

NSAI

Song Evaluation Service

NSAI SONG EVALUATIONS

Things You Should Know!

Song Evaluations

As an NSAI Member, you may submit 12 songs (music and lyrics) or lyric (no music) per your membership year. You have the option to use our online or mail-in service. Our team of experienced evaluators, all professional songwriters whom we have carefully selected and trained, will evaluate your song or lyric's readiness for the commercial marketplace.

Our policy is to maintain the anonymity of our evaluators – all of whom are published and many of whom are NSAI Pro members. Each is given a number in order to respect their privacy and to keep them from being deluged with dozens of personal requests. Bios of our evaluators are available under the Song Evaluations section of our website.

Getting to the NSAI Song Evaluations Homepage:

1. Go to www.nashvillesongwriters.com and log in under the “members” button.
2. After you have log in click on Song Evaluations under the “members” button as well.
3. This will bring you to the NSAI Song Evaluations Homepage where you will see three columns of links. Be sure to navigate through this links to familiarize yourself with the Song Evaluations Department.

Ready To Submit?	Have Questions?	Information
Submit Online	How It Works	Evaluators Bios
Submit by Mail	F.A.Q.'s	Recommended Songs
NSAI Consent Form	Additional Credits	Dictionary

Before getting started be sure to check out our FAQ's section from the Song Evaluations Homepage where you will find many useful tips and answers to help you get the most from your evaluation experience. Included below are two major points not to be missed from our FAQ's:

Do my song evaluation credits roll over to my following membership year?

Your song evaluation credits will expire when your membership does. You must use them before 11:59 pm the day before you expire. However, you will NOT lose any credits until your original expiration date, if choose you renew early.

What happens if I have used my 12 evaluations?

You will have the opportunity to purchase further evaluations at \$25 a credit after you have used your 12. The next time you log in and attempt to submit a song for evaluations you will be notified you do not have any available credits and offered a link to purchase more. You may also purchase additional credits from the link available on the Song Evaluation Homepage. Follow one of the links and the purchasing procedures to have a credit added to your account. You may then submit as usual.

Instructions for Online Song Evaluations:

1. To begin, go to www.nashvillesongwriters.com. Click on the “members” tab and then click “Login.” After you have logged in, click on “Song Evaluation” under the “members” tab. This will direct you to the NSAI Evaluation Services Home Page. (This page includes frequently asked questions, a dictionary of frequently used terms by the evaluators and other tools you may find helpful in the future, so you may want to bookmark it.) For submitting online, click on “Submit Online” to proceed.
2. On this page, you will find links to both “Submit A Song Now!” and “View Songs I’ve Submitted” (this link is where you will be able to view the status of you current submission and previous song submissions and completed evaluations). Click on “Submit A Song Now!”
3. This will bring you to Step 1 of the Evaluation Submission form. Your first name, last name, email address, and the number of your remaining evaluations have been automatically provided to your submission form for your convenience. You will need to type your song title, select the genre of music that best describes your song, and fill out the remainder of the form. Be sure to include any questions or comments you may have for the evaluator.
4. Also in Step 1, you can let us know if you would like a particular evaluator to evaluate your song. If you don’t have a specific evaluator in mind, just click “First Available” and we will get your song to an appropriate evaluator.
5. Before you can continue to Step 2, make sure to agree to the “Terms of Evaluations” and then click “Continue.”
6. For Step 2, you will copy and paste or type your lyrics into the space available. Click “Continue.”
7. On Step 3, you will attach your MP3 (MP3 is the only allowable format for your song submission). If you need to convert your song to an MP3 you may find instructions to do so under the FAQ’s section from the Song Evaluations Homepage. If this is a lyrics only submission, please check the box to indicate a lyric only submission. Then click “Submit for Evaluation.”
8. Once you have followed all of these steps, your submission is complete. The next page will indicate the remaining amount of submissions for your membership year. To return to the main evaluations page, select the option “click here to continue.” To be sure your song was received you may check under “View Songs I’ve Submitted” where your song should be listed with a pending status. If your credits have not been depleted by one and your song is not listed under “View Songs I’ve Submitted” your submission was not received and you will need to submit again.
9. You will receive a completed evaluation via email in 7-10 business days. You may also look under “View Songs I’ve Submitted” to check on the status of your submission and to view completed evaluations.

