



ONE-WEEK SONG CLUB

CREATE OFTEN.
RELEASE OFTEN.

The One-Week Song Club Blueprint for Writing & Releasing More Music

By brian botkiller

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Introduction: What is this blueprint for?

In this short ebook, you will learn how to write and release a song every week by diving into the mindset and practices necessary for consistent music production.

We will explore the importance of setting goals and staying motivated, as well as developing a creative workflow that allows you to efficiently write and release music on a regular basis. By the end of this course, you will have the tools and techniques needed to confidently share your music with the world.

Throughout the lessons, we will cover topics such as cultivating a growth mindset, overcoming creative blocks, and managing your time effectively to make room for regular music production.

You will also learn about the power of collaboration and feedback, and how to leverage these resources to improve your songwriting and release process. By committing to writing and releasing a song every week, you will not only refine your musical skills but also build a dedicated fan base and establish yourself as a consistent artist in the industry.

About the author, brian botkiller

I'm brian botkiller, an experienced drummer, producer, musician and technician with over 30 years in the music industry, in which I have run two successful businesses, a label, a band that reached international success, and written over 300 songs and five albums. I have collaborated with many of my musical heroes and I've had that one amazing phrase uttered to me by someone: "*Your music saved my life*". That is why I write music.

The methods I outline in this book helped me to write and release more music, and become more confident as a musician. Writing one song a week over ten years taught me that I needed to believe in myself and my art, and to do it consistently.

It's not to say that you *must* write a song every week using the practices that I have built. I choose to do this on even-numbered years because it keeps me focused and accountable for my purposes of writing and releasing more music.

Rather, I'd like to see you take what you read here and strike out to do one simple thing; write, finish, and release more music into the world, because when you do, you put something out there that **never existed** before you chose to write it. That's a big deal.

About the Inspiration Behind the One-Week Song Club Blueprint

The One-Week Song Club was inspired by a project called **Weekly Beats**.

Weekly Beats is a community of musicians around the world who challenge themselves, during even-numbered years, to write and release a song every week.

These songs only need to be original, finished, and at least one minute long.

The kicker? You must submit your song by 5pm PST, every Sunday.

If you don't, there's no penalty. You can submit for as many weeks as you wish. This isn't a contest, there are no "Winners" or "Best songs". There's only creativity and a community that supports it.

I started doing this project in 2014 after having discovered it on the music blog, Create Digital Music. On a lark, I decided to give it a go. It was January, 2014, and I wanted to finish songs that I'd previously left sitting in the dust.

Finishing a few songs and telling myself I'd "Just do a little bit", turned into writing 52 songs because I simply could not get over the idea of not completing the whole set.

This project MADE me write more music, because I wanted to complete the challenge. Completing a year of 52 songs made me realize that I could write music and put it into the world. It got me outside of my head, out of my comfort zone, and it reminded me that creating music should be fun and creative.

Most importantly, there was a community behind Weekly Beats that lifted each other up via forums on the website and a Discord server. Everyone listens to each other's music and offers compliments, thoughts, and inspiration.

This project reminded me that having a community behind the art you create is the most important part of creating art. Artists are looking for community when they show their work to the world. They want people to tell them they like their art, that it impacted them in some way. That is the true meaning of art. Not money, nor fame or clout.

I would not be where I am if it weren't for Weekly Beats. I highly suggest you check the project out. There is tons of great music there, and you can contribute to it.

Visit the site [HERE](#).

Mindset For Success

Why Write and Release a Song Every Week (Or as often as you can)?

Writing and releasing a song every week may seem like a daunting task, but the benefits of this practice are immeasurable. Setting a specific goal to create and share music on a regular basis can help us develop a mindset of consistency and discipline. By committing to this process, we train ourselves to overcome perfectionism and self-doubt, allowing us to break free from the barriers that often hold us back from sharing our work with the world. When we embrace the idea of releasing early and often, we open ourselves up to new opportunities for growth and improvement as musicians and creators.

One iconic example of the power of consistent creation is the story of Lou Reed and Andy Warhol.

When Lou Reed was part of Andy Warhol's Factory, Andy would often cross paths with Lou over the course of a day, and one day asked Reed how many songs he'd written that day; Lou would lie and say he'd written ten. Warhol would respond, "10? Oh, you're so lazy. You should have written 15".

This might seem excessive, but this mindset has a purpose -- write and keep writing.

Through this ongoing process of creation, we can discover our unique voice, refine our skills, and ultimately find success in the music industry. By following in the footsteps of artists like Lou Reed and embracing the challenge of writing and releasing music regularly, we can unlock our full potential and pave the way for our creative journey.

Ultimately, the practice of writing and releasing a song every week is not just about the result, it's about the journey of self-discovery and growth that comes with it. By consistently putting our work out into the world, we not only hone our craft but also connect with audiences on a deeper level. This practice challenges us to push past our comfort zones, experiment with new ideas, and evolve as artists.

So, whether you're a seasoned musician or just starting out, embracing the mindset of release early and release often can help you cultivate resilience, creativity, and a strong work ethic in your musical endeavors.

Benefits of Regularly Writing & Releasing Music

Writing and releasing music on a regular basis can have a multitude of benefits for any musician or band.

One of the main advantages is that it keeps your audience engaged and interested in your work. By consistently putting out new music, you are giving your fans something to look forward to and keeping them connected to you as an artist. This can help build a loyal fan base that will continue to support you throughout your career.

Another benefit of regularly releasing music is that it can help you improve as a musician. The more you write and release songs, the better you will become at the craft. Each new song is an opportunity to experiment with different styles, techniques, and themes. By consistently challenging yourself to create new music, you will continue to grow and evolve as an artist.

Finally, releasing music on a regular basis can also help you build momentum in your career. Each new song is a chance to reach new listeners and expand your audience. The more music you release, the more opportunities you have to connect with people who resonate with your sound. This can open doors to new collaborations, performance opportunities, and other ways your music can find new ears.

Section summary:

- Keeps the audience engaged and interested
- Helps improve as a musician
- Build momentum in your career

Overcoming Perfectionism

Perfectionism is the most common challenge that many songwriters face when trying to release music consistently.

Perfect is the enemy of done.

Perfectionism can hinder creativity and productivity, leading to dissatisfaction with your work.

You tell yourself, “*It’s close, but not perfect,*” or, “*I just have to get this one verse a little better*”. The list goes on and on.

Every time you tell yourself that, every time you agonize over a small change in a song, you lose a little bit of your creativity.

I’m going to challenge you to run with the single take of a guitar that you recorded, or that drum part that has just a little too much swing. Let it go and move onto the next part.

One key strategy for overcoming perfectionism is to embrace imperfection and see it as a natural part of the creative process. By letting go of the idea of creating a flawless masterpiece, you can free yourself to experiment, take risks, and ultimately produce more music.

Embrace flaws. Make mistakes. Play notes that are a little off, even a lot off. Record it, then do it again, and again, and again.

It is only through the process of continuously doing that we learn how to do more.

I’m not going to tell you that you have to bootstrap your way to confidence. Believing in yourself is a consistent process that requires almost tireless devotion to the idea that you do indeed create art that matters, and that regardless of what others think about you, or your art, you deserve to keep doing it.

The bottom-line is this; try not to get held up by yourself.

Most often, we are our own most harsh critics, and that keeps us from getting to the next step of leveling-up that we wish to reach.

When I started writing and releasing a song every week, I had already released albums before, but I had waited entirely too long to release them and lost steam by the time that I did. Taking on this challenge meant getting over the biggest obstacle; myself.

The best artists don't stop themselves because they're worried about what others think about them, because they've probably already worked very diligently on getting over what they think of themselves.

Try this: Every time you sit down to write music, start with the first idea in your head, the first idea to come out of your hands and into your instrument, and just go with it. Don't worry about the thoughts that well up, telling you that you must do better. You will only do better if you keep doing it.

Section summary:

- Embrace imperfection as part of the creative process
- Set aside time for regular practice and brainstorming
- Experiment, take risks, and don't be afraid to make mistakes
- Allow yourself to be yourself.

Structuring Your Workflow for Efficiency

Setting Realistic Goals and Deadlines

When it comes to writing and releasing a song every week, having an efficient workflow is crucial. By structuring your workflow effectively, you can maximize your productivity and creativity while minimizing stress and burnout.

Set Base Goals

One key aspect of structuring your workflow is setting specific goals and deadlines for each step of the songwriting and releasing process.

- What day will you release on? Fridays and Sundays are best, but, be realistic about a day you'll be able to write and potentially also release your music. Consistency will establish you to your audience and keep them interested in what you do (I release my music on Sundays).
- What type of music will you be creating? Genre and use-case are good to consider. Do you write pop music? Ambient? Dance? Rock? Or do you want to experiment with genre? Will your music be fitting for casual listening, a club, or for TV/Films/Streaming services?
- How often do you plan to write and release? Once a week is great, but, be realistic with yourself and how much time you are going to decide to set aside every week for writing. It's ok to not release every week. Set a definable goal that you feel you can stick to, but make a decision to stick with it.
- What are your personal goals from songwriting? Do you want a large audience? Are you writing for yourself, for fun, or for eventual profit?

