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# *Every Copy Counts Webinar: Nicole Justice's Tips and Tricks Transcript*

***Please note: This is not a verbatim record***

**[Intro music]:**

**Anna-Marie Descartes:** Good afternoon. Welcome everyone happy Monday! We are now in February. I feel like the year is going off to a quick start. Hope everyone is well.

Welcome to the second Every Copy Counts webinar. My name is Anna Marie Descartes. I am your host. I am very excited to be here with you all today. We had Rob Kitchen last time who was on body percussion which was fun and today you are also in for a treat and it's going to be interactive.

About me:

I am TV/radio presenter and have been doing this for six years. I have worked across a variety of networks and had a variety of clients. This is my handle. I am on Low Signal Radio and also doing New Music Friday and I am also a resident host at Soho House.

Every Copy Counts is a new campaign to help schools get the most out of the Schools Printed Music Licence which makes sure that composers and songwriters get paid fairly for the music that is being used in schools which is very, very important.

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Date: Monday, February 7, 2022

Time: From 01:38pm

ENT(s): Notemaker: Laura Carlisle- Goldthorpe



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If you did not know, artists and musicians are one of the lowest paid industries until you really reach a high level which is sad, but with ECC we hope to change that.

To say a big thank you to schools who are sharing information about the music they are using, this webinar series will bring composers, songwriters and creative practitioners directly into your school through this webinar. We hope it helps you get creative!

A bit about Nicole Justice our workshop leader:

Nicole is a singer, songwriter, rapper and producer. Super incredible woman. She supports community groups, schools, pupils and she refers units and teaching music technology, vocal training and works on performance skills with organisations like Mac Makes Music. She runs her own company called Amber Music Group. She mixed and produced her first solo and self produced single 'Personality' in May 2021 and you'll hear more about.

But for you watching from home if you are here then please leave a comment in the chat stream. Let us know you are here. Give us a wave, give us a 'Hi'. Also whilst Nicole is chatting make some notes and pay attention to her presentation because there will be time for questions at the end.

**Nicole Justice:** Hi Guys. Thank you Anne Marie. I definitely want to thank Every Copy Counts because I think it is an amazing campaign that links the artists as well as the students and brings us together in a lucrative forum and ensure you get the best experience and ensure artists get paid as they should do. So I am very very privileged and happy to be part of this campaign.

I am a singer, rapper producer. I will share a couple of slides so you can see a bit more about what I do.

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So. I am a singer, a rapper an actress as well. I released myself and produced a single called 'Personality' which was available at all major platforms last year. I have performed at arenas such as O2 Arena and also benefits like the hip hop Festival in Berlin.

I have featured in films such as 'The Quickener' and 'One Day'. I will explain more about that later. I featured on albums like Benjamin Zephaniah, the poet, and his album and also launched my own company called Amber Music Group.

I want to talk to you today about my creative process and give you guys some creative tips and tricks that you can use to be creative yourselves. Before that I want to go through my process and I want you to take notes to let me know any questions you might have or find ways to adapt these skills.

During quarantine I was a bit frustrated because I could not perform or go to venues and see people perform. I like to see people play live music and felt there was a kind of disconnect between myself and supporters and social media following. I created a project called 'A Page in My Rhyme Book'. That name I got from one of my favourite rappers Nars: the phrase "You are a slave from the page in the rhyme book". I just wanted to share a one line snippet idea. It helped me to gain confidence and try out different ideas and also enabled me to keep connected with my social media following.

I also rebranded. A brand, at school or at home is anything that helps you to identify an artist, such as a logo or a T shirt. For example it could even be the font you have that helps somebody to recognise your name somewhere. Whether on a poster, flyer or social media.

For example Drake has the owl. The owl has become part of his brand/logo. And when you see that on hoodies for example you know that it's his brand.



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So anything that helps to identify you as an artist also how you manage your social media so it could be colours that you use.

I got rid of my social media and started something new and had a really small following and this actually helped me to experiment without any worries and the experience I had previously.

One thing that came out of this was experimentation was this song called 'Personality'. I created a video and got a pretty good response and developed a track that I released it on Spotify and Apple Music and all other platforms through Ditto.

Distribution is something that is very important to artists because it helps us to get our music to you guys, to listeners. So if you are an up-and-coming artist and you want to know how to get your music on Spotify and Apple Music we use distribution services such as CD Baby, Ditto, DiscoKid. Please do make a note of those and research them; - especially Ditto because they have nice videos on You Tube and things about how to promote yourself so quite a lot of information is out there.

