MUS 302: RECORDING STUDIO PRODUCTION
LECTURE 1:
INTRO TO PRODUCTION
WHAT IS A PRODUCER?

• A “producer” is one who...drumroll...produces!

produce
Verb

1. make or manufacture from components or raw materials.

2. cause (a particular result or situation) to happen or come into existence.

3. show or provide (something) for consideration, inspection, or use.

4. supervise the making of a musical recording, especially by determining the overall sound.

• Producers are supposed to make IT happen.
WHAT’S A PRODUCER’S ROLE?

- Financial backer (as in film - “Executive Producer: Martin Scorsese”)
- Financial manager (help raise funds, pay contractors)
- Casting director (logistical issues: booking studio musicians, studio time, etc.)
- Supervisor of a recording session (listening and taking notes)
- Project manager (sounding board / time manager)
WHAT’S A PRODUCER’S ROLE?

- Creative director (*has a vision / or carries out artist’s vision*)
- Contributor of creative content (*making beats, writing a bridge, writing string parts, etc.*)
  - Decision maker (*argument breaker*)
- Go-between (*keeps outside world out / acts as messenger*)
- Reissuer of old recordings (*either remixed, remastered or repackaged.*)

Who is This guy?

John Lennon

George Martin

George Martin signed the Beatles to Parlophone (EMI) in 1962 and subsequently produced (almost) all of the Beatles’ records.

His skills as an **arranger** helped the Beatles add depth to their sound as he was able to compose string and horn parts (and conduct them!) “The 5th Beatle.”

**WHAT’S A PRODUCER’S ROLE?**

No idea
WHO CAN BE A PRODUCER?

- Musician
- Band-member
- Recording Engineer
- DJ
- Music Executive (A&R Man)
- Non musician with good ears and good judgement
WHO CAN BE A PRODUCER?

- Rick Rubin has worked with everyone from Jay Z and the Beastie Boys to Tom Petty and Johnny Cash to Slayer and Metallica.
- Rubin got his start playing in punk rock bands in the 70’s but got involved in hip hop in the 1980’s as a DJ, known as “DJ Double R.”
- Rubin saved Johnny Cash’s career with the “American Recordings” series.
- Rubin founded his own labels, Def Jam Records and American Recordings.
WHAT MAKES A GREAT PRODUCER?

- Ability to adapt to different situations
  - Must bring something to the table
    - Ability to keep mood positive
  - Perspective and critical listening
    - Time management
    - Instantly recognizable sound
WHAT MAKES A GREAT PRODUCER?

• Jeff Lynne is a founding member of the 70’s band “Electric Light Orchestra” and the rock super group “The Traveling Wilburys.”
  • Lynne’s “sound” owes a lot to George Martin and The Beatles.
  • He became a first call producer for rock royalty including the surviving Beatles, Bob Dylan, Tom Petty, and Brian Wilson.
  • Lynne has a VERY recognizable sound and production “fingerprint.”
STYLES/TYPES OF PRODUCERS

Active Producer *(involved in decision making, taking action, leading the session, etc)*

Passive Producer *(laid-back, gives artist space to experiment, gives advice when asked)*

In-House Producer *(works as salaried staff at a label or studio)*

Independent Producer *(works as a hired gun for different artists and labels)*
Mitch Miller helped develop the “pop-record sound” of the 1950’s and 60’s.
He felt a producer was more important than the artist, the band or the material!
He worked as the “A&R Man” for Columbia Records, which meant he discovered, developed and recorded talent. (Artist & Repertoire.)
He was a classical oboist and conductor and used cheesy musical “gimmicks.”
THE STAGES OF PRODUCTION

1. Pre-Production
2. Actual Production
3. Post-Production
1. PRE-PRODUCTION

- Planning the recording.
- Getting to know the artist.
- Writing songs/selecting songs.
  - Hiring a band.
  - Rehearsing.
  - Recording demos.
- Booking the session.

