

THE SINGLES SERIES: HOW TO PITCH

The following summarizes the preferred format for a pitch, and what we mean by a “single.” We hope these guidelines are useful, but they’re also meant to be flexible.

What is a *single*?

By “single,” we mean not only a discrete musical track of great personal or social significance but a long-lasting song with mass appeal and in many (though not all) cases, chart-busting success. Think big. If it is a song with a long recording history, we are interested first and foremost in a specific version, a singular musical object — and only secondarily in subsequent cover versions. We recognize that our measure is as much an editorial intuition as a science, not least because charts/metrics have changed over the history of popular music. That’s why we ask that you first run your proposed track by us in a short initial pitch.

What is the pitch process?

Please write to both of us (email addresses at bottom) and briefly explain who you are, what song you wish to do, and why. A single page is great. There is no need to send us a full proposal at this stage. We will request a proposal if we think your idea might work for the series. Please pitch the book you most want to write; do not pitch us more than two songs.

What is the proposal format?

Once your initial pitch is approved, we will ask you to complete a full proposal. Proposals consist of a short (200-word) overview of your book, followed by a chapter outline that includes summaries of approx. 100-200 words each. The question of how many chapters is up to you.

The overview should give us a sense of why your song matters, both in and of itself and to pop music or the culture more broadly. We are interested in how your song was made, what it meant in the moment of its emergence, but we are also interested in your song’s re-emergences, comebacks, and afterlives. The chapter summaries should provide a sense of how you expect to tell the story of your song and its significance. Finally, please tell us when you expect to be able to deliver a full draft of the 20,000-30,000-word (MAX) manuscript.

We understand these proposals as blueprints that are subject to change. But they should provide an accurate representation of you as a writer, and of your set of interests (cultural, historical, personal, musicological.). We like an argument, a magnetizing claim about the song in the world that can keep things clearly oriented while pulling in material from all around.

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