



THE MUSIC PRODUCTION HANDBOOK

BY SAM MATLA & CONNOR O'BRIEN

TIPS & ADVICE FROM 30+ PROFESSIONALS

The Music Production Handbook

Version 1.0

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Introduction

We reached out to 30+ successful artists and engineers and asked them for production advice. We asked about starting tracks, songwriting, creative block, mixing, mastering, and more.

We compiled their responses into this book, offering an unparalleled resource to learn music production. We've included additional advice after each quote, helping to clarify their responses and offer additional insights.

Wherever you are in your production journey, we're confident you'll learn something new and get value from this book.

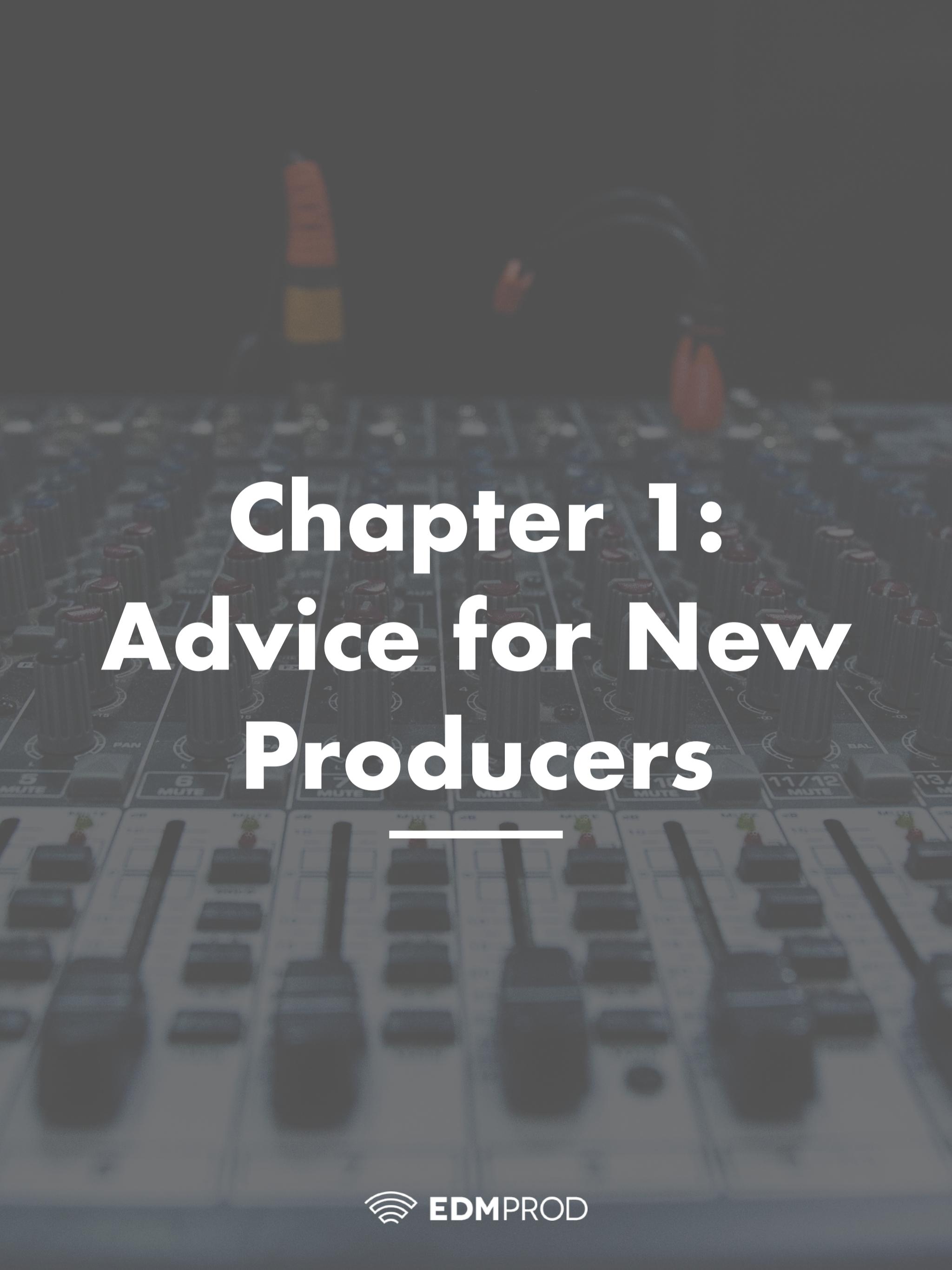
Cheers,

- Sam Matla & Connor O'Brien



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Chapter 1: Advice for New Producers



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Chapter 1: Advice for New Producers

We started off by asking producers a classic question: "What's your #1 piece of advice for new producers?"

1.1 Getting Good Takes Time

"Getting good takes time - so be patient with yourself. The bad news is that you've probably realized you're not as good as you'd like to be. The good news is, anyone with a musical ear can do this. There's no mystery, no secrets, no magic involved. The secret ingredient? A large body of work. And that takes time. So put in your reps, churn out song after song, mix after mix, and you'll get better. It's inevitable." - Graham Cochrane

Getting good at production takes years, not days. There are no shortcuts. The only way to the top is through hard work and dedication. Don't let this discourage you. Rather, let it drive you to put in the hours necessary to master the craft.

1.2 Don't Chase Trends

"Follow your inspiration. Don't sell yourself short by hopping on a trend or a style of music that your heart and mind aren't 100% committed to. True inspiration leads to the best music." - Big Wild

Some artists find success by following trends, but that success is often short-lived. Most artists who have sustainable careers create unique and original music.

Don't chase trends. Focus on following what inspires you. As Big Wild stated, it's the best way to create music that's worth listening to.

1.3 Decide What Makes You Different

"Figure out what makes you different, what makes your perspective different, and what you personally want to communicate." - Willy Joy

Anyone can learn the fundamentals of production. It's up to you to figure out what sets you apart from the rest. What makes you different? Why do people listen to your music over another artist's music in the same or similar style? What are you known for?

1.4 Who Are You Making Music For

"Who are you making music for? Are you making music for yourself or are you making music for other people? I can't be happy making music for other people. I learned that the hard way.

I got into a habit of making stuff and going "I wonder if people will like this". And then I came to the realization that I'm not enjoying myself, I need to go back to the drawing board and start over.

I found out that making what makes me happy makes other people happy...so there's no point in hating what I'm making." - Zac Waters

Do you only want to make music for yourself, or would you rather meet listeners halfway? Ideally, you make music for yourself that others also enjoy. But this is easier said than done.

What matters more to you: a sacred creative output or a sustainable career? The answer often lies somewhere in the middle.



1.5 There Are No Shortcuts

"Work hard & work smart, there's no easy way to do this if you wanna be unique & good. Work hard, put the hours in. Work smart, watch YouTube tutorials & read manuals (you'll halve your learning time)" - Mr. Bill

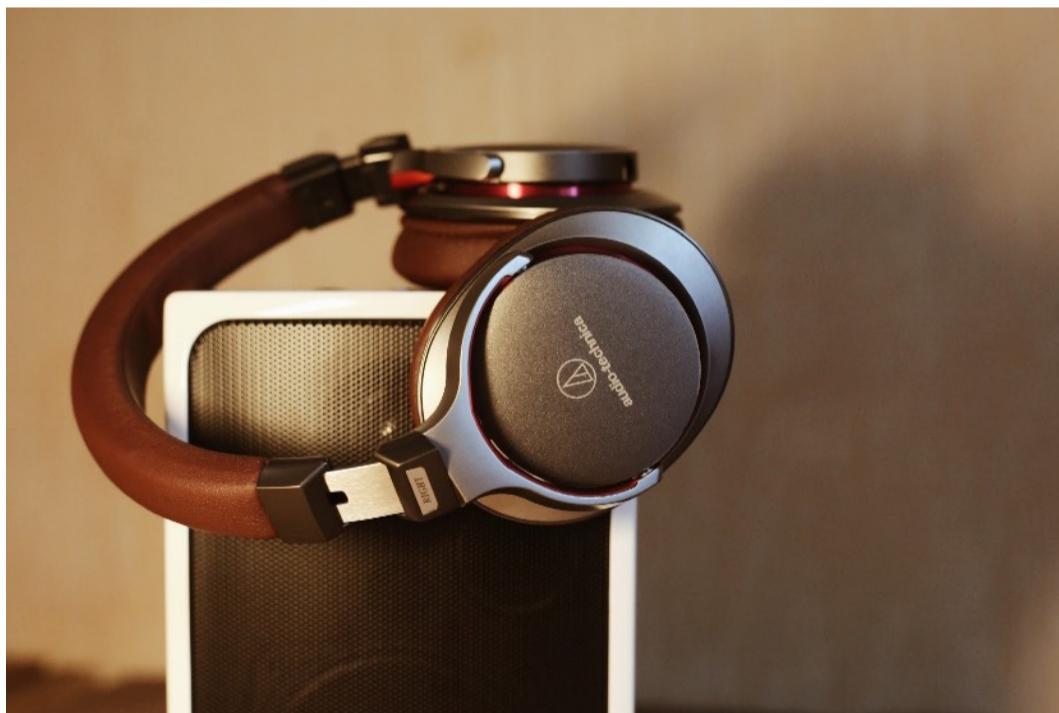
This was touched upon in the first quote, but it's important, so we've added it again.

All of your favorite artists spent years perfecting their craft. There is no substitution for hard work. Put in the hours and you'll be rewarded.

1.6 Keep Your Ego in Check

"I've seen [ego] do really awful things to a lot of people. So I try to stay pretty far away from it, you know? I mean, we all have an ego. We're all looking for some kind of validation. But keeping it in check is something I really try to focus on." - Matt Lange

Matt Lange has worked with some of the biggest egos in the industry, so you can trust him on this. Everyone wants to believe their music is better than the rest and that they deserve special treatment. Keeping your ego in check will help make you and the people around you happier. It will also help you develop faster as a producer.



1.7 Listen to All Types of Music

"You have to be worldly when it comes to music. I barely listen electronic music, I listen to everything else. From John Denver to Enigma, I love music. If you can get a chance to study music, I'm sure it will help a lot." - Vintage & Morelli

A classic mistake producers make is to only listen to one genre or style. Even if you're set on producing one style, it's essential to listen to other types of music. Doing so will allow you to take in multiple influences and apply them to your own productions.

1.8 Be Different, Not Better

"Question everything. Ask why. Compression/EQ/etc.. aren't magic. Focus on what makes your track interesting/exciting/emotional/dancey/etc.. and don't put technical details ahead of this. Don't expect to make better music in a certain style than someone who's been doing it for 12/15 years.. make something unique." - Multiplier

Understanding *why* certain plugins work will make you a more educated and aware producer. The better you understand your tools, the better songs you can build.

Also, focus on being different, not better. Nobody wants a recycled version of what's popular. Focus on crafting a sound that is unique and inventive.

1.9 Make Quality Music Your Main Focus

"Definitely focus on making sure your music sounds good. If you are really trying to make it in the music industry, it will be a whole lot easier if the quality of your music is up to par. By all means, make whatever genre you want, but make sure the quality sounds professional." - Ryos

Beyond all the marketing, promo videos, and bucket helmets, nothing helps you cut through the noise better than quality music. Focus on making quality music first. You can worry about the other stuff later.

1.10 Finding Your Voice

"At first, as a producer, you're always going to want to sound like somebody else. You spend a lot of time trying to sound like somebody else. When you've done that for a long period of time, I think you're finding your own sound along the way." - Fabian Mazur

Finding your voice is one of the most difficult parts of production. Many producers spend years or even decades trying to find their own style or voice. The key is to understand your influences, then combine them to make something unique.

1.11 Finding Your Sound

"Finding your sound is a bit of both playing around with it and hoping it comes across naturally, as well as keeping an eye out for it." - Said the Sky

As mentioned above, the process of finding your sound is a natural, gradual process. You can try to force it, but most of the time it's will to develop organically over time.

1.12 Creating Value

"It's important for young artists to understand that they have to create value. Just because they make a track that's on par with Pendulum or Hardwell doesn't mean anyone is going to care." - KJ Sawka

A lot of producers can make great music but struggle to create a sustainable and successful career. The best way to break into the industry is to add value first. Record labels, managers, and artists are more likely to work with you if you've helped them in some way.

1.13 Don't Wait for Opportunities: Go Find Them

"Both Josh and Perry (Flosstradamus) became really good friends of mine and influences of mine as far as what I learned from them. I was inspired by their hustle and their creativity because instead of waiting for anyone to come in and reach out to them or help them, they built this movement completely on their own, doing what on paper would seem like all the wrong things. And people just gravitated towards it." - Willy Joy

Nobody is going to show up at your front door with a 7-figure record deal. If you want success in this industry, you have to make it yourself. Don't expect opportunities to come to you. Drop your entitlement, drop your bitterness, and do whatever it takes to make your career successful.



1.14 Stay True to the Music

"Rule number one is to be as absolutely persistent as possible. The industry is always going to have its ups and downs. There really isn't a way of knowing what tracks are going to really make it. Just stay true to the music you love making and have fun doing it always. Otherwise, what's the point of this career anyway?" - Bruce Karlsson of FATUM

Creating a successful and lasting career in the music industry is extremely difficult. Since the odds are stacked against you, you might as well enjoy the journey. Like Bruce Karlsson mentioned, success is pointless if you don't enjoy it. If you stay true to the music, anything else that comes from it is a bonus.

1.15 You're Constantly Learning

"Strive for perfection, but know that you'll never be perfect". Even the masters in any field, they're always going to be a student. You're always constantly learning."—Auvic

Plenty of producers (ourselves included) struggle with the pursuit of perfection. As Auvic mentioned, your music will never be perfect. As the saying goes, "Art is never finished, only abandoned." In the early stages of your production journey, focus on completion, not perfection.

1.16 Collaborate

"Get out there and collaborate with other people. It's really cool to bounce back and forth and get ideas from each other." - Dave Winnel

One of the best ways to grow your skills and grow your network is to collaborate. It's the most effective way to learn music production, and in our opinion the most fun. Look to connect with people in your area, regardless of their clout or experience.

1.17 Actually Make Music!

"Do less shouting on social media about what you are going to do, and do more of the actual task at hand... which is, MAKING MUSIC!" - Graham Cochrane

Don't be that friend who always posts on social media about making music but never actually releases anything. It can be tough, especially when it may take years to create something worth sharing, but spending hours on social media touting without actually creating is wasted time. Put your head down and put in the work.



Chapter 2: Starting Tracks

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Time is a limited resource. When you find the time to produce, you want to spend that time *actually* producing, right?