(choosing the studio, engineer, gear, etc)
2. PRODUCTION

- Making the recording.
- Choosing your format (Analog vs Digital)
- Setting up the session
  - Getting sounds (tuning instruments, checking levels, etc)
- Recording basic tracks
  - Overdubbing tracks
    - Repeat!
  - “We’ll fix it in post…”

(Do a cost/benefit analysis of time spent in studio vs time editing.)
3. POST-PRODUCTION

• Finishing the recording
  • Editing
  • Mixing
  • Mastering
• Performance rights organization *(ASCAP vs BMI vs SESAC)*
  • Songwriting credits/publishing credits/“points”
  • Artwork and design
  • Record Labels?
• Pressing/Printing *(CD, vinyl, cassette, online only?)*
  • Distribution
• Spotify vs Apple Music vs Tidal vs YouTube
  *(iTunes Music…)*
  • Music Video??
• Licensing and syncing
PRODUCTION TIMELINE

Sample timeline from “The Music Producer’s Handbook.”

Preproduction: May 21 - June 7
Tracking: June 10 - June 17
Fixes: June 20 - June 21
Guitar Overdubs: June 22 - 29
Guitar Solos: June 30
Keyboard Overdubs: August 1 - August 7
Lead Vocals: August 8 - August 18
Background Vocals: August 20 - September 1
Percussion Overdubs: September 3
“Extra”: September 5-10
Mixing: September 11 - September 26
Listening Session: September 28
Mastering: September 30
Delivery: October 1
Release: ???
Hannah Selin <h.c.selin@gmail.com>
to me, patrick, Daniel, Ayumi, Nicki

Hey Ayumi, Pat, Arthur and Dan,

Miss you guys, and hope you're all doing ok! We're excited about making this new album over the summer. We've uploaded everything to a big Google Drive folder. In there you'll find scratch recordings (w/ click) to record with, lead sheets (updated horn arrangements arriving soon), and a big Google Doc with notes for each song and links to live reference recordings. Recording settings for the album: 48,000 kHz, 24 bit. Make sure your projects are recorded at these settings.

We'll pay you each $1,000,000!

The timeline is flexible, but what we have for now is:
7/8 Arthur finishes drums
7/13 Dan finishes bass
7/20 Pat finishes trumpet
7/27 Ayumi finishes tenor
8/3-8/12 Nicki & Hannah finish final vocals/keys, overdubs
end of August: finish production
September: mixing

Would you all be up for a Zoom call sometime next week? We're super flexible. Would be awesome to see everyone and talk through the recording process.

We're uploading both individual tracks for each instrument & click, and rough mixes for each of the songs, so you can play with the balance to your liking. We'll check in with each of you as we go.

Thank you guys for being down to do this in such a crazy & difficult time! Lookin forward to playing and hanging sometime soon, in some way or another :)

love,
Hannah
In-House Producers were generally employed by a record label.

The first In-House Producers were referred to as A & R Men.

Artist & Repertoire Men were responsible for discovering and recording new talent.

A & R Men were often musicians/arrangers themselves and were involved in every aspect of the recording process.

The most famous In-House producer was George Martin, who worked for EMI and produced The Beatles. (EMI was the parent company that owned Parlophone and Apple.)
Independent producers don’t answer to anyone but the artist.

They operate on a work for hire agreement and negotiate their terms and payment.

This was ultimately a win for labels as they no longer needed a producer on salary.

Some independent producers actually OWNED their own labels.

*(Sam Phillips/Sun Records, Leonard Chess/Chess Records, Rick Rubin/Def Jam.)*
IN-HOUSE PRODUCER

(Working with a label)

- Salaried position, employed directly by the record label.
- Producer makes same amount of $ regardless of how well the record sells.
- George Martin got screwed out of millions of $ by EMI because he wasn’t given ROYALTIES.
- Royalties are a percentage of sales.

INDEPENDENT PRODUCER

(Working with a label)

- Contracted by the artist.
- Given an advance from the recording fund by the label, that will have to be paid back before any royalties are seen.
- Royalty rate for producers is usually 3% or 3 “points.”
- This worked out great for producers...

BEFORE THE INTERNET!
INDEPENDENT PRODUCER

(Working for artist)

• This is most common now.
• Help raise funds or get paid by Artist.
  • Charge a flat fee.
  • Charge a per-song fee.
  • Charge per-hour.
• Get paid on “spec” - meaning you agree on getting paid down the road if the record sells or gets picked up by a label.