This video or song: I actually do quite a few things for this video. Another part of branding is the marketing. How do I get it out to people? How do people hear what I do? One way to do this is something called a roll out campaign. Before you release a song you try and make a bit of noise, try and let people know and if you are say, The Rock and Kevin Hart what you would do is an interview with a top company and that is how you promote a film.

As artists we also do a roll out campaign and within that we have a social media campaign. So you might have seen your favourite artists have pictures before their song comes out every day. They might have one every day.

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The first one might say "5", or the next one might say "4", the next might say "3" and so on until the last one may say "Song is out now! Go to You Tube and check it out"

This video was a tiny video leading up to the release of my song 'Personality'. The reason I show it is because you get to see my process, I explain it in the video. And you get a glimpse of the page in the rhyme book series.

## [Video playing]

*If you follow me thank you if you don't: Click on me!*

*I did a project called a PITRB. It was because I had just rebranded and wanted a way to test out new ideas, verses, videos and stuff with my followers. We are small but strong!*

*I found out how to use Final ProQuo and become more confident in my music production and try out different singing styles.*

*My idea was this track I did which is available on all digital platforms on Saturday 24th May.*

*Thank you for watching the video!*

## [Video Ends]

That single was called 'Personality'. One of the reasons I created it and called it 'Personality' was because I really do think a personality is the best thing you can have. I believe that it's nice to be a bit quirky and use what is inside to come outside.



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I say Quirky because I am a bit of a joker so in this video which I filmed on my iPhone 11 and edited on FinalQuopro I actually pretended to be a nerd that was invited to a party and had nothing to wear then 3 helpers come out from nowhere to help me out. I composed the music for this song on Logic Pro, I wrote the lyrics, performed it and engineered it myself which means I recorded the vocals and edited it myself.

I sent it to a professional to get it mixed and mastered. Because the quality of the actual song is something I do actually pride myself on and what it to stand up next to anyone else's song that is out there. So I paid for some things but did as much else as I could myself. I did the videos for the roll out campaigns too.

I am not saying this to toot my own horn. I am saying this to let you know how much work we have to do to promote ourselves as independent artists. I also think it would be really nice for you to come with me and look behind the scenes as that video happened.

On that note this is: Personality!

## [Video: Personality]

Right so that was Personality. If you looked at the end you would have seen my logo. That was the branding I talked to you about.

I hoped you enjoyed it – yes I am a joker and I got issues but I had so much fun making that. My advice, make something you like and that brings you joy. Chances are if you like it then hopefully someone else will like it too.

I did some acting as well and was in 2 films: 'One Day' and a medieval rap film called 'The Quickener'.

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I will tell you about that shortly. My company is called Amber Music Group. It's a company I use online and in person to go around to schools, community centres and work with clients of all ages to teach them music technology, vocal training music production and some performance techniques. Feel free to check out my website.

How I got into songwriting: I come from a very musical family. When I was little most of my uncles and aunts played an instrument, sang or both. So my childhood consisted of me sitting at a piano and most of my aunts/ uncles singing songs: Anything from Nat King Cole, to gospel, to Frank Sinatra. They were very talented and always inspired me to create and to sing. Also I grew up in church and grew up singing, acting and doing lots of dancing in church.

When I was 11 they asked if we wanted to perform an original song. Me and my friend remixed a song called by a Rapper called MC Light called Outside on the Corner. We changed it into a gospel song and we performed it. It was at that moment I knew that what I wanted to do was perform because I loved creating it and performing and being able to share that with an audience.

When I left school I studied music technology because we did not have that in my school. I studied CuBase and was shocked at how many sounds I could put together. And the fact I could make a song and make it from scratch and have a finished product to put on a CD. I thought that was amazing.

I went to South Birmingham College and studied a BTEC in popular music. It was great because it covered music technology and performance but also things like history and contextual studies. It sounds boring but to know what people do before you and be changed or inspired by that is a very good gift.

I got into a rap group when I was younger and went to different venues to perform. So I got lots of experience at that college.



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We performed everywhere in the Iris Centre and everywhere. We were building our experience as artists.

When I left I went to the University of Central England and did an HND in popular music. I got to learn about music theory and remember I studied The Four Seasons which was very annoying but taught me a lot. It was a really good experience to have. So go to university and study music! It helped me a lot studying music.

At the time I began to open up my own recording studios. I have had four recording studios. At this point I did a course called Supporting Our Sisters for women who went through domestic violence and they do a music therapy. I then went back to my recording studio and did a mix tape called The Wonder Woman Mix Tape and I will tell you about that another time.