Curate Your Workspace

Another important element of an efficient workflow is creating a designated workspace that is conducive to creativity. Whether it's a home studio, a local cafe, or a quiet corner of your room, having a space where you can focus and get into the right mindset for songwriting can make a big difference in your productivity. Additionally, establishing a daily routine that includes dedicated time for songwriting, production, and promotion can help you stay organized and on track.

- Set your workspace up so that it's comfortable. Don't plan on hunching over a laptop with headphones on. If you work on a laptop, mount it on a stand so that it is directly at eye-level -- the same is true for your computer monitors. Get a comfortable chair. Use ambient lighting vs harsh overhead lighting. These small aspects can have large effects on your work.

- Keep your instruments ready. If you play Guitar, have your Guitar plugged into your amplifier or directly into your audio interface so it's ready to go. If you use an amplifier, keep that amplifier "mic'd up" (with a microphone placed in front of it for recording). This is true for any instrument you use - have it ready to go so you don't waste time setting up when you should be writing.
- Use a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW, the software you use to record) that you feel most comfortable with and keep a template for working with it that has the ideal tracks, virtual instruments, plug-ins, and other content that you need to sit down and work quickly.

Self-Care

Lastly, it's essential to prioritize self-care and time management to maintain a consistent workflow.

- Take breaks when you need to. It's generally best to set aside at least two to five hours a week for working on music. However, don't put undue stress onto yourself when you should take a break. Stepping away for any amount of time, even 15 minutes, can rejuvenate your creative ideas.
- Drink water. Coffee and energy drinks are fine, but stay hydrated. You very literally will do better work.
- Don't use mind-altering substances. I'm not here to tell you how to live your life, but, if you sit down to create in an inebriated state, you likely won't find that your goals are met.
- Get rest. Don't plan on sleeping two hours a night and then pushing yourself directly into your work. You won't find success this way.

Section summary:

- Set specific goals and deadlines
- Create a designated workspace
- Establish a daily routine
- Prioritize self-care and time management
- Keep your instruments and your space ready to go.
- Have a template ready with your DAW so that you don't waste time with software nuances and lose inspiration.
- Keep your instruments ready to go.

DO NOT Wait for Inspiration.

This is going to be perhaps the most controversial concept in this book.

DO NOT wait for inspiration to strike to write music.

There is a misconception that artists must work on inspiration; that the best work doesn't happen unless it sparks alive in your brain and then becomes material by your hands.

This could not be further from the truth, and the sooner you distance yourself from this mindset, the better.

Inspiration is excellent. It is a tool to push us forward towards creation. But if we await its arrival like a train that changed its arrival station, we will never get anything done.

You only overcome the inspiration flux by sitting down to do the work. Yes, I get it, no one likes to think about their art as work, but, your art isn't a job -- it's your work. There is a difference between the importance of one's job and of one's work. A job provides money but may never provide fulfillment. One's work may not provide money but can almost certainly provide fulfillment, but money can come more quickly from being properly fulfilled in one's spiritual and artistic goals.

In my years teaching others how to produce music, I have seen some very consistent obstacles for those with whom I've worked:

1. They have entirely too much equipment, and too little time or knowledge to use it all (Software, plugins, instruments, etc.).
2. They expect that their art and their work should make them money in order to have value. This is a fallacy. Your work is important regardless of monetary compensation from it, and do not ever let the machine of Capitalism tell you otherwise.
3. They have convinced themselves they are not good enough and fallen into a depression about finishing their creative works.
4. They've been waiting for inspiration to strike to get over the first three issues.

These are the obstacles which you must overcome.

Try this: Allow yourself to get over the idea that a spark of inspiration is needed to create great things. Sit down, do the work. Do it at the same time every week, if you can. Even ten minutes of creation done consistently will yield a product from which you may grow.

Allowing Yourself to Write Music

This sounds funny, but it's true. You have to allow yourself to write music.

It's important to note that you do not HAVE to write a song every week after reading this book. .

But, if you've been struggling with writing and releasing music, I cannot stress enough that you should ALLOW yourself to write music.

A lot of us spend entirely too much time telling ourselves we don't deserve something unless we meet other markers in our everyday lives; we can't play video games if we don't work enough. We can't have pizza if we don't run two miles. The list goes on.

It's great to set goals for yourself, and these can help to motivate you.

But, it's also important to tell yourself, "I'm allowed to sit down and spend some time making music. It doesn't have to be music that makes money. It doesn't have to have pop appeal. I'm making music because I LOVE it".

When you allow yourself to make music, you care for yourself, and you'll care for others in your life even more.

Homework

Give yourself 15 minutes to sit down and, even if you don't play an instrument, or create a new song, simply think about what you'd like to write, or focus on an idea you had, an inspiration, anything, that you can spend some time envisioning.

I can almost certainly guarantee that if you do this, you'll find that the next time you sit down, you'll be able to write a song, or even a piece of a song, that turns into something, then something else, and iterates infinitely, if you allow it to.

Finding Inspiration and Developing Ideas

While you should not wait for inspiration, you should be open to it being all around you. Conversations you have or hear in third person, sounds on your everyday commute, thoughts you have while taking a shower. These sparks can all lead to a larger flame.

One of the key components in writing and releasing a song every week is finding inspiration and developing ideas. Inspiration can come from anywhere - personal experiences, emotions, other artists, nature, the news, and so on. It's important to be open to different sources of inspiration and to keep an open mind when it comes to developing ideas for your songs.

To develop your ideas further, it can be helpful to keep a songwriting journal or notebook where you can jot down any lyrics, melodies, chord progressions, or song ideas that come to mind. This can help you stay organized and keep track of your ideas. Additionally, collaboration with other musicians can also be a great way to develop your ideas and receive feedback on your work.

Remember, the key to finding inspiration and developing ideas is to stay curious, keep an open mind, and be consistent with your songwriting practice. By staying open to new ideas and experiences, you can continue to grow as a songwriter and release quality music every week.

Try this: Use a notes app on your phone and write down inspirations that come to you throughout your day.

Section summary:

- Be open to different sources of inspiration
- Keep a songwriting journal or notebook
- Collaborate with other musicians for feedback and ideas

Tools and Software for Music Production

In this lesson, we will explore the essential tools and software needed for successful music production. Whether you are a beginner or seasoned musician, having the right tools at your disposal can make a significant difference in the quality and efficiency of your music-making process. From digital audio workstations (DAWs) to virtual instruments and plugins, we will cover a range of software options that can help you bring your musical ideas to life.

Using a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW)

One of the most important tools for music production is a **Digital Audio Workstation** (DAW), which serves as the central hub for recording, editing, and mixing music. Popular DAWs include Ableton Live, Logic Pro, and Pro Tools, each offering unique features and workflows that cater to different types of musicians.

We will talk more about using your DAW later in this course. For now, explore what you have available to you. You do not have to go out and buy an expensive piece of software to create music.

- On PC, you won't find an application for music production pre-installed. However, for a free option, explore using **Audacity**, a free DAW that facilitates audio recording. Audacity does not easily allow you to record virtual instruments (covered in our next section). If this is a requirement for you and you need a low-cost alternative to popular DAW software, I would suggest **Cockos REAPER**, which features a try-before-you-buy model, and is VERY inexpensive should you choose to purchase it. REAPER is a full-featured DAW, fitting for audio and virtual instrument recording.
- On Mac OS, Garageband is included, and is a great way to get started with music production. It will allow you to record both audio and virtual instruments, and is powerful enough to allow you to produce a song from start to finish.
- I use **Ableton Live** and **PreSonus Studio One**. Each software features a trial to let you try it before you buy it. I highly suggest you do this, instead of purchasing outright even any software that I or another producer uses.
- We will delve further into DAWs later in this book.

Virtual instruments

In addition to a DAW, virtual instruments (software representations of physical instruments such as synthesizers, stringed instruments, drums, and etc.) and effect plugins (software effects and/or instruments that allow you to create or mix your sound) play a crucial role in shaping the sound of your music. From synthesizers to effects processors, these software tools can add depth and texture to your productions.

These are usually referred to as **Plugins** or **VSTs** (VST = **V**irtual **S**tudio **T**echnology, designed by Steinberg Media over 30 years ago, this platform is utilized for coding and building virtual representations of instruments including Keyboards, Synthesizers, Drums, Guitars, and more).

A **plugin** can be loaded into a DAW when installed from a third-party source.

Plugins of this type are often included with DAWs to help you get started and are referred to as "native", as they are native software to the DAW with which you are working.

I need to reiterate, here; you do NOT need expensive tools to create great music. I will expand upon that in the next lesson.