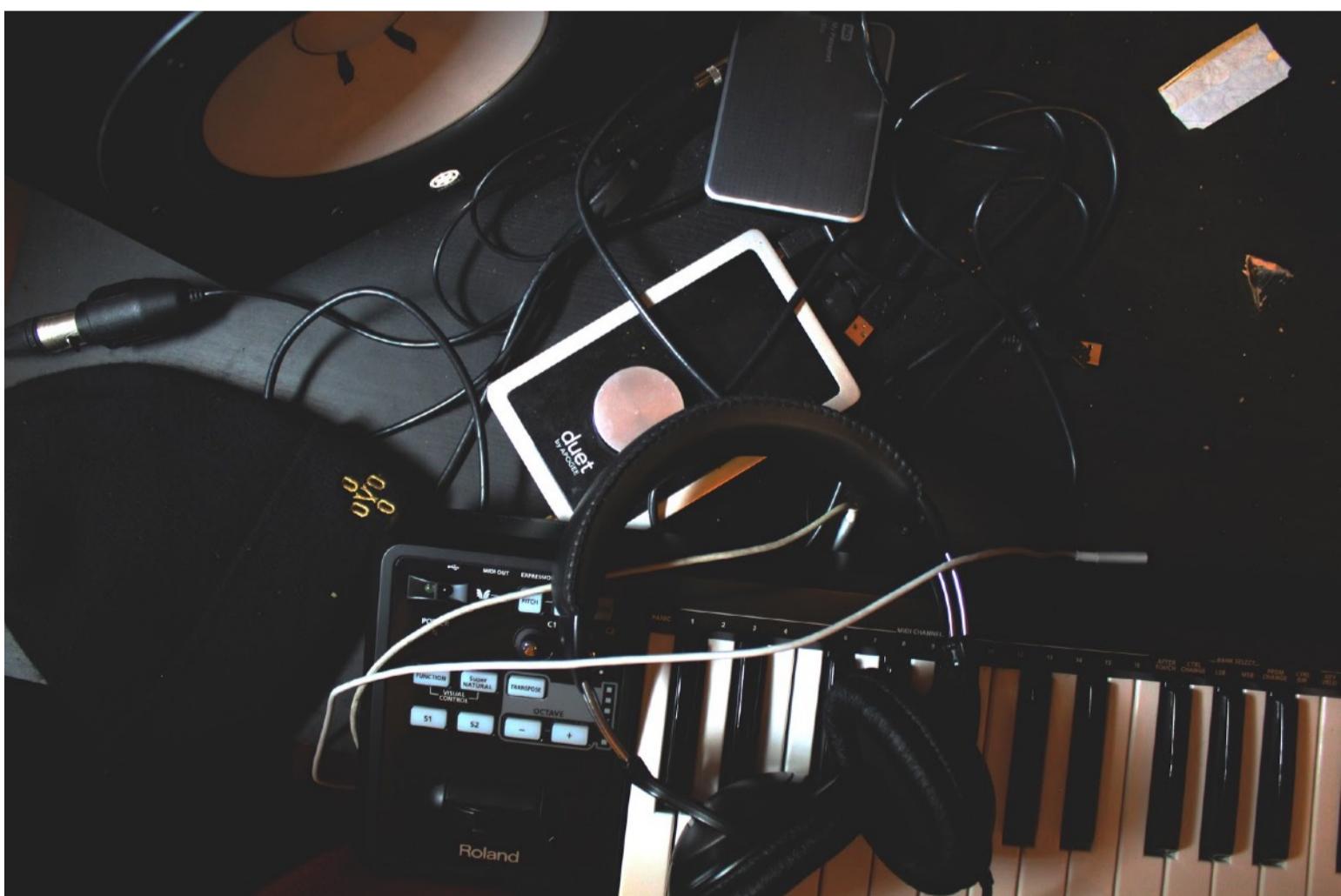
Of course.

This means it's important to optimize your time in the studio, starting your track off right. We've asked producers to break down their writing process, revealing how they approach starting tracks.

2.1 Remove All Distractions

"Get everything in your personal life out of the way first. If you have a workout scheduled, or a friend coming over or anything distracting happening, do that first. Your music deserves your uninterrupted attention and anything less than that is sub-optimal." - Ark Patrol

One of the keys to a productive studio session is removing all possible distractions. Turn off your phone, disconnect your wifi, and shut the door. You don't want anything to break your focus. As Ark Patrol states, make sure to take care of any busy work first, so there's nothing to stop you from working on music.



2.2 Start with a General Direction in Mind

"Go into the studio with an idea, feeling, emotion or some kind of mindset that can be put into your music. Going to produce without a general idea of what direction you want to go in is like trying to throw lots of food in a pan and see what you get. It can work sometimes but I generally think it's better to have a general direction to focus your energy in." - Thomas Hayes

The best studio sessions are those where you have a general direction in mind. This could be a genre of music, a drum pattern, a melody, or a specific mood.

2.3 Don't Rely on Inspiration

"When creating new music, everyone talks about how important it is to get inspired. But I think that's a cop-out. It's easy to get inspired. It's easy to get excited. Anyone can listen to a new song on the radio, or watch an artist interview, or some inspirational piece showing how artists x and z went from broke to touring the world in a few years....anyone can find reasons to get excited to produce music.

But life isn't that easy. You can't always dial up inspiration. Sometimes you just have to get to work.

Sometimes making music is the last thing I want to do. And in those moments, after just sitting down and starting, ideas usually begin to flow. And then all of a sudden, I find that inspiration follows me. It's like I created it out of thin air, but all I had to do was sit down and start.

I'm a firm believer that the hardest part about starting is convincing myself that it's ok to start. Once I do, my mood follows the action. I find that the mood that I want to be in creatively will present itself to me if I just get going.

And of course, I'm not the one who discovered this stuff. This dates back to Bushido, the way the Samurais lived their lives in feudal Japan - they knew way back then that the mind was a silly thing to rely on. And once you test out this perspective, it's awesome to apply it way beyond music. Too tired to go for a run? Just start, you'll get into it. Don't think you'll have fun at some social event? Just start getting ready. Don't want to make music? Just open your DAW and cycle through a few samples...

Obviously, there are exceptions to this and times when taking breaks are very, very necessary. But more often than not, I just need to sit down and decide to start." - Hyperbits

Have you ever dreaded going to workout or run, but once you actually started it wasn't so bad? The same applies to music production. The most productive creatives are the ones that sit down and do their job every single day, without hesitation. Relying on inspiration will severely stunt your output and development.

2.4 Don't Rush: Great Ideas Happen Naturally

"Starting your own track can be done in 101 different ways, right? But the best way I have figured out over the past 18 years is starting with a 4 bar chord progression. When I come up with a chord progression usually 90% of the time I can develop an entire 3-5 minute song based around 4 bars of chords. If you have a vocal or an acapella, lay it out in your DAW and write a super catchy progression underneath it. Once that is locked in start to develop the entire arrangement of your song. Intro, Verse, Pre, Chorus, etc can all be developed based off of this 4 bar chord progression, in my opinion! One last thought, don't overthink it, always let your song come to you naturally. Do not rush or overwhelm yourself with an idea not coming together quick enough, most great ideas happen naturally!" - Shanahan

Two things.

First, there are plenty of ways to start a track. Shanahan likes to start with a chord progression, but for you it might be starting with a drum groove. Most producers alternate between different starting points. Try out different approaches, and learn what works best for you.

Second, don't expect your track to be a hit in 30 minutes. It may take some time for the idea to fully develop. Keep an open mind and avoid frustration. Also, don't make the mistake of comparing your initial idea to your favorite tracks. Those were made by producers with a lot more experience than you and are tracks they spent hours and hours on.

2.5 There are Many Ways to Start a Track

"Lately I've had the most success or the fastest success starting with a vocal... but if I'm not starting with a vocal a lot of times I'll start with either drums or a really cool piano groove. The reason it's so different, I think, is because I'm always starting tracks at different points in my life or in different mindsets. If I'm sitting down and I'm not feeling super creative musically it's fun to just start with some drums because that's easy, that's really more just technical work. When you get a drum groove that you really like and it feels good and you can listen to it over and over you'll probably be pretty set." - Said the Sky

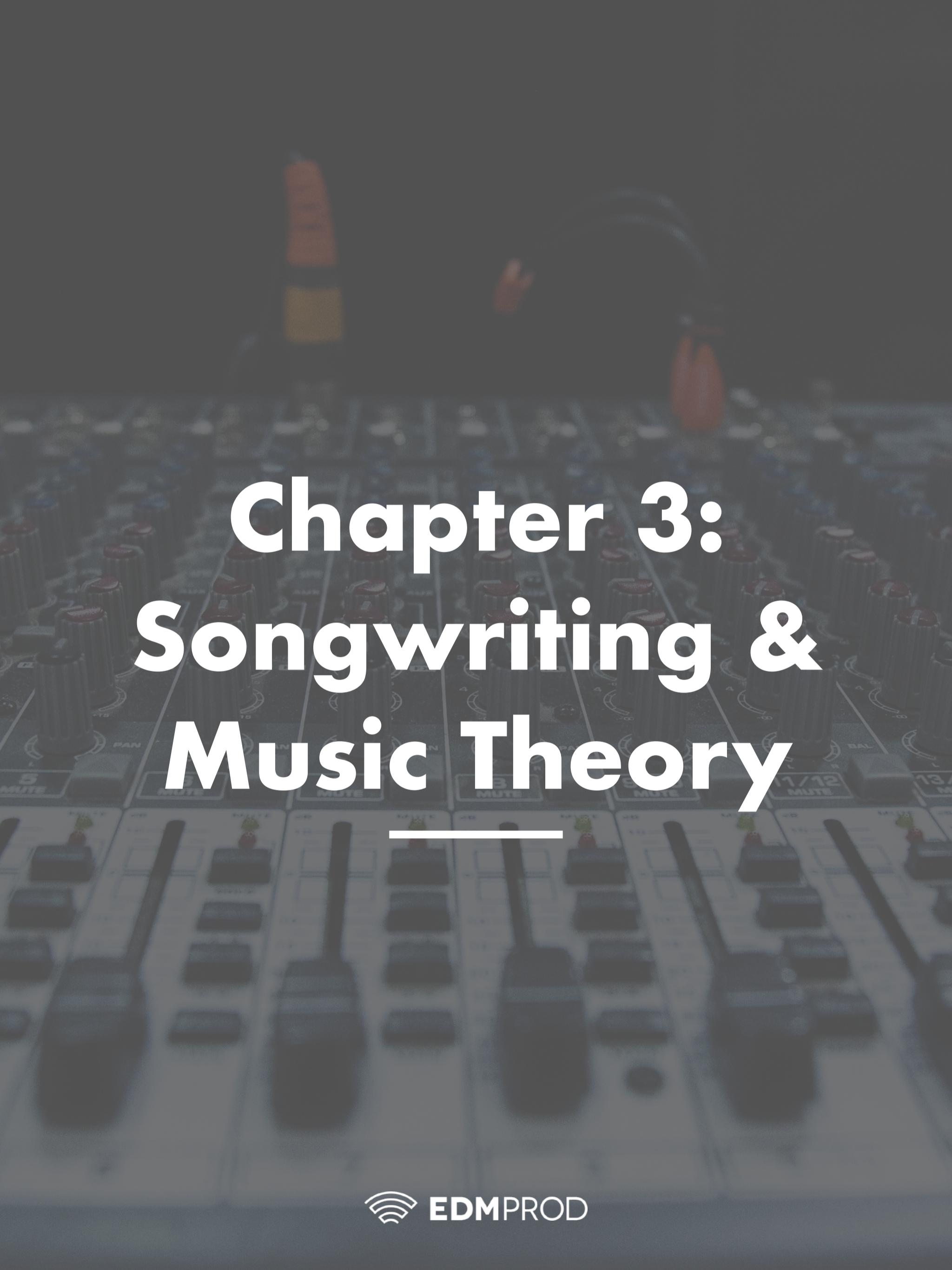
This tip is similar to the one before, but we wanted to reiterate how there's no "right" way to start a track. Most professionals switch up their songwriting approach, altering their workflow as needed. Again, in order to find what works best for you, experiment.

2.6 Don't Focus on the Details Too Early

"When starting tracks, it's all about the idea of the track and not the details. What you need to focus on is the concept of the tune, for me personally that's the melody. If you focus on details too soon, you most likely will get stuck very early in the process and that can completely kill your motivation." - Bjorn Akesson

Focus on building the core melodic and sonic foundation of your track at the start. You can fill in the details later on. If you get technical too early, you may waste time on an idea that isn't going anywhere. Rather, try to flesh out a basic idea first to see if it's worth turning it into a full track.





Chapter 3: Songwriting & Music Theory



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Chapter 3: Music Theory and Songwriting

3. Songwriting & Music Theory

How do you arrange a full song? How much music theory should you learn? There are no definitive answers to these questions, but this section will help point you in the right direction.

3.1 Bass Kleph's 4-Step Production Process

"Step 1: Rough Sketch. Step 2: Arrangement. Step 3: Transitions. Step 4: Final Mixdown." - Bass Kleph

Bass Kleph has a straightforward, four step framework that he uses with all his students. You can read a breakdown of it on the following page.

3.2 Songs are Winning

"Now more than ever, songs are winning. Right now, the market is not Soundcloud bangers. It's a streamer's world. People stream while they're chilling, people stream at the office. You don't have to stop making bangers, but be aware that all the talent buyers/bookers are looking at how many Spotify followers you have, how many monthly listeners you have, and how your latest release did". - Bonnie X Clyde

The music industry is moving towards streaming, in particular to Spotify. It's important to know that Spotify favors tracks you can listen to over and over again. In other words, Spotify favors *songs* over *bangers*. There is still a market for big club/festival tracks, but know the industry is moving towards more streaming-friendly songs.

3.3 Use Sound Design as Creative Expression

"There's so much more that you can express musically that is different than the melodic composition of it. I can have a chord progression and melody (that are arranged well), but the synthesis and instrumentation are the other side of it.

I like to think of sound design, production and mixing as the texture, and the harmonic and melodic content as the color." - Au5

We'd bet many of you got into production because of the nearly infinite capabilities of producing music on a computer. Let your individuality drive all aspects of your production, whether it be through your songwriting, sound design, or mixing.

Bass Kleph's 4 Step Music Production Process

Rough Sketch

Focus on getting a rough idea down for each section.
Try to avoid any mixing.



Transitions

Focus on connecting each section with transitions, fills, and automation



Arrangement

Arrange the entire song.
Understand the arrangement of the genre.



Final Mixdown

With everything in place, execute a final mixdown.

