Down With The RIAA

Musicians Against the Recording Industry

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Priceless

- New computer: $900
- I/O box: $500
- Studio monitors and Microphone: $900
- Telling the RIAA to go fsck themselves: Priceless

Purpose of this Presentation

- This presentation is for enlightening individuals on the current state of the music business and provides a way to completely change it in the future so that it better suits both artists and consumers.

- Prove that you don't need a big recording studio to make a good recording

What's the Problem?

The recording industry isn't about music, it's about:

- Money for the company
- Image and product
- Applying formulas to artistic works
- Telling people "This is cool, you should buy this."
- Not caring for the consumers of their products
- Benefiting only a few

What's the Problem?

- Payola - Yes it does happen
- Resistant to change
- They don't think, they just have knee jerk reactions
- It's not how good you are it's who you know
- Artists retain little rights, if any, over their music
- Pirate Act: Lobbying to get copyright civil suits changed to criminal

Money for the Company

- Getting a recording contract is like winning the lottery, only winning the lottery you are guaranteed some money
- 90% of major label releases don't make a profit
- Companies sign bands as tax write-offs and then dump them after the first of the year
- Overpriced CDs

Why does a CD Cost so Much?

- Record company: Manufacturing CDs is expensive!
- Survey says: Mass produced, replicated CDs are less than a dollar for the total package.

  -Side note: AOL gives away a ton of CDs

- Record Company: It costs a lot to record a CD.
- Survey says: Recording advances are given to artists which they have to pay back. Company doesn't take the hit, unless they want to or unless it was stated in the contract the company would pay.

They Resist Change

- Fight tooth and nail to keep things the same
- What happens to other companies that resist change?
- If record companies were in the tech business they would be out of business
- They compare to the buggy industry

The Effects on Radio

- The Industry releases 100 songs per week and approx 4 are added to the average radio playlist
- Two radio conglomerates control 42% of the listeners
- Hit Top 40 Songs are often repeated over 100 times a week
- One of these companies, Clear Channel Communications, cancelled its support for local musicians and listeners so they could make more money

Why don't People buy CDs?

- There is nothing worth buying
- They only like one song
- Too expensive
- I can get it for free

Applying Formulas

- 90% of all singles get to the hook within 20 seconds
- Approx. 98% of all #1 singles are less than 3 minutes and 30 seconds long
- Labels often ask artists to change lyrics or content they find offensive or wouldn't sell the album

Food for Thought

What if these same formulas were added to older music, how would that change things like:

- Stairway to Heaven – Led Zep
- Hotel California – Eagles
- Bohemian Rhapsody – Queen

How would this have changed music history?

What are we missing out on today?

The Old Days

- Needed a contract for distribution
- Recording equipment was expensive
- Recording was expensive
- Reproduction was very costly
- Radio was impossible to reach without label backing

What Has Changed?

- Recording equipment capable of 16bit 44.1Khz (CD quality) is very affordable
- Distribution can be done world wide with little or no cost
- Reproduction prices are cheap
- Plenty of college & Internet radio stations willing to play good music
- Recording can be done free with your own equipment

What has changed?

- More affordable high-speed internet connections
- No longer need to tour the country and go broke to get people to know who you are
- No geographical limitations, you can live pretty much anywhere

Independent Music Production

The Future

- Levels the playing field
- No longer who you know, it is how good you are
- Artists retain rights to their material
- No formulas or templates to apply
- More variety
- Less competition between groups

What do I need for my studio?

Depends on the type of music you want to record

- For electronic music you may just need a solid computer, software of choice, good sound card, and some studio monitors

- For recording instruments, vocals, or bands you may need a few additional pieces like, mixer, i/o box, and microphones

- Some systems bundle these together

Computer Recommendations

- Check the software and hardware vendor's site for recommended configurations

- No less than 512mb of RAM

- Dedicated secondary hard drive

- CD burner

- Over 2Ghz processor

- No anti-virus or anything else that constantly runs in the background

Computer Recommendations

- No or carefully screen internet connections (remember no anti-virus? :^)
- Updated drivers
- Enable DMA on hard disks
- The faster the hard disk spins the better
- Change role of computer to network server

Sound Card Recommendations

- M-Audio Audiophile 24/96 – Very solid and cheap $149.99

- AudioTrak Maya44 MKII - $199.99

- RME Audio Digi 96/8 – $399.99

Sound card considerations

- Low Latency
- At least 24bits / 96Khz
- Make sure there is an ASIO driver available
- Check system compatibility
- Nothing made by SoundBlaster

Studio Monitor Recommendations

- Any studio monitor that Event Makes
- Event TR8N Reference Monitors – $499.99
- Alesis Monitor 1 Active MKII - $399.99
- M-Audio Studiophile BX8 - $479.99