It's essential to invest time in learning how to use your chosen tools effectively (that's why you're here!).

Practice using different software features, experiment with new sounds, and don't be afraid to push the boundaries of your creativity. As you become more familiar with your tools, you'll develop a workflow that suits your unique style and helps you produce music more efficiently. Remember, the goal is to have fun and express yourself through your music, so let your creativity shine through in every song you create.

Key Lesson Concepts:

- Digital audio workstations (DAWs) are essential for recording, editing, and mixing music.
- Virtual instruments and plugins can add depth and texture to your music productions.
- Invest time in learning how to use your tools effectively and develop a workflow that suits your unique style.
- Do not assume you need expensive tools to create great art.

You Don't Need Expensive Tools and Toys

You don't need expensive tools to create great things.

You probably see, every day, people on the Internet who have all the best and most expensive tools for music production; shiny home studios, thousands of dollars in plugins and equipment, lots of flashy things that they show off and talk about in their TikTok videos.

Have they created any music? Moreover, have they created anything they truly enjoyed that fed them creatively and spiritually?

Oftentimes, they have not. They are no better than gurus on the Internet who stand next to expensive cars and tell you that you can be just like them. They rented those cars, and they don't own expensive mansions. They are selling you a dream built on a false foundation.

You can (and you will, by the time you're done with this course) write music using only that which comes packaged with the software you choose to use. Nearly every Digital Audio Workstation includes the basics you need to write and release music:

- The ability to record multi-track audio and MIDI instruments.
- Basic audio post-production plugins, the most important being **Compression**, **Equalization**, **Limiting**, and general post-production tools such as normalization, editing, etc.
- Basic virtual instruments and synthesizers that can create sounds. They don't have to be perfect. They just need to make sounds with which you can experiment and play.

Did you know?

Finneas Baird O'Connell, Billie Eilish's brother, wrote and composed his sister's debut album with her using a MacBook and GarageBand. Kieran Miles David Hebden, known as Four Tet, keeps a very basic home studio from which he has written songs with millions of plays around the world.

While you need not keep a basic workspace or workflow to create, you need to remember that it's not the instrument, it is the player that makes something great.

I learned this first-hand when I was 18 and a young punk drummer growing up in Santa Fe, NM. I worked at a movie theater, and a co-worker asked me if he could borrow my drum kit to record a demo in one night at a popular local studio. I said yes, on one condition; I wanted to be able to come to the studio to see how the process was done.

I showed up that night with my drum kit and was amazed at all the gear and tools used for producing music, but even more amazed when one of my favorite local musicians, Jim Goulden, showed up at the studio to record with my co-worker.

Jim walked to my drum kit, now set up in the main room, and asked, "Is this your kit?".

"Yes," I responded, "but it's not very good, it's just a cheap kit I bought because I couldn't afford anything better."

Jim said, "Hey man, it's not the instrument, it's the player. Don't get down on yourself or your instrument!", and then proceeded to sit down behind my kit and make it sound like a kit that cost ten times what I'd paid for this beginner's kit by CB Percussion (a drum maker known for making low-cost drum kits).

At that moment, I knew that one does not need expensive instruments to make great music, and neither do you.

Use what you have and what is available to you. You do not need to go into debt to create music. There are many freely-available or low-cost tools that you may use in your journey. You can always move up from them, but you can never move up if you build on a poor foundation based on the false idea that greatness relies upon how much money one has spent on one's toys.

Try this: Open your DAW and create a one-minute song using only what is available in that software. Restrictions can be good. They can teach us how to work with what we have, become more creative and resilient, and how to improvise.

Improvise, Improve, Increase your output.

In the world of music production and songwriting, finding inspiration, developing ideas, and maintaining an efficient workflow are crucial for creating high-quality music consistently. Here are the key takeaways from the lessons:

- Be open to inspiration from various sources like personal experiences, emotions, nature, and news.
- Keep a songwriting journal or notebook to jot down ideas and stay organized.
- Collaborate with other musicians to receive feedback and enhance your ideas.
- Set specific goals and deadlines for each step of the songwriting process.
- Create a designated workspace conducive to creativity.
- Establish a daily routine for songwriting, production, and promotion.

- Prioritize self-care and time management to avoid burnout and maintain creativity.
- Utilize digital audio workstations (DAWs) for recording, editing, and mixing music.
- Explore virtual instruments and plugins to enhance the sound of your productions.
- Invest time in learning your tools effectively and developing a workflow that suits your style.
- Remember that expensive tools are not necessary to create great music.
- It's crucial to focus on creativity, utilizing the tools at hand, and not getting caught up in the idea that greatness is determined by expensive gear. Use what you have, stay resilient, and prioritize creativity over material possessions to improve your music production skills.

The Fast-Track Method to Writing More Music in Ten Steps

We've talked a lot about mindset, tools, and ways to get past perfectionism.

Let's lay it all out on the table. Here's how to write a song every week in a quick, step-by-step outline.

This is by no means perfect; this is instead a way to show you that you can, by following some quick steps, write, finish, and release a song.

Let's get right into it.

First: Use a Template

This is covered in the next section, but the basic idea is this; have a template for your DAW, whichever flavor you choose to use, that lets you sit down and get right to work.

You may use the templates that are part of this book, or, you may build your own.

Whichever direction you choose, remember that your template is one of the key items in your journey to writing more music.

It sets you up for success so that you don't sit down and waste time adding tracks, opening virtual instruments, and setting up effects plugins on each track to polish your sound.

It empowers you to know that when you sit down to write, you can open your DAW and get to work.

Second: Go With the First Idea That Happens

If you're writing a lot of music, two things are going to happen:

1. You're going to have an idea that you want to make happen.
2. You're not going to have any ideas.

Either of these situations is optimal for writing more music.

If you have an idea, sit down and do your best to run with it. It may or may not come out of your head the way you heard it. That's ok.

Third: Play Anything

If you don't have an idea, embrace this. Play anything.

I find that starting with a melody is a quick and easy way to break the ice. Play a chord on your guitar or piano. Load a virtual instrument and play with the first preset sound that you load up. DO NOT spend hours searching for the "right" preset sound.

Create a drum loop, or start with a pre-made loop (drums or otherwise).

There is NO shame in using a loop or a preset to spark creativity.

All art is, in some way, plagiarism. This doesn't give you free reign to steal from others, but it does mean that inspiration often comes from the work we've heard from others.

Don't be afraid to use what you have -- if a DAW or plugin has a great preset that you love, use it. With time, you'll tweak and turn it into your own.

The purpose of these tools is to ignite the first spark of creativity. The rest comes after that.

Fourth: Record That Sound, Pattern, or Whatever Else Came to Mind.

Once you have a sound – anything – record that sound.

If you strummed a simple three-chord melody on your guitar, record it.

If you played three notes on your keyboard, record it.

If you dropped a loop into your DAW, drop another one. Experiment. Reverse the loop. Drop a wild delay on it. Have fun. No one is judging you here, except you, and you need to stop judging yourself.

Fifth: Move Onto the Next Part and Create Variations

Next, move onto either the bass or drums; I personally like to move onto the drums from here.

Again, repeat the steps as previous with melody for drums or bass; record what comes to you first. Then, record a slight variation. You now have two parts to a song, or four, or perhaps more, if you play with these variations.

Next, move onto bass (or drums, if you opted for bass in step 2). Repeat the previous steps of at least two variations.

In the purest sense, you now have the building blocks for a standard structure song.

If you increase each of these variations to three of each instrument, you've now written the basic structure for 90% of pop songs released in the last 50 years.

There is no need to over complicate this process. You are free to explore these sounds once you've created them; change their tuning, effects, note length, etc. and you'll find that you've got more song structure than you thought.

This can be done in less than 20 minutes if you allow yourself to experiment and you do NOT get lost in perfectionism.

Next, you can explore variations of your variations, and you may find that your song begins to go in new directions – some of which you never expected. This is ok.

Remember, our goal is to write and release more music, not to be perfect. Perfect is the enemy of done.

Sixth: Arrange the Song

Once you've written the building blocks for your song, it's time to experiment with arranging the song – see the section of this book about **Basic Song Structures** for ideas.

After having arranged your song, step away for a few minutes, and then come back and listen to what you've created.

Here's the hard part; don't delete what you did because something was "off".

Let that rest, and even allow yourself to decide that the song is done.

If this is version 1 of this song, that's fine. There may be ten, twenty, and even more versions. This is the essence of art; it is never finished.

Seventh: Export It.

Export version 1 of your song from your DAW after having looked at the section in this book about **Mixing and Mastering Your Song**. Master this song using either tools available to you in your DAW, or using an online mastering service such as LAND.

Eighth: Release It.

Release this version of your song. It doesn't need to make its way to Spotify and other streaming services, but you may easily release it on your Bandcamp, YouTube, or Soundcloud pages (all three are completely acceptable).

