Lesson 8 Chapter 20

Four tools for guiding you toward a successful project:
- Preperation
- ATTENTION TO DETAIL
- Creative insight
- Common sense

Probably the most important step toward ensurring that a recording project will become successful and marketable is careful preperation + Planning.

Producer can fill one of two roles:
- to be an artistic, psychological, and technical guide that can help a band or artist reach their intended goals of obtaining the best possible song, album, remix, film, score, etc. To stand back and objectively look at the big picture.
- A directorial role, but also has added responsibility of being an executive producer. In charge of bugeting, making arrangements for all studio + session activities, contracting. Even help with negotiations and contact relations with record comps.

The search for a producer:
- Check out the liner notes of groups or musicans you like
- Find a local up-and-coming producer
- Talk with other groups or musicans for recomandetions.

Questions to ask when look for a producer:
- Do they openly discuss ideas + alt paths
- Are they team players - or DICTATORS
- Do they know the difference between a creative endevor and one that waste studio time.
- Do they say "Why Not" more often than "Why"

<u>Music Lawyer</u> - the music industry is fraught with its own special legal + financial language, and having someone on your side who has insight into the language, quirks and inner workings of this unique business can be an extremely valuable asset. "Lawyers for the Arts"

① Long before going into the studio
<u>Preparation</u>
- How are you going to recoup the production cost?
- How will it be distributed to the public? Self, Digital download, Indy, Record label.
- Will other musicians be involved + what's the cost or financial arrangements?
- Do you need a producer or self-produce?
- Should you record in ~~drummer's~~ project studio or comercial studio?
- If the project studio works, should the mix be done at a commercial?
- Who's keeping track of time + budget?
- Are you going to need a lawyer to help with contacts + contracts?
- When should the artist n group's artistic + financial goal be discussed and put down on paper?

TO-DO List of task before going into the studio.
- Create mission statement for yourself + Group and the project.
- Practice, Practice, Practice / and record the practices
- Start working on project's artwork, packaging and website ASAP.
- Copyright songs (form PA for registration) Work for performing arts!
  ① musical works, including any accompanying works
  ② dramatic works, including any accompanying music
  ③ pantomimes and choreographic works
  ④ motion pictures and other audiovisual works
     www.copyright.gov/forms
     library of Congress www.loc.gov
- Should you wish to use the services of a pro studio during the recording and/or mixdown phase, it's ALWAYS wise to take the time to check out several studio's and available engineers.

② Before going into the studio

Create a basic check list that can help answer what type of equip will be needed, the number + type of musicians/instruments, their particular miking tech (if any) and where they'll be placed. The best way to do this is for you, your group and the producer (if there is one) to sit down with the engineer and discuss instrumentation, studio layout, musical styles and production tech.

Following tips are also useful:
- if no producer, pick a spokesperson who has the best production "chops"
- Record your songs during live gigs or/and rehersals.
- You might want to audition a session song list before a live audience.
- Work out all of the musical and vocal parts before going to the studio
- Try to leave plenty of time for laying down the final vocal tracks.
- Rehearse more songs than you plan to record.
- Again, meet with the engineer beforehand
- Prepare and edit any sequenced, sampled or prerecorded material beforehand.
- Try working to a metronome (click track) if timing is an issue.
- make sure that the instruments are in good working condition, bring new string etc.
- Create a checklist of all the small but important details that can make or break a session.
- make sure to bring good gables + extras
- Take care of your body. Try to relax and get good sleep before and during the session
- Don't fatigue your ears before a session, keep them rested + clear.

③ Setting Up
- Show up on time — time is money
- Use new strings, chords, drumsticks + heads, and bring spares.
- know the locations, phone number, open hours of the local music store.
- Make sure everything is tune before session, and keeped regularly tuned.
- Use familiar equip.
- Take the time to make the studio a comfortable place in which to work.

A. Session documentation-
- Artist, engineers + support staff who were involved with the project
- Session calendar dates + locations.
- Session tempo
- Participants in the project + important dates (for future credits)
- Mic choice + placements (for future overdub reference)
- Out board equipment types and their settings
- Plugin effects and their settings or general descriptions (duplication for later dates)

Not a bad idea to quickly document setups and/or actual session for "behind-the-scenes" (online video content - youtube)

Basic session documentation guidelines can be found in the Guidelines + Recommendation section at www.grammy.com/Recording_Academy/Producers_and_Engineers.

B. Recording
" It's always best to get the right sound and vibe onto tape or disk during the session. If you need to do another take, _do it!_ if you need to change a mic, _do it!_ Try to get it right the first time! You can not always "fix it in the mix".
- Know when to quit! Don't push too hard, if tired stop, it often will show!
- Technology doesn't always make a good track; feeling, emotion and musicality ~~will~~ do.
- Beware of adding new parts or tracks onto a piece that doesn't need it. Know when to say "its done ... lets move on."
- Leave plenty of time for vocal tracks. It takes time and a clear focus to get the vocals right.
- If you mess up on a part, keep going, you might be able to fix the bad part by punching in. if it ~~that~~ bad, the engineer or producer will hopefully stop you.