Also central to my progression I auditioned for a film called One Day. They were looking for rappers so I auditioned as a rapper. They said they liked my song and wanted to use it in my film and the author asked me if I wanted to act. Having experience when I was young I said yes and I got a role in the film. That lead me to create a documentary about the work I was doing in my studio. It got picked up by Channel 4 and became a 3 minute wonder. They featured my documentary and it gave me a thirst for film making.

After I that I performed at O2 Arena, toured in Berlin and Spain. I also went to university, the Westminster University in London to study film and media because I felt I wanted to put these things together, take all my skills and put them together.

That is where I am now, making mini movies and developing them into actual songs and things for you to see.





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My process.

How do I do it? Ideas for me are everywhere. I find it hard to not have a good experience and want to turn it into a song. I could have a conversation with someone and say: Do you know what? That's fun! I could make song from that! Or I might see something on social media or TV and think: That is a really important subject for me and I want to talk about it or make a song about that.

When that natural creative energy is not there are also tips and tricks I use that I will share to help you out. For example if I am writing a song for someone and it's about such and such, these are some of the things that I will do.

I will start with a topic. (Time to get your pens out guys). These are my trusted tips and tricks.

First Find a topic.

Then find an associated word. That means (in case you don't know) things associated with a topic. For example if my topic was 'Trees' my associated words would be things that associate with trees e.g. Grass, The Park and Green.

My Topic is: Trees. My Associated Words are Grass, Park and Green.

Next Find Rhyming Words.

Take those rhyming words and rhyme my associated words



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So for park – Dark  
Grass – pass  
Green – Beam, Clean, Screen

This is a basic example.

Then when I have done all of that I will turn them into sentences. I could say:

“I want to go to the park before it gets dark.  
Will I see you walk past on the green grass?  
So green so fresh so clean what a nice day let's catch a sun beam.”

Sounds simple and I know you guys can come up with so much better ideas, but that is to get you going.

**[See slide]** To remind you of the process.

We had a topic, associated words, rhyming words and we turned those into a sentence.

What if the topic was a book? The associated words could be anything to do with books so it could be Pages, Lines, Chapter. Can you think of anything? Any answer you give will be right.

Rhyming words:

Book – Crook, Hook, Took, Cook  
Pages – Ages, Stages, Wages etc.

Then I would turn those into a sentence. Try and make a sentence where I try and have the rhyming words at the middle and at the end.



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[See slide] The example of Park.

“I want to go to the park before it gets dark”

Rhymed in the middle, rhymed in the end.

“Will I see you walk past on the green grass?”

Middle – end

“So green, so fresh so clean, what a nice day to catch a sun beam”

Another thing I did there was something called ‘Alliteration’ which is when you use the letter from the beginning of the word over and over. A really simple example is repetitive rhymes. It might seem a bit childish but I think we all need to be a bit of a kid some days.

I watched this cartoon when I was younger and I always remembered the pattern because it was so simple, so repetitive. Watch the video and tell me what repeating word is used and what letter that starts with to explore the alliteration.

We'll start with the video in just a second.

Bear with me.

[See Video]

[Video Ends]



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Now I will pause because I want you guys to tell me what the repeating line was and what the repeating words were.

It was “Dark Dark”. You guessed it.

The 2 words they used the repeating rhyme was Dark Dark but we could change that to Joy Joy, Run Run etc.

Going back to my slides you can see that what I have done is here is change Dark Dark to Sun Sun. The reason why; because in your verse you will do your topic, the associated words and the actual rhyming words and also the actual sentences.

But In the chorus we like to have something nice and memorable. We call the chorus a ‘hook’. The reason why it's called that is because it's catchy and you can reel people in. The reasons you want to reel people in is because you want them to remember it. It's simple, so easy for you to join in even if you don't know it. For this part I have changed Dark Dark to Sun Sun and it goes

“Sun sun shine bright  
Sun sun that gives light  
Sun sun in the sky  
Sun sun for you and I”

I want you to copy me when I say sun sun and join in and I'll read it again. So you got the hang of it. Let's do it one more time.

You can see how easy it is just to say “ even if you can't remember anything else.



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For you to write a song and make it really repetitive and easy is good for you and good for the audience so they remember it. Also you can have the crowd repeating after you. That means straight away you have everybody going back and forth with you and you get an exchange of energy which is really nice for performers.

Now I am going to talk a bit about Composing

Composing is something that is really essential to an artist. I have heard producers tell singers just to play the piano, even if you are not very good, just get familiar just play around, get familiar with some chords. It gets your ears familiar. When you do start composing and get out some sheet music (and this is where Every Copy Counts comes in) you will start very very simply. That is what I want you to do.

Rule of thumb, any 2 notes go together. No? Yes? Very random.