These are your release early and often platforms because you control the timing and release of the music, as opposed to Streaming services, which require a more structured release model (see *Releasing Your Music* for tips on how to do this).

Ninth: Let Them Talk.

Now, the difficult part; let that song sit, as-is, and announce to the world that you've released it.

You're going to get plenty of "insight" from listeners who will tell you what you should change, what should be "better", and the like; while I won't tell you to ignore this input, I will tell you this – it is not obligatory that you listen to every single piece of input and make changes accordingly. Thank listeners for their input, take with you what you wish, and move on.

Tenth: Repeat.

Your task after this is to repeat this process again, and again, and again.

At some point, you'll likely come back to one of these songs, recognize parts you wish to change, use in other songs, or build upon. Repeat the previous steps I have just outlined, and create version 2 of your song. Again, release it. Once you feel confident that this song is ready to reach a wider audience via streaming services, refer to **How to Digitally Distribute Your Music**, and release your music to streaming services.

Congratulations, you have now released music – something that a large percentage of musicians never allow themselves to do.

Remember, the key factor here is **allowing yourself** to release music.

Every time you do this, instead of telling yourself, “It isn’t ready”, you’ve accomplished something that many others do not allow themselves to accomplish.

Writing and Arranging Music

Creating a Template For Quick Production

Having a template in place is crucial for any musician who aims to consistently create and release music. Whether you prefer using Ableton Live, Logic Pro, FL Studio, or any other Digital Audio Workstation, a template can significantly streamline your workflow. Imagine this: you wake up in the middle of the night with a melody swirling in your head. With a well-organized template, you can quickly open your project, have your favorite sounds loaded, effects set up, and start recording your idea in a matter of minutes. This efficiency not only saves time but also helps you capture the raw essence of your inspiration before it fades away.

Setting up a template that fits your style and workflow can take some initial effort, but the long-term benefits are immeasurable. You can customize your template to include your go-to virtual instruments, audio effects, mixing presets, and even bus routing. By having these elements pre-configured, you reduce the friction between your creative thoughts and their actualization in your DAW. Moreover, a personalized template can also serve as a creative springboard. When you consistently start with a familiar setup, you train your mind to focus on the music-making process rather than the technical setup, allowing for a more intuitive and seamless creative flow.

A well-crafted template is like having a musical sketchbook that is always ready for your next masterpiece. It is a tool that empowers you to dive straight into the creative realm whenever inspiration strikes. Remember, the goal is not to limit your creativity but to enhance it by removing unnecessary barriers. So, invest time in designing a template that reflects your unique sound and creative process. Embrace the power of organization and preparedness in your music production journey and watch how it transforms the way you write and release songs on a regular basis.

I have created a template from which you may get started using two of my favorite Digital Audio Workstations: Ableton Live and PreSonus Studio One.

Each of these templates utilize only virtual instruments and effects that are native (included with) these DAWs, which should allow you to get going without having to install or purchase third-party plugins.

Developing Melodies and Chord Progressions

When it comes to writing and releasing a song every week, developing melodies and chord progressions is a crucial aspect of the process. Melodies are the heart and soul of a song, creating a memorable and engaging tune that listeners will remember. Chord progressions, on the other hand, provide the harmonic structure that supports the melody and gives depth to the overall sound. In this lesson, we will explore techniques for developing melodies and chord progressions that will enhance your songwriting and help you create music that resonates with your audience.

One key aspect of developing melodies is understanding the relationship between notes and creating a cohesive, memorable tune. Experiment with different scales, intervals, and rhythms to find the right combination that speaks to you. For chord progressions, focus on building a strong foundation with simple but effective progressions that complement your melody. Don't be afraid to try different variations and experiment with unconventional chord changes to add interest to your song.

Using music theory, the Circle of Fifths, and knowledge of how to play an instrument, are all great ways to make music. Another great way to make music? Just make it.

You don't have to get lost in knowing that you've chosen the right key for the type of song you're writing. You don't have to get lost finding the right snare sound for that dance track. In fact, don't do any of those things; if you do, you're not going to release music.

Use the tools you have and the skills you've learned or are learning. You will learn more and you'll acquire new tools along the way.

Try this: Have fun picking a sound -- any sound -- and seeing where it goes. Play a note on your guitar, record it, then hack it to bits and add some effects in your DAW, and see what happens. Don't worry about it being perfect, or it even being "music". Music is just sounds and noises that some find pleasing, and others do not. If you like it, go with it.

Section summary:

- Melodies are the heart of a song and should be memorable.
- Chord progressions provide harmonic support and depth to the music.
- Experiment with scales, intervals, and rhythms for melodies.
- Build a strong foundation with simple yet effective chord progressions.
- Don't be afraid to try unconventional chord changes to add interest.

Theory and Concepts

Music theory is a complex beast, and it's something that, were I to explain it in this document, would likely still not truly fit your goals. If you don't understand music theory, that is just fine; many musicians did not truly understand music theory in their careers, and in fact chose not to because they felt it would limit their creativity.

Rather than dive into all aspects of music theory, I am going to touch on some of the most important factors you'll need to know when you decide to write and release more music.

Did you know?

Vangelis, the composer famous for scoring films like "Chariots of Fire" and "Blade Runner", amongst many other great pieces of music, could not read nor notate sheet music. This may come as a surprise because we often picture composers hunched ardently over their piano, scribbling away at a piece of notation, furiously writing and erasing cryptic musical notes so as to translate the noise in their brain into beautiful music. This is not always the case. Vangelis was a self-taught musician, and he created some of the most memorable creations in modern music.

What is ADSR?

ADSR is a very important part of music production.

It applies not only to Electronic Music but to all instruments we play, including our voice.

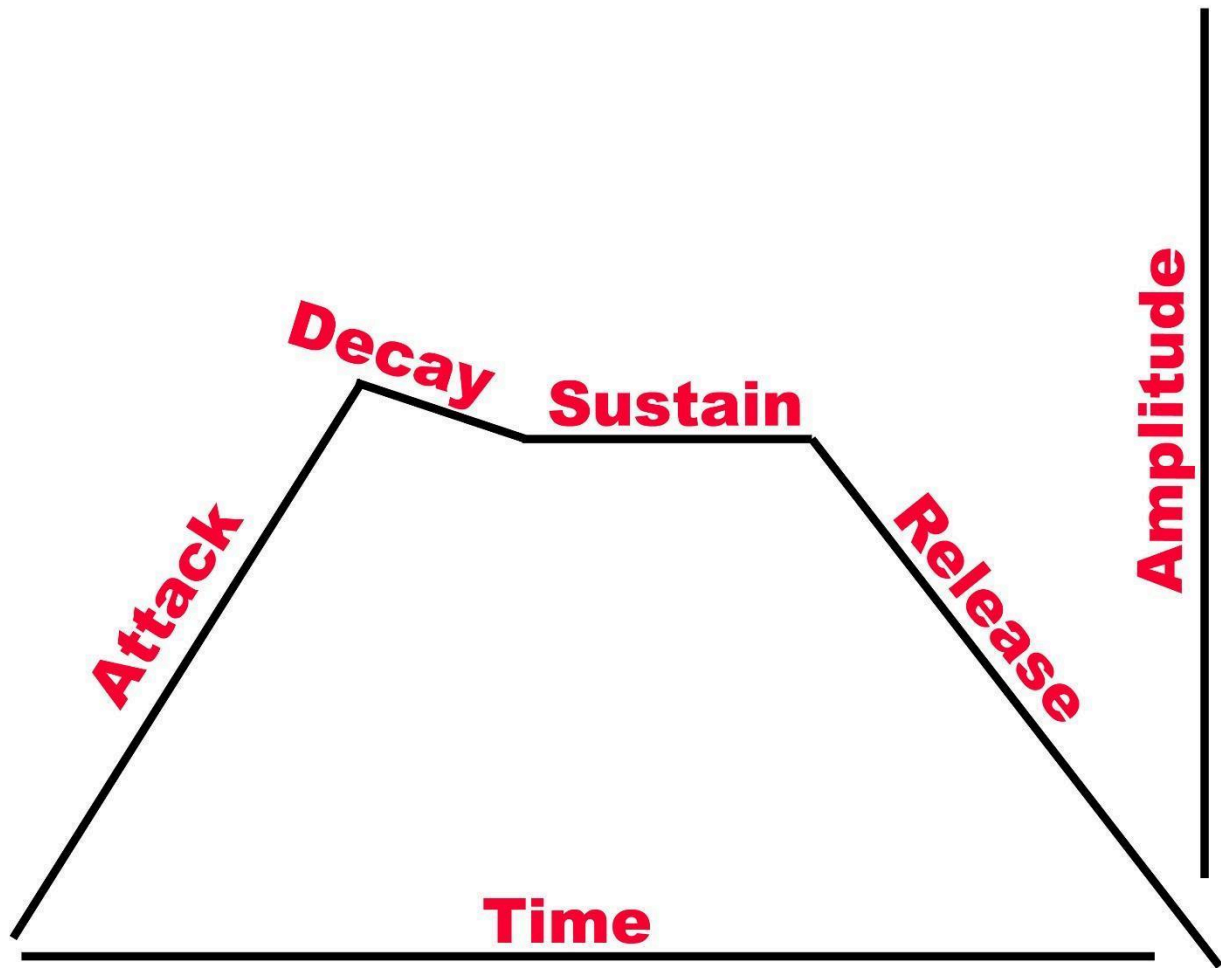
ADSR stands for:

Attack: How quickly a note is heard when it is struck, played, sung, etc.