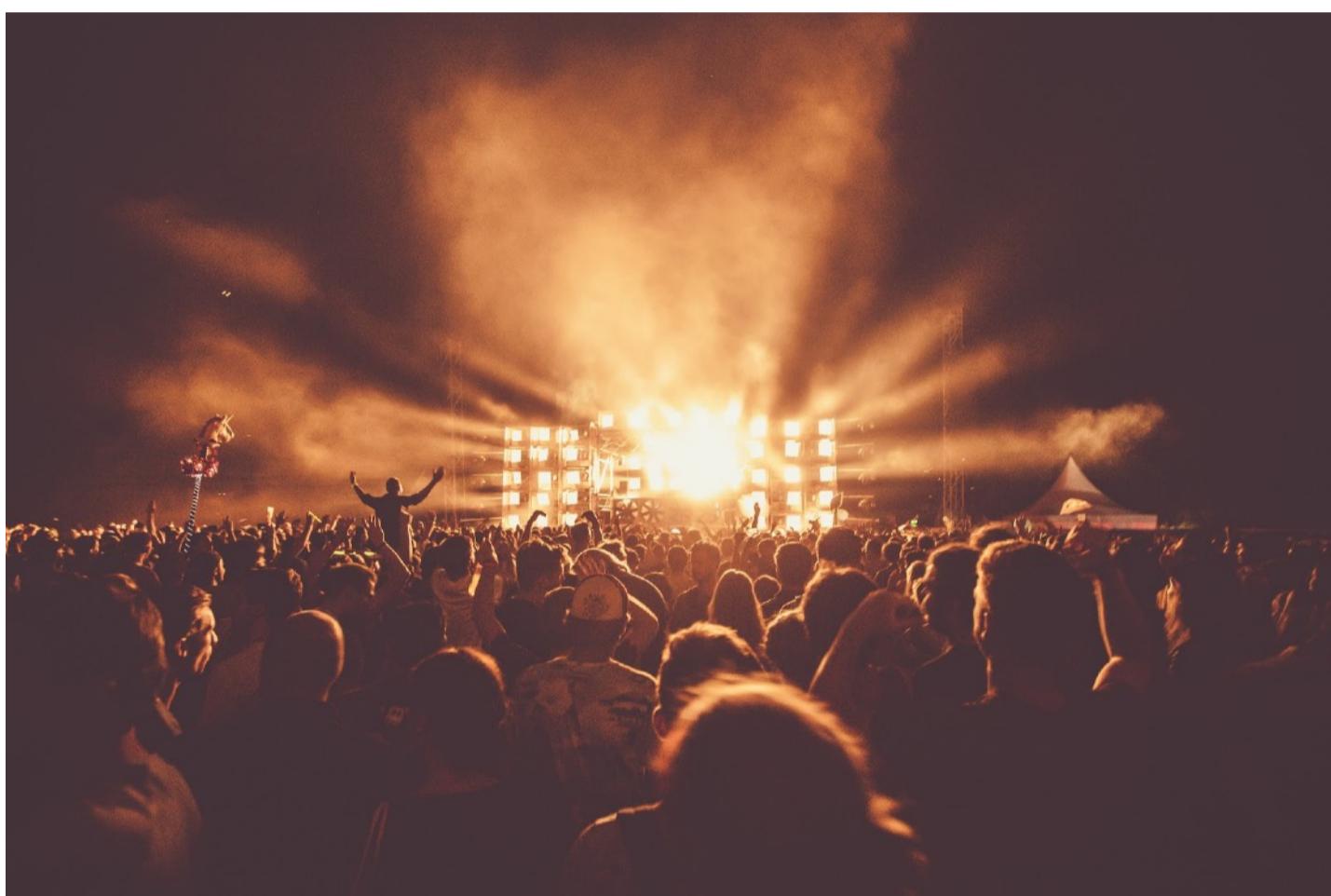


Full Interview: edmprod.com/68

3.4 Put Yourself in the Position of the Listener

"When we (Rob Swire & KJ) were making The Island, we were imagining playing these tunes in front of 20,000 people thinking "is this going to hit?". It's a great visual perspective to have... where are you, and what kind of crowd do you have. Are you playing for a tiny little drum and bass room, or a massive club with bottle service. Are you playing for a dirty rave crowd, or a rock big rock festival? It's nice to have that image in your mind when you're making that tune." - KJ Sawka

A great way to kickstart your songwriting is to visualize your ideal listener. Are they listening at a club, at a festival, in their car, or with earbuds? Keeping this in mind can help shape the direction of the track.



3.5 Keep Your Song Interesting the Whole Way Through

"If your song is going to be long, make some different stuff happen during the song. Don't just have it be the same loop all the way through. Put yourself in the position of the listener. Are you going to be holding the listener's attention span for the entire song?" - Slynk

You need to give the listener a reason to listen to your song from start to finish. Focus on keeping your track interesting the whole way through.

3.6 Learning Music Theory is Optional, But It *Really* Helps

"You've got to be able to speak the language of music if you want to be able to tell a story. You can get by without knowing too much music theory, but you're going to sound like a tourist with a phrase book". - Slynk

How important is it to learn music theory? We think Slynk's quote sums up the answer to this beautifully. Can you get by without it? Sure.

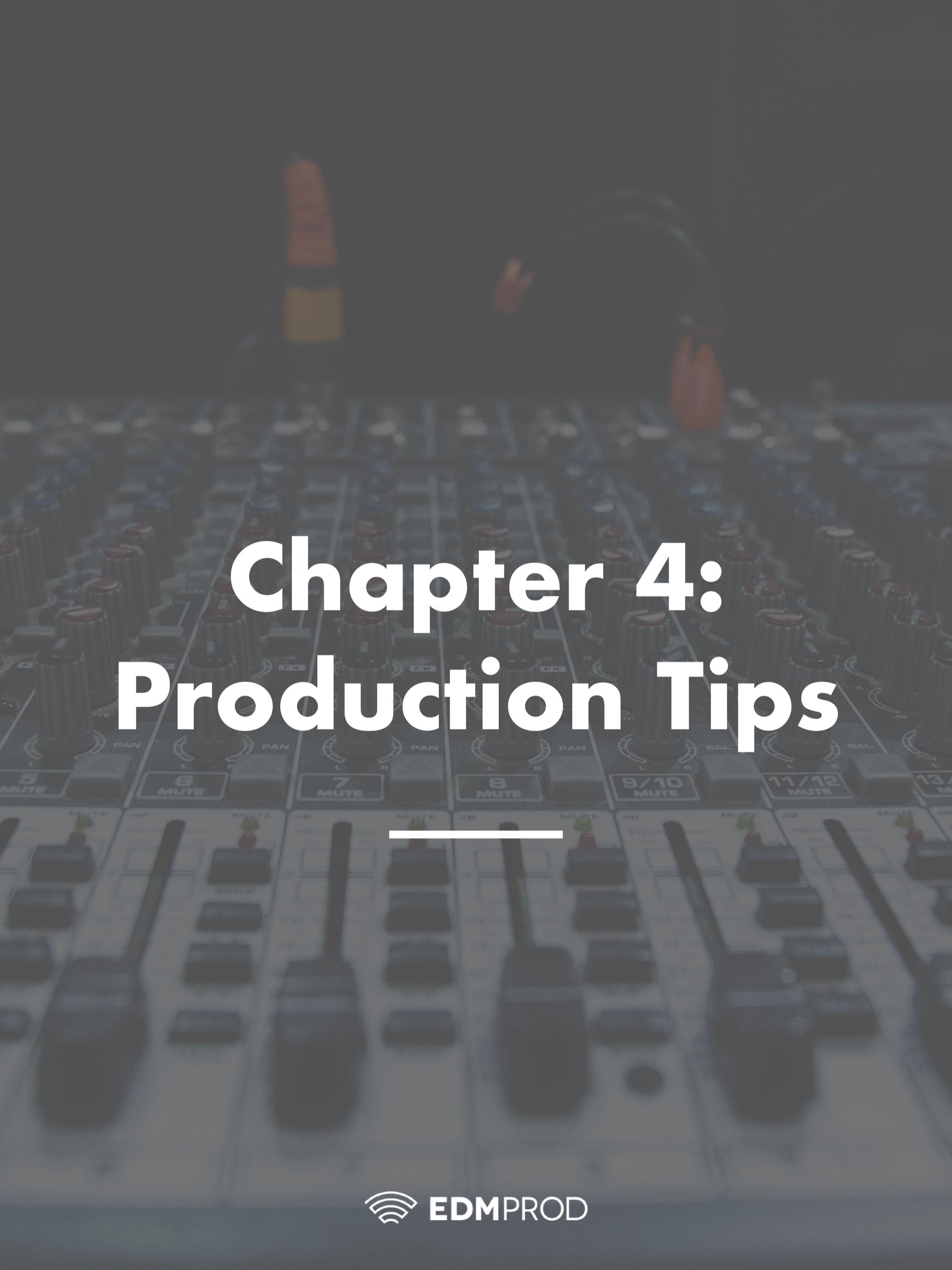
But if you want to make the best music you possibly can, wouldn't you want the best set of tools available? Don't settle for *good enough*, invest time into properly developing your skills as a musician.

3.7 Learn Your Music Vocab

"Melody and harmony to me is a musical language. The more vocabulary you learn, the more you can express with it." - Jaytech

So now that we've gone over how important music theory is, how much should you learn? A lot of this depends on the style you're making. In general, you want to be comfortable building the core melodic elements of your music, including chord progressions, melodies, and basslines. Some genres are more dependent on music theory, and warrant further knowledge. To reiterate Jaytech's point, learning music theory will help you to write better music, faster.





Chapter 4: Production Tips

Chapter 4: Production Tips

4. Production Techniques

Whether you're a complete beginner or a seasoned pro, there is always something new to learn about music production. Below are techniques the pro's have been using to push their boundaries in the studio.

4.1 Plan & Prep For Your Sessions

"The thing that helped me the most was doing a lot of planning before I jumped in the studio and started making music. I had a particular vision set out for different tracks....having those things ready to go helps a great deal.

...A bit of pre-planning, just like when you're cooking when you cut up something in the kitchen. Before you cook your meal, you get your ingredients and you do a bit of pre-prep. The same thing applies to music and working on an album." - Audiofreq

If you feel lost or aimless while producing, try pre-prepping for the session. Consider what style you want to write, what techniques you're going to use, what samples you're going to use, what mood the track will convey, and more.



4.2 Embrace Limitation

"Let the natural chaos that arises within your limitations inspire you as well. It has been really frustrating to try to get something to sound exactly like how I hear it in my head and I just can't do it and it's a waste of energy and it's not really the most sensible way to go about something. Just limitations in general (are) conducive to novelty and creating new ideas as long as you are receptive to the natural chaos, to what nature is feeding back to you... like this doesn't sound like what I wanted it to sound like but it sounds cool, let's take a completely new approach to where I was going and see where it leads." - Au5

Don't try to force a track in particular direction. It rarely ends well. Rather, be willing to go wherever the track might take you.

Embrace limitation, whether it be in your production abilities, your software, or your music theory skills. Don't complain about the skills you lack, work with the skills you have.

4.3 Identify and Embrace Your Strengths

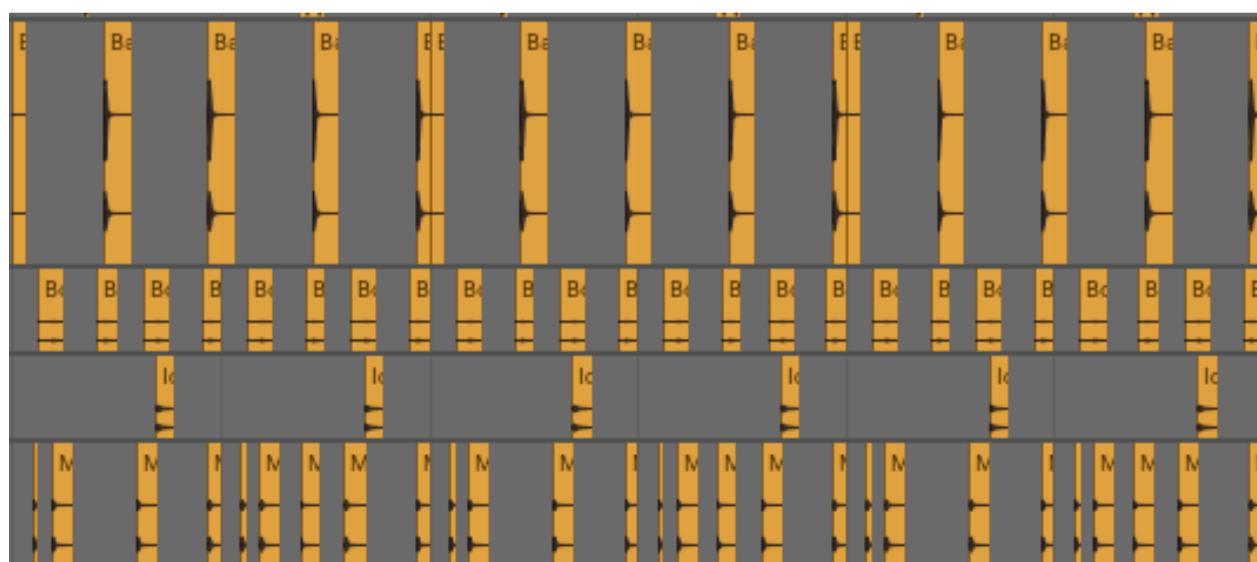
"I've found that my strength lies in sampling and making the most out of sounds that already exist, using them in your own songs and putting your unique tone or twist on it. Not so that it's recognizable, but so it flows in your track as well." - Zac Waters

Every producer approaches production in their own way. It's up to you to experiment with different workflows to find what works for you. For example, Zac's strength lies in sampling, but your strength might lie in your sound design or keyboard skills.

4.4 Looping and Layering

"Recently I've fallen back on to the core of production, which I believe is layering. Looping and layering is both fun and productive - a winning combo". - Ark Patrol

Layering in music production is when you stack multiple sounds on top of each other, such as a clap and a snare. As Ark Patrol states, this is more or less the basis for production: stacking sounds and samples on top of each other to create interesting and exciting loops, then expanding upon them to create a full track.



4.5 Use Proper Layering

"Not only recently but from the early days of me starting production I've always been into layering. Proper use of layering can result in new sounds without getting too deep into sound design. My personal favorite is layering a pluck lead with a saw lead. This way you get the hard, thick body from the pluck and the high frequency goodness from the saw lead." - Bjorn Akesson

What is proper layering? Layering with a purpose. When layering, it's important for each element in the loop to serve a purpose. In Bjorn Akesson's example, the pluck lead and saw lead each serve a unique purpose. By itself, a saw lead doesn't have a strong attack, so layering a pluck lead with it can help give the lead instrument attack and punch.

4.6 Get Creative With Layering

"A production trick I've been loving recently is to use a lot more organic sounds in combination with super electronic sort of sounds. I really like the combination of real sounding instruments with synthesizers, it adds great contrast in a song as well as a feeling of familiarity. It can also force you to be a bit creative! Instead of having a supersaw sound playing chords, try using a guitar sound or even strings. Get weird with it!" - Ryos

The title says it all: get creative with layering. There is no limit to what you can do, and no rules for what will and won't work. Dive through sample packs, rip audio off YouTube, or record sounds on your phone. Part of the beauty of production is experimentation, so take it upon yourself to experiment with layering all sorts of sounds.



4.7 Combine Acoustic and Electronic Elements

"I love combining acoustic and electronic elements. Lately I've experimented mixing my acoustic guitar with synth sounds like a Reese bass or 808 drums. The guitar adds a human touch." - Big Wild

If you've listened to Big Wild's music, you know he's great at combining acoustic and electronic elements. Why is this technique so cool? Electronic elements are typically strong and powerful, but lack the warmth and dynamics of acoustic elements. Thus, combining acoustic and electronic elements is the best way to get the best of both worlds - the power and body of electronic elements with the human character and tone of acoustic elements.

4.8 Don't Rely Solely on Presets

"Having presets is good to understand some techniques, but really try to make it yours." - Pyramid

A common debate with producers is whether or not you should use synth presets. We agree with Pyramid in saying presets are helpful, but make them your own.

Presets are a great starting point, especially when you're newer to production. However, it's important that you tweak them to make them yours. This isn't just so they're unrecognizable. It's to add your own personal touch to the song and make the preset fit well with everything else.