So you might go:

“Dun Dun  
Dun Dun Dun Dun  
Dun Dun  
Dun dun dun dun”

May sound like a very simple melody but it's something to start something off.

Find any 2 notes and start with a very simple melody. You can use things like samples to help you but please be mindful and remember that samples need to be licensed. There are companies that can help you do that like Track Lived that can help you get by and sample other artists.

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And we don't want to just plagiarise someone else's song but what is really good is that you can try and remake someone's song just for fun.

There is a footballer on TicToc and he remade a Marvel song the other day but it was amazing. It was to help understand, as he was doing it he was talking about the theory that composers use to make a song. He talked about the chords they used and why they used it trying to listening to someone else's music and try to remake it as a recreational activity, it will help you to understand music more.

What I want to say to you guys: Trust your ears: you listen to more music than you think you do. You listen on apps, you listen to films. If your friend says to you "Can I sing you a song bruv?" And you say "Yeah". And they go:

**[Singing off key]**

And you go "No!"

How do you know it is not sounding good? Because your ears tell you when something is off key. So if you know something you've made does not sound good, keep going singing it to yourself until it sounds good to you and like I say if it sounds good to you it will sound good to other people.

Music theory is a brilliant tool; please learn as much as you can. But also be aware as well as music theory. As well as music theory there are lots of things you will come up with creatively which are not in the structure music theory but will add to your song so feel free to experiment but use music theory as your guide.

Copywriting your work



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Once you create something that is yours. You own it as intellectual property.  
When you register your songs with places like: write this down

PRS, PPL, MCPS

These are companies that help you get your music out but also register the date you submitted it. If you register it before you distribute it, chances are you can go back and prove when you registered it. If your music theory is not great, still transpose it into a score and print that off to use as evidence of your work please do research different ways as different countries have different ways to register your work.

Thank you very much for having me. I am not going yet because we are going to have questions for me and Anne Marie will come back online. But thank you for very much time and I am really happy to be helping with this is campaign because I think it is important.

Any question, leave it in the chat. Tell your teachers if you have questions

**Anna-Marie Descartes:** How was that?

**Nicole Justice:** Good how was it for you?

**Anna-Marie Descartes:** I loved it, loved your video, the colours you used and the super interactive and fun to watch. I have a couple of questions about the video. I felt like I was watching Nickleodeon.

What was the inspiration?





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**Nicole Justice:** The inspiration. Remember the video with Chris Brown and T Payne where he dressed up as a nerd. I really wanted to get that nerd image. To be a clown. I literally studied his video. I could not do it justice but that was my inspiration.

I also like games and cartoons and tried to use the graphics behind me. The Star War and 'Game Over' signs. Having fun being a nerd and love playing different characters as well.

**Anna-Marie Descartes:** I can see that.

**Nicole Justice:** The cool girl at the end gets to go to the club.

**Anna-Marie Descartes:** It was so enjoyable. If you do have questions please pop them in the chat.

Is there are a composer or songwriter, producer or anyone you admire and if so who and why?

**Nicole Justice:** There's loads. I would say Bruno Mars is probably someone I really respect. Reason why he's been going since he was tiny. You can see him literally if you Google it performing when he was little. You can see videos of him at 4. It's the determination he has in his art form to keep creating new things. He always tries to bring something new. I can't remember the song he did with Cardi B.

**Anna-Marie Descartes:** [Singing it]

**Nicole Justice:** So he was remaking lots of 90s stuff. It was really cool. It is things we have not heard. And latest the album Silk Sonic He does the album now which is epic.



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He uses things from the 70s as well. One thing he said: He works with the best, He works with people like Smokey Robinson, Baby Face, songwriters from before he signed to bring in and keep up a standard and also add something new to it. To be doing that from such an early age and have that enthusiasm to always be learning. That is inspiration to me. Also to say to my students never stop learning it's a passion and drive to keep you going.

**Anna-Marie Descartes:** Great answer.

What do you like most about songwriting and social media?

**Nicole Justice:** The fact I can interact with my audience and my supporters. For example my 'Page in a Rhyme' book I can literally make an idea and get it out there. For example that song 'Talking to the Moon' I wrote an instrumental and was able to make a little video and get that out on social media and get that to people straight away. I just love that connection.

**Anna-Marie Descartes:** Great. I am afraid we've come to the end but I could talk to you all day. It was an absolute pleasure to have you today. And thank you to everyone watching this live You Tube and hope you have learnt something and take on some of those many tips that Nicole provided for you in your musical careers. .

This is Every Copy Counts and we'll be back next month with another webinar. Ensure you visit us on our socials and visit our website to stay up to date with everything. . Thank you Nicole and everyone and I will see you again. Bye.

**[ENDS]**