UPLOAD YOUR FIRST SONG

AN EASY, QUICK GUIDE TO UPLOADING YOUR FIRST SINGLE OR ALBUM FOR THE WORLD TO HEAR, TODAY

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WECLOME!

FIRST OFF, **A PREEMPTIVE CONGRATULATIONS.** ITS AN INCREDIBLE ACHIEVEMENT TO CREATE MUSIC (OR ANYTHING FOR THAT MATTER), AND **TAKES COURAGE AND VULNERABILITY TO SHARE IT WITH THE WORLD** – SO KUDOS.

THIS IS A QUICK GUIDE THAT WILL GIVE YOU **EVERY STEP YOU NEED IN A FAST, SIMPLE FORMAT** TO BREAK THE PROCRASTINATION CYCLE (IF YOU'RE ANYTHING LIKE ME) AND GET YOUR MUSIC OUT THERE!

THE FIRST STEP MAY FEEL DAUNTING, BUT WITH THIS GUIDE, YOU'LL EASILY NAVIGATE THE ESSENTIAL STEPS, **FROM PREPARING YOUR TRACK, TO PROMOTING YOUR RELEASE,** SO YOU CAN FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS MOST: **CONNECTING WITH YOUR AUDIENCE.**

BY FOLLOWING THESE STEPS, YOU'LL ENSURE YOUR MUSIC IS PRESENTED PROFESSIONALLY AND REACHES LISTENERS ON POPULAR PLATFORMS LIKE **SPOTIFY, APPLE MUSIC, AND BEYOND.**
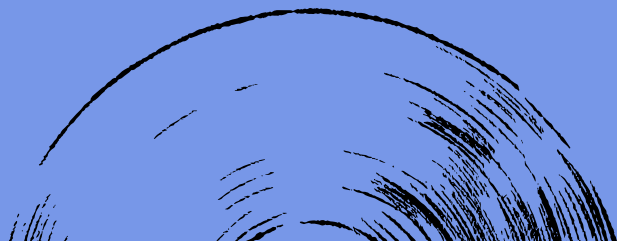
A FEW NOTES

HOW LONG WILL THIS GUIDE TAKE TO READ?
THIS GUIDE CAN BE READ IN 15-20 MINUTES. PLANNING CAN AND SHOULD TAKE LONGER - ENJOY THE PROCESS!

A LITTLE ABOUT ME
BEFORE WE DIVE IN, LET ME TELL YOU A BIT ABOUT MYSELF. I WEAR MANY HATS WITH MY MUSIC, BUT BILL MYSELF FIRST AND FOREMOST AS A VOCALIST AND GUITARIST. I HAVE SELF-PRODUCED NUMEROUS SINGLES, MUSIC VIDEOS, AND MY FIRST ALBUM (VIA KICKSTARTER!)

I LOVE EXPLORING ALL FACETS OF MUSIC AND HELPING FOLKS LEARN HOW TO TURN THEIR DREAMS INTO A REALITY - WE ALL NEED A LITTLE HELP SOMETIMES!

MY CREDENTIALS
- RELEASED OVER 20 SINGLES, 1 EP AND AN ALBUM
- CREATED NUMEROUS PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGNS FOR MY MUSIC
- GUIDED NUMEROUS OTHER MUSICIANS IN THE UPLOAD PROCESS
- OVER 60000 STREAMS ACROSS PLATFORMS
- FEATURED ON SPOTIFY'S "FRESH FINDS: THE WAVE", SPOTIFY'S "NEW FROM NYC: INDIE" AND SPOTIFY'S "NEW FROM NYC: R&B AND SOUL EDITORIAL PLAYLIST"
- NUMEROUS PLACEMENTS ON USER CREATED SPOTIFY PLAYLISTS AND BLOGS
- FULLY FUNDED KICKSTARTER FOR DEBUT ALBUM "JOI" (FUNDED IN 2 DAYS)

