

Heta – Hk3366
Columbia University Spring 2025

Too Many Nights

(feat. Don Toliver & with Future)

[Link to Instrumental](#)



Introduction: 3x Metro

“There was a monologue I resonated so strong with,” says Metro, now 29, “where [One Punch Man] was complaining, moping about how he’s looking for real combat, how it just gets boring doing the hero thing. Another hero, King, was telling him how his thinking is kinda selfish. What you’re doing, it’s still a service and you’re still helping and saving people, it’s not all about you looking for the fight of your life. You were blessed with a certain ability for a reason.”

- [GQ Interview \(2022\)](#)

The song *Too Many Nights* is strategically positioned as the third track on *Heroes & Villains*, the central installment in Metro Boomin’s conceptual trilogy. In light of his remarks in a *GQ* interview, it is evident that Metro Boomin seeks to provoke a subliminal philosophical reflection on the nature of purpose, ego, and responsibility. By aligning himself with the anime character *One Punch Man*, he critiques the often self-perpetuating pursuit of accolades and status within the music industry. The comparison reveals a tension between personal ambition and the deeper imperative of service, suggesting that the true essence of heroism, particularly in music, lies not in public recognition but in personal sacrifice.

Composed during a period of profound personal grief following the loss of his mother, the track functions as an attempt to construct meaning amidst emotional rupture. The ongoing dialectic between heroism and villainy is mirrored in the song’s harmonic language, particularly through its use of modal mixture. The raised seventh degree in the key of G minor introduces a leading tone that not only intensifies melodic tension but also sonically embodies themes of isolation and unresolved longing. We will dive into these deeper themes later; first, let’s unpack Metro Boomin’s three-act structure!

Acoustic Architecture: Mapping the Sonic Structure

i) Intro – Time Travel Emergence

Too Many Nights Metro Boomin, Future feat. Don Toliver
arr. by YaKari Bryant

♩ = 88

The musical score is for a 4/4 ensemble. The instruments listed are Piccolo, Clarinet in Bb, Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Mellophone, Trumpet in Bb, Trombone, Baritone Horn, and Sousaphone. The tempo is 88 BPM. The score shows the first 8 bars of the intro. Bars 1-4 are characterized by sustained whole notes in the woodwinds and brass, with a Piccolo melody in the upper register. Bars 5-8 introduce a more complex rhythmic pattern with eighth notes and sixteenth notes in the woodwinds and brass, while the Piccolo continues its melodic line. The bass line is silent throughout the intro.

In bars 1–4, the song establishes a hypnotic, time-warping ambience. Unlike typical rap or trap music, which often begins with rhythmic intensity in the bass, the bass clef here remains silent, allowing the synth to shape the mood. There is no forward rhythmic motion, only stillness conveyed through sustained whole notes. From bar 4 onward, the bass is introduced as the main beat-carrying element, while the Piccolo assumes the melodic line. Positioned in the upper register of the ensemble, the Piccolo cuts through the denser timbres of the lower instruments. This acoustic dislocation creates the illusion of speed against the otherwise steady, unembellished synth backdrop.

The melody cycles over three bars and modulates slightly on the fourth, repeating with minimal variation. This repetition anticipates the entrance of the artist's voice in bar 13 and provides space for the narrative to emerge. Rather than acting as a dominant melodic protagonist, the Piccolo serves as a narrative companion, drawing attention to the unfolding story. It only briefly escapes its registral constraints during the verse, though even then it maintains a restrained melodic structure.

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The musical score for measures 7-10 features the following instruments and parts:

- Picc.**: Piccolo, playing a repeating melodic pattern in the treble clef.
- Cl. in Bb**: Clarinet in Bb, playing a repeating melodic pattern in the treble clef.
- A. Sax.**: Alto Saxophone, playing a repeating melodic pattern in the treble clef.
- T. Sax.**: Tenor Saxophone, playing a repeating melodic pattern in the treble clef.
- Mello.**: Mellophone, playing a repeating melodic pattern in the treble clef.
- Tpt. in Bb**: Trumpet in Bb, playing a repeating melodic pattern in the treble clef.
- Tbn.**: Trombone, playing a strong, distorted bass line in the bass clef, marked *ff*.
- Bar. Hn.**: Baritone Horn, playing a strong, distorted bass line in the bass clef, marked *ff*.
- Sphn.**: Snare Drum, silent in measures 7-10.

Measures 7-10 show a repeating melodic pattern in the woodwinds and a strong, distorted bass line in the Trombone and Baritone Horn. The Snare Drum is silent in measures 7-10.

