides a moment of brightness, temporarily anchoring the progression in C major. The Bm7 and B7alt/D# function as secondary dominants, leading back to Em7 with a smooth chromatic resolution that reinforces the minor tonality.

Pre-Chorus

Chord Progression: Em – Dm7 – G – Cmaj7 / Bm7 – B7alt/D# – Esus11 – Asus13 / A7 – D – G7 – Cmaj – Em7

The pre-chorus expands upon the harmonic palette introduced in the verse. The progression Em – Dm7 – G – Cmaj7 suggests a temporary modulation to C major, providing contrast and tension. The use of suspended chords, such as Esus11 and Asus13, introduces harmonic

ambiguity and anticipation. The final sequence (A7 – D – G7 – Cmaj – Em7) reinforces the tonal relationship between E minor and its parallel modes, creating a sense of return and resolution.

Chorus

Chord Progression: Am7 – B7 – Em7 / Dm7 – G7 – Cmaj / B7 – Em7

The chorus solidifies the tonal center in E minor with the iV-V-i progression (Am7 – B7 – Em7). This classical jazz harmonic sequence establishes structural clarity and provides a sense of grounding. The subsequent Dm7 – G7 – Cmaj progression momentarily shifts the tonal focus to C major, introducing a brief yet effective contrast. The B7 – Em7 resolution reaffirms the E minor key, maintaining coherence within the larger structure.

So this composition reflects a sophisticated understanding of harmonic principles, particularly within the jazz idiom. Key features include:

1. Extended Chords: The frequent use of 7th, 9th, 11th, and 13th chords adds harmonic depth and texture, enriching the overall soundscape.
2. Modal Mixture: The incorporation of chords from parallel modes (e.g., Gm7 in an E minor context) introduces tonal diversity and emotional complexity.
3. Secondary Dominants: Chords such as B7alt/D# function as secondary dominants (V/i), creating strong and compelling resolutions.
4. Suspended Chords: Esus11 and Asus13 add harmonic tension and dynamic interest, enhancing the pre-chorus's role as a transition.

5. Chromatic Movement: The inclusion of altered chords (e.g., B7alt) and chromatic transitions enriches the harmonic language and adds intrigue.

The harmony in our song creates a sophisticated, jazz-influenced sound while maintaining a strong sense of key center. The progressions are both interesting and functional, providing a solid foundation for melodic development and lyrical expression.

4. Instrumentation

Verse:

The instrumental arrangement of the verse introduces a hip-hop-inspired drum pattern, accompanied by a synthesizer producing soft, choral-like pad textures. This combination establishes a subtle yet rhythmic foundation.

Pre-Chorus:

In the pre-chorus, backing vocals are added, layered in octaves and thirds, enriching the harmonic depth. In the second part of the pre-chorus, the drums drop out, leaving only the piano and lead vocals. This minimalistic approach enhances the dramatic impact of this section, drawing the listener's attention to the emotional core of the song. The lead vocal, supported by harmonized backing stabs, creates a tension-filled transition into the chorus.

Chorus:

The chorus reintroduces the drums, with the synth pads continuing to carry the harmonic progression. Additionally, a rhythm guitar with a choppy, syncopated feel is added, further energizing the arrangement. The vocals in the chorus consist of a lead melody supported by a backing vocal an octave lower, which adds a sense of richness and warmth.

Second Verse:

The second verse brings a dynamic shift; the drum section is reduced to just snaps on the second and fourth beats. In the third measure, the full

instrumentation gradually returns, adding dynamic interest and tension. Here, the guitar plays dramatic melodic licks that respond to the lead vocal, emphasizing the ironic tone of the narrative.

Later Sections:

The pre-chorus and chorus that follow remain similar to the first iterations, maintaining structural consistency. However, as this is still a demo, additional instrumental layers may be added to the final version, particularly in the last verse or chorus.

5. Rhythm

The rhythmic foundation of the song is defined by a steady hip-hop beat that persists throughout the track. The emphasis on the second and fourth beats creates a groove that feels engaging and propulsive, perfectly complementing the vocal delivery.

6. Texture

The texture of the composition is intentionally kept transparent and uncluttered. The lead role is carried by the drums, which provide a steady pulse. A lightly chorused synthesizer and the rhythmic guitar offer harmonic and rhythmic support, while the tender, emotive vocals maintain the song's intimate character. This balance ensures that the arrangement feels both spacious and emotionally resonant.

