Move Your Music Forward
How To Make A Record Part 2: RECORDING
MoveYourMusicForward.com for digital links

Which recording studio have your chosen?

If multiple studios write each down and for which part of recording:

Who is your producer?
We recommend one that is familiar with your music, likes the style, and you know you can work with them.

What role(s) will your producer play?

Tracking Engineer:
Mixing Engineer:
Mastering Engineer:
Arranging:
Writing:
Members of Band/People That Are Recording:

What is the timeline goal for getting this project done?
Tracked By:

Mixed By:

Released By:

Know your recording terminology. Stems, Tracking, mixing, mastering are the big ones.

You might need different song versions: instrumentals, acappella, tv mix, etc.

Which format(s) will you need: wav, mp3

For digital version, here's a link to an article describing different formats.

DIY Recording Set Up Recommendations:

Basic Terms:
Interface:
This allows your computer to "talk" to your microphones and instruments. You plug mics and instruments into interface and it converts that signal to digital "ones and zeroes".

DAW:
Digital Audio Workstation (recording programs like Garage Band, Logic, Protools, FL Studio, Reaper, and more) Find the one that works best for you, don't worry about other people's preferences, the one that fits with your style is the best.

Recommended Budget set up:
Yeti Blue Mic - **($80 to $150 range)** Plugs directly into your computer via USB. Great for beginners and quick set up. Laying down vocals and playing acoustic instruments into it for getting decent quality demos. Not recommended for release ready quality audio.
Does not work with an audio interface, interface is built in to microphone. If you are hesitant, don't want to mess with a lot of tech, and want to get started, this is a great mic.
GarageBand - (free on Apple Computers) great DAW for beginners, "graduate" to Logic as it is essentially a much more advanced version of GarageBand, also made by Apple.

Beginner Interface recommendations:
Scarlett Focusrite 2i2 - (**$200 or so)** Good for budget conscious beginners, easy to use, plugs directly into your computer via usb. This allows you to plug actual xlr mics into it and converts it to digital signal. If you're doing acoustic guitar and vocals or a small set up 2 inputs is recommended and will get you far. If you have more instruments plugged in at the same time often, more inputs are recommended which will bring the interface up in price.

Kito's Recommendations:
Intermediate Set Up
SSL 12 USB Audio Interface - $500 range link
This interface gives you 4 XLR/TRS inputs with the ability to patch in 8 more separate channels via ADAT lightpipe. MIDI in/out and 4 balanced ¼ inch outputs - a great interface if you're looking to expand and record a whole band.

Higher End
The Apollo interfaces are probably the more professional setups. The TWIN and DUO are smaller formats with only 2 XLR/TRS inputs. Starts at about $1000 - link here
The mic pres and converters on these interfaces are much better which is why they are so much more expensive.

Kito's set up
Presonus Studio 1824c - link
8 XLR/TRS inputs
ADAT
SPDIF
MIDI IN/OUT
6 balances 1/4in outs along with 2 monitor outs

Recording Terminology:
Comping - Vocal comping (short for 'compiling') involves recording a few takes of the song and splicing together only the best parts. The end result features the singer's best work, while still sounding like it was done in one take. If this feels like cheating, it's not, but it's up to you which style of recording works with your artistry. If you don't like a lot of comping - communicate to the engineer.
Tracking - This is the recording process in real time. This could be the full band all at once, just the vocalist, just the guitar player, etc.
Overdubbing - When something has been recorded, now we are putting something over top. A common use would be "let's overdub some harmonies here" and you would sing over the pre-recorded material.
Punching In - Let's say you messed up one word on that last verse you tracked but the other words were perfect, you can fix that one word by "punching in".
overdub
Doubling - Making an exact double of what you just recorded by overdubbing on top of the other part. This is done a lot on vocals to thicken them up (see Billie Eilish), it can be a really effective technique.
Gang or Group Vocals - Just what it sounds like, a group of people all singing together. Sometimes this is used to make a fun chorus.
Ad Libs - After the lead singer has done their "main" vocals, or main part. Sometimes they use ad-libs to punch it up, or create ambience. This is also used often in hip hop.
Mixing - This is after the tracking is done, the engineer will put the sounds together adjusting volumes, adding effects, compression, and all the studio magic. Remember these steps are unique and separate so when you are tracking, the song you hear back is not mixed, also sometimes the engineer will give you an "unmixed" version so you can listen away from the studio, be careful not to fall too in love with the "unmixed" version, this is also known sometimes as "demo-itis".
Compression - A music production tool used to control the dynamic range of a sound: to decrease the difference in volume between its loudest and softest parts. This can be done by making the loudest parts quieter (downward compression) or the quietest sounds louder (upward compression).
Standby - The engineer will often say this right before you track as to say "be quiet, or wait, we are about to record".
Rolling - The "tape", often now digital, has started and everything after this will be recorded.
From The Top - Let's go back to the beginning and start over, or do another take.

Things to think about while actually recording in the studio:

While recording vocals in the booth, do you want them "raw" or do you want the engineer to pipe in effects so you can here reverb or autotune (or other effects) on your voice? You have the right to choose this if you want.

Know your producer before going in. Try to have a balance of confidence yet open minded-ness. Sometimes the producer/engineer might ask something of you, don't be afraid to try it even if it sounds goofy. Also know your limits, this is why it's important to know your producer going in and be comfortable with them so you know the quirks and personality.

If you want to do 80 takes, you have the right to do that - you are paying them.

Give it time, don't be afraid to come back to it later, with digital recording we can always go back and fix it.

It is your music, you know when it feels right, trust that instinct - if something is off you usually know it and it is your right to communicate that to the engineer and try to fix it. Be informed when you communicate, give them references and examples of things you like before going in, or if you need a change - give them references for what you'd like it to sound more like. Engineers are not magicians, it is your job to communicate very clearly your vision so they can execute it, otherwise they will go with their own taste and what sounds good to them.

Some more things to think about when going into the studio:

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.