4.9 How to Learn Sound Design

"I design everything from scratch, I don't think I've ever used a preset. My knowledge of sound design comes from trying to emulate my favorite sounds. Let's say I heard an Owl City song with a lead I like. Then I'd spend, say, 2 hours, just recreating the lead." - WRLD

Learning sound design isn't as complicated as people make it out to be. It just takes hours of dedicated practice. The best way to learn sound design is to reverse engineer existing presets and to recreate your favorite sounds. This will help sharpen your sound design skills, making it easier to create the sounds you want.

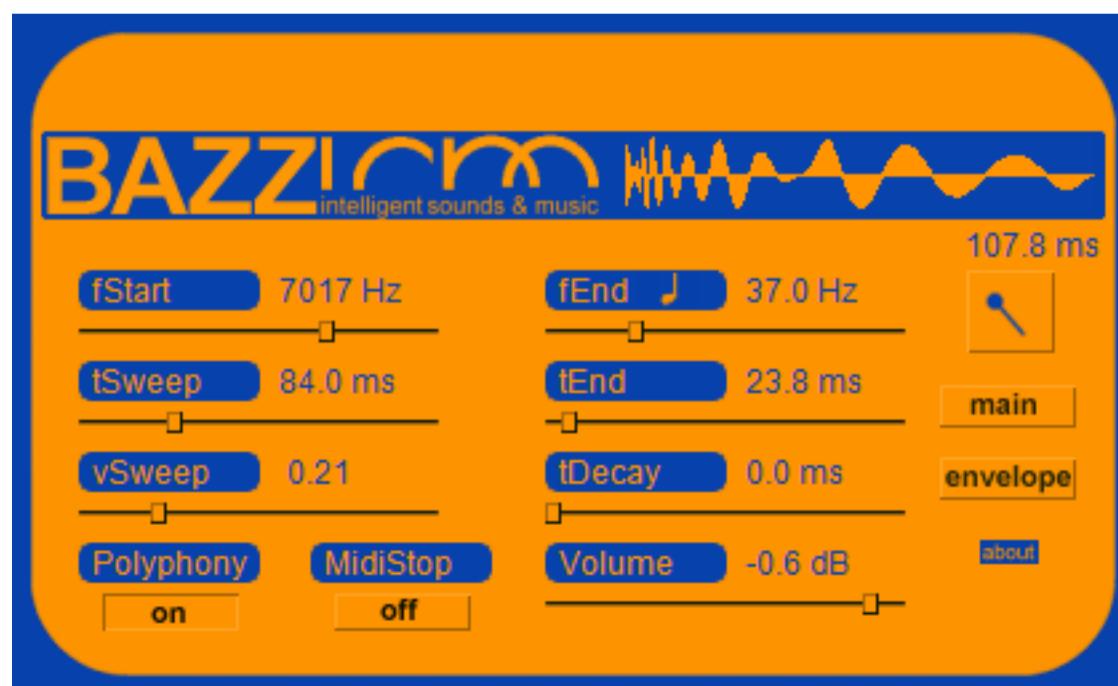
4.9 Mixing Kick and Bass

"I think the really important thing is to tune my kick to the baseline, or tune the bassline to the kick. There are always one or two notes of your bassline that are going to sound awesome with one particular kick. I also love the kick synths like Sonic Academy Kick 1 & 2, they did a great job on that. And also, Bazzism is another that's just absolutely awesome." - Sean Tyas

Tuning your kick to the rest of your track is an essential part of a professional production. For example, if your track is in F Minor, your kick will likely sound best tuned to an F. If you're using samples, you can transpose the pitch of the kick, either using a tuner or adjusting by ear.



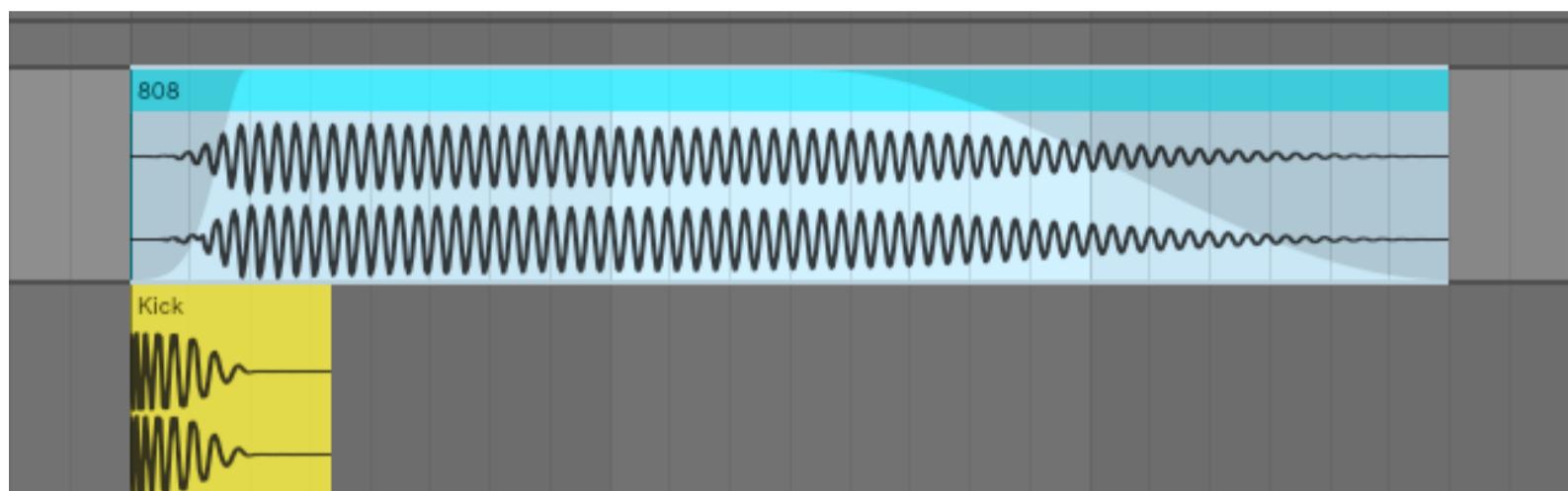
Alternatively, as Sean Tyas mentioned, you can use kick synthesizers to design the kick from scratch.



4.10 Mixing Kick and 808

"If you have a kick and an 808, the easiest way to make it super clean is to just volume fade the front of the 808. Nothing makes it as clean as volume fades." - Bonnie X Clyde

Mixing kick and bass is an important part of any dance track. In genres that use 808's (i.e. trap, hip hop, dubstep, future bass, etc..), the easiest way to blend the two is through simple volume fades. Fade the front of the 808 so the kick can come in cleanly, with the 808 coming in afterward.



4.11 Widen Sounds with the Haas Effect

"Simple and efficient, the Haas effect." - Pyramid

The Haas Effect is a psychoacoustic effect used to control the stereo width of a sound.

To set it up, you need to delay either the left or right channel by between 3 and 30 ms. You can set this up using any delay plugin. Turn the dry/wet to 100%, turn the feedback to 0%, then set one channel to be as fast as possible (~0-1ms). Lastly, set the other channel delay to between 3 ms and 30 ms. The longer the delay, the "wider" the sound will be.



4.12 Creating Analog/Vinyl/Tape Effects

"There's this plugin called RC-20 Retro Color by XLN Audio, who also do Addictive Keys and Addictive Drums. It is the most amazing plugin, I just got it recently. It emulates VHS tapes and vinyl effects. It has really cool parameters like flux, flutter, wow, bitcrushing, and distortion. It really adds to my loud, ambient vibe." - ILIVEHERE.

If you're looking for a VHS/vinyl effect plugin, RC-20 is a great start. It contains all the effects most commonly associated with lo-fi mixing: noise, wow & flutter, distortion, sample reduction, and more.



While most of these effects can be achieved with stock plugins, RC-20 is a handy all-in-one interface. Alternatively, iZotope offers a free plugin called Vinyl which simulates the effect of vinyl on a turntable.



4.13 Focus on Creating Movement

"Does creating movement in a mix count as a technique? I love creating movement in ALL forms.

For me, I can simplify the entire music production process as an attempt to make overly-digital and overly-clean computer stuff sound human and real. This means making things imperfect. This means playing with auto-panners and tremolos and auto-filters (basically the entire Soundtoys bundle) until my mix has this kind of x-factor to it. It starts to jump and pop and move and dance and feel the opposite of rigid. That, to me, is the most fun part of music production...making it sound real." - Hyperbits

Many beginner tracks will sound dull and flat when compared to professionals. One of the main reasons for this is a lack of movement and development. The best way to fix this, as Hyperbits states, is through movement. These “imperfections” will add life and character to your mix, helping grab and hold the listeners attention.

4.14 Boost Your Creativity With New Plugins

"I've been taking Little AlterBoy by Soundtoys and using it to create new sounds out of samples I find. It's super interesting and you can really make some cool stuff with that plugin." - Fatum

Little Alterboy by Soundtoys is a quirky effects plugin capable of pitch shifting, formant shifting, hard-tuning, and vocoding vocals. Although it's designed for vocals, you can use it on just about anything: leads, basses, plucks, etc. This is a great example of how experimentation is the key to creative breakthroughs



4.15 Get Mathematical With Your Plugins

"I've been getting real scientific with compressors lately. Most time-based effects have been tickling my pickle lately though really." - Mr. Bill

When tweaking effect parameters, it can be difficult to find the perfect setting values. For example, many producers struggle to dial in the right side-chain compressor parameters.

You can approach this problem mathematically using the BPM of your track. You can set parameters to different note lengths to let them naturally sit in the groove of your track. For example, you could set the delay of your reverb to exactly 1 bar long, or you could set the release of a side-chain compressor to be exactly 1/16th note.

How do you set this up? First, you'll need to know the tempo of your track. Then, you'll need to figure out how long each interval (i.e. 1/4th, 1/8th, etc..) is in seconds. Delay Calculator is a great free resource to calculate this. Plug in the tempo of your track, and the site does the rest for you. For example, we plugged in 130 bpm and got out these note times:

Delay Calculator

Notes

1/1: 1846.15 ms
1/2: 923.08 ms
1/4: 461.54 ms
1/8: 230.77 ms
1/16: 115.38 ms
1/32: 57.69 ms
1/64: 28.84 ms
1/128: 14.42 ms

Delay Calculator

Triplets

1/1: 1230.75 ms
1/2: 615.38 ms
1/4: 307.69 ms
1/8: 153.84 ms
1/16: 76.92 ms
1/32: 38.46 ms
1/64: 19.23 ms
1/128: 9.62 ms

(via nickfever.com/music/delay-calculator)

Now, we can experiment with setting plugin parameters to these specific intervals. Things like pre-delay/decay on reverb and decay time on delay plugins are great starting points.



4.16 Frequency Dependent Sidechain

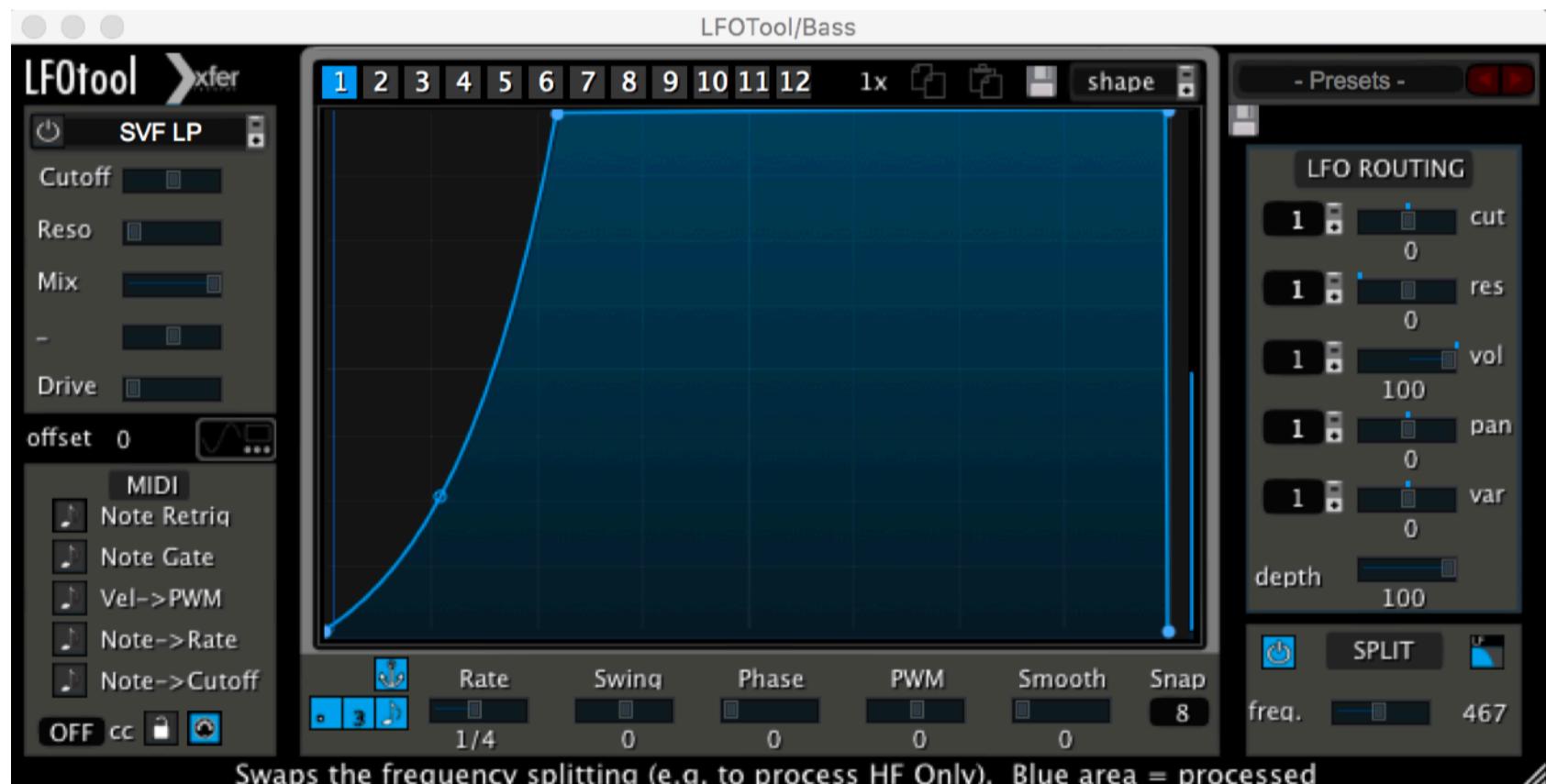
"Set yourself up with a standard sidechain envelope in LFOTool, just sidechain (volume). On the bottom right there is a filter setting, and you should turn it on. It will sidechain whatever's underneath a certain frequency threshold that you set."

"Just the low is sidechaining, so you can hear the attack of the bass coming in at full blast but the lows are out, so the kick has room to breath." - Sean Tyas

Other than the classic “pumping” effect, sidechain compression is foremost a mixing technique, used when two sounds operate the same frequency space and we’d like to push one out the way. Frequency-dependent sidechain allows us to sidechain only the clashing frequencies, while keeping all other frequencies unaffected.

For example, let’s say our kick and bass are clashing at 80Hz. If we sidechain the entire bass, we’ll lose the timbre of the top end when the kick hits. However, we can sidechain just the sub frequencies of the bass, allowing the top end of the bass to remain intact.