Decay: How long it takes for that note or sound to reach its max intensity.

Sustain: How long that note or sound is heard after Attack and Decay.

Release: How quickly that sound goes away after following Attack, Decay, and Sustain.



Typically, **ADSR** is usually used when speaking of synthesizers and keyboards, where these settings are quickly adjusted for sound design purposes.

However, **ADSR** applies to any instrument that we play.

If you strike a single guitar string:

The **ATTACK** of your finger or the pick hitting the string triggers the **DECAY** of the vibration of the string, with a sound being created by that action. The amount of time the string vibrates relates to the **SUSTAIN**. The **RELEASE** will denote how quickly the sound of that string having been struck will go away.

When using digital instruments, such as synthesizers, **ADSR** is very important for sound design purposes. It allows us to change a single struck note from a harsh attack (such as hammering on a key) to a slow, swelling "pad" sound which builds up (a combination of the Attack and Decay) and can continue for quite some time (the Sustain and Release).

You'll find that once you know what **ADSR** is, you'll start to recognize it in nearly every sound. You'll also likely see these controls in many virtual synthesizers, keyboards, and other instruments.

Creating Rhythms and Beats

Rhythms and beats are the backbone of any song, setting the pace and groove that listeners will feel compelled to move to. By understanding how to create engaging rhythms and beats, you will be able to elevate the quality of your music and captivate your audience.

I'm a drummer by trade. I have been playing for nearly 25 years at the writing of this course, and so, drums are very important to me. We always hear the instrument with which we most closely align when we listen to music.

You'd think that that means that I write the most complex drum patterns on the planet, but that is not the case.

When it comes to writing drums, simplicity is key. Even a great drummer who has been playing for many years will tell you that the best drummers "Sit in the pocket", or, lock into the groove of the song that sets a backbeat for the entire production.

Take Charlie Watts, who was best known as the drummer for the Rolling Stones. Charlie kept a very basic drum kit throughout his career, but he played and sounded like he could have been five drummers behind the same kit. He locked himself into the groove, kept the backbeat for his bandmates, and created memorable, solid drum patterns.

This doesn't mean that you must always work simply, but, if you wish to release music frequently, it's important that you note the following:

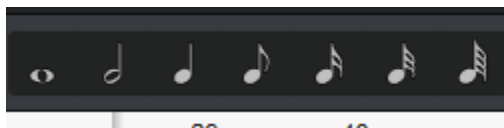
1. If you use virtual drums, keep a preset or two in your virtual drum software or DAW that house the basics of what you need to create straightforward patterns; Kick, snare, hi-hats, crash and ride cymbals.
2. Don't get lost in finding the "right" sound. You can spend your entire life searching for the "perfect" snare sound and still never find what you think is perfect. Use what you have and move on.
3. Keep MIDI patterns for some basic drum beats that you can reuse -- a 4/4 beat with a basic kick and snare pattern, the same pattern but with added cymbals, a simple drum break or fill, and other variations.
4. Experiment and have fun and remember that nothing needs to be perfect.

5. Loops are completely acceptable to use in your productions, just keep two things in mind - The loops you use should be from sample packs to which you own the rights to use said loops for your songs (loops you purchased, or which are included with your DAW), or loops you create. Using loops from others which do not expressly state that they may be used in your own productions can cause a mess down the road.

Basic Notes for Drum Patterns

Notes are the building blocks of not only melodies, harmonies, and chords, but also of drums. Each note you play carries a note value - denoted by its note type - that, when played is equal to a beat you may play on a snare, kick, or other drum.

In basic musical notation, these are your building block notes:



Pictured above, left to right, are: Whole, Half, Quarter, 8th, 16th, 32nd and 64th notes.

Whole Note: A single note that, when played, equates four beats.

Half Note: Half a whole note, or, two beats. Two of these could play in one measure.

Quarter Note: Half a half note, giving us one-quarter a beat. As referenced previously, this allows us four of these notes to one measure.

8th Note: A time division of a quarter note, or a quarter note sliced in half.

16th Note: An eighth note sliced in half.

32nd Note: Sixteenth notes, sliced in half.

64th Note: 32nd notes, sliced in half.

These are your most basic time divisions, and the ones you'll most likely encounter when programming or playing beats.

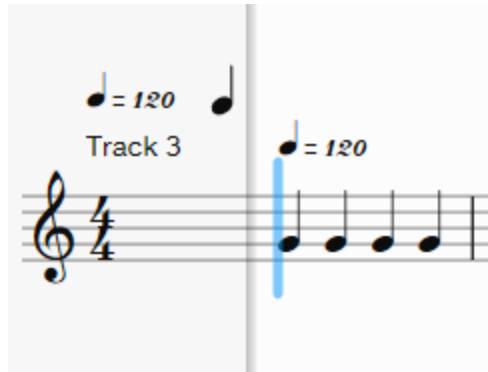
The Four On the Floor Drum Pattern

Your basic “four on the floor” drum pattern is one that we all know. It is used in most dance music, and more often than not, you'll find it in rock, pop, and other forms of music as well. This is because, on average, most music is written in 4/4 timing, or time signature.

4/4 time signature means that we may have four beats per measure, and each quarter note receives one beat.

Clap and count out, “One, two, three, four,” with every clap. That's 4/4 time signature – Four quarter notes to a measure, where each note receives one beat.

It would look like this, were we using standard musical notation:



In this notation, we are using a 4/4 time signature, with one beat per quarter note in a measure. Hence, if we count, “One, two, three, four”, we are counting in 4/4 time.

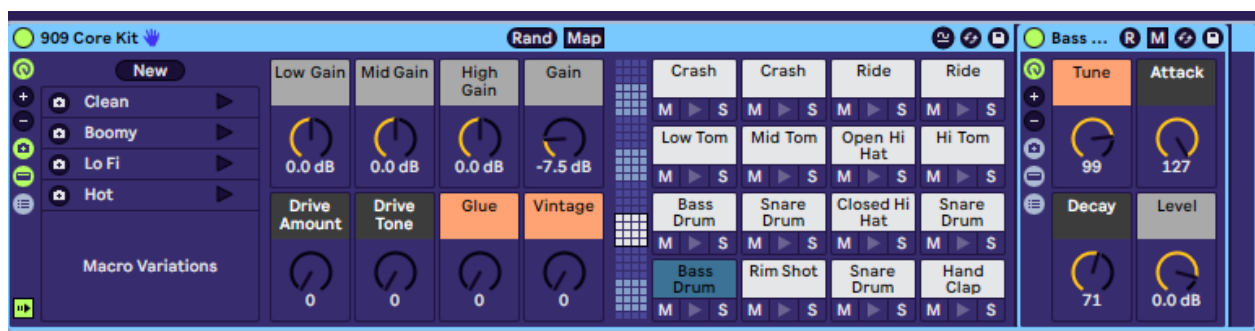
The Tools for Beat Programming

We can program drums in many ways:

- Using virtual instruments such as Impact, a drum machine found in PreSonus Studio One, and their user interface, which allows us to tap or play pads which then record the notes we play to a piano roll (this was covered in the **MIDI** section of the course).



- Using a drum module such as Drum Rack, found in Ableton Live:



- Both of these tools allow us to load a drum sound or sounds to each of the virtual pads found in the interface.
- We can also program drums using simple loops and cutting and pasting those loops, or one-shots (a single drum note recording, such as snare hit).

Basic Drum Programming

For the purposes of this section, we're going to use Ableton Live and its built-in drum module, called Drum Rack.

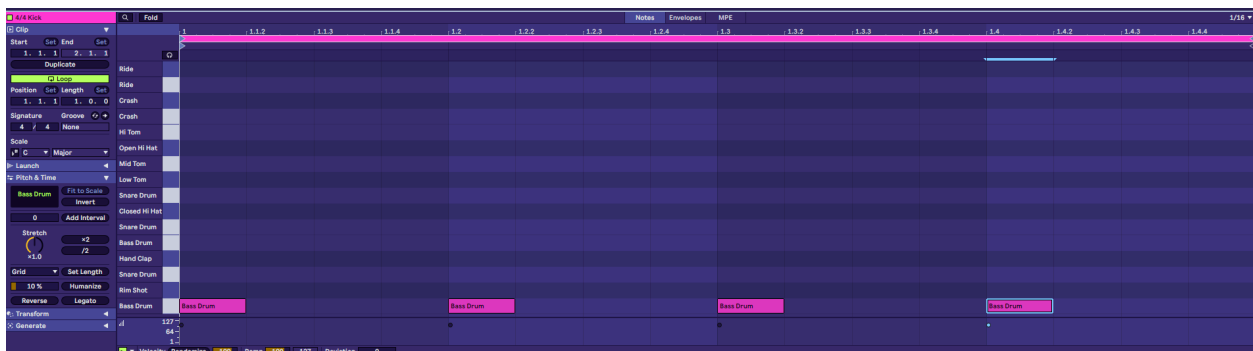
You'll find Drum Rack loaded into the template included with this course, with basic TD-909 drum samples pre-loaded into it, which are part of the Ableton Live sound library.

