

CASE STUDY

'Levitating' – Dua Lipa

Written by: Dua Lipa, Clarence Coffee, Sarah Hudson, Stephen Kozmeniuk

*If you wanna run **away** with **me** I know a **galaxy** and I can take you for a **ride**
I had a **premonition** that we fell into a **rhythm** where the music don't stop for **life**
Glitter in the **sky**, glitter in my **eyes**, **shining** just the way you **like**
If you're **feeling** like you **need** a little bit of **company** you met me at the perfect **time***

*You want **me**, I want you you **baby**
My sugar boo I'm **levitating**
The Milky **Way** we're **renegading**
Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah
I got **you** **moonlight** you're **my** **starlight**
I need **you** **all** **night**
Come on dance with **me**, I'm **levitating**
You, **moonlight**, you're **my** **starlight**
I need you **all** **night**
Come on dance with **me** I'm **levitating***

This song showcases an amazingly phrased assonance (the similarity in sound between two syllables that are close together, created by the same vowels but different consonants, for example 'back' and 'hat') and rhyming phonetic lyric that weaves between exact rhyme, near rhyme and inner rhyming perfection. Verses focus on 'ayy' and 'ee' sounds and the chorus switches to 'oooh' and 'iiii'.

Everything falls nicely on the ear where you don't feel overloaded, just phonetically very satisfied.

When writing melodies, a great rule of thumb is to sing the vowels and consonants that feel right and sound right, even if they sound like gibberish, and then find the lyrics that fit the sounds. This is where the websites like rhymezone.com or rhymewave.com become a songwriter's best friend. They show exact rhymes and near rhymes and help speed up the rhyming phonetic lyric process. It's almost like approaching it as a puzzle and you've got to fit the right sounds with the melody. It can take quite the brain power to solve the puzzle of phonetics but the more you get into the swing of doing it, the more it'll become second nature.

You won't write a great song every day as no one does, but if you've done it once you can do it again, I promise. Trust the process, do all the things that work for you to stay inspired, tap in, find the flow and the great songs will come, don't let your own self-doubt stop you from getting those songs.

I've never said I'm giving up but I've definitely wondered if I'd ever have success. I wonder if I'm not as good or if I'll never be as good as I once was. Maybe I suck, maybe I've lost it, maybe I don't have the thing anymore, all of that. I've found my own mechanisms for combating that and/or ignoring or blocking it out. It's a journey that everybody has to take to figure out their own way of navigating the inner voice and the doubts. You just have to figure out a way to talk to your own voice cos you're the only one that has to hear it in your head. That's the only way you're gonna ascend to the highest level of something or it will just hold you down.

Julian Bunetta

Every songwriter has those moments where they wonder if it's worth it. What keeps me from quitting is the belief from the people closest to me and the fact that I genuinely love the people I get to work with. And without fail, every time I feel like I'm ready to quit, I'll have one of those magical days writing something I love with people I love. Those moments are unlike anything else and remind me why I do this. **Steph Jones**

I've always had the experience where something I do becomes astoundingly popular and then normal life resumes for like four or five years. So every time I've had a big success I always have this crash afterwards and then the self-doubt and 'why am I even doing this' and it all kind of rises up again almost every time. But this past year I won a Grammy for a song I did called 'White Horses' with Chris Stapleton for Best Country Song. And we've written a bunch of songs over ten years and this song had been sitting around for a long time. For some reason after that song became a big No. 1 on country radio and was awarded a Grammy, I didn't suffer the crash after that. For some reason maybe I'm at a point in my life where I'm just more even-keeled about things. **Dan Wilson**

CREATIVE EXERCISES TO STAY INSPIRED

I: A SONG A DAY

Give yourself 30 minutes to an hour to write a song. Write freely, write about anything, anyone, no rules, no boundaries, just set the timer and go for it. It doesn't need to be a full song, it can be a chorus, a verse, an instrumental hook, whatever comes out.

'SOMEONE LIKE YOU' – ADELE

Written by: Adele Adkins, Dan Wilson

Produced by: Dan Wilson

The first day we wrote, we did two days. The first day we met at this very, very small studio in Hollywood called Harmony, which had a really nice piano and really good light, very small room, good vibes and a little porch so that she could have smoke breaks. We spent the first hour talking and she played me clips of songs she loved, including Wanda Jackson, rockabilly songs and Chris Stapleton singing 'If It Hadn't Been For Love'. And this was before people had heard of him outside Nashville and his band The Steeldrivers. She played me a couple of songs she was working on. 'Rolling in the Deep' and another one and they both sounded amazing to me and then she showed me two ideas. One was the song that would eventually become 'Rumour Has It'. She already had it kind of worked out, the drama of that song, it's gonna be a 'rumour has it you're the one he's leaving me for', all that clever wordplay stuff. She knew the groove she wanted.

It was really cool and then she sang me the first three or four lines of what would become 'Someone Like You' and she said, 'Which one do you wanna work on?' and I said, 'I love "Rumour Has It" but I'm not funny in my songwriting. It never comes out right if I try to be funny in a song and that's a funny song so I can't do it, let's do the ballad instead.' So we started working on 'Someone Like You' and about halfway through the day we got to the chorus. She wrote that line 'Never mind I'll find someone like you' and it really all started to come together. End of the day we had a verse, a chorus and a bad second verse, a good second chorus and it ended abruptly and we recorded it. I played the piano part into ProTools and slowed it down and sped it up in different sections a little bit. Then she sang in those sections, good verse, good chorus, bad second verse, good second chorus.