AKA “Sweat Equity.”
TYPES OF INDIE PRODUCERS

1. The Complete Producer
2. The Engineer/Producer
3. The Artist/Producer
4. The Promoter/Producer
5. The Executive Producer
6. The Co-Producer
7. The Non-Producer
1. THE COMPLETE PRODUCER

- Is qualified to handle all the important elements that make up recording production; artistic, managerial, and technological.
  - This person is rare.
  - Usually better to spread responsibility out.

2. THE ENGINEER/PRODUCER

- This person is basically an engineer who is engaged to run sessions when there isn’t another producer involved.
  - For a band that is “self-producing,” for an “executive producer” or for a creative director who lacks technical skill.
- Engineer/producers are most adept at “getting sounds” from the console that please others.
• Alan Parsons engineered Pink Floyd’s masterpiece “Dark Side of the Moon.”
• DSotM was “produced” by Pink Floyd, but none of it could have happened without Parsons, who’s contributions were integral to the sound of the record.
• While he wasn’t credited as a producer, he built his career from this record.
3. THE ARTIST/PRODUCER

• This is probably a performing artist or writer who makes it as a producer largely through empathy with the performers and the material.

• This person may lack technological skills and depend upon a mixer for engineering judgements, as well as depending on others for managerial judgements, etc.

4. THE PROMOTER/PRODUCER

• This person may lack musical training and sensitivity - and may be terrified at the options offered by the mixing console.
  • This type makes it as a producer...How? Why? By Raising Money!
    • “The Money is an important part of the mix!”
  • This individual’s money (or borrowed money) forms a catalyst, drawing together diverse artists, writers, mixers, etc.
  • Recordings are made by committee, but the promoter has a voice.
• Todd Rundgren had a successful musical career before he started producing.

• He has produced rock bands like Grand Funk Railroad, Cheap Trick, New York Dolls, Meatloaf, Badfinger and many more.

• His knowledge as a musician informs his decisions as a producer.
5. THE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

• This identifies a money source, i.e. an investor.
• They can oversee the “branding” of the artist and supervise music videos, etc.
  • Producers may have to answer to the executive producer.
  • Executive producers are NOT eligible for Grammys....

6. THE CO-PRODUCER

• The one who shares the musical, technological and managerial responsibilities with another person or persons.
• Some people are identified as co-producers who are performers on sessions who assume a leadership role during recording and/or mixing.
  • Do you and the others understand the division of labor?
  • Do you know what you’re in for? Will you get compensated?
7. THE NON-PRODUCER

- Sometimes someone with money or some other kind of power insists on being identified as the producer, but doesn’t seem to function in any way, at any time, as the real producer, except possibly to show up with money or take the star to lunch.
  - In the music business, prestige can often be bought....
PRODUCER
GRAMMY® Award Eligible Credit Definitions

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This document defines GRAMMY Award eligible credits for the title of PRODUCER.

All producers (and others) eligibly credited on a GRAMMY-winning recording will be acknowledged with GRAMMY certificates. All those eligibly credited as a producer per the rules for each category, will also receive GRAMMY statuettes and be designated a GRAMMY Award recipient.

Per the rules of the genre album categories, (Best Country Album, Best Reggae Album, etc.) eligibly credited producers who have worked on 51% or more of the playing time of winning albums receive GRAMMY statuettes. These producers are not Nominees and are compiled and audited after the Telecast.

Eligibly credited producers in following categories shall be deemed nominees and receive statuettes. Album of the Year (if they have worked on at least 33% of the playing time of the album), Record of the Year; Best Immersive Audio Recording, Best Historical Album, Best Dance Recording, Best Musical Theatre Album, and Best Compilation Soundtrack for Visual Media.