You'll also find basic Ableton Live clips for drum programming that you may utilize to begin your songs.

For instance, click on the clip labeled "4/4 Kick", included on the track labeled **Drums-MIDI** in the associated template:

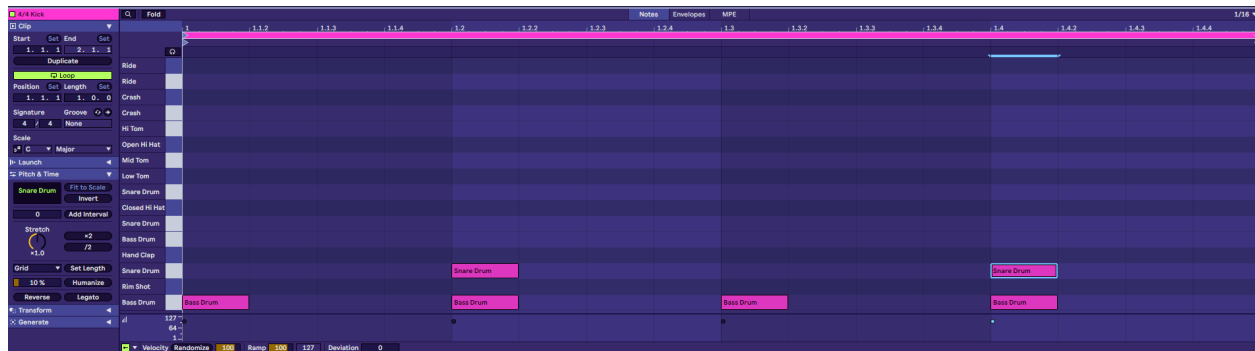


And then, look to the bottom inspector section of Ableton Live, to see an example of a 4/4 kick pattern. Notice that on the far left-hand side of the piano roll, all of the drum sounds' names are listed in stacked order, next to the piano key which, which played, will sound that sample:

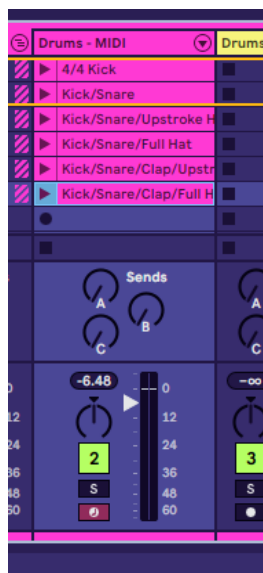


We may program new notes into this clip by simple double-clicking anywhere in the grid shown above, keeping in mind the sound which will be played by entering a note into the horizontal row which is associated with a certain sound.

By doing this, we can program a basic kick/snare pattern, also found in the template:



And then, create variations of these clips, such as the others you'll find in the template:



Using these basic building blocks, you may point and click to enter new notes and create variations of these patterns.

You won't break anything – you can always undo anything, and save copies of the original template to create any of your songs!

Section summary:

- Exploring the fundamentals of creating rhythms and beats
- Techniques for crafting engaging rhythms, including drum patterns and percussive elements
- Understanding the relationship between rhythm and melody to create cohesive songs

Arranging Your Song

Arranging your song effectively can make a huge difference in how your music resonates with your audience. The arrangement is the way in which the different elements of your song – such as instruments, vocals, and effects – are organized and structured. In this lesson, we will explore some key strategies for arranging your song for maximum impact.

One important aspect of arranging your song is to consider the dynamics and structure of the music. This includes thinking about how to build tension and release throughout the song, as well as creating contrasts in volume and intensity. Another key strategy is to pay attention to the instrumentation and how different elements interact with each other. Experimenting with different combinations of instruments and sounds can help you create a unique and engaging arrangement.

You also do not need to follow any specific arrangement or structure if you find that you don't work well in that way. I know that I can write a standard structured song, but I also like to create music that is long-form and relatively devoid of structure. It's how I allow my brain to relax and simply create.

Basic Song Structures

The most well-known song structure generally looks like this:

Intro, Verse, Chorus, Verse, Chorus, Bridge, Chorus, Outro.

We can also see these pieces as letters for ease:

A = Intro

B = Verse

C = Chorus

D = Bridge

E = Outro

And so, the structure above would be seen as: **A, B, C, B, C, D, C, E.**

That's it. Listen to some of your favorite songs, and you'll see the pattern.

Variations

There are variations, of course, such as:

Intro, Verse, **Pre-Chorus**, Chorus, Bridge, Verse, Chorus, **Breakdown**, **Pre-Chorus**, Chorus, Outro.

We have now added some additional components to our structure:

A = Intro

B = Verse

C1 = Pre-Chorus (Generally, around two bars of music that lead into the Chorus)

C2 = Chorus

D = Bridge

E = Outro

F = Breakdown (A passage that serves as a moment of breath in the song, leading up to a buildup that can take us out of the song and into the outro)

or, **A, B, C1, C2, D, B, C, F, C1, C2, E.**

And, of course, there are songs that simply do not follow any set structure:

<There is no structure, there is only Zuul>

You'll find that music on the pop, rock, punk, country, and classical sides follows a more structured format.

Jazz and Electronic Music will generally shy away from basic structures.

Don't be afraid to take risks and try new things with your arrangement. Sometimes the most impactful songs are the ones that break the rules and push boundaries. Trust your instincts and let your creativity guide you as you arrange your song for impact.

Try this: Take one sound from any instrument and expand it for at least a minute. Change its timing, pitch, tuning, or structure, and see where you go from there.

Section summary:

- Consider dynamics and structure

- Pay attention to instrumentation and interaction
- Take risks and think outside the box
- Use structured songwriting concepts, but don't be beholden to them.

Section summary

- Setting up a music template in your preferred Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) can greatly enhance your workflow, helping you capture creative ideas quickly and maintain a consistent approach to music production. A well-organized template with pre-configured virtual instruments, effects, and mixing presets can save time and streamline your creative process.
- Create a template that fits your style and workflow for efficiency.
- Customize your template with go-to tools and settings to reduce friction in your creative process.
- Consistent use of a personalized template can boost creativity and offer a familiar starting point for your music-making.
- Developing melodies and chord progressions is essential for songwriting. Melodies are the core of a song, creating a memorable tune, while chord progressions provide harmonic support. Experiment with scales, intervals, and rhythms for melodies and explore unconventional chord changes to add interest to your music.
- Focus on creating memorable melodies that resonate with listeners.
- Build strong foundational chord progressions that complement your melodies.
- Experiment with different scales, intervals, and rhythms for creative songwriting.
- Understanding rhythms and beats is crucial for song creation. Experiment with drum patterns, percussive elements, and software tools to craft engaging rhythms. Remember that simplicity in drum patterns can be effective, and having a few basic MIDI drum patterns ready can streamline your workflow.
- Explore different techniques for crafting engaging rhythms and beats.
- Understand the relationship between rhythm and melody in creating cohesive songs.
- Keep drum patterns simple and effective for impactful songwriting.
- When arranging your song, consider dynamics, structure, and instrumentation for maximum impact. Experiment with different combinations of elements and do not

be afraid to take risks and push boundaries in your arrangement to create unique and engaging music.

- Pay attention to dynamics, tension, and contrasts in your song arrangement.
- Experiment with instrumentation to create engaging and unique arrangements.
- Utilize basic song structures as guides, but feel free to break the rules and try new approaches.

Mixing and Mastering Your Music

Basics of Mixing Your Tracks

When it comes to releasing music, one of the most important aspects is the mixing process. Mixing involves balancing all the individual elements of a track to create a cohesive and professional sound. In this lesson, we will cover the basics of mixing your tracks to help you achieve a polished and high-quality final product.

The first step in mixing your tracks is to organize your session and set levels for each element. This involves adjusting the volume of each track to ensure that they all blend well together. Next, you will need to apply basic EQ to each track, cutting out any unwanted frequencies and boosting others to create a balanced mix. Finally, adding effects such as reverb, delay, and compression can help enhance the overall sound of your track and give it a more polished finish.

The key terms used in this step have been explained in a previous lesson.