TRANSPARENCY NOTE:
IN THE INTEREST OF KEEPING EVERYTHING TRANSPARENT AND HONEST, THIS GUIDE WAS WRITTEN WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF CHATGPT. ALL OF MY ANECDOTES AND VOICE THOUGH ARE MINE AND COME FROM MY DIRECT EXPERIENCE WITH THIS PROCESS.
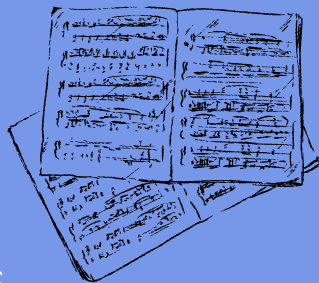
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BEFORE YOU UPLOAD

THIS GUIDE ASSUMES YOU HAVE ALREADY COMPLETED YOUR TRACK – PRODUCED, MIXED AND MASTERED, WHETHER BY YOURSELF OR OUTSIDE SOUND ENGINEERS. IF YOU ARE STILL WORKING ON YOUR TRACK, NO WORRIES – COME BACK TO THIS GUIDE ONCE YOU HAVE THAT FINAL MP3 OR WAV FILE READY!

OTHERWISE WE WILL START WITH A BIT OF PREP:

1. PREPARE YOUR MUSIC AND MATERIALS

- **FINALIZE YOUR TRACK:** ENSURE YOUR SONG IS FULLY MIXED AND MASTERED FOR QUALITY. IF YOU WANT TO MASTER ON YOUR OWN THERE ARE SERVICES LIKE LANDR WHICH I USED FOR A FEW OF MY EARLIER RELEASES. YOU CAN ALSO WORK WITH ENGINEERS ON FREELANCE SITES LIKE FIVERR FOR GREAT OPTIONS!

- **CHOOSE YOUR FORMAT:** EXPORT IN INDUSTRY-STANDARD FORMATS (E.G., WAV 16-BIT/44.1 KHZ OR HIGHER). YOU CAN ALSO EXPORT AS AN MP3, BUT WAV IS GENERALLY THE GOLD STANDARD/RECOMMENDED.

- **CREATE COVER ART:** USE HIGH-QUALITY VISUALS (3000 X 3000 PIXELS, JPG/PNG FORMAT – OR WHATEVER SIZE/FORMATE YOUR DISTRIBUTOR REQUIRES). I USE CANVA TO CREATE MY VISUALS. I'LL EITHER USE IT TO EDIT PHOTOS OR CREATE ALBUM ART FROM CANVA ELEMENTS – THE FREE VERSION IS GREAT FOR EDITS (THOUGH I INVESTED IN THE PAID VERSION WHICH IS DEFINITELY WORTH IT!)
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2. SELECT A DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION PLATFORM (THE PLATFORM THAT SENDS YOUR MUSIC TO STREAMING PLATFORMS)

- **POPULAR OPTIONS:** DISTROKID, TUNECORE, CD BABY, OR UNITEDMASTERS. I USE DISTROKID PERSONALLY. THEIR INTERFACE IS EASY TO NAVIGATE AND THEIR SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE REASONABLE COST WISE.

- **COMPARE COSTS, ROYALTIES, AND FEATURES LIKE PROMOTIONAL TOOLS:** I RECOMMEND REGISTERING YOUR MUSIC AT LEAST WITH YOUR P.R.O. (PERFORMING RIGHTS ORGANIZATION). THESE ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS ASCAP (THE ONE I USE) AND BMI HELP WRITERS, COMPOSERS AND PUBLISHERS COLLECT AND DISTRIBUTE ROYALTIES FROM PUBLIC PERFORMANCES. I ALSO WILL COPYRIGHT MY SONGS WITH THE US COPYRIGHT OFFICE IF I PLAN TO PITCH IT FOR SYNC (GETTING MUSIC ON TV OR IN MOVIES).

3. REGISTER FOR A DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT

- SET UP A PROFILE WITH ACCURATE INFORMATION AND ADD PAYMENT DETAILS TO RECEIVE ROYALTIES. DISTROKID OFFERS A DIRECT DEPOSIT OF ROYALTIES AND SPLITS YOU CAN SET UP BASED ON WHO WORKED ON THE PROJECT.