Instructions for Mail-In Song Evaluations:

1. Make sure you have checked the CD on which you have recorded your song and ensure that it plays from beginning to end. Label it with your name, the song title and your phone number. If this is a lyric only submission then do not worry about including a CD and proceed to step 2.
2. Print out a CURRENT lyric sheet. (Whatever is being sung on your recording should be what is printed on your lyric sheet.)
3. Be sure to completely fill out and sign the consent form.
4. Create a return envelope: Address a small padded envelope to yourself and place NSAI's return address in the upper left corner. Do NOT seal the envelope. Stamp your envelope with the proper postage. (We do not pay for your return postage).
5. You will receive a completed evaluation by mail in 30 days.
6. With mail-in evaluations you will be randomly assigned to an available evaluator and are unable to request specific evaluators.

Check, Check and Double Check

Be sure that when you are mailing in a submission to us that you have included:

1. Self Addressed and Stamped Envelope
2. Signed Consent Form (printable from our website under the Song Evaluations section)
3. Typed Lyric Sheet
4. Your Song on CD

We will **NOT** accept submission without the above listed items included and your submission will be returned.

RECOMMENDED SONGS
THE JOURNEY THROUGH NSAI SONG EVALUATIONS

Below is a bulleted list of how your song will make its journey from the evaluations department to the publisher's panel if it is deemed "Pitchable" by our evaluation staff members.

1. You submit your song to the evaluations department for a thorough evaluation and assessment of your piece.
2. The evaluator listens to the song and reads the lyric in its entirety.
3. The evaluator comments on the overall concept, the melody, the lyric, the hook and marketability of your song.
4. If the evaluator feels there is nothing to amend in the song and he or she would feel confident in playing this song for a publisher it is deemed "pitch ready" and recommended.
5. You will receive the evaluation back on your email (or in the mail if you sent it in by postal mail) and it will clearly state if it has or has not been recommended.
6. NSAI holds a P2P (Pitch to Publisher Luncheon) once a quarter. A couple of weeks prior to these luncheons ALL recommended songs up to that point will be sent from the evaluations department to the NSAI membership department who decides what TWENTY songs will be played for publishers at the luncheon. Only the top, most commercially viable songs will be played.
7. If your song is chosen to be played, you will be contacted by a member of the membership department informing you of their decision.
8. If your song is NOT chosen, you will be notified by the evaluations department.

Remember, music is subjective. What one person thinks is a hit, another person may pass on. Welcome to the music industry! However, please keep in mind that if your song IS recommended, that, in it self is a huge step in the right direction. Just because it may not make it to the P2P luncheon this time, doesn't mean that your next recommended song won't. Please use recommendations as encouragement that you are doing all the things necessary to further your writing and progress your craft.

****IMPORTANT****

NSAI is by NO MEANS a pitch service! NSAI exists wholly as an educational organization providing you with tools and services to improve the craft of your writing and to learn about the music business from professionals

What Happens if I am Recommended but not played at the luncheon?

All songs that were recommended but not played are not retained for consideration for the next event. The slate is wiped clean and we start again. This process is much like pitching to a record project and is actually good training for the pitching process and here is how. If Kenny Chesney was looking for songs for his next record there would only be 15 to 20 slots open for the project and thousands of songs would be submitted and sorted through to find that small handful of songs. Unfortunately, when your song isn't selected for Kenny's project you don't receive notification or suggestions on what to do next like you do with NSAI!

NSAI SONG EVALUATIONS Getting the MOST from your Evaluation!

Each evaluation you receive reflects just one person's thoughts on your music. While the evaluation is simply one person's opinion, it's a very educated and experienced one. Our evaluators are not here to "rip" on your song. They donate their time and experience to aide you in becoming a better songwriter. Their job is to help you gain perspective on your song; much like a publisher does for their staff writers on Music Row every day. They will in most cases cover: Form/Structure, Melody, Lyric, Hook and Commercial Viability in today's market place.