Note: The producer of a recording is responsible for working together with the artist to assign credits. The producer is also responsible for supplying accurate credit information to the content owner for the purpose of compiling printed or metadata album credits. The producer should also review finished liner notes to ensure that the information remains correct through that point.
Eligible Producer Credits

Producer

The producer is the primary person(s) contracted by and accountable to the content owner for the task of delivering the recording as a finished product. The producer directs, and has overall creative and technical oversight during the recording project, including the individual recording sessions that are a part of the project. Duties of the producer(s) can include:

1. Oversees the recording sessions of a project to realize the goals of both the artist and content owner.
2. Makes creative, technical and aesthetic decisions in the creation of the musical content for a project that realize the goals of both the artist and the content owner.
3. Oversees performances and chooses the final takes or versions used in the final product.
5. Works with and oversees the selection of musicians, engineers, singers, arrangers, studios etc.
6. In collaboration with the artist, assigns credits to performers and technical personnel, and is responsible for supplying accurate crediting information to the record label, media company or content owner as official documentation.
7. Oversees other staffing needs, keeps budgets and schedules, adheres to deadlines, supervises mixing, mastering and overall quality control.
Eligible Producer Credits (continued)

Co-Producer
This person generally shares some or all of the above responsibilities with a producer or another co-producer, and is assigned a co-producer credit by the artist and/or content owner. A co-producer makes significant and consequential contributions to the outcome of the production to realize the goals of both the artist and content owner.

Vocal Production/Vocals Produced By; “Featured Artist” Produced By
This person has overall creative and technical control of the vocal recording on a project and the individual recording sessions that are a part of that project. He or she is present in the recording studio or at the location recording and works directly with the vocalist(s) and engineer. The vocal producer makes creative and aesthetic decisions that realize the goals of both the artist and the label in the creation of the vocals.

Compilation Producer
(This credit is eligible in Best Compilation Soundtrack for Visual Media and Best Historical Album categories only)
Music Supervisors of nominated albums will now be considered GRAMMY nominees in the Best Compilation Soundtrack Album category. Music Supervisors will no longer be eligible for consideration as album producers, unless they produced at least 51 percent of the album in question.

Immersive Audio Producer
Same as producer, but for an immersive audio recording.
Non-Eligible Producer Credits

Executive Producer
Often a label representative or a person who secures funding for a project. May be responsible for the overall concept. He or she may monitor the project from time to time to ensure that the producer and artist are on track.

Assistant Producer, Associate Producer, Additional Production
This person is delegated some area of responsibility on a project, but reports to the producer or co-producer(s).

Strings (or any other instrument) produced by
This person works with the individual instruments/elements of the recording and not the overall production.

Produced on Behalf of (the content owner)
Someone who is appointed by the content owner, whose job relates more to that of an executive producer and/or A&R. They may give overall feedback to the project, but are not directly involved in the day-to-day tasks of delivering the recording to the content owner.
IN-HOUSE PRODUCER VS INDEPENDENT PRODUCER

How their roles differ in Pre-Production, Studio-Production, and Post-Production.
IN-HOUSE PRODUCER

1. Create the concept
2. Get assigned a budget
3. Select the contract artist
4. Select repertoire
5. Mechanical Licenses
6. Get Music Director
7. Reserve studio time
8. MD hires arrangers
9. Hire vocal contractor
10. Schedule head engineer
11. Confirm special equipment

INDEPENDENT PRODUCER

1. (Same)
2. Raise $$ (from investors, kickstarter...)
3. Locate artist & contract musicians
4. (Same)
5. (Same)
6. (Same)
7. Book time at an independent studio
8. (Same)
9. (Same)
10. Contract head engineer
11. (Same)
IN-HOUSE PRODUCER

1. Lay down basic tracks
2. Add overdubs & vocals
3. Manage studio time
4. Keep vibe good & productive
5. Arrange breaks & food

INDEPENDENT PRODUCER

1. (Same)
2. (Same)
3. (Same)
4. (Same)
5. (Same)
POST-PRODUCTION

**IN-HOUSE PRODUCER**

1. Supervise or make edits
2. Supervise or lead mixing
3. Supervise mastering
4. Record label’s creative department
   create album artwork and text copy
5. Help conceive marketing plan/promo campaign with label PR
6. Confirm all bills are paid
7. Get paid!

**INDEPENDENT PRODUCER**

1. (Same)
2. (Same)
3. (Same)
4. Hire a graphic designer to create album artwork and text copy
5. Look to sell or lease master recording to a label. Hire PR for press, social media.
6. (Same)
7. Get paid…unless you’re working on spec, then hopefully someday…
THE END!