

Move Your Music Forward

How To Make a Record

Part 1: Preparation

Are you ready and practiced?

Will you have/need a band?

How many songs will you be recording?

What songs will you be recording?

What studio/studios have you picked?

Do you have a team in mind?

Tracking:

Mixing:

Mastering:

Producer:

Musicians:

What is your ideal timeline?

Recording done by:

Mixing done by:

Mastering done by:

Release/Release show date:

Digital vs Physical Release

What are advantages of a physical release?

What are advantages of a digital only release?

What are the disadvantages of each?

Where does your community listen and what community will you be releasing music to?

Funding

Grants For Artists

GCAC Grants (For Columbus OH artists) can help offset or pay entirely for your project.

More info [here](#)

Ohio Arts Council

Crowdfunding

Kickstarter - an online all or nothing funding platform. Utilize fans, friends, family, community to help pay for your project. Rewards are given at the end. A good way to look at this is have fans "pre-order" your album.

Indie Go Go - similar to Kickstarter but it is not all or nothing.

Patreon - Think of this as a private social media and or landing page for your content where your community chooses to opt in to a monthly subscription to support you as a "patron". Like a long slow burn Kickstarter. Some people will pay good money each month some will pay a small fee to support you long term.

Organic Fundraising - Set up a landing page and put all funding options on there venmo, cash app, PayPal, and collect cash or check in person. Joey Aich did this locally and raised over \$3000. His strategy was to straight up be honest and ask because it costs a lot to be in this business and people responded positively. Read a little about this journey [here](#).

Investors - We don't think of music as a business, not at first, but once you're into recording you are now creating something that costs money. Why not ask around to see if someone would invest into your project with their dollars? You can make an ask and then give them a timeline when you will pay them back and how. Set up a monthly schedule just like a bill to pay them back. You could even offer to pay them a low interest rate if absolutely needed. Who do you know that could throw down a \$1-\$10,000 loan easily? You may be surprised if you think about it. You could use multiple people if needed.

Planning

Have a vision for your project. Will it be R&B with a splash of New Wave 80's pop? The sky is the limit but the closer you get to articulating this vision the better your recording will come out on the other end. Explaining what you hear in your head, especially to producers, will really help narrow the options and make your vision come to life. So how do you get closer to this with this creative brain?

References

References or reference tracks will go a long way. We all have songs we love now let's make a playlist around your next recording. Be able to describe what you like about each song it doesn't have to be the same on each song but try and get a vibe going that has a thru line.

What songs have drums you think are really cool sounding?

What reverb do you like on a vocal track?

Are the keys the featured instrument on this whole album? Is that how you want your album to sound?

When thinking about how a song is mixed - picture all the elements in a room. Put on your headphones and try to place where each instrument is in the room or in the mix, which is closest to you (loudest), which is furthest away (softest)? Are the vocals right in the center, panned left, doubled and panned left and right? Once you can listen closely like this you can now know what

you like a little bit better and articulate that to your sound engineer. If you do not, they will make the record sound how *they* want, which could be great, or could be really not great 😞.—Side note—listen to your engineer's work prior to working with them!

What are your top three artists you aspire to be or sound like?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What is it *sonically* you like about their music, be very specific?

First Artist

Second Artist

Third Artist

Try writing a **Record Brief** - each song may have one. This may include vibe, colors, reference tracks, season, feeling, how you want people to dance to (or not to).

Some more things to think about:

Who:

Band or Solo - Is this a project where one person makes most or all the decisions and is dictating to people what to do. Is this a band where there is a semi democracy? What happens when you need to make a decision quickly in the studio, a hierarchy is nice to establish so you know what to do in those tense moments.

Personnel

Is this the same band live as it is studio? My approach is to make the BEST recordings so my live band can then learn the arrangements off of the recording, that way you really get what you want in the studio and then the live shows can take that as inspiration and move it into a new stratosphere when playing live (ideally). They do not have to be the same band, but can be.

What:

Single, full record, three four song ep
Format - vinyl, streaming, cassette, wax cylinder (ya never know)

Where:

Home studio - do you have a decent set up? A really great way is to do a hybrid where you do some stuff at home and use a pro studio for live drum tracking, etc.

Pros - not rushed, work on your own time, plenty of vocal takes if you want, if you're not feeling it you can stop and come back

Cons - not rushed, work on your own time, these can also all be cons because sometimes having pressure is good to produce a product more efficiently. Gear can be an issue if you don't have good stuff sometimes you get what you pay for.

Pro Recording studio in town

Pros - knowledgeable dedicated engineer/producer there to help you, access to gear and great rooms designed for recording

Cons - cost, working on their time can sometimes be difficult,

Recording studio out of town

Some studios have a house attached so you can take a few days overnight and knock it out.

Pros - everyone has committed time to it, not rushed, hardcore focus, band bonding

Cons - can be cost prohibitive and difficult schedule wise

Alternative recording ideas: cabin record, beach house, live venue recording, other ideas?

Why:

Are you trying to put together something for tour, is this for your closest friends private group, is this for your patreon/fan building, is it social media, is it just for spotify, is it just for you?

When:

Getting everyone's schedules in sync. Will you be playing live together in a room, or piece meal/assembly line recording where you start with vocals/instrument, and build one by one on top of this original recording. What vibe are you going for - that's a good question to answer before deciding this.