The most important concepts here will allow you to work quickly:

1. Drop the gain level (volume) of each of your tracks by at least -10dB or more. Ideally, you want to leave **headroom** for mixing. Headroom is essentially the empty sonic space before we hit a threshold of 0dB, which, in audio engineering terms, is the level we should not go over. Anything over 0dB is the "red zone", or where clipping is introduced. Clipping may or may not manifest as noise in your output mix, but if you are consistently in the red, you will not leave any headroom for the final polish process, known as mastering.
2. Utilize compression and EQ on each of your tracks.
3. Vocals, if they are a part of your song, will usually be the first component of a song that listeners remember. If you're a drummer (like me), that means you have to get over your insistence that your drums should be louder. They probably don't.
4. Less is more. Creating track after track for small inserts or other bits isn't going to get you anywhere at first. Keep it simple with drums, bass, synthesizer or keys, vocals, guitar, and various add-in sounds or FX.

Section summary:

- Organize your session and set levels for each track
- Apply basic EQ to cut out unwanted frequencies and create a balanced mix
- Add effects such as reverb, delay, and compression to enhance the overall sound

Understanding Mastering and Its Importance

Mastering is the final step in the music production process before releasing a song. It involves the optimization and enhancement of a mixed audio track through various techniques such as equalization, compression, and stereo enhancement. The goal of mastering is to ensure that the song sounds polished, cohesive, and professional across different playback systems.

Mastering is crucial for giving your music that competitive edge in the industry. A well-mastered track will have better clarity, depth, and balance, making it stand out among other releases. Additionally, mastering can help in achieving the desired loudness levels and ensuring that the song translates well on different platforms such as streaming services, radio, and live performances.

Collaborating with a professional mastering engineer can greatly benefit your music production journey. They have specialized skills, experience, and equipment to take your song to the next level. By understanding the importance of mastering and investing in this crucial step, you can elevate the quality of your music and create a lasting impact on your listeners.

The best reason to work with a mastering engineer is simple; they are not as close to your music as you are. You will always hear things that you don't like, or you'll miss things that could be important in the final mix. This is inevitable; we are always too close to our own work. A mastering engineer is subjective; they have a set of concepts and rules that they follow to give a song a final push in its volume, intensity, equalization and mix that you may not be able to achieve after having spent hours working on that song. Their subjective ears will isolate potential issues, work to correct them, and allow other components of your song to shine.

If You Don't Have a Mastering Engineer

If you don't have a mastering engineer, or don't have the budget for one, you can still master your music using tools that are powerful and inexpensive.

1. Master using the basics in your DAW; compression, EQ, limiting. These are the most important components of mastering.
2. Your final song mix should leave at least a little **headroom** on the final output bus. Headroom refers to the decibel range below zero of the final output gain of the sum of your tracks and their collective output. Leaving at least 3-6dB below 0 on the output gain metering of your master output channel is suggested. Without headroom, there is no opportunity to increase the gain of your recorded audio when you reach the mastering step. Most mastering engineers and online mastering services will insist that you have at least some headroom, otherwise there is very little that can be done to process your sound using compression and

other tools to give it a final sound that is punchy without losing **Dynamics** (the peaks and valleys in recorded sound that are representative of the overall volume of your various instruments).

3. Use a mastering service such as **LANDR**. I personally was standoffish to auto-mastering platforms, but I have found that LANDR is an excellent tool and, with some knowledge, allows you to create excellently mastered tracks. A free trial is available, and I highly suggest checking it out.
4. Use the popular plugins, Ozone (by izotope), and T-Racks (by IK Multimedia) and their presets and/or individual settings and modules to master your track.

If you're delivering your music to a Mastering Engineer, ask them how they prefer to have mixes delivered to them. Some prefer to have each track/instrument isolated and delivered as a multi-track session. Others prefer a high-quality stereo mixdown of your song.

Regardless of the packaging of your song, you should export your final mix as Stereo and at least 48kHz and 32-bit .wav audio. This is important because:

1. .wav audio is uncompressed, and therefore there is no loss of quality in the final mix.
2. 48kHz 32-bit audio allows for clipping in your output to be either ignored or bypassed, allowing for an easier mastering process thanks to your audio's resolution (think of the resolution of a camera, the higher the resolution, the more visual data there is with which to work) at which it was recorded.
3. Work to lower your individual track gain outputs so as to keep your master bus output gain level at at least -3dB (at most). By doing this, you reduce the possibility of clipping, and you allow your mastering engineer (even if that's you) the headroom needed to ensure that you can increase the overall volume of the final mix without clipping.

Key Lesson Concepts:

- Mastering is the final step in the music production process, optimizing and enhancing a mixed audio track.
- A well-mastered track stands out with better clarity, depth, and balance, making it more competitive in the industry.
- Collaborating with a professional mastering engineer can elevate the quality of your music and create a lasting impact on your listeners.

- You can master your own music. Even though we are often too close to our mixes for comfort, it is important to know the vocabulary of mastering so that you can collaborate with others when the time comes.

Tips for Polishing Your Final Sound

When it comes to writing and releasing more music, it's important to ensure that your final sound is polished and ready for your audience. One of the key tips for polishing your final sound is to focus on the mix. Take the time to balance all the elements in your song, making sure that each instrument and vocal track can be heard clearly without overpowering each other. This will create a cohesive and professional sound that will captivate your listeners.

Another important tip for polishing your final sound is to pay attention to the details. This includes adding subtle effects, such as reverb or delay, to enhance certain parts of the song. Additionally, make sure to fine-tune the levels of each track, adjusting the EQ and compression settings to achieve a balanced and dynamic sound. By paying attention to

the details, you can elevate your song to the next level and make it stand out in a competitive music market.

Lastly, don't forget to trust your ears and take breaks during the mixing process. Sometimes, stepping away from your song and coming back with fresh ears can help you identify areas that need improvement. Trusting your instincts and being open to experimentation will ultimately lead to a final sound that you are proud to release to your audience.

Section summary:

- Focus on the mix to create a balanced and professional sound
- Pay attention to details such as effects and track levels
- Trust your ears and take breaks to ensure a polished final sound

When it comes to releasing music, mixing is a crucial step in creating a cohesive and professional sound. Here are the key concepts to help you achieve a high-quality final product:

- Organize your session and set levels for each track
- Apply basic EQ to cut out unwanted frequencies and create a balanced mix
- Add effects like reverb, delay, and compression to enhance the overall sound
- Less is more - keep your arrangement simple with drums, bass, synthesizer/keys, vocals, guitar, and add-in sounds/FX

Mastering is the final step in music production before releasing a song. Here's why mastering is crucial:

- Optimizes and enhances a mixed audio track
- Ensures the song sounds polished and professional across different platforms
- Helps in achieving desired loudness levels and clarity
- Collaborating with a professional mastering engineer can greatly benefit the music production process

If you're mastering your own music, consider these tips:

- Use compression, EQ, and limiting in your DAW
- Leave headroom on the final output bus for mastering
- Consider using a mastering service like LANDR

Releasing Your Music

How to Digitally Release Your Music Yourself

Before you release your music to Spotify and other streaming services, you may release it onto platforms that afford you more control over the release, timing, and even pricing of your music.

The three most popular platforms for doing so are outlined below:

Bandcamp, an artist-driven service which allows you to upload your music and make it available for streaming via the Bandcamp website and app. While an extremely supportive platform (your fans can purchase your music, rather than simply stream it), is

not the only service from which you should share your music. Your average everyday listener is not going to visit Bandcamp to listen to their favorite music. They will most certainly use a digital music streaming service for these purposes.

Bandcamp also allows you to sell your music while also being able to revise the music you upload and sell with ease. Bandcamp will not, however, distribute your music to Spotify, et. al. to do that, you will need to use another digital distribution service like those we will mention soon.

YouTube, the video service we all know and use, is also an easy way to release your music without digital aggregation. You'll need to create a video associated with your song, but this doesn't need to be a typical music video. A simple still image will suffice, with your song playing behind it.

You can quickly create videos such as these using **Microsoft Clipchamp** on PC, and **iMovie** on Mac.

Soundcloud, an easy to use service which allows you to upload your music, create an artist profile, follow other creators and get feedback on your work. You can easily share your work from Soundcloud, and it is a very well-known platform for creatives who choose to do so. It is free to sign up, but in order to upload more than a certain amount of music (set by the platform), you'll need to purchase a subscription.

Digital Distribution/Aggregation to Streaming Services

Distributing your music to streaming services is easy, and easier now than ever.

The practice of digitally distributing your music refers to sending your final recordings, in digital format, to a digital distribution service which works with Spotify and other music streaming services to share your music around the world.

Once you've released your music on the platforms mentioned in the previous section of this lesson, you may take the next step by releasing your music onto streaming services

that are ubiquitous with music consumption, such as Spotify, iTunes, Apple Music, Napster, and more.

These platforms require that you submit your music for inclusion in them via digital distribution platforms.