7. Timbre

The timbral palette combines acoustic and electronic elements for a

dynamic, contemporary sound. The acoustic drums feature a tight, snappy snare that punctuates the rhythm, while the synth pads produce a soft, mellow tone. The electric guitar adds an edge with its groove-oriented, percussive quality, contrasting effectively with the warm, expressive vocal lines.

8. Dynamics

The dynamics of the song evolve progressively, building tension and release in each section. The pre-chorus, characterized by a sudden drop in instrumentation, creates a dramatic pause before the chorus. This contrast heightens the impact of the hook, maintaining the listener's engagement and emotional connection.

9. Structure

The song follows a straightforward yet effective structure:

Verse – Pre-Chorus – Chorus – Verse 2 – Pre-Chorus – Chorus.

This structure balances familiarity with enough variation to sustain interest throughout the composition.

10. Target Audience

The song appeals to listeners who have experienced the thrill and vulnerability of falling in love, particularly those who have navigated the bittersweet early stages of a romantic relationship. It resonates with anyone who has overlooked "red flags" in love and chosen to pursue emotional connection despite potential heartbreak. Additionally, the track is likely to attract fans of melodic soul and R&B with a retro-inspired live instrumental feel.

11. Exploring the Therapeutic Influence of Songwriting

For me, this song had a profoundly therapeutic impact. At its core, it reflects my personal story. By translating the experience into lyrics and music, I was able to gain a bird's-eye perspective on the situation. It allowed me to recognize that the choices I made—despite the red flags—were my own, and while I learned valuable lessons, I also took accountability for my own heartbreak.

I am deeply grateful for music as a medium, which allows me to process and express emotions with greater courage and ease. Writing and performing this song provided a means of release, and the therapeutic effect is further amplified by the awareness that my creation will reach its intended audience, including, perhaps, the person who inspired it.

CHAPTER 4. SONG “BRAINWASH”

General Description of the Song and My Role in Collaboration

This song was created during a K-Pop camp. It was my first experience working in a camp organized by a publisher with specific leads tasks for creating a potential hit that would compete for selection by an actual K-pop group in Korea.

The understanding that the song could be performed by a real group gave me immense motivation to dive into the style, which was unfamiliar to me at the time, and to understand its intricate structure. This complexity is largely influenced by the large number of group members (4–13 people) who will perform the track.

I was teamed up with British topliner Emma Gale-Kirkbride and Finnish producer Valente Villanueva. We used the "*Asynchronicity*" model (as classified by Bennett), where toplineers and producers work separately on a multi-track file, exchanging it back and forth and making iterative changes. This model allowed to collaborate worldwide quickly and with all the benefits of creative collaboration.

We were provided with several reference tracks and chose one of them, taking time to analyze it. We also dedicated time to studying the genre as a whole. I listened almost all tracks in the top Korean charts and absolutely loved the concept: jazzy chords combined with hip-hop drums and soul-pop vocals, sometimes interspersed with rap sections.

At the time of writing, we were physically located in three different countries and time zones. Producer Valente sent us the first music draft, after which Emma and I held a brainstorming session on the lyrics. It was fascinating to

work with Emma, as a British native speaker, because she used linguistic structures differently, bringing a fresh perspective.

We decided on a social theme: the role and influence of social media on our lives. During an online session, we turned off our microphones and started writing down all possible hook phrases related to the theme. Once we were done, we discussed everything we had written and began combining the sketches into the lyrics of the future banger.

I then mumbled a melody, assigning different parts to the future group members based on their performance styles and personas. To achieve this, I studied the group's previous works and read interviews with its members to better understand their roles and positioning.

We had an entire month to create the track, so I spent a lot of time individually working on the lyrics, creating drafts and sketches. Emma also worked on her ideas, and eventually, we combined all of our inputs into the final text.

I recorded a demo of the melody with lyrics, while Valente worked on the arrangement, sending us different versions. Together, we structured the track and, after a month, presented it to the publisher for review.

