



First Things First....

Congratulations on making the decision to record your project! This is a big step, no doubt something you've dreamed of doing a long time. Our job is to help you make this dream come true. If you have only informally recorded, or maybe not at all, there are some procedures that will help it all go much easier, and help you stay within your budget. So dig in, and feel free to ask questions, that's what we are here for! There might even be a few reminders for the pro's, but either way, a quick glance at this will assure we are all on the same page!

- I always say this first, because, well, its super important, **DO NOT PLAN A CD RELEASE PARTY, UNTIL YOU HAVE A MASTER YOU ARE HAPPY WITH, ALL THE ART IS FINISHED, AND APPROVED BY YOUR REPLICATOR,OR DUPLICATOR.** There are so many more things that you can do before your project is finished, that are important, do those, and be happy working on that. There are so many more details than you can imagine. If you insist on planning a CD Party before you begin, find another studio. If you come to me and tell me you have a date set, and a space ready to go, I will export your tracks to a neutral format, give them to you, and only charge for the time you've spent, and I will absolutely ask you to take your project somewhere else, I won't be mad, but I will do it.
- You will need to have your Lyric sheets, arrangements printed out for us,(handwritten is no good) we use these for many things regarding our responsibility regarding your project; if you don't have them when you come in for your session, we will re-schedule for you. Please put your chords in also, many times we need to know the key the song is in, and its much faster if there are chords . In addition, if you use any session players, the least you can do is have the song charted out, and to be certain of your own arrangement.

- The most important part for the success of your project is planning, most of that is on your end. We plan for each session based on what you tell us you are planning on doing.
- Good planning means more efficiency, and will save you money

• So, What Should We Do?

- The first question you have to ask yourself is, are we ready?? Here is a list to help you determine that
- If you are a band....
- Does everyone know their parts.(no, really know them? This is the biggest time waster in the studio)
- Can your band play these songs without a lead singer, and not get lost?
- Is the band planning on playing them live in the studio, or doing what we call overdubbing, and layering?
- If you plan on doing these as overdubs, can your drummer/percussionist play to a click track?(be certain of this prior to your first session!)
- If the songs are covers, have you begun to gather the clearance rights to use that copywritten material? We won't record it otherwise.(If you don't follow through on this process). I'm sure you will want to get paid also, when another Artist does your music!
- Do you have a producer, or is the band self producing? We produce, but this is a discussion that needs to be had before you begin, so everyone's expectations are appropriate.
- We typically expect to engineer and mix, and expect that bands,or songwriters will deal with this, or at least ask us how it is handled.
- Besides the band members, who else if anyone else has a say in how this record turns out? We will be asking you, so make sure you know.
- If all the band members, or investors have a say in the outcome, they must be here during the sessions, everyone needs to agree that parts are played properly, we won't be responsible for approving the solo's or vocals, we will tell you when we hear things that don't seem correct, but if you don't fix it, it is your responsibility, hence, the practice, practice, practice. This can cause time overruns, this will cost you more money....

• Prepare Yourself, and your instruments

- Are all your pick-ups working well? How about Volume and tone controls?
- How is your drum set, new heads are great, hopefully they have been on for a couple days prior to recording. Do any of your pedals squeak?
- Do you have extra drum sticks? It's Sunday, and no, Leitholds isn't open! You would be surprised how often this happens
- Are your effects pedals in good working order? no crackling, how are your batteries? Bring extra
- We typically have batteries, but this is your responsibility, and besides, you want to be professional right?
- Bass players, similar thing, intonation is good right?
- If you have an "Active Bass" I would rather record a "Passive" bass, but, bring batteries, that distortion sound you are hearing is you, not me!
- If you are using our piano, we will want to know in advance, so we can plan to have our piano tuner in, (this cost should be included in your estimate, if you didn't give us that specification, we will add that cost on to your estimate right now its about \$90.00
- If you are producing your own songs, and project, you should develop a list of what the expected instrumentation will be for each song, realizing that could change, and continue throughout the project to create refined lists for each session, then we can be professionals, and plan for it, so all you have to do is plug and play!
- If you are planning on hiring us to produce, or co-produce, we will want to arrange a time to hear your songs in their most primitive form, either on acoustic guitar, or a piano etc.
- If you are a songwriter self producing a project, you must do most or all of the following
- Hire the musicians (and pay them)
- Make sure they have their charts, lyric sheets, chord sheets, or a actual tape, cd or mp3's of a rough version of your songs, well ahead of recording time
- Then, sit down with each, and run through them, make sure they are connected to what you need
- Don't set your session players up for failure, by not giving them what they need, if you need help, we can help

- **Coordinating 101, for the songwriter**

- You must coordinate rehearsals, and follow through on scheduling, with us. We can do evenings, weekends, whatever, but we need to know as soon as you know!
- Once you know when, its time to plan what, who is coming, what are we recording, what instruments, songs, etc, and make sure everything is together for a successful session
- Following a click track, a metronome, if you will, is a critical skill. If its just you and one instrument, we may let you get away without using one, but naaw, probably not. This is a big source of timing issues, which will get worse as you overdub more instruments. When I hear people say, “oh I play with Joe all the time, he’ll be able to follow me, my B.S. Alarm goes off, and everyone in this building goes running for the doors; click tracks, when used correctly with sub divisions, are the best way to get solid tracks, and keep everyone on the same page!!
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