There is not, at the making of this article, an easy way to release your music to these services yourself; you must use a digital distribution service as they have direct partnerships with streaming services, allowing them to handle the important information associated with music that is being released.

There are many platforms for digital distribution. The most popular are:

- CDBaby
- Ditto Music
- Tunecore
- Distrokid
- LANDR

Each of these services will allow you to release your music to Spotify, Amazon, Apple Music, YouTube, and the like. There are literally hundreds of music streaming services, and you want your music on all of them to reach a wide audience.

I currently use Ditto Music because it allows for a simple, yearly fee that allows one to release unlimited music, and it allows you to distribute your music to **Beatport**, the popular DJ music purchasing service that is notoriously difficult to platform on.

However, if that is not of importance to you because of your music genre or simply because you don't wish to release music there, any of the above-mentioned services is excellent. If you use **LANDR**, you have an all-in-one package for releasing your music after mastering it, and this is another great way to ensure that you are releasing music quickly, by removing obstacles and small problems that can arise.

When uploading your music for distribution, pay attention to the requirements set by the services you're using. Key tenants are:

1. Upload .wav audio that is at least 44.1kHz and 16-bit CD-quality audio.
2. Have your album artwork ready to go.

3. Listen to your track or album, and then listen again. Make sure the levels are right and that the songs begin and end and play properly. You can fix mistakes in the upload after a release, but it can be costly and difficult.
4. Know who needs to be credited on the release if you worked with others.
5. If you used samples in your music (especially spoken ones that you didn't create), or if you did a cover song, make sure you have the rights and clearance to do so.
6. Fill in all the other gaps, like the names of your songs, spelling, capitalization and punctuation (on track names and in your artwork).
7. Use a service like Bandcamp to release music for an audience with the ability to upload revisions of tracks and their artwork with ease and without having to wait for your digital distribution service to apply fixes.

Section summary:

- Consider your goals and target audience when choosing distribution channels.
- Research the reach, revenue potential, and fees of each platform.
- Utilize a digital distributor for efficient distribution and audience insights.

Releasing music to streaming services has become easier with the rise of digital distribution platforms. Some popular options for distribution include:

- [CDBaby](#)
- [Bandcamp](#)
- [Ditto Music](#)
- [Distrokid](#)
- [Tunecore](#)
- [LANDR](#)

These platforms allow you to release music to major services like Spotify, Apple Music, and YouTube. It is essential to release your music on multiple platforms to reach a broad audience. Each platform has its advantages; for example, Ditto Music offers unlimited releases for an annual fee and distribution to platforms like [Beatport](#). LANDR provides an all-in-one solution for mastering and distribution.

When uploading music for distribution, it's crucial to adhere to certain guidelines:

- Upload .wav audio with CD-quality specifications
- Prepare album artwork
- Ensure proper mixing and song structure
- Credit collaborators and clear sample usage

Building Your Online Presence as a Musician

One of the most important aspects of being a successful musician in today's digital age is having a strong online presence. This means establishing yourself on various platforms such as social media, streaming services, and your own website. Building your online presence allows you to reach a wider audience, connect with fans, and promote your music effectively.

To build your online presence as a musician, start by creating profiles on popular social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok. Regularly post updates about your music, upcoming shows, and behind-the-scenes content to engage with your audience. Additionally, consider creating a website to showcase your music, sell merch, and provide a hub for your fans to find all your music in one place.

Engaging with your fans online is key to building a strong online presence. Respond to comments, messages, and emails promptly to show your fans that you appreciate their support. Collaborate with other musicians, bloggers, and influencers to expand your reach and connect with new audiences. By actively participating in the online music community, you'll be able to grow your fanbase and elevate your music career.

Most of all, be real. Be you. Don't put on a front of being someone you're not. Believe it or not, listeners can tell when you're not being authentic. Write the music you want to write, talk about the process of doing so, share with others how your journey has progressed. This is the stuff of real interaction and authenticity.

Section summary:

- Create profiles on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok
- Regularly post updates about your music, shows, and behind-the-scenes content
- Create a website to showcase your music, sell merch, and provide a hub for your fans
- Engage with your fans by responding to comments, messages, and emails promptly
- Collaborate with other musicians, bloggers, and influencers to expand your reach

Marketing and Promoting Your Releases

When it comes to releasing music, marketing and promoting your releases is crucial for getting your music out there and reaching a wider audience. One of the key aspects of marketing your music is creating a strong online presence through social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. By engaging with your fans and

sharing behind-the-scenes insights into your creative process, you can build a loyal following and generate buzz around your music.

In addition to social media, collaborating with music blogs, playlists, and online radio stations can help increase visibility for your releases. Sending out press releases and pitching your music to influencers in the music industry can also help attract attention to your music. By leveraging these promotional strategies, you can increase your chances of reaching new listeners and growing your fan base.

Using social media advertising can be beneficial. Building an audience organically -- or without paying -- is difficult. Your friends and family are not your audience. You want to find a new audience, and you can find them, if you pay.

The good news is that you don't have to pay a lot to do so. The most cost-effective platform for advertising your music is Facebook and Instagram, where you can advertise for anywhere from \$3-5 a day.

Do not spend more money than you have advertising yourself. Your goal is to find new audiences and listeners, not to spend money to look cool with lots of followers. 100 well-engaged fans are better than 10,000 people who don't care about what you're doing.

Do not buy followers, do not use shortcuts. They will always come back to bite you, and do nothing to help you find an audience of people who care about your art.

Most of all, ask those around you to share your work, but don't expect that they will listen immediately or even at all. Everyone has a life, everyone is busy. They may not have the time to devote to your art. This does not mean they don't like you; it just means that they aren't your audience. You're looking for an audience who is just disconnected enough from you to become enamored with your art and your process and include you in their every day.

Section summary:

- Build a strong online presence through social media
- Collaborate with music blogs, playlists, and online radio stations
- Send out press releases and pitch your music to industry influencers

For effective promotion, consider your target audience and choose distribution channels wisely. Digital distributors offer efficient distribution and valuable insights into your audience. Marketing your music involves:

- Creating a strong online presence through social media platforms

- Engaging with fans by sharing updates and behind-the-scenes content
- Collaborating with industry influencers and music blogs
- Utilizing social media advertising, focusing on platforms like Facebook and Instagram

Building an authentic connection with your audience is key to success. Be genuine in your interactions, share your creative process, and prioritize engagement over follower numbers. Avoid buying followers and shortcuts, as they do not help in finding a dedicated audience for your music.

Conclusion & Next Steps

Reflecting on Your Journey

As you continue your journey of writing and releasing a song every week, it's important to take the time to reflect on how far you've come and celebrate your progress. This practice of reflection can help you recognize your growth, identify areas for improvement, and stay motivated in your musical endeavors. By acknowledging your achievements and milestones, you can boost your confidence and inspire yourself to keep pushing forward.

One way to reflect on your journey is to set aside dedicated time each week to review your work. Listen to the songs you've created, take note of what you're proud of, and consider what you could do differently next time. It can also be helpful to journal about your experiences, capturing your thoughts and feelings throughout the process. Additionally, don't forget to celebrate your progress, whether it's sharing your music with friends and family, treating yourself to a small reward, or simply giving yourself a pat on the back for your hard work.

Section summary:

- Reflection helps you recognize growth and areas for improvement
- Setting aside time to review your work and journaling can aid in the reflection process
- Celebrating your progress boosts confidence and motivation

Next Steps and Continuing Your Journey

Now that you have successfully completed the course on writing and releasing a song every week, it's time to take the next steps in your music release journey. This lesson

will focus on key strategies and practices to continue releasing music consistently and effectively.

One important aspect to focus on is building a strong online presence through social media, streaming platforms, and music websites. By engaging with your audience and promoting your music regularly, you can increase your reach and attract new listeners. Additionally, collaborating with other artists and participating in music events can help you expand your network and gain more exposure to your music.

Lastly, don't forget to continue honing your songwriting and production skills. Keep experimenting with different genres and styles, and don't be afraid to push your creative boundaries. By staying consistent and dedicated to your music release schedule, you can continue to grow as an artist and build a loyal fan base over time.

Section summary:

- Build a strong online presence through social media, streaming platforms, and music websites
- Collaborate with other artists and participate in music events to expand your network
- Continue honing your songwriting and production skills by experimenting with different genres and styles

Thanks for reading.

I hope that you found this document useful to help inspire and give you information you need to write and release more music.

If you've been sitting on a wealth of songs that are on your hard drive, I'm going to encourage you to sit down after finishing this ebook and pick one of those, and work to finish it.

Take your time, but don't get lost in the nuance. Move on from the thoughts that block you from finishing, the thoughts that can range from, "You're just no good" to "I don't know how to do this".

The fact is that no musician is the greatest musician on Earth. Everyone has something to offer the world, because musicians paint on silence. You can paint anything you want on that silence, and I sincerely hope you do that, many times over.

I wish you the greatest of success!

brian botkiller



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