Here is a (short) listing of what the Evaluation Service **CAN** do for you:

- Improve your songwriting structure and form
- Improve your melody writing
- Improve your lyric writing
- Educate you on the craft of songwriting
- Educate you on how your song will be perceived by the industry
- View your song from a different perspective
- Suggest lyrical, form and melodic changes
- If the evaluator feels you are ready and your song is fantastic, they have the option of recommending it to the panel for further review with considerations for playing it for our network of music row publishers.
- Provide you with educational materials

Here is a listing of what the Evaluation Service **CAN NOT** do for you:

- We cannot MAKE your song a hit song (that's YOUR job!)
- We cannot rewrite your song for you
- We cannot play a song for a publisher that we do not feel is ready to be pitched
- We cannot make any special concessions with regards to any song
- We cannot lie to you. If your song needs help, we are obligated to tell you. Telling you something is great, when it's not, invalidates our service to you and does not improve your writing.
- We cannot please everyone all the time

NSAI Helpful Hint with regard to rewriting: Craig Wiseman says, "Your best song is in front of you."

Again, remember...

It is easier for an evaluator to just say "great job!" than it is to formulate and articulate a constructive criticism of your song. Our evaluators, as well as our staff, get genuinely excited when we hear a great song. We WANT you to succeed. We WANT to help propel your career! The only way the evaluation department can help boost your career is by ensuring you have all the tools necessary to write great, commercially viable songs that an artist will want to cut. Remember; rewrite to improve the quality of your writing. Do not rewrite for the purpose of pleasing the panel.

Free and Clear

Please beware of many “song services” online. In most cases these companies will ask that you send them a lyric. In turn, they send you a letter saying it’s a great song, along with a contract and a bill for producing the demo. In a few weeks you get back “your song.” What they don’t tell you is that you signed away a portion of your writer’s share of the copyright, as well as the rights to the master (the master is the actual recording of your song).

In most cases, these are stock melodies, and will not result in a professional, commercially viable song. Even if the song was good enough to pitch, a publisher, film or TV service will not be able to use it because you have signed a contract with someone else. We at NSAI cannot evaluate such songs or consider them for pitching to our network of publishers.

If you are a lyricist and do not write music or melody, we suggest that you branch out and find co-writers. In addition to NSAI’s regional workshops and online forums, good places to find co-writers are your church, local music store and area music venues.

When it comes to creating a demo of your music, feel free to give us a call here at NSAI so that we can make suggestions and steer you in the right direction.

Protecting Your Song

Beginning writers are overly concerned with the idea that someone may steal their songs. The copyright law now states that a song is yours from the moment you play it or write it down, even if it’s on a cocktail napkin. You do not even have to put the copyright c symbol on your paper. It’s always good, however, to keep all the sheets of your rewrites and keep work tapes or CDs as your song evolves. Date them and file them away as part of good record keeping.

Further, if your song is so good that someone wants to steal it, they’d rather sign you to their publishing company or have you as a co-writer, so they can benefit from your talent on an ongoing basis.

Songs do not need to be registered with the copyright office until they are used; for example, when they are recorded, used on TV or printed as sheet music, say for use by a local high school chorus. Part of your publisher’s job is taking care of that paperwork, and he will not register your songs with the copyright office until they are used.

If you are acting as your own publisher, and your song is picked up for use in a TV show, for example, it will be your responsibility to file that song with the copyright office.

To order the necessary forms call (202) 707-3000, or write to: Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Washington D.C. 20559. Request form PA to copyright the music and lyrics, or form SR to copyright the song and the actual recording or sounds. If you have questions concerning copyright, please call (202) 707-5959.

You may also download or print the forms here: www.loc.gov/copyright/forms.

*NSAI Helpful Hint How To Save Money: Register your songs as a collective works and pay the same price as you would pay if you send in one song at a time.