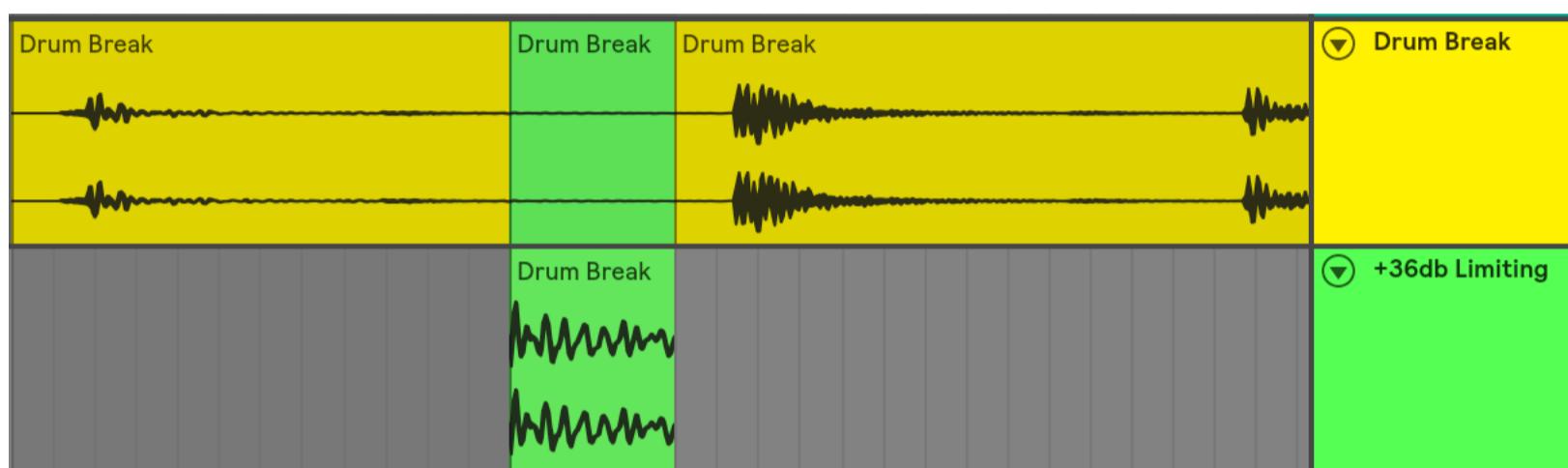
As explained by Sean Tyas, Xfer Records LFO tool makes this easy to set up. On the bottom right corner of LFO tool, you can turn on frequency splitting and use the HP/LP filter and cutoff frequency to shape the frequencies affected by the sidechain.



4.18 Extreme Ambience Limiting

"Something I call 'extreme ambience limiting'. You take the gaps in something like a drum loop or foley recording, and apply at least 12db or so of limiting. Try it on a range of different sample sources. You get this super wild sound to work with, unlike anything you've ever heard before." - Multiplier

This is a crazy technique that lets you get a wide range of textures and sounds out of acoustic recordings. In the example below, I've applied +36db of limiting to a "quiet" part of a drum break and ended up with a cool low percussion hit. Experiment and have fun with this!



4.19 Use Atmospheres to Create Depth and Complexity

"Not a technique per say, but bear with me. D&B production has really been enjoyable, I find that particularly with the 'liquid' form the amount of room you have to play with atmospheres is incredibly enjoyable. Using these atmospheres to create depth, mystery and complexity that an otherwise simple piece of music is a great technique." - Thomas Hayes

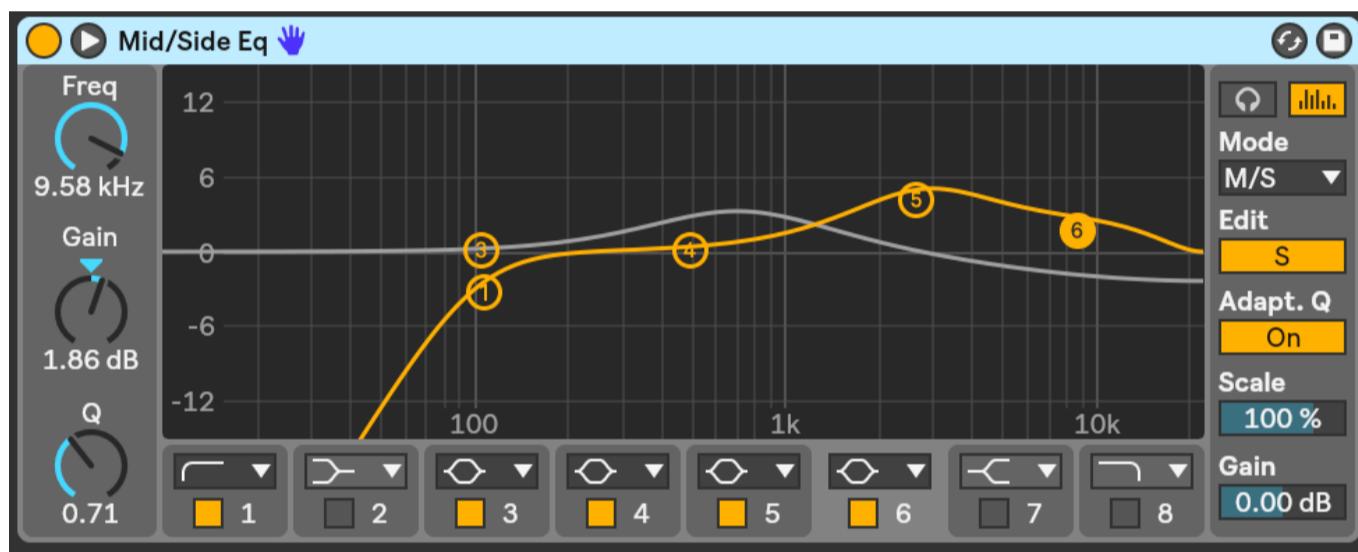
Many producers struggle to create depth in their tracks, especially when compared to their favorite artists' songs. The best way to improve your ability to create depth is to analyze your favorite artists' tracks and learn how they did it. Things such as volume, stereo placement, tonal balance, reverb, and delay all contribute to the depth of a mix.

4.20 Use Mid/Side Processing to Control Stereo Width

"I've been consistently using mid/side processing for boosting certain areas on the side to widen the stereo image of a sound, or boosting certain frequencies just in the 'mid' to make it more centred in the mix. This is so easy to do in Bitwig. I also switch my master to mono frequently to make sure everything is well balanced." - Karanda

Mid/Side processing is an intermediate/advanced technique where you process the mid and side channels of a track differently. Boosting the mid will increase the center/mono image of the mix, while boosting the sides will increase perceived width of a mix. You can use mid/side processing either on individual channels or on your mix bus. Further, reductive mid/side EQ is a great way to clean up the stereo image of a sample.

Most stock EQ's, such as Ableton's EQ8, offer a Mid/Side EQ mode.



Alternatively, many third party EQ's, such as Fabfilter's Pro-Q2, allow Mid/Side processing.

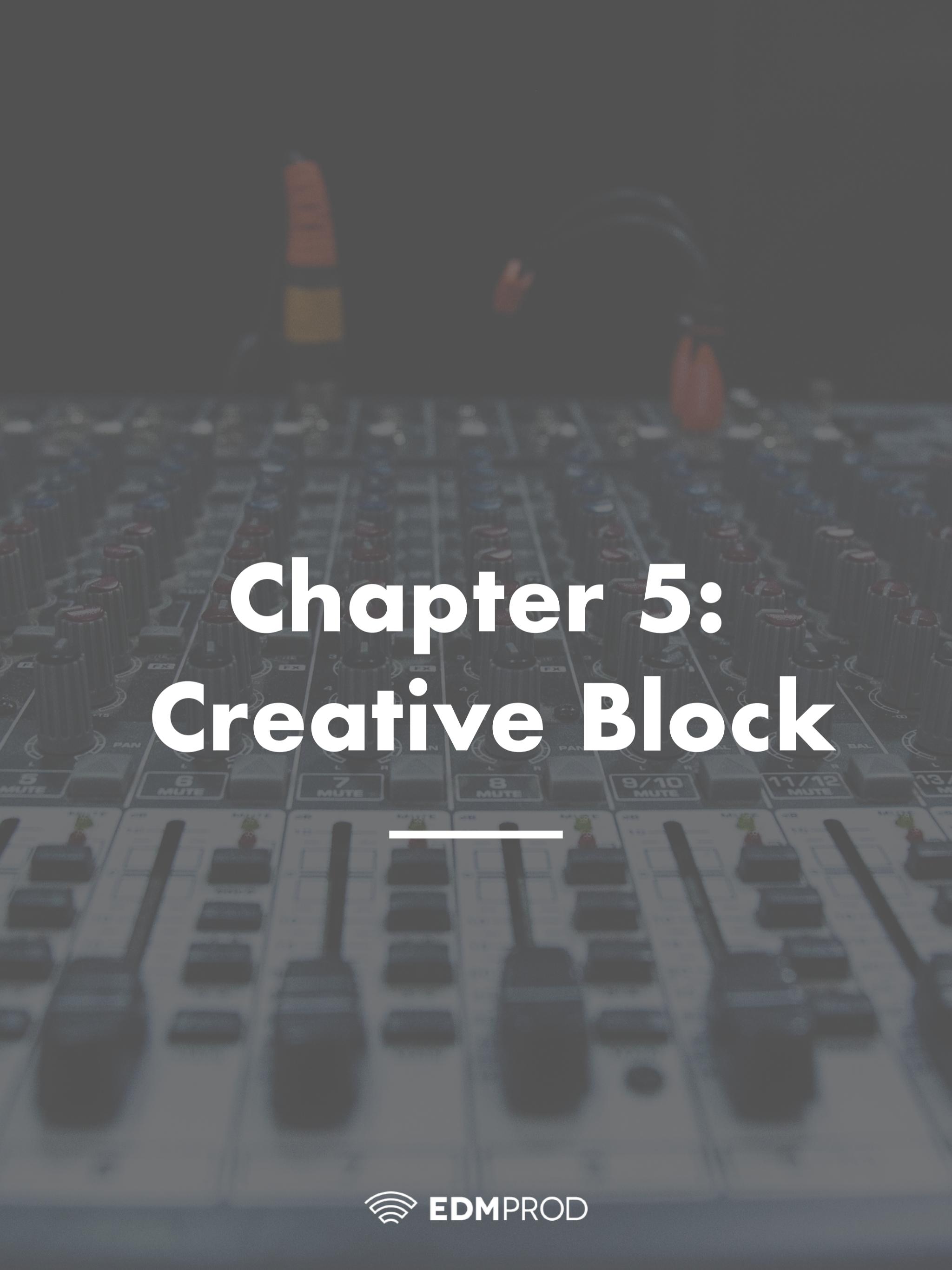


4.21 Master Channel Saturation and Distortion

"Utilizing Harmonic Distortion and Saturation on your master channel. This is a technique that I have been using for years, along with releasing on some of my public tutorials, people have loved it. If you take a SPL TwinTube plugin from Plugin Alliance on your master channel towards the top of your chain you can literally do wonders! Think about it as grabbing soothing harmonics throughout your song and enhancing them to give a louder perceived loudness to your listeners. This is a powerful tool that can usually gain you about 1-3db output on your master channel if done correctly!" - Shanahan

Master channel saturation is a technique I wouldn't recommend to a beginner because it's an easy way to destroy your mix. However, when done correctly, it's a great way to get a loud and full master. The key is subtle adjustments: 1-3db a drive on a saturation or distortion plugin. Stock plugins will work alright, but I'd recommend a well designed third party plugin such as Fabfilter Saturn, Soundtoys Decapitator, or SPL TwinTube.





Chapter 5: Creative Block

Chapter 5: Creative Block

5. Creative Block

Creative block is one of the most frustrating aspects of production. Creativity seems to come in bursts, and when it has run out, it can be tough to come up with new ideas and finish music.

We asked a handful of artists about how they deal with creative block. We're going to hold off our comments for this section, letting the producers speak for themselves.

5.1 Accept That Everyone Deals With Creative Block

"Accept that creative blocks happen and that everyone undergoes them. Reconcile with the fact that you may have to take a break but also view it as a chance to find more creativity elsewhere (in different media, new artists, obtuse techniques, or a simple nap etc)." - Ark Patrol

5.2 Step Away From Music

"Go do something fun, get outside in nature, listen to a podcast and/or try to learn something outside of music. I find these mentally stimulating exercises really help me be productive in whatever I'm trying to achieve be it a track or anything else in life. Furthermore more trying something completely new can help get the juices flowing and bring back that excitement we felt in the beginning." - Thomas Hayes

5.3 Go for a Walk

"GO FOR A WALK! Fresh air, and light exercise is scientifically proven to boost the creative juices. I do it often and it's the difference between nailing that melody, or bassline. Also having someone who you respect give you some feedback is essential." - Stephen Kirkwood

5.4 Just Power Through It

"I'd much rather just sit down and physically do the work, because I think there's a lot more discovery in that and I feel more accomplished, as opposed to if I just blow off the day and decide that I'm not feeling it right now and I'm just going to go and watch movies all day or something like that." - Matt Lange

5.5 Go Back to Your Roots

"In my opinion, the best way to get out of a block is by: A) Getting out of the studio. If you're not in the mood to make music but you're forcing yourself, you are gonna hear that the music is forced. Take a break, enjoy some time with your loved ones, go to the gym, whatever makes you happy. Also, B) try to remember why you started making music, and what inspires you. Look back on some favorite interviews of your favorite artists or favorite performances." - Ryos

5.6 Switch Up Your Workflow

"Listen to new music. Learn a new production technique. Force yourself to use a plugin you wouldn't normally use. Force yourself to work in a different workflow to normal (e.g. MIDI drums instead of audio clip drums, or using a MIDI effect chord generator)." - Multiplier

5.7 Sound Design Cures Creative Block

"Sound design cures creative block. Literally just fire up any sound, add random effects to it, go absolutely crazy until suddenly you have something interesting. I also find that creative block can happen when you're focusing too much on technique, and I think sound design helps because it gets you to disconnect from that mindset. If you have a rough idea, just listen to it and say to yourself "What do I imagine might happen next?" and see what your brain comes up with - follow through with your thoughts, and you might surprise yourself. Inspiration is just one idea leading to another, after all." - Karanda



Chapter 6: Mixing



EDM PROD

Chapter 6: Mixing

6. Mixing

Mixing is one of the most important skills to develop. Improving your skills and developing your ear takes years of dedicated practice. We asked a handful of professionals for their best mixing tips, and they delivered with a wide range of practical and actionable advice.

6.1 Use a Reference Track

"Use a reference track. While working on your own music, have a reference track you listen to occasionally that has a mixing palette you're striving for. This maintains a consistent sonic direction and gives perspective on your mix." - Big Wild

A reference track is a near necessity for achieving a clear and competitive mix.

Select 1-2 well mixed tracks in a style similar to the track you're working on. Then, when mixing down your own track, reference how elements in the professional track are mixed. For example, if you're struggling to mix your snare, listen for how the snare is mixed in the professional track.

