

IMPORTANT MELODY NOTES CHECKLIST

The 5 notes that carry the most emotional weight in any melody phrase — and how to make each one intentional

1

FIRST NOTE — THE EMOTIONAL ENTRY POINT

The opening note of a phrase sets the listener's emotional orientation before a single other note is heard. This is the fastest shortcut to a strong or weak opening.

CHORD TONE

Confident, direct entry. Listener feels immediately oriented.
Works well for choruses and hooks that need impact.

NON-CHORD TONE

Mysterious, questioning entry. Listener leans in. Works well for verse lines that need intrigue and forward motion.

2

LAST NOTE — RESOLUTION OR QUESTION?

The final note of a phrase determines whether it feels **closed** (resolved) or **open** (unresolved). This one choice shapes the entire emotional arc of the phrase.

CLOSED ENDING

Land on **DO** or **SO** = full resolution. **MI** = warm completion. Best for chorus arrivals.

OPEN ENDING

Land on **RE** or **TI** = question, yearning. Creates need for the next phrase. Best for verse endings.

3

HIGHEST NOTE — THE EMOTIONAL PEAK

The highest note in a phrase is the melodic climax — the moment with the most singability and emotional visibility. Whatever zone it occupies becomes the dominant mood of the entire phrase, even if it's brief.

Rule: The highest note should be placed deliberately, not accidentally. If your phrase climbs to **FA** without intention, it creates Zone 4 tension that may not serve the section. If you want a euphoric chorus peak, aim your highest note at **DO** or **MI** as a chord tone — Zone 1 at the apex creates a triumphant feeling.

4

LONGEST NOTE — THE MAGNIFYING GLASS

Duration amplifies emotional effect. A note held for two beats receives far more emotional attention than a note lasting an 8th. The longest note in a phrase gets the most scrutiny from the listener's ear — its zone becomes the emotional color of that moment.

Check deliberately: Is the longest note in Zone 1 (resolved warmth), Zone 2 (supported tension), Zone 3 (floating color), or Zone 4 (bitter edge)? Is that the emotion you want to hold longest in this section?

5

NOTES ON BEAT 1 — THE HARMONIC DOWNBEAT

Beat 1 is where chord changes typically occur. The melody note at beat 1 lands in the ear with full harmonic context — no other beat has as much harmonic weight. This note effectively defines the emotional character of each bar.

CHORD TONE ON BEAT 1

Stable, grounded bar. The melody reinforces the harmony.
Gives the listener a place to land and breathe.

NON-CHORD TONE ON BEAT 1

Constant tension — the bar never quite settles. Powerful in small doses; exhausting if every bar does this.

QUICK AUDIT — CHECK YOUR 5 NOTES

1 · FIRST NOTE

- ☐ Zone identified?
- ☐ Intentional feel?

2 · LAST NOTE

- ☐ Zone identified?
- ☐ Open or closed?

3 · HIGHEST NOTE

- ☐ Zone identified?
- ☐ Placed deliberately?

4 · LONGEST NOTE

- ☐ Zone identified?
- ☐ Correct emotion?

5 · BEAT 1 NOTES

- ☐ Chord tones?
- ☐ Consistent feel?