UPLOAD TIME

4. INPUT METADATA

METADATA PROVIDES DATA ABOUT YOUR MUSIC (RUN TIME, ARTIST(S), LYRICS, ETC) TO HAVE A DIGITAL FOOTPRINT EMBEDDED ON YOUR MUSIC FILE. IT HELPS TO IDENTIFY, SORT AND DELIVER YOUR MUSIC SO YOU CAN COLLECT THOSE ROYALTIES!

METADATA INCLUDES:

- **TITLE AND ARTIST NAME:** ENSURING CONSISTENT BRANDING ACROSS PLATFORMS.

- **ISRC/UPC CODES** (UNIQUE CODES THAT IDENTIFY YOUR MUSIC). SOME PLATFORMS PROVIDE THESE AUTOMATICALLY - LIKE DISTROKID)

- **CONTRIBUTORS:** INCLUDE PRODUCERS, SONGWRITERS, AND FEATURED ARTISTS.

5. SELECT RELEASE OPTIONS

- **CHOOSE A RELEASE DATE:** CHOOSE A FUTURE DATE TO ALLOW FOR PROMOTION (2-4 WEEKS IS STANDARD). APPS SUCH AS SPOTIFY FOR ARTISTS ALLOW YOU TO PITCH YOUR SONG TO SPOTIFY'S ALGORITHMIC PLAYLISTS, WHICH IS A GREAT WAY TO GET NEW LISTENERS. IT RECOMMENDS TO GET YOUR MUSIC UPLOADED AT LEAST 7 DAYS BEFORE ITS RELEASE SO THAT IT CAN BE CONSIDERED FOR PLAYLISTS (I PERSONALLY RECOMMEND AT LEAST 2 WEEKS BEFORE SO YOU AREN'T FEELING ANY ADDED CRUNCH).

- **PRE-SAVE/PRE-ORDER:** ENABLE IF AVAILABLE THROUGH YOUR DIGITAL DISTRIBUTOR FOR ADDED BUZZ. I'VE USED **PRESAVE.IO** TO CREATE PRE-SAVE CAMPAIGNS WHERE I CAN TRACK SAVES AND COLLECT EMAILS. THIS IS A PAID SERVICE.

- **PLATFORMS:** SELECT WHERE YOU WANT YOUR MUSIC TO BE SENT TO (SPOTIFY, APPLE MUSIC, TIKTOK, ETC.). MY RECCOMENDATION IS TO UPLOAD TO AS MANY PLACES AS YOUR DIGITAL DISTRBUTOR OFFERS! I ALSO UPLOAD TO BANDCAMP AND SOUNDCLOUD TO REACH MORE FOLKS!

6. SET RIGHTS AND LICENSES

- CHOOSE TERRITORIES FOR DISTRIBUTION IF APPLICABLE.

- OPT INTO SERVICES LIKE YOUTUBE CONTENT ID IF APPLICABLE.

DISTRIBUTION + MARKETING

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7. SUBMIT FOR DISTRIBUTION

CONGRATS! YOU ARE NOW READY TO SUBMIT YOUR MUSIC INTO THE WORLD! A FEW THINGS FIRST:

- **DOUBLE-CHECK ALL DETAILS.** MAKE SURE YOU'VE SELECTED THE CORRECT FILE (I LOVE NAMING MY FILES "FINAL", "FINAL FINAL", "REAL FINAL ACTUALLY"). IF YOU'RE ANYTHING LIKE ME, GIVE THE TRACK A FINAL LISTEN TO MAKE SURE ITS THE CORRECT ONE. MAKE SURE ALL OF YOUR CO-WRITERS/PRODUCERS ARE ADDED AS COLLABORATORS ON THE TRACK VIA YOUR DIGITAL DISTRIBUTOR AND/OR P.R.O. (AND COPYRIGHT AS/IF NEEDED). THIS CAN MEAN GIVING THEM SPLITS OR CREDITS.

- **SUBMIT AND TRACK THE PROGRESS OF YOUR RELEASE** THROUGH THE PLATFORM