

SONGCHECKS

Your name: Salvatore Manalo

Song name: Dreaming

First impressions (30-sec snap judgment A&R listen)

- Smooth and beautiful! Those chords make me feel like chilling by the beach with a once-in-a-lifetime type sunset. The bass sounds really good. I love the texture of the whole song.

First full listen-through impressions

- Vibes! The production is tight and groovy, with excellent sound choices, and it develops over time. The well-designed arrangement makes it sound more and more interesting towards the end of the song. I would love to go back and listen to it again.

What do you LOVE

- Pretty much everything in the song, especially the sound choice and texture of the piano and bass. Great vocal performances.

What do you HATE

- Honestly, there's nothing I don't like about the song. There are some notes I can share, however.

Overall thoughts on the mix

- Incredibly clean and wide mix. Great job!
- I can hear all of the instruments shine at their own moment, and I particularly love the textures of the piano, bass, and saxophones.
- The first thing that jumped out to me was the squeaking noise of the clean guitar, which hurt my ears a little bit.
- The other thing was the reverb/space for the vocal; there's a little canned-sound-like reverb that makes the vocal not sit so well with the other instruments.
- Some of the instruments can be pushed back in space to create nice layers and the feel of depth; simply take out the excess high frequency at a certain timeline of the song to let the others come up to the front more.

Your song/mix feedback was done by Yang Tan

You can book Yan on SongChecks here: <https://bit.ly/3jrMIRj>

SongChecks.com

Instagram: [songchecksmusic](#)

hello@songchecks.com

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Section by section thoughts

- INTRO

- Very intriguing opening. I was wondering if it'd be more mysterious and make the verse come in more magically by narrowing the width of the mix in this section. Put the piano in the center and lower it in volume, even making it a little duller, so that when your vocal comes in in the first verse, it feels like opening the window and letting the breeze in.

- VERSES

- The guitar squeaking noise stops me from focusing on your vocals. Maybe try cutting some more of the high-frequency content of the guitar and lower it in volume, like 1.5 or 2dB. It might shift the feel of the song.

- PRE-CHORUS

- The color of the chords is darker here; you could try making the instruments darker here (less high-end, duller, and smoother), especially the piano, guitar, and background vocals.

- CHORUS

- The vocal reverb has that sound like the inside of a can. Try putting an EQ on the reverb track and taking out some hollow-sounding parts. Pick one instrument/vocal as a focal point of the whole picture. Everything was trying to shine simultaneously and it made my ear tired trying to process all of the information in my face and fighting for my attention.
- Some of the gems can be slightly hidden until one day I find them after I listen to them 1000 times.
- Some of the instruments can be pushed back by EQing and lowering their volume in the mix.
- I'll be more than likely to revisit the song many times if it's very smooth and it has a vibe when I can feel it but can't quite pinpoint what it is.

Your song/mix feedback was done by Yang Tan

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- BRIDGE/BREAK

- I like the balance between the vocal and piano at the beginning of this section (02:13-02:27). This is the right amount of darkness, creating a quiet and intimate moment. Starting at 02:28, the piano is too high in volume in this section. Increase the volume slower in this section before the last chorus. Create and stretch that tension of this section.

WHAT RULES

- Well produced, and you know how to sculpt the sound of the instruments. You know how to make them sound smooth, bouncy, and glued together.

WHAT DOES NOT (what we need to work on)

- The contrast and dynamic of the mix. The magic of the story comes from dynamics; some sections are darker, and some are brighter. Utilizing the tools to create contrast and dynamic in music is true magic. Just like looking at a dazzling picture: what catches your eyes first is always the focal point because the other part of the picture is slightly out of focus and duller.

Rate and focus

- VOCALS
 - (4/5) I love the performance and the texture of your vocals. The only thing I'm not so sure about is the reverb.
- HI/MID/LOW
 - (4/5) This is a very well-balanced mix.
- DYNAMICS
 - (3/5) This is the area to work on and focus on for this mix.
- ENERGY/VIBE
 - (4/5) I really like the energy and vibe of this song.
- TWISTS AND TRANSITIONS
 - (4/5) Great production, chord changes, and arrangement. The feel of the energy twists can be improved by creating a higher contrast in the mixing.

Your song/mix feedback was done by Yang Tan

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What would I reference if I was mixing this?

- 'Lost in Paris' by Tom Misch featuring Goldlink. His production is not as full and complex as yours, but the looseness and dynamic shift is something I would reference. I would make your vocal drown in reverb but still feel intimate and close.

Overall mix rating: scale of 1 - 10 (1 = remix it, 10 = Grammy time)

- 8 of 10. I think it's a decently good mix!

Final thoughts

- I appreciate you sharing the incredible and exceptional music with me. I enjoyed listening to it. I love how you craft the texture and sound for each instrument. All the ingredients of your music are premium material and well arranged. I want to hear a little more depth and layers in terms of mixing and making other instruments not as essential and shiny so that I can take my time and think about the song's taste and figure out the ingredients you put in it.

Your song/mix feedback was done by Yang Tan

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