EQ Magazine article "The Performance Curve: How Do You Know Which Take Is The One?" by Craig Anderton

Being in front of a mic isn't always easy, and we all deal with it differently.

- _Curves up ahead_: With this type of performer, the first couple of takes are pretty good., then start to go downhill before ramping back up again, untill they hit their peak before going downhill really fast.

- _The quick starter_: This type starts out strong and doesn't improve overtime in later performances. Live performers often fall into this category, because they're conditioned to get it right the first time.

- The _Long Ramp-Up_: these musicians often take awhile to warm up to a performance. After they hit their stride, you might get a killer take or a few great ones that can be composited together into the perfect take.

- _Anything Goes_: This category can vary widely within a performance. Often, snippet can be taken from several takes into a single composite. You want to record everything with this type of performer, because you just never know what germ (or bad take) you'll end up with.

- _Rock Steady_: This one represents the consumate pro who is fully practiced and delivers a performance that doesn't waver from one take to the next; however, you might record several takes to see which one has the most feeling

(it takes a qualified and experienced producer +/or engineer to intuit) just which type is in front of the mic.

C. Mixdown

- Regarding monitoring, it's often a good idea to use reference monitors that you trust.
- Unlike during the 70's, when excruciatingly high SPL's tended to be the rule in most studios, recent decades have seen the reduction of monitor levels to a more moderate 75 to 90 dB SPL. A good rule of thumb is that if you have to shout to communicate in a room you're probably monitoring too loudly.
- Listen to several speaker types. Home, car, ipod

D. Backup + Archive Strategies.

Back up your data in the most reliable (or redundant) way possible When UNBACKED UP valuable session sound files are lost, "they're lost"

- As you might expect, the most straightforward backup system is to copy the session data, in its entirety, to the most appropriate media.
- In the longer run (5+years), the most ironclad way back up the track data of a session is to print each track as its own .wav or .aif file.
- In such a track-by-track safety restoration situation, you might want to save two copies of a track that has a particular effect - one that contains the original, unaltered sound and one that contains the effected signal.
- Those who want additional protection against the degredation of unproven digital media may also want to back each track (or groups of tracks) to the individual tracks of a multitrack analog recorder.
- For those sessions that contain MIDI tracks, you should always keep these tracks within the session (DON'T DELETE THEM)
- Speaking of MIDI... it's always wise to export all of the MIDI tracks/data within a session as a standard MIDI file. You should save all of the tracks as a type 1 file and whenever possible, save it as both a type 0 and a type 1
- Whenever possible, make multiple backups and store them in different locations.

⑧. Household Tips
- With large amounts of time in the control room. Have high-quality chairs for production team and musicians.
- Velcro or tie-strap can be used to organize wires looks more professional
- Keep environment clean and uncluttered. Say alot about studio habits to clients.
- Unused cables, adapters and miscellaneous stuff in storage box etc.
- Important tools and item used frequently in a rackmount drawer.
- Portable label printer – label everything!

⑨. Musician's Tools
- A form of self-motivation
- Good Networking Skills
- A good, healthy attitude
- The realization that "showing up is HUGE!"

"Failure isn't a bad thing... not trying is!"

"It's not (only) what you know... it's WHO you know!"

"SHOWING UP IS HUGE"

Some practical & immediate tips for musicians
- Build a personal and/or band website: Facebook, Twitter, Youtube
- Build a relationship with a music lawyer.
- Possible manager
- Copyright your music. (www.copyright.gov/forms)
- Making music is about the journey, friendships, collaborations, good & bad times at gigs... To me, it's about making music.

(10) Record your Own Concerts + Practices
* Freely distributing concerts on your site helps to promote your music and provides a degree of goodwill that can go a long way with your fans
* These recordings can be really helpful as a business card promo tool, in that a link can be sent to potential venues, allowing booking agents to hear + appreciate your music firsthand.
* These recordings can also be helpful as learning tools for the band and yourself. In general, they don't lie, and can help to point out shortcomings in your performance.

(11) Protect Your Investment
~~████████████~~
* General Rule - if something is not backed up unless its saved in three places - one offsite
* Insure the studio - get several quotes
* List your equip + their SN + replacement values, pictures, or video

(12) Protect Your HARDWARE
UPS (UNINTERRUPTIBLE POWER SUPPLY)

(13) Update Your Software
Check your software's website frequently for updates

(14) A WORD OF PROFESSIONALISM
"TO BE OPEN, BE PATIENT, AND ABOVE ALL, BE YOURSELF"
* Having an innate willingness to experiment
* Be open to new ideas (flexability)
* Have a sense of humor
* Having an even temperment (this often translates a patience)
* Being willing to communicate with others
* Being able to convey + understand the basic nuances of people from all walks of life and with many different temperments.