

Song Writing: Recording your song

If you wanted a recording company to listen to your song, you would need to send in a good quality recording. A poor recording will probably be switched off in seconds, so it's a good idea to use a recording studio.



The Producer

The producer is the person who puts the song together in the studio. Most studios have a producer, or engineer. A good producer can literally transform your song.

Arrangements

The arrangement of the song is how well it is put together. This is often the stage when you add the rhythm and accompaniment sections, and other things such as intros and instrumental breaks.

Many songs are arranged in a recording studio.

Test your understanding

Answer all questions in full sentences.

1. What is a recording studio?
2. What equipment would you expect to find? Make a list.
3. Why is the producer so important?
4. Think of your own song and explain your arrangement.
5. What is a track?
6. Look at the following tracks. Now put them in the order that they would be recorded in a studio.

- Backing Vocal
- Keyboard
- Drums
- Lead vocal
- Guitar
- Orchestra

Building a song track by track

In a recording studio, a song is built gradually, layer by layer. Each layer is called a 'track'. The first track that is recorded is the drum track. *Why do you think this is? Discuss this briefly in pairs and then note down your conclusions.*

Often several tracks are put together (or mixed) to make the background rhythm sound more interesting. Usually the next track is made up of the chords, normally played on a keyboard. Sometimes two keyboard tracks are recorded to give the sound more depth. Then the guitar and backing vocals are added, and any orchestral parts. Usually the lead vocals are the last thing you record.

Other points:

Technology:

It is possible, using computer software, to create a song in as little as half an hour. Many dance tracks are created in this way, using techniques such as sampling. Sampling is where sounds are recorded and then altered, for example, by being stopped in mid-flow or repeated several times very quickly.

Using other Songs

Sometimes songs that already exist are sampled to form part of a new song. This means that you base your song around a hook (catchy tune) or riff (short repeated pattern) that is already successful.

Song Writing: Selling your Songs

Once you have a demo tape or CD, you can start trying to sell your songs. This is not easy. You will need to be very determined and very

Managers

A manager can help to market songs. He or she can help to negotiate contracts and fees, as well as trying to promote your work to record companies. It is very rare for a performer or songwriter to secure a recording deal without a good manager.

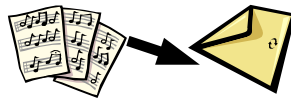


The best way to find a manager is by asking around. Get in touch with D.J.'s, booking agents, club owners, and local bands.

Agents

Having your songs performed live is a good way of getting yourself noticed. If you, or the band performing your songs, don't play regularly, it's a good idea to hire an agent. It is the responsibility of an agent to organize gigs and to make sure they are well advertised. Your manager, local bands or club owners might have ideas about which agent to choose. Make sure though that your agent is enthusiastic about your music!

Registering your Song



It is important to register your song in some way. This proves that you wrote it. It is better to do this legally, either through a solicitor, or through the copyright stationers Hall in the UK. Obviously this costs money! A cheaper alternative is to mail a copy of the demo tape/CD, or lead sheet to yourself. Do not open it. Keep it in the sealed envelope in a safe place. Although you will not be registered as the owner of the song, it can help show when it was written.



Royalties

Once you have a record deal, you are entitled to royalties from record sales, and from the performance or public broadcast of your song on TV or radio. To receive royalties, you need to register with a copyright agency. Royalties from record sales are distributed by the Mechanical-Copyright Protection Society (MCPS) in the UK. Performance royalties are collected from clubs, concert venues, shops and TV and radio stations, by the Performing Rights Society (PRS) in the UK.

Task

Create a pamphlet to fellow song writers to let them know all the important facts on this page. Your pamphlet should be clear and well presented. (Minimum words - 300)

Extension Task

With all the information on both sides of this worksheet, think about the best way to publicise your song. Draw up a publicity proposal and then design leaflets, posters, CD covers etc to promote your song/band.

N.B. If any groups wish to know any of the above addresses please ask me in your next lesson, Mrs Field.