In bar 9, the 808 enters at fortississimo (*fff*), functioning as a static anchor that reinforces the cyclical nature of the melodic loop. It possesses a distorted effect, creating a buzzing texture that, when layered with the other bass notes, accentuates the characteristic punch of the 808. Unlike conventional 808

patterns, which often rely on syncopation and rhythmic variation, this one is sustained and rhythmically static. This choice enhances the track's time-warping sonic atmosphere and contrasts sharply with the flickering presence of the Piccolo in the upper register. As the lowest frequency element in the song, the 808 also assumes a symbolic role. It resonates with the lyrical references to emptiness or void, positioning it as an existential weight, a sonic mass that grounds the track's emotional and philosophical gravity.



ii) Verse – Linear flow & Emotive Suspension

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Picc. *ff*

Cl. in Bb *ff*

A. Sax. *ff*

T. Sax. *ff*

Mello. *ff*

Tpt. in Bb *ff*

Tbn. *ff*

Bar. Hn. *ff*

Spn. *ff*

4

This musical score is for measures 15 through 17 of the piece 'The Rose Tree'. It features eight staves: Piccolo (Picc.), Clarinet in B-flat (Cl. in Bb), Alto Saxophone (A. Sax.), Tenor Saxophone (T. Sax.), Mellophone (Mello.), Trumpet in B-flat (Tpt. in Bb), Trombone (Tbn.), Baritone Horn (Bar. Hn.), and Soprano Horn (Sphn.). Measures 15 and 16 are marked with a '15' at the beginning of the Piccolo staff. The Piccolo, Clarinet, Saxophones, and Mellophone parts are highly rhythmic, featuring eighth-note patterns with many accents. The Trombone and Baritone Horn parts have a similar rhythmic pattern but with fewer accents. The Trumpet part is more melodic, with some eighth-note runs. The Soprano Horn part is the most melodic, featuring a clear eighth-note melody with accents. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

At bar 13, the verse begins, marking a transformation in the Piccolo's melodic role. Where it previously sustained longer notes to support an ambient texture, it now adopts a more rhythmically active figure: an eighth-note loop built on a chromatic-like intervallic pattern (D–D–Ab–D–Ab–D–Rest), with the rest subtly shifting position by measure 18. This motif, percussive in effect, mimics the function of a hi-hat, introducing a sharper, more articulated texture. The use of rests punctuates the phrase, giving it a punchy, syncopated quality that stands in contrast to the smoother introductory material.

On the production side, Metro Boomin employs spatial effects that heighten the track's immersive quality. Notably, an echo effect radiates outward, almost cone-like, on the line "Lil Shawty off the Clicquot," while additional layers of reverb and stereo panning, particularly on phrases like "C notes," create harmonic swells that move laterally across the sound field. These production choices evoke a sense of universal energy, situating the verse within a cosmic or intergalactic soundscape. This aligns seamlessly with the overarching *Heroes & Villains* concept, in which the narrative seems to unfold within an expansive, otherworldly domain, blurring the lines between story, sound design, and symbolic space.

iii) Pre-Chorus – Silence before Spiral

“Sayin', "Uh-uh-uh-uh" (yeah) Let's get drunk, uh-uh Keep the ---- jump, uh-uh Keep the ---- jump, uh-uh (jump) Keep the”

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This moment in the song presents an ideal entry point into a broader discussion of hip-hop’s structural innovation. *Too Many Nights* exemplifies a rotational form (A–B–A’–A–B–A’–C–B’) that reflects the architecture of modern trap, in which the instrumental loop shapes itself around the lyrical flow. This contrasts sharply with pop conventions, where lyrics typically conform to pre-existing structural cycles. The question then emerges: is what we’re hearing truly a pre-chorus? Here, the perceived modulation occurs almost exclusively in the bass, creating a sparse sound field that

isolates the echo and reverb-laden vocal phrases discussed earlier. This prepares the listener for the moderate *crescendo* into the forthcoming hook, which repeats.

Rather than functioning as a conventional pre-chorus, this moment operates more like a drop or post-hook return, signaling dynamic release through textural shift.

The bassline itself transitions from simple quarter notes to triplets and syncopated eighth notes with a triplet passage revealing a descending chromatic movement (G–F#–F). Furthermore, the layered articulations (>) emphasize attack over sustain, producing rhythmic contrast with the breathier vocal edits. These sharp accents mimic the percussive behavior of a kick drum. This is emblematic of Metro Boomin's signature approach: assigning percussive roles to melodic instruments. It's precisely this kind of instrumental cross-functionality that marks the idiosyncrasy of Metro's production style, redefining how rhythm, texture, and structure operate within contemporary hip-hop.

iv) **Bridge – Outro**

14

53

Picc.

Cl. in Bb

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Mello.

Tpt. in Bb

Tbn.

Bar. Hn.

Sphn.

Metro Boomin strips away the drums near the end of the track, sharpening the listener's attention on Future's solo. The repeated phrase "you get what you want," delivered by either Future or Don Toliver, gains emotional weight precisely because of the omission of percussion. This absence allows the listener to feel the depth of resignation or inevitability being conveyed. Concluding the track with a bridge, particularly one that does not function as a prelude to a climax, is an unconventional choice. It speaks to the broader architectural logic of the album, where endings are less about closure and more about transition. Here, the song's conclusion serves as a precursor to the heightened intensity of the next track. In doing so, Metro subtly reinforces the album's recurring theme: the cyclical and infinite nature of time, made perceptible through the manipulation of sonic structure.

Conclusion

Too Many Nights marks a pivotal moment in Metro Boomin's sonic architecture, not only within *Heroes & Villains* but within contemporary trap itself. The compositional choices, modal mixture, chromatic descent, textural contrast, and non-functional harmony signal a deliberate shift away from formulaic beat-making toward a more nuanced, emotionally loaded design. These are not accidental choices! Rather, they reveal a producer who is just as invested in tonal contour as he is in rhythm and groove.