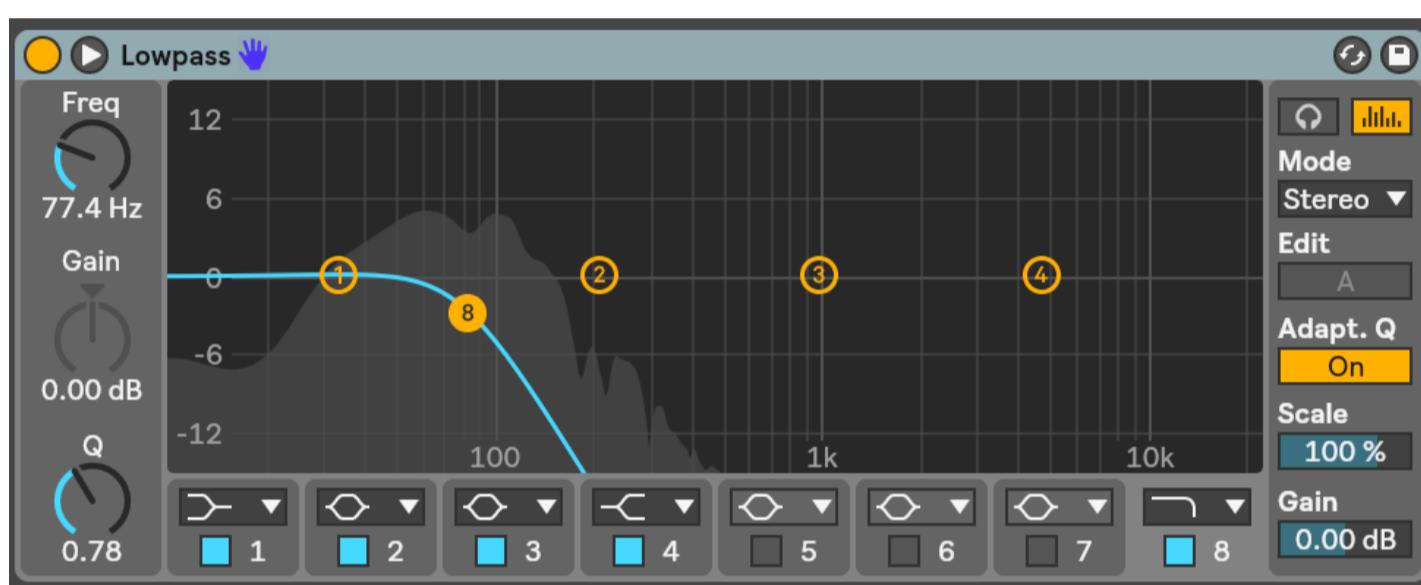
We find the easiest way to do this is to bring the reference track into our DAW and put it on a muted channel. Then, whenever we need to reference it we'll simply solo that channel. Alternatively, you can use a plugin such as Magic AB to quickly switch between up to nine reference tracks.



6.2 How to Use Reference Tracks

"The secret weapon to mixing is using reference tracks. Find a track as similar to the one you're working on as possible and then compare. When using EQ, do the highpass filter first, then low pass for the elements that needs it. Do your mid cuts and boosts later on. The key to loud and clean mixes is getting rid of bad frequency, most of the located in the lower range." - Bjorn Akesson

You can use EQ to focus in on a particular aspect of a reference track. For example, let's say you're trying to get the low end of your track to match that of your reference track. Use a lowpass filter on the reference track to solo out just the low end, allowing you to fixate on that area alone.



6.3 There's No Easy Fix for Mixing

"When people struggle with their mixes, they tend to throw their hands in the air, buy a new plugin or hope for a new secret technique to bring everything together. But the truth is you're struggling because you're listening sensibilities are developing and pinpointing opportunities to capitalize on within the material. Which means those who are struggling, are about to level up. The only way to level up is through perseverance, humility, effort and time. No plug-in, secret technique or youtube video will replace that." - Nicolas di Lorenzo

Read this tip again. And again. Write it on a post it note and put it on your studio monitors. There is no easy fix for mixing. There isn't a special plugin the pro's have that you don't, and there isn't one super secret technique that will make your mix sound amazing. Anyone that tries to tell you otherwise is lying. A quality mix is created through a series of small, incremental changes. Changes that make your mix 1% better than after a while add up.

6.4 Keep Things Simple

"Mixing is definitely something that I spend a lot of time on and also something I love teaching online to my students. My main advice when mixing is keep things simple, don't load a bunch of processing plugins on channels hoping this will fix your dull or muddy mix down. Go back to the basics, is your kick coming through? Does the bass and kick mask each other and create low end mud? There's certain things to look at when mixing, always start with your low end is my advice. Once your kick and bass work perfectly together, move on to your chords and bass, than move on to your leads and chords, and so on! This is a guide that you can develop and a few rules that you can follow when mixing that will teach yourself to clean things up as you're producing! Always keep your low end centered & tight, try not to push the width on low end, you can definitely do it, but I would recommend pushing for MONO to clean things up immediately!" - Shanahan

Adding to what Shanahan said, don't blindly add plugins to a channel "just because." Mixing without a purpose can do more harm than good. For example, don't add a compressor because you feel you have to. If you're not sure, try it out and decide for yourself. When developing your mixing skills, your ears are your best friend. Everything in mixing ultimately comes back to what sounds good.

Also, there are no "universal" settings for plugin parameters. Don't blindly use compressor settings somebody gave you on Reddit. Sure, you can try it out, but ultimately trust your ears.

6.5 Reference Your Mix In Mono

"If you're struggling with mixing, there are two things you can do. The first is to keep switching your master to mono, and use that as a reference for keeping your levels right. Secondly, as I'm sure you'll hear a lot, reference one of your favourite tracks. What I like to do is place my current favourite track inside my DAW, make sure it's routed just to my speakers or headphones so it isn't being processed by my Master channel, and then start A/B'ing it with my project to get the levels (and EQ'ing of particular elements e.g. hihats) just right. As a little extra tip, try out Eventide's EQuivocate plugin, which lets you boost/ reduce frequencies perfectly tuned to the human ear for the most natural sound." - Karanda

Hmm, reference tracks again, they must be important.

Also, what's the purpose of mixing in mono? According to Graham Cochrane from The Recording Revolution, "Without the crutch of stereo to give your mix separation, you are forced (in mono) to make better EQ, compression, and level decisions in order to get your mix to pop." In addition to that, if your mix sounds good in mono, it is more likely to sound good on low quality speakers. You know, the ones most of your fans will be listening on.

6.6 Mix at a Low Volume

"1. Turn your speakers down! Most of us mix our music louder than we should and this hurts us in two ways. First it can damage our hearing over the long term, even if we don't realize it. This is something you can't undo. Secondly, though, the louder the music is, the more hyped the bass response and top end become. Consequently if we mix at loud volumes we tend to think our mixes have more top and bottom end in them than they really do and we actually churn out a mix that is small, thin, and fat. Simply turn your speakers down to a level where you could comfortably have a conversation with the person next to you without having to raise your voice.

2. Mix in mono. This simply means listening to your mix down to mono while making your EQ and compression decisions, then popping it back to stereo before you finish. The idea here is simple - panning is a trick. It's fake separation. By listening to your mix in mono, with all the tracks "on top" of each other you're forced to make smarter EQ decisions in order to hear everything clearly.

3. Compare your mix to a professional mix. We call this referencing and it's your most powerful tool! Simply pull in some of your favorite mixes, level match them to your mix and flip back and forth. Take note of how the low end and top end sound on the pro mix compared to yours. Compare your mix's snare, vocal, and kick drum level to the reference. Pay attention to what kind of reverb and delay choices were made. This ALWAYS gives you perspective on your mix to know whether you are even in the ball park." - Graham Cochrane

We've covered two and three so far. Number one is an extremely common technique among seasoned engineers. As Graham explains, mixing at a low volume will force you to focus on what matters most. Mixing at a loud volume can trick you into thinking the mix sounds good, when it's actually just loud. We're guilty of neglecting this tip, but try your best to stay true to mixing at a low volume.

6.7 Mixing is like a Broadway Show

“On the subjective side, mixing is like a Broadway show. When you’re up close the makeup on those actors is out of control...it all seems a bit much. It even seems ridiculous. But from the crowd, everything makes sense. The colors, the lights, the costumes, even the makeup. And mixing is a lot like that. It’s about over-doing things so that the average, commercial listener understands the mix.” - Hyperbits

When mixing, always keep the central focus of the track in mind. We like to call this *mixing in context*. Your bass shouldn’t just sound good, it needs to sound good played with the rest of the track. A common pitfall is to frequently solo elements during a mixdown. This is fine in small doses, but make sure to consistently reference how that element fits with the rest of the track. Every track, every sample, and every plugin adds up to one final track.

6.8 Use Reductive EQ to Create Space

“On the technical side of things, use more reductive EQ to create space. Stop boosting everything. If an amateur engineer wants more bass, they just boost the bass. They don’t think, oh, I can actually achieve a more prominent bass sound by cutting other sounds that occupy this frequency range, or by even removing some seemingly unrelated sounds. Sometimes too much high-end sucks away your bass sounds, and vice versa.

Also on the technical side, I would say that referencing is everything. If you aren’t mixing to reference tracks, you have no idea what your mix is supposed to sound like. You have no reference point. No calibration. You could mix for 20+ hours with no reference point and simply make your track worse. Just replicate the people who are making the best mixes. You’ll naturally fall a bit short, but sounding 85-90% of one of your favorite artists is still better than 99.9% of amateur bedroom mixes out there.” - Hyperbits

Many beginners make the mistake of boosting before cutting. Boosting can help shape the character and tone of a track, but reductive EQ is your best friend when it comes to a clear and clean mix.

Every element in your track takes up space. You want to make sure tracks aren’t clashing heavily, and that each element has its own space. The best way to do this is through reductive EQ. Some examples include:

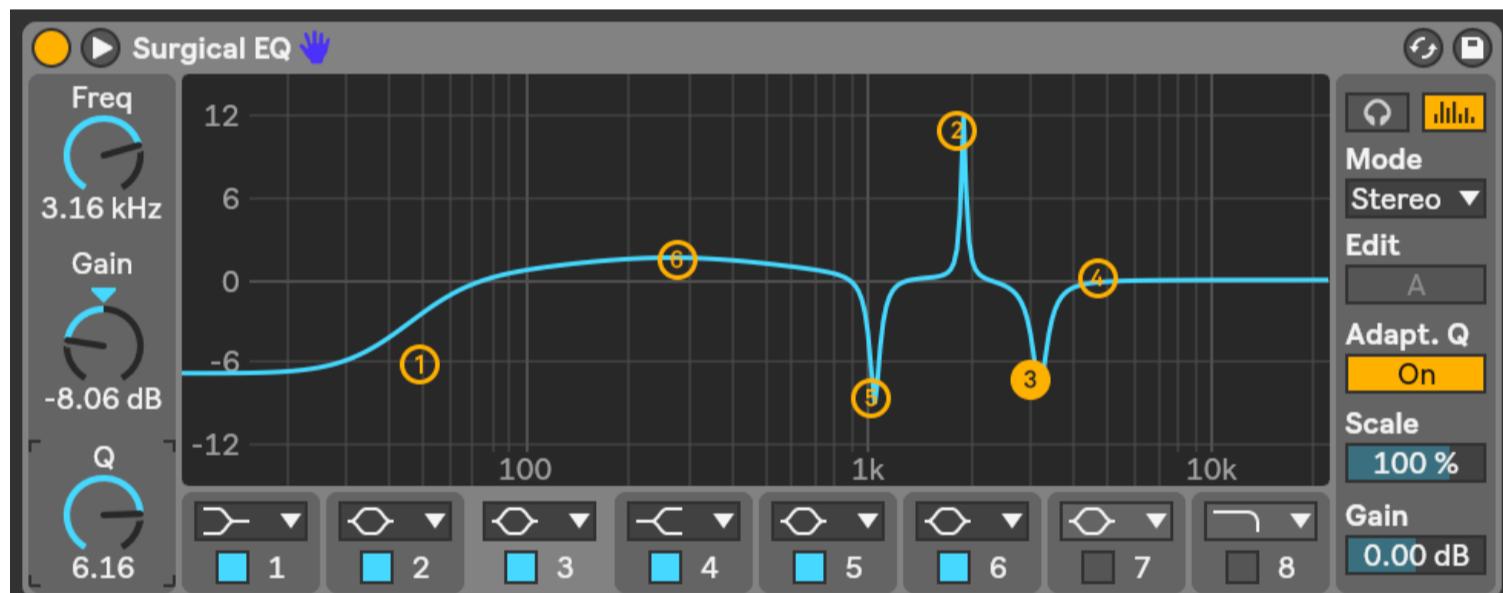
- Bass isn’t loud enough? Use reductive EQ to remove the bass from all other tracks.
- Vocal gets lost in the mix? Use reductive EQ on the main instruments to make room for the body of the vocal.
- Lead synth isn’t bright enough? Shelve off the highs from the other melodic instruments.

6.9 Getting Rid of Harsh Frequencies

"I have been loving combing through frequencies in different parts of the stereo field. It's a very clinical and effective way of getting rid of those frequencies you don't hear when listening normally! In Ableton I use a mixture of the Utility tool and the PAZ Analyser from Waves." - Stephen Kirkwood

Surgical EQ is a great way to remove harsh frequencies. Here's how to do it:

- Drop an EQ onto the channel.
- Select a bell filter and turn the Q to as high as possible.
- Boost the gain of the filter to 10db or so (make sure your master output is low, it may get loud)
- Then, with your track playing, slowly sweep the filter across the frequency spectrum, listening for any harsh/piercing frequencies.
- Once you find one, simply drop the volume of the band as you see fit (-3db to -7db works well), and adjust the Q as needed.
- Rinse and repeat.



