

Credit: Written By Chris Robley and copyright CD Baby, excerpted from email from CD Baby mailing list

Are you sitting on an “unfinished” recording?

If you’re like me, you start every session with the best of intentions: to work quickly and make decisions as you go.

Next thing you know you’ve added 100 vocal parts. Your computer is cranky from too many plugins running at once. And your mix? How could you possibly have perspective on THAT (since it’s been a thousand years since you laid down the first track)?

A song starts with a burst of inspiration! But then it feels like it’ll never see daylight.

There’s always a reason why.

"The kick sounds like crap."

"The vocals aren’t perfect."

"The track doesn’t sound like my heroes."

Yeah, so? Guess what!

The kick only sounds like crap to you, because you’ve been obsessing over it. The vocals make you feel insecure, because it’s YOUR voice. The track DOESN’T sound like your heroes. It sounds like YOU!

There’s a famous saying by Leonardo da Vinci: "Art is never finished, only abandoned."

I love that saying. Because that’s ME every time!

There’s a point I reach where I start stressing over things I either can’t achieve (because the London Philharmonic doesn’t live at my house) or that no one else will even notice.

THAT is when I know I’m done.

I’ve sat on “unfinished” recordings for literally years because I thought they needed more work. Only to have my wife, or my bandmates, or my producer friends say “You’re crazy. That sounds great. Put it out!”

-

I don’t have the production skills of Finneas. I don’t have the songwriting of Lizzo. I don’t have the voice of Freddie Mercury.

What I have is... my skills. I’ve managed to make music my fans enjoy.

What you have is your skills. And I bet if you ask your friends, fans, bandmates, or collaborators, they’ll tell you your song sounds MUCH better than you think it does.

We can be our own worst critics. Don’t let perfection (which is impossible, btw) be the enemy of creative progress.

So here's my suggestion: go show your song to someone close to you. See what they think. Your song might not be "perfect," but it might be ready.