

THE 8-STEP MELODY AUDIT

A complete revision workflow — apply this to any melody phrase to find and fix unintentional zone placements



1 IDENTIFY EVERY NOTE

Write out the DO-TI solmization for the entire phrase. Sing or play it slowly and name each note. **Don't guess — be precise.** If you're not sure which note is which, figure it out before continuing. The whole audit depends on accurate labeling.



2 MARK EACH CHORD

Write the chord playing under each melody note. For phrases with multiple chords, note exactly where each chord change occurs. **Focus on the important notes** (chord-change notes, held notes, start/end notes) — you don't need to analyze every 16th note passing tone.



3 DETERMINE CHORD TONE STATUS

For each important note, ask: is this note in the chord? The chord tones are the **root, 3rd, 5th, and 7th** of the current chord. Everything else is a non-chord tone. Mark each: CT (chord tone) or NCT (non-chord tone).



4 MAP TO STABILITY

Rank each important note on the stability ladder: **DO** =1 **SO** =2 **MI** =3 **LA** =4 **RE** =5 **TI** =6 **FA** =7. Notes 1-3 are *stable*; notes 4-7 are *unstable*. This is the first axis of the Emotional Map.



5 PLACE EACH NOTE IN A ZONE

Combine stability (Step 4) and chord tone status (Step 3) to get each note's zone: **Stable + CT = Zone 1** (Sweet) · **Unstable + CT = Zone 2** (Tense) · **Stable + NCT = Zone 3** (Float) · **Unstable + NCT = Zone 4** (Bitter). Label each important note with its zone number.



6 CHECK ZONE DISTRIBUTION

Tally up Zone 1/2/3/4 counts for this phrase. Compare to the **Reference Zone Distributions** on Sheet 6A for your section type. Is the balance appropriate for where this section sits in the song? Too much Zone 4 in a chorus is a red flag. Too much Zone 1 in a verse = potentially boring.



7 REVIEW THE 5 KEY NOTES

Check the five most important notes (from Sheet 4B): **First note, Last note, Highest note, Longest note, Beat 1 notes.** For each: what zone is it in? Is that zone intentional? Does it match what that moment needs emotionally? If not, that's where to revise first.



8 SING IT BACK

After completing steps 1-7, sing or play the phrase while aware of the zone map you've created. Does it **feel** the way the zone map predicts? If the analysis says Zone 3 (floating, modern) but it actually feels harsh and tense — find the mismatch. The map is a tool; your ear is the judge.

⚠ RED FLAGS — FIX THESE BEFORE MOVING ON



3+ consecutive Zone 4 notes — listener fatigue. The ear needs contrast. Insert a Zone 1 or Zone 3 landing point, or shorten the bitter phrases.



Chorus ending on TI or FA — no resolution. The hook needs to land. If the last important chorus note is Zone 4, the whole section feels incomplete.



All Zone 1, no tension — too safe, predictable, and emotionally flat. Add a non-chord tone or unstable degree in the middle of phrases to create motion.



No Zone 3 or 4 anywhere — the melody lacks color and interest. Even conservative hooks need some non-chord tones for personality and memorability.