6.10 Constructing a Top-Down Mix

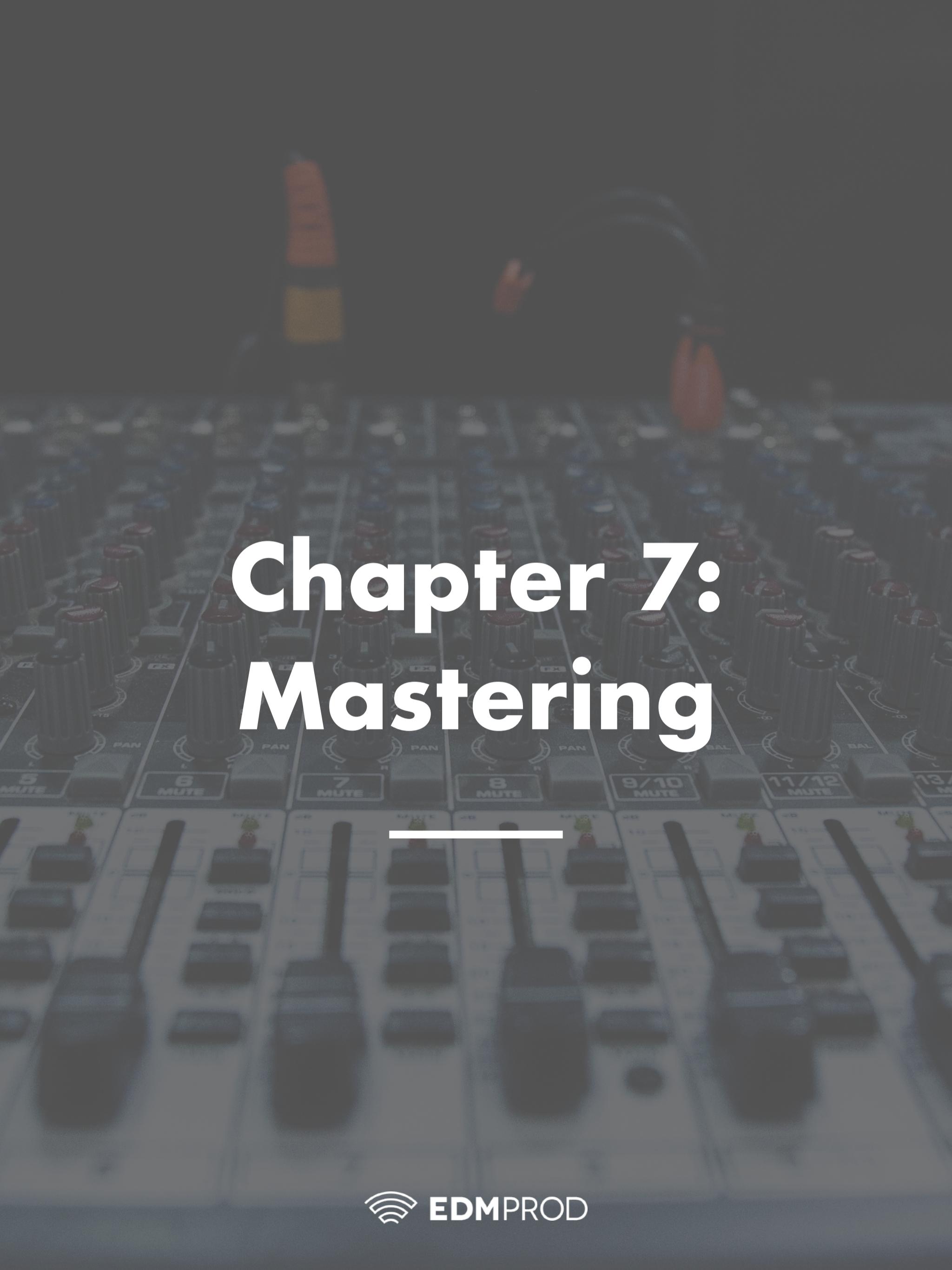
"If you've got a situation where you've got a lot of stuff happening in your mix and you're mastering it yourself and you're trying to get it to a certain loudness and it's just falling short, what you can do is construct back to front. Or what I call a top down mix. You mute things and bring them one by one.

Get just your kick and bass playing at the same time, and do your loudness then. You'll find if you have something as simple as a kick and bass, you'll be able to effortlessly amplify and limit stuff up to what point you need, and you can use that as a basis to bring everything else back in, and reconstruct the mix with that loudness on. That's a really great way of getting that situation out of the way right at the start. Because if you have that loudness when just those two things are playing, and you construct the rest of the mix around that, you'll keep that loudness the whole time." - Jaytech

Top-down mixing is one of many theories about how to mixdown a track. As it is a theory, it's not the ultimate solution, but many producers/engineers find it extremely helpful.

This type of mixing is also called a "fader-down" mix. Pull all of the faders down, then bring in the elements one by one in order of importance. This ensures the core foundation of your track is at the front of the mix.





Chapter 7: Mastering



EDM PROD

Chapter 7

7. Mastering

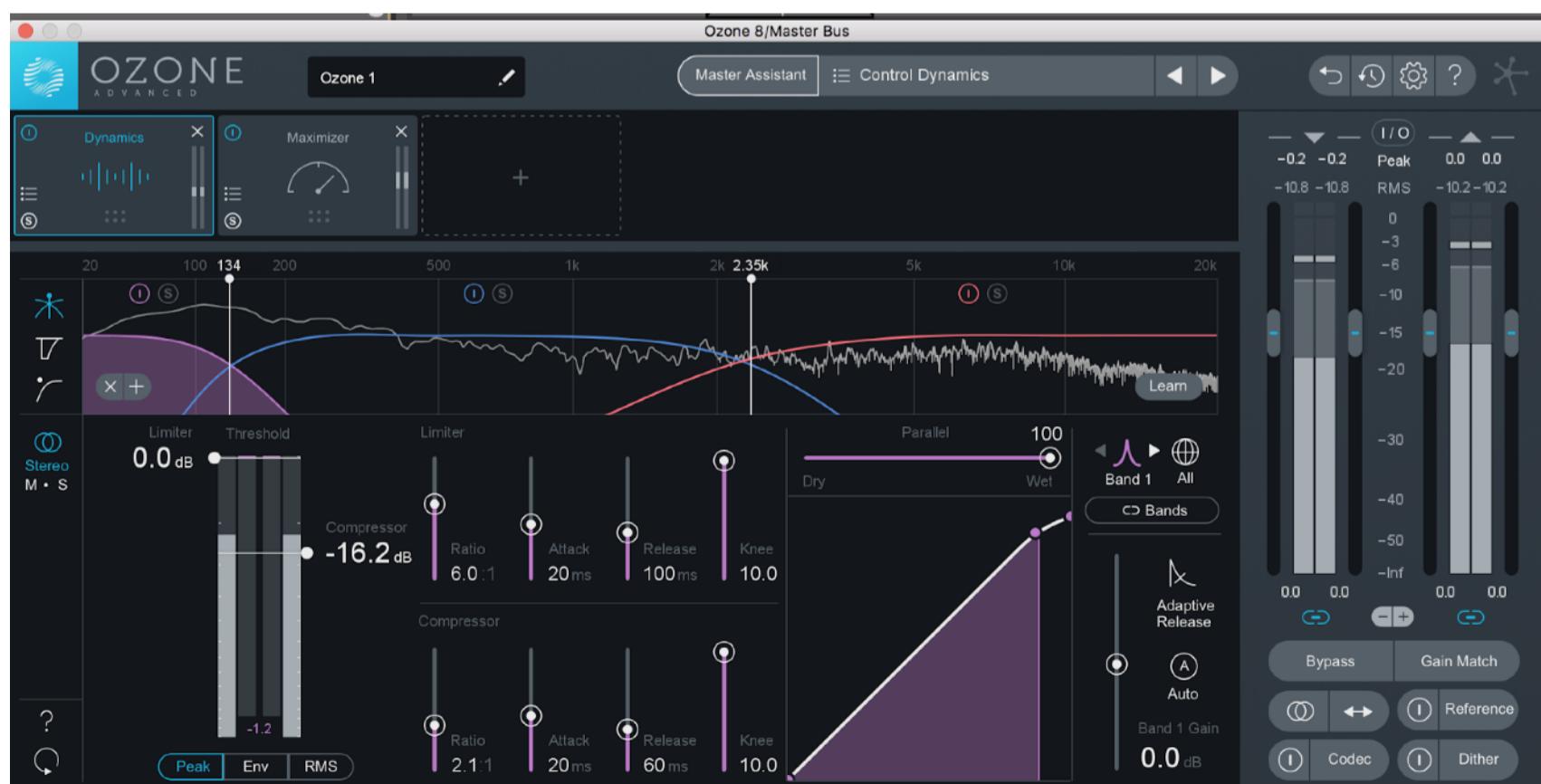
Mastering is one of the most misunderstood production topics. It isn't some magic technique that makes any track sound professional; rather, it's an extra 5% that pushes your track a bit further. We've only included one tip in this section, and for good reason: it's the most important mastering lesson you'll ever learn.

7.1 The Better the Mix, The Better the Master

"This might sound like a cop-out but if you are mastering your own material then mix your songs in such a way that mastering is not needed :-) That's my favorite mastering technique. Seriously, I try to set myself up so that in mastering there is virtually nothing left to do but finalize level. And if your mastering someone else's music, the referencing rule applies as well. A great reference will "tell" you what you still need to do." - Graham Cochrane

Graham's tip is our number one tip for achieving a quality master. It's simple: the better the mix, the better the master.

Whether or not you're mastering your own tracks, your job as a producer should be to make the mix sound as great as possible before any mastering is applied. A bad mix will only result in a bad master.



Conclusion

Conclusion

We want to thank these artists for offering their expertise and advice to help out aspiring producers. If you benefited from any of their tips, please be sure to follow them on social media or, better yet, send them a personal thank you. In the meantime, feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions related to this eBook, we'll be sure to help out the best we can.

Cheers!

P.S. Want to connect with us? Send us an email info@edmprod.com

Artist Guide

- | | |
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| 53. Au5 | 70. Mr. Bill |
| 54. Audiofreq | 71. Multiplier |
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| 56. Bass Kleph | 73. Pyramid |
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| 66. Jaytech | 83. Willy Joy |
| 67. KJ Sawka | 84. Zac Waters |
| 68. Karanda | |



Connect With Ark Patrol

 @arkpatrol

 @arkpatrol

 @arkpatrol

 @arkpatrol

 Heroic, Nest HQ

ARK PATROL

Ark Patrol on Creativity

"Accept that creative blocks happen and that everyone undergoes them. Reconcile with the fact that you may have to take a break but also view it as a chance to find more creativity elsewhere (in different media, new artists, obtuse techniques, or a simple nap etc)."





Connect With Au5

@theau5

@au5music

@au5_official

@au5

Monstercat, Armada



Au5 on Songwriting

"There's so much more that you can express musically that is different than the melodic composition of it. I can have a chord progression and melody (that are arranged well), but the synthesis and instrumentation are the other side of it. I like to think of sound design, production, and mixing as the texture and the harmonic content and melodic elements as the color."





Connect With Audiofreq

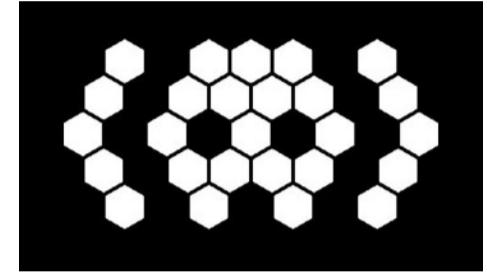
@audiofreqdj

@audiofreqdj

@audiofreqdj

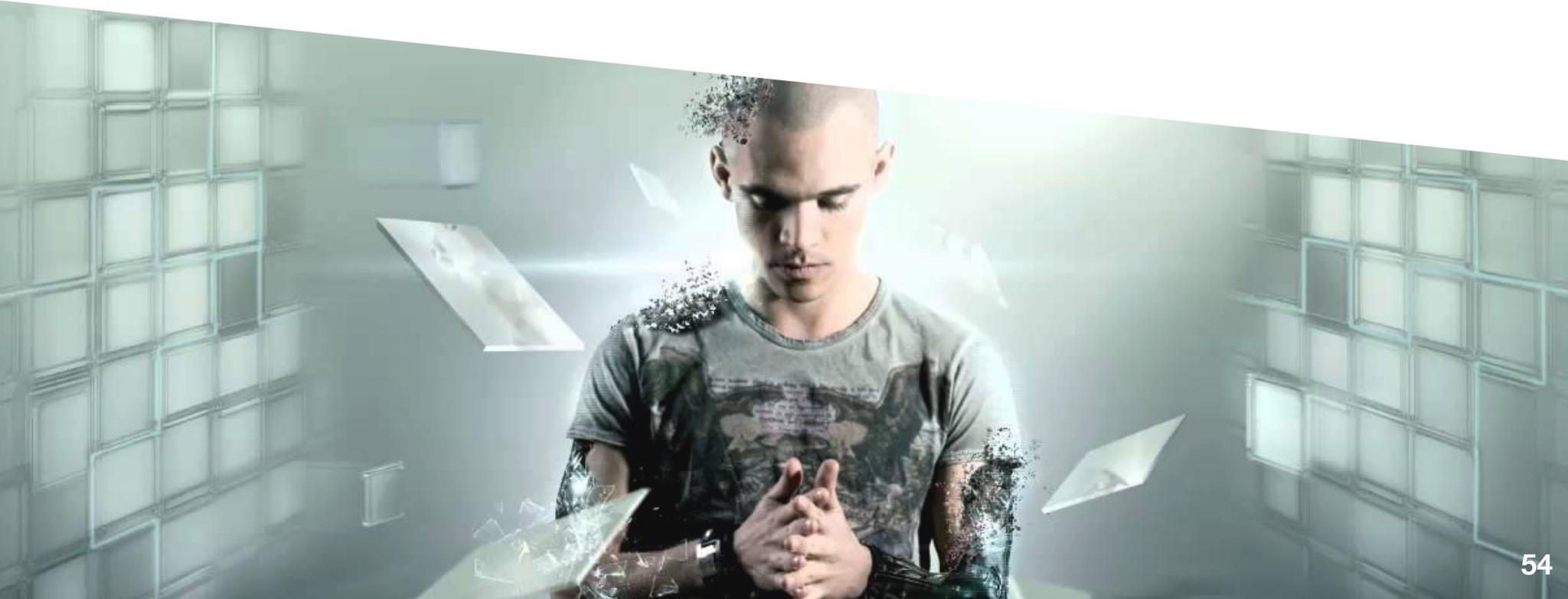
@audiofreqdj

Ultra, HARD with STYLE



Audiofreq on Writing an Album

"The thing that helped me the most was doing a lot of planning before I jumped in the studio and started making music. I had a particular vision set out for different tracks....having those things ready to go helps a great deal."





Connect With Auvic

f @auvicmusic

twitter @auvicmusic

Instagram @auvicart

soundcloud @auvicmusic

Auvic on Writing an Album

“Strive for perfection, but know that you’ll never be perfect”. Even the masters in any field, they’re always going to be a student. You’re always constantly learning.”—Auvic





Connect With Bass Kleph

- @basskleph
- @basskleph
- @basskleph
- @basskleph
- Spinnin', Hysteria



Bass Kleph on Creativity

"Those things you think are distractions, that's what you should follow...tinker and just have some fun. Creativity will be spawned."