Then I realised overnight that the bad second verse was more like a bridge/middle eight part, and I thought to myself, 'If we work on that song again that's what I'll propose.' So the second day we got together the first thing I said was, 'So what do you wanna work on today? Do you wanna finish the one we started yesterday or do you wanna start something new?' And she said, 'Oh, we have to finish the song from yesterday' and I said, 'Oh really' and she said, 'Yeah, cos I played it to my manager and my mum.' (And all I could think about was the bad second verse cos the song wasn't finished so I was a little bit dismayed that she had already played it for people but it was the right thing to do.) She said, 'My manager loves it and my mum cried.' A couple of years later I was talking to her about that moment and she said, 'I knew at the end of that first day that "Someone Like You" was gonna change my life,' so she knew that and all I was thinking was about fixing that second verse but even maybe instead of finishing that song we could start a new one.

By the time we started working on this second day, her voice was rougher. She'd been having some struggles with her vocal cords at that time so that day her voice was rougher and more kind of emotional sounding. So I asked her to re-sing the choruses because I said it's just going to sound more emotional. So she recut the choruses and they sounded incredible. She

Most songwriters are also producers, most producers are also songwriters. The two things intertwine in the creative collaborative process. And just like the songwriting process, having endless melody options and endless lyrical options, in production there is an endless choice of sounds, so many options of sonic palettes. A song can be produced in so many different ways, but a great producer finds the best way for the song and serves the song always. A great producer knows how to complement a song, bringing the lyrics and melodies to life, musically and sonically.

*As a producer I wanna always get that feeling that makes me wanna put it on again and again and again. What's the thing that makes me wanna put it on again, what's the moment that I look forward to in the song that makes me wanna play it again, to get that feeling again? That has a lot to do with production and of course, obviously, the song has to be there as well. **Julian Bunetta***

WHAT IS A MUSIC PRODUCER?

In short, a music producer is responsible for delivering a completed recording to the artist/label who hires them. Being a music producer involves a range of creative and technical roles, the main one being bringing a song to life, overseeing all aspects of the creation of a song or album. Think of a music producer like the director of a film, or a movie producer; they have a vision for the song and they make a lot of the decisions to execute that vision or work with an artist/label to bring their vision to life. Gathering ideas, sonic references, composing music, making the beats, choosing the musicians, arranging the song, coaching/directing the performers to get the best performance on the song, recording all the parts, engineering the sessions, overseeing the mixing/mastering process and really everything and anything to do with the making the finished product as good as it can be.

A SHORT HISTORY OF MUSIC PRODUCTION



The music producer's role has evolved over the years along with advances in technology. In the late 19th century, the **phonograph** was invented by Thomas Edison, and it was really the first thing to capture and reproduce sound. Then came **gramophones**. Then we get to the mid-20th century where it was **magnetic tape** and the introduction of **multi-track recording**. Then came the birth of electronic music and use of **synthesizers** in the latter half of the 20th century, which brought new effects and sounds along with new genres and styles. The 1980s saw the most significant advance in music production, the digital revolution in

So we've talked through the deals, now it's vital we talk about how creatives in music actually get paid, where the revenue comes from. What music royalties actually are. Who pays them out and how it all works. How you can make the most of your deals and how you can make more money in this crazy music business where sometimes the money just seems to disappear. Of course you want to trust that your teams will be across all of this, but as someone who has been in the business for 20+ years you would be shocked at how much people can drop the ball. There are a lot of people in high positions in the music industry that do not understand how all of this works and it's time to empower ourselves as creatives and know everything about our business. Most songwriters don't have a clue how songs make money and how to read their statements; it's a huge area in music where a lot of us are uneducated. When I first started out it was never explained to me by anyone how it all worked.

Times are changing though, and it's more important than ever to have a handle on your own business and not just trust that the money will find its way to you. So as boring as this chapter may be to read, I feel it's vital to pass on what I've learned about this in simple, digestible terms and hopefully it'll help you understand how we get paid a lot better and how to get a little more bang for your buck. And if you aren't getting paid you'll know where to look. I also interviewed Helienne Lindvall to make sure we are giving you the most up to date accurate information. Helienne is an award-winning songwriter, musician and the President of the European Composers & Songwriters Alliance. She also chaired the Ivor Novello Awards and is the former Head of Business & Songwriter Relations for the song data management platform Auddly/Session, backed by Max Martin and ABBA's Björn Ulvaeus.

What are royalties?

A royalty is money paid to an asset owner for the right to use that asset. These royalties are generated when copyrighted songs and recordings get licensed and it's the main revenue stream for all music creatives.

What is a copyright?

A copyright is a type of intellectual property. It's the rights held by creatives over their original music. Music royalties are obtained from copyrights by way of a license. No one can legally use these copyrighted works without a license.

Songs have two copyrights:

The Publishing (Composition): The songwriting of the song: lyrics/melody/chords.

Owned by: The songwriters of the song.

The Master (Sound Recording): The actual recording of the song (what the listener hears).