Studio Monitor Considerations

- Near field reference
- Bigger the speaker is, the better the bass
- You usually listen to the music from approx. 3 feet away
- Your ears will adjust to the monitors
- Active (the power amp is built into the monitor. Reduces noise and interference)

Microphones

For vocals

- AKG SolidTube – $799.99 (must be fairly strong vocalist)

- Neumann TLM 103 – $749.99

- Some fairly decent condenser mics can be found as cheap as $150 but you need a good pre-amp to make them sound decent

Microphones

For instruments and drums

- Anything by Shure and AKG
- Condenser mic for instruments like acoustic guitars
- When recording drums it is good practice to use two condenser mics as overheads on the left and right of the drum kit
- It is not uncommon to use 10 or more mics when recording drums

Guitars and Bass

- Line 6 PODxt – Amp Modeler
- Line 6 Bass PODxt – Amp Modeler
- Shure SM57 microphone – for mic'ing guitar cabinets
- Condenser microphone for mic'ing bass cabinets

Microphones

Drums

- You can usually buy a pre-packaged drum mic kit for $199 and up

- Sometimes you get what you pay for

- Pro Tools Sound Replacer – can be an invaluable tool in fixing drum sound issues

Software recommendations

- Propellerheads Reason – for electronic music creation and beat production

- Acid – for remixing and some VST instruments

- Cubase SX – electronic music creation and VST instruments

- Digidesign Pro Tools – The defacto standard in audio recording and editing

- WaveLab – Wave file manipulation and audio mastering

What do these people do?

- Engineer – Usually the person who gets stuff ready to record and tracks the recording

- Mixing engineer – Person who equalizes and puts the levels in the right place

- Mastering engineer – Person who takes the product of mixing and puts the finishing touches on the final two stereo WAVs

- Producer – Person who makes sure everything sounds the way it should from start to finish

Problems with Indie System

- Advertising and promotions
- Misconceptions
- No rating system (mostly peer review)
- No good, standard way to collect money for plays of your song

Independent Artist Tips

- Have a good web site
- Present yourself well
- Present yourself bigger than you are
- Communicate and create friendships with other independent artists
- Create independent musical networks
- Know where you are and what you need to do to improve

Tips for the Producer

- Don't get frustrated (a lot of trial and error)
- Remember it is always easier to add than to take away
- Listen to mixes on many different systems at the very least a car, home stereo, computer and a boom box
- Get accustomed to your monitors
- Listen in a realistic environment

Tips for the Producer

- Your ears can deceive you
- Listen to good recordings of instruments that you are getting ready to track
- Something may sound like crap on its own, but sound good in the mix
- Layer your instruments
- Create stereo effects by recording two tracks of the same audio and panning one all the way left and the other all the way right

Tips for the Producer

- Don't be afraid to experiment
- Be mindful of effects that make your music sound dated, unless that is your goal
- Clean, punchy, and equalized right to the edge will give your recording a modern feel
- Learn what each EQ range sounds like and know what your track is missing

I've made my own music so...

- Post it online in as many places as possible
- Share though P2P
- Get people to notice
- Talk to other artists
- Get CDs made
- Sell CDs online
- Share knowledge with the community

I've made my own music so…

- Find Internet and College radio stations willing to play your stuff
- Find places that can charge for plays of your music like Apple iTunes
- Use your songs to promote yourself and your web site

Community helping each other

- Collaborative recording processes
- Files can be sent over the net
- Mixed and mastered elsewhere
- Plenty of help through forums
- Streaming Audio
- Share talents
- World Wide collection of talent

What does the future hold?

- Instead of the Billboard charts we have the Internet Download charts
- Different royalty collection methods
- More quality independent artists
- Artists retaining rights to their music
- More variety
- System structure changes
- Progress that actually moves forward

What needs to happen

- A service that is reasonably priced that pays artists
- Attention needs to be drawn to the advantages of in independent system
- Investors for a new system
- Willingness to take a chance

My Project

Why did I do this project?

- To prove the point that you don't need to spend thousands of dollars on a recording when you can do it yourself at home, even if you live in an apartment

My Project

- In Your Eyes by Peter Gabriel
- Recently rerecorded by SR71
- Recently rerecorded by me in my own apartment
- Details available here www.loopbackimposter.com/project.html
- My version available here www.loopbackimposter.com/music.html
- Compare

My Site

- www.loopbackimposter.com
- Papers
- Music
- Reviews
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Useful Links

- www.musiciansfriend.com – Equipment
- www.garageband.com – artist reviews
- www.getsigned.com – artist resource and promotion
- www.ampcast.com – post your music
- www.audioforums.com – Get help
- www.digidesign.com – Pro Tools site and forums

Useful Links

- www.propellerheads.se – Reason and forums

- www.reasonfreaks.com – Reason forum

- www.futureproducers.com – Audio forum

- www.homerecording.com – Audio forum

- www.cdbaby.com – sell your CDs online

- www.eff.org – Electronic Frontier Foundation