2.Lyrics

Brainwashed

Intro

Brainwash Brainwash

Addicted to obsession

Stop the clock watch

Verse 1

Welcome to the new world

Gonna blow your mind apart

At first it was so innocent

Sweet is the secret

That's how it starts

Verse 1B

You're drawn into the lights

Wasting all your nights

Watching other lives

Go by

Verse 1C - clearer diction

You just stop doing what you really
love

Searching all the time *but you give it
up*

Try'na find a way

Living for today

Crashing through the power lines

Pre

All day long

The hours pass by while ya lose
your mind

It's got you wasting all your time

Can you survive the rising tide

Watch it till it stops

Go get the powder

Choruss

Brainwash Brainwash

Addicted to obsession

Stop the clock watch

Brainwash brainwash

My smartphone is *the rinsing aid*

Wash wash

Brainwash

Take the powder

Brainwash

And put your head *in the* washing
machine

Brainwash

Now now

Brainwash

Brainwash, Brainwash

Verse 2

Lonely in the real world

Scrolling till your head burns

You better get out

before you forget

Taking over me

Taking over you

Pre

Can you survive the rising tide

Watch it till it stops

You got the power, power, power,
power,

Chorus

Brainwash Brainwash

Addicted to obsession

Stop the clock watch

Brainwash brainwash

My smartphone is *the rinsing aid*

Wash wash

Brainwash

Take this powder

Brainwash

And put your head *in the* washing
machine

Brainwash

Now now

Brainwash

Brainwash, Brainwash

You can't put them down

Flooding your mind and your body
takes over

Bridge

Search for emotion

There's no way of getting out

The way is broken

All you do is scream and shout

Triggering, triggering, triggering all
or nothing

Chorus

Brainwash Brainwash

Addicted to obsession

Stop the clock watch

Brainwash brainwash

My smartphone is *the rinsing aid*

Wash wash

I'm very pleased with the results of this collaboration, particularly the catchy melodies, engaging arrangement, and the clever, ironic lyrics. Immersing myself in a completely new genre and culture was an eye-opening experience. Exploring their tools and methods for creating hits expanded my creative horizons in ways I would never have achieved if I had continued making music solely for myself in a genre I'm comfortable and familiar with.

This process also sparked a newfound desire to write music for other artists. It presents an exciting challenge—crafting characters and stories that artists will later bring to life, turning your storytelling into music videos and concert performances. Through this collaboration, I became more acutely aware of the songwriter's responsibility. The meanings we create will be carried to listeners

through the artist's voice, shaping the emotional and cultural impact of the future hit.

This collaboration was also remarkable for me because it required mastering vocal production. I realized how important it is to make the producer's job easier by delivering clean, well-recorded vocal parts. As a result, I upgraded my technical vocal setup and improved the acoustics in my recording space, further refining my approach to vocal production.

This experience pushed me as a songwriter and vocalist, reinforcing the vital role of collaboration in expanding creative potential and professional growth.

SUMMARY

This experience has been transformative for my musical vision. Over the course of this research period, I collaborated with more than 11 producers and topliners from around the world, creating over 13 songs. I learned the art of collaboration—sharing ideas, embracing creative compromises, and striving for the best possible material. By studying and analyzing vast collections of reference tracks and revisiting the themes I wanted to explore in my work, I identified personal growth and relationships as central topics. Writing numerous lyrical sketches, I discovered the therapeutic power of songwriting firsthand. It has been an extraordinary tool for deeply processing and releasing emotions.

Creative partnerships have become one of my greatest joys. The process of finding like-minded collaborators and together bringing a song from conception to completion has been immensely fulfilling. Collaboration provides not only emotional support but also the motivation to finalize tracks and push creative boundaries. Through this journey, I developed a powerful formula: deconstructing successful tracks and experimenting with fresh combinations of elements in my own music.

Participating in songwriting camps dedicated to various styles took me far beyond my musical comfort zone. I immersed myself in genres like EDM, Rock, K-Pop, and C-Pop, each of which has its unique tools for captivating audiences. The beauty and strength of these genres have enriched my creative palette, giving me new techniques to implement in my own music.

I found particular joy in writing lyrics collaboratively. It allowed me to step beyond my personal experiences and, through the perspectives of others, address universal human triggers that resonate with wider audiences.

Additionally, crafting songs by developing characters in the lyrics has proven

effective, as it enables listeners to connect their own experiences to the story, fostering a deeper emotional bond with the music.

While writing this master's thesis, I analyzed my practical work in-depth, uncovering elements that are often executed intuitively. I identified figures of speech that enhance lyrical imagery and reaffirmed my love for working within the soul and R&B genres. My current formula—hip-hop-inspired drums, jazzy harmonies, and deeply soulful melodies and lyrics—feels closest to my artistic identity at this stage.

My next steps will involve finalizing the demo versions of my songs, managing teams to produce polished tracks, and navigating digital platforms and social media marketing to promote my music. Ultimately, my mission is to perform my original music at festivals and venues worldwide, creating meaningful and beautifully conceptualized performances that resonate with audiences.

Building this musical project will be a team effort, and I am excited to continue working with the collaborators I've met on this journey. My networking and songwriting path has only just begun. I also look forward to writing songs and crafting concepts for other artists, using my experience and connections as a songwriter to contribute to their success.

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