Big Wild



Connect With Big Wild

@bigwildmusic

@bigwildmusic

@bigwildmusic

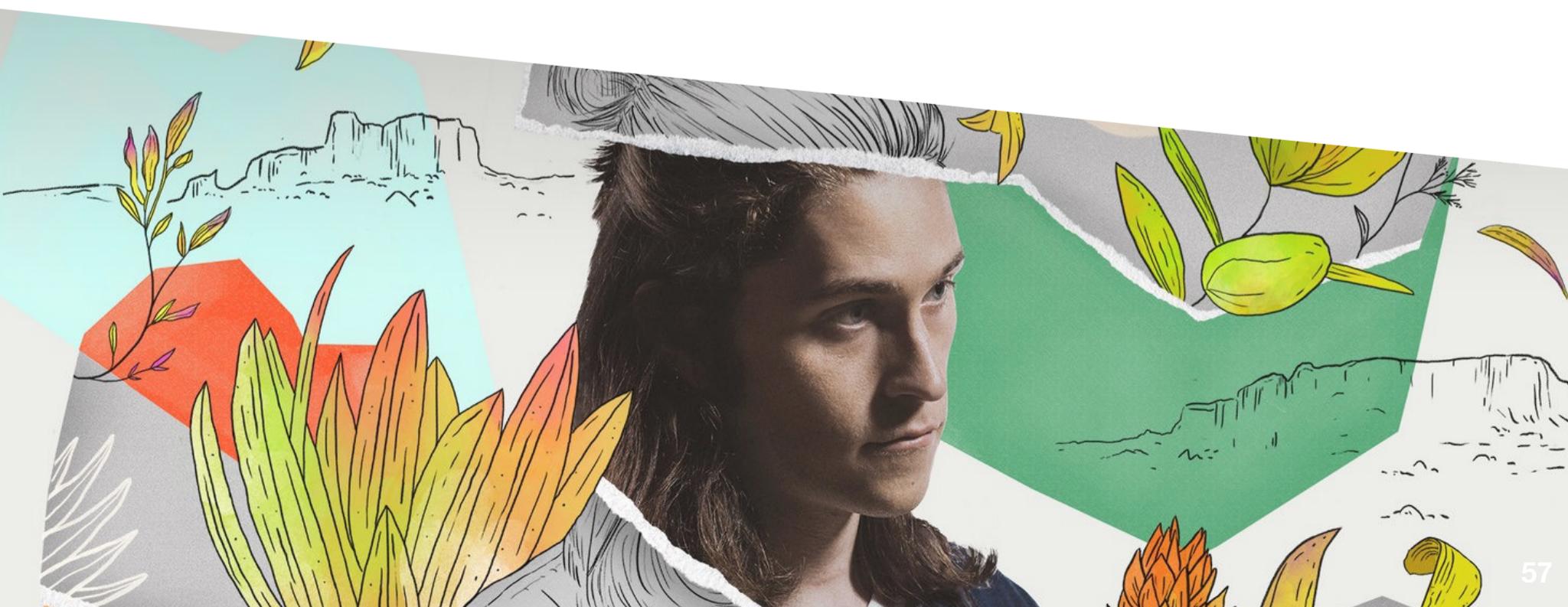
@bigwild

Foreign Family Collective



Bass Kleph on Creativity

"Follow your inspiration. Don't sell yourself short by hopping on a trend or a style of music that your heart and mind aren't 100% committed too. True inspiration leads to the best music."



Bjorn Akesson



Connect With Bjorn Akesson

@bjornakessonmusic

@bjorn_akesson

@bjornakesson

@bjornakesson

Armada, FSOE



Bjorn Akesson on Starting Tracks

"When starting tracks, it's all about the idea of the track and not the details. What you need to focus on is the concept of the tune, for me personally that's the melody. If you focus on details too soon, you most likely will get stuck very early in the process and that can completely kill your motivation."





Connect With Bonnie X Clyde

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instagram @bonniexclydedj

BONNIE X CLYDE

soundcloud @bonniexclydeofficial

discogs Insomniac, Interscope

Bonnie X Clyde on Songwriting

"Now more than ever, songs are winning. Right now, the market is not Soundcloud bangers. It's a streamer's world. People stream while they're chilling, people stream at the office. You don't have to stop making bangers, but be aware that all the talent buyers/bookers are looking at how many Spotify followers you have, how many monthly listeners you have, and how your latest release did."



Dave Winnel



Connect With Dave Winnel

@davewinnelmusic

@davewinnel

@davewinnel

@dave-winnel

Armada, Axtone

**DAVE
WINNEL**

Dave Winnel on Collaboration

Get out there and collaborate with other people. It's really cool to bounce back and forth and get ideas from each other.



Fabian Mazur



Connect With Fabian Mazur

@fabianmazur

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@fabianmazur

Musical Freedom, Armada

**FABIAN
MAZUR**

Fabian Mazur on Finding Your Sound

"At first, as a producer, you're always going to want to sound like somebody else. You spend a lot of time trying to sound like somebody else. When you've done that for a long period of time, I think you're finding your own sound along the way."





Connect With Fatum

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Anjunabeats, Armada

F A T U M

Bruce Karlsson of **FATUM** on Persistence

"Rule number one is to be as absolutely persistent as possible. The industry is always going to have its ups and downs. There really isn't a way of knowing what tracks are going to really make it. Just stay true to the music you love making and have fun doing it always. Otherwise, what's the point of this career anyway?"





Connect With Graham Cochrane

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twitter @recordingrev



Graham Cochrane's Advice for New Producers

"Getting good takes time - so be patient with yourself. The bad news is that you've probably realized you're not as good as you'd like to be. The good news is, anyone with a musical ear can do this. There's no mystery, no secrets, no magic involved. The secret ingredient? A large body of work. And that takes time. So put in your reps, churn out song after song, mix after mix, and you'll get better. It's inevitable."





Connect With Hyperbits

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- i** @hyperbits
- s** @hyperbits
- d** Mixmash, Armada

HYPERBITS

Hyperbits on Mixing

"Mixing is like a Broadway show. When you're up close the makeup on those actors is out of control...it all seems a bit much. It even seems ridiculous. But from the crowd, everything makes sense. The colors, the lights, the costumes, even the makeup. And mixing is a lot like that. It's about over-doing things so that the average, commercial listener understands the mix."





Connect With **ILIVEHERE**.

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Bitbird

ILIVEHERE. On Creating Lofi/Vinyl Effects

"There's this plugin called RC-20 Retro Color by XLN Audio, who also do addictive keys and addictive drums.. It is the most amazing plugin, I just got it recently. It emulates VHS tapes and vinyl effects. It has really cool parameters like flux, flutter, wow, bitcrushing, and distortion. It really adds to my loud, ambient vibe."





Connect With Jaytech

 @jaytechofficial

 @jaytechmusic

 @jaytechmusic

 @jaytechmusic

 Anjunabeats, Positronic

Jaytech

Jaytech on Music Theory

"Melody and harmony to me is a musical language. The more vocabulary you learn, the more you can express with it."





Connect With KJ Sawka

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KJ SAWKA

@kjsawka

Destroid, Impossible

KJ Sawka on Adding Value

"Anyone can be your new best friend, but what is the value? What can you offer that person? If you have something of value, it's exciting to share it with each other. It's important for young artists to understand that they have to create value. Just because they make a track that's on par with Pendulum or Hardwell doesn't mean anyone is going to care."





Connect With Karanda

- f @karanda
- t @karandamusic
- i @karanda
- s @karanda
- d Enhanced, Macarize

KARANDA

Karanda on Creative Block

"If you have a rough idea, just listen to it and say to yourself "What do I imagine might happen next?" and see what your brain comes up with - follow through with your thoughts, and you might surprise yourself. Inspiration is just one idea leading to another, after all."

KARANDA



Connect With Matt Lange

@mattlangeaudio

@mattlange

@matt_lange

@mattlange

Mau5trap, Anjunadeep

**MATT
LANGE**

Matt Lange on Surviving in the Industry

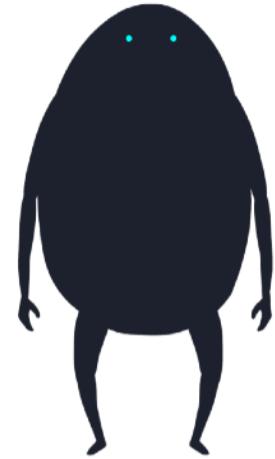
"Nobody owes you anything"





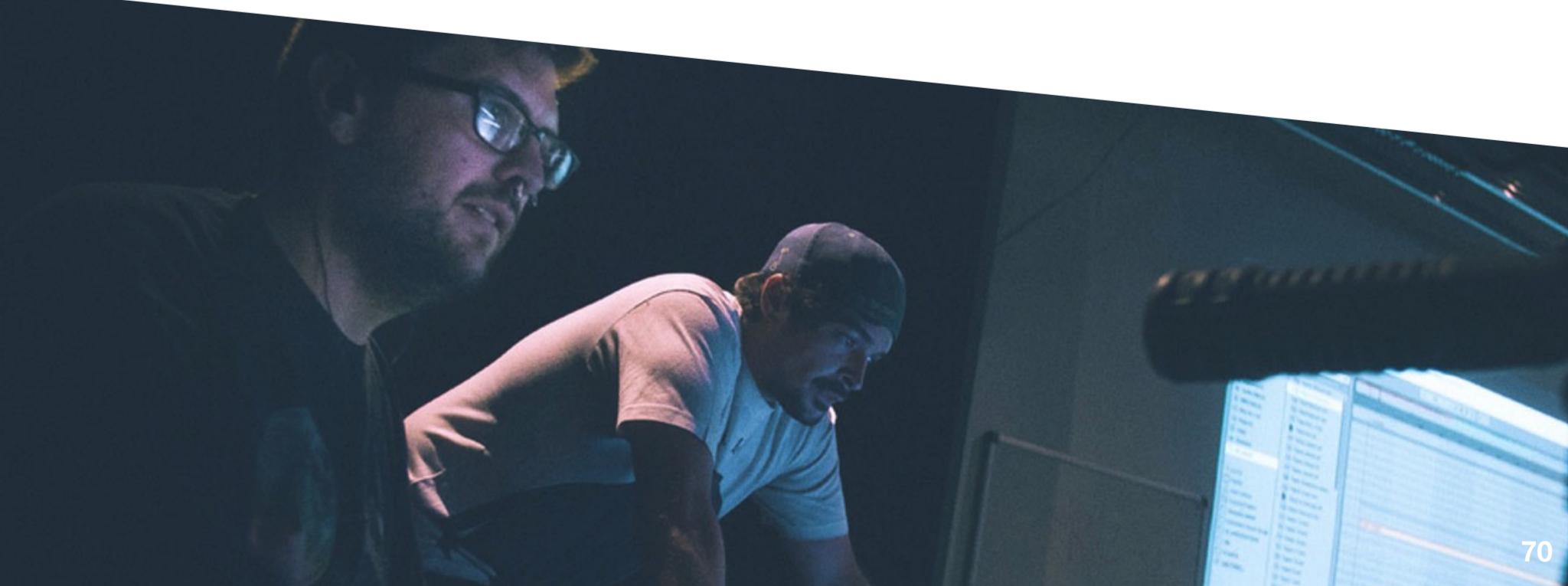
Connect With Mr Bill.

- @mrbilltunes
- @mrbilltunes
- @mrbilltunes
- @mrbilltunes
- Mr. Bill's Tunes



Mr Bill on Making It

"Work hard & work smart, there's no easy way to do this if you wanna' be unique & good really. Work hard, put the hours in. Work smart, watch YouTube tutorials & read manuals (you'll halve your learning time)"





Connect With Multiplier

@multipliermusic

@multipliermusic

@multiplier

@multiplier

Multiplier on Starting Out

"Question everything. Ask why. Compression/EQ/etc.. aren't magic. Focus on what makes your track interesting/exciting/emotional/dancey/etc.. and don't put technical details ahead of this. Don't expect to make better music in a certain style than someone who's been doing it for 12/15 years.. make something unique."



Nicolas Di Lorenzo



Connect With Nicolas

@panoramamastering

@panoramamasters

@panorama_mastering

@panorama-mastering



Nicolas Di Lorenzo on Improvement

"The only way to level up is through perseverance, humility, effort and time. No plug-in, secret technique or youtube video will replace that."





Connect With Pyramid

@0Pyramid0

@pyramidhall

@pyramidhall

@pyramidhall

Record Record, Confession



Pyramid on Using Presets

"Having presets is good to understand some techniques, but really try to make it yours."





Connect With Ryos

@ryosofficial

@ryosofficial

@ryosofficial

@ryos

Spinnin', Enhanced



Ryos on Starting as a Beginner

"Definitely focus on making sure your music sounds good. If you are really trying to make it in the music industry, it will be a whole lot easier if the quality of your music is up to par. By all means, make whatever genre you want, but make sure the quality sounds professional."





Connect With Said The Sky

 @saidthesky

 @saidthesky

 @saidtheskyofficial

 @said-the-sky

 Seeking Blue



Said The Sky on Finding Your Sound

"Finding your sound is a bit of both playing around with it and hoping it comes across naturally, as well as keeping an eye out for it."





Connect With Sean Tyas

@seantyasmusic

@seantydas

@seantyasmusic

@seantydas

FSOE, Black Hole Recordings



Sean Tyas on Balancing your Kick and Bass

"I think the really important thing is to tune my kick to the baseline, or tune the bassline to the kick. There is always one or two notes of your bassline that is going to sound awesome with one particular kick. I also love the kick synths like Sonic Academy Kick 1 & 2, they did a great job on that. And also, Bazzism is another that's just absolutely awesome."





Connect With Shanahan

@shanahanofficial

@shanahanmusic

@shanahanofficial

@shanahanofficial

Revealed, Armada

Shanahan

Shanahan on Achieving a Loud Mix

"Utilizing Harmonic Distortion & Saturation on your master channel. This is a technique that I have been using for years, along with releasing on some of my public tutorials, people have loved it. If you take a SPL TwinTube plugin from Plugin Alliance on your master channel towards the top of your chain you can literally do wonders!"





Connect With Slynk

@evanslynk

@evanslynk

@evanslynk

@slynk



Slynk on Learning Music Theory

"You've got to be able to speak the language of music if you want to be able to tell a story. You can get by without know too much music theory, but you're going to sound like a tourist with a phrase book".



Stephen Kirkwood



Connect With Stephen

@djstephenkirkwood

@stephenkirkwood

@stephenkirkwood

@stephenkirkwood

Subculture / Kearnage / Outburst

Stephen Kirkwood on Starting Out

"Do less shouting social media about what you are going to do, and do more of the actual task at hand... which is, MAKING MUSIC! "

S T E P H E N
K I R K W O O D



Thomas Hayes



Connect With Thomas Hayes

@thomashayesmusic

@thomashayesdj

@thomashayesmusic

@thomashayesmusic

Enhanced, Armada

Thomas Hayes on Starting Tracks

"Go into the studio with an idea, feeling, emotion or some kind of mindset that can be put into your music. Going to produce without a general idea of what direction you want to go in is like trying to throw lots of food in a pan and see what you get. It can work sometimes but I generally think it's better to have a general direction to focus your energy in."





Connect With Vintage & Morelli

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- i** @vintageandmorelli
- u** @vintageandmorelli
- d** Silk, Anjunabeats

Vintage & Morelli on Talent

"Talent is 5%, hard work is 95%. You have to believe in yourself and you have to work hard. Then you'll get to where you want to be."

**Vintage and
Morelli**
music reinvented





Connect With WRLD:

@thewrld

@wrldmusic

@thewrldmusic

@thewrld

Monstercat, Heroic

WRLD

WRLD on something:

I design everything from scratch, I don't think I've ever used a preset. My knowledge of sound design comes from trying to emulate my favorite sounds. Let's say I heard an Owl City song with a lead I like. Then I'd spend, say, 2 hours, just recreating the lead.



Willy Joy



Connect With Willy Joy

@willyjoy

@willyjoy

@willyjoy

@willyjoy

Fools Gold, Good Enuff



Willy Joy on Breaking into the Music Industry

"Figure out what makes you different, what makes your perspective different, and what you personally want to communicate"





Connect With Zac Waters

 @zacjwaters

 @zac__waters

 @zac.waters

 @zac-waters

 Monstercat, Armada



Zac Waters on Not Selling Yourself Out:

"Who are you making music for? Are you making music for yourself or are you making music for other people? I can't be happy making music for other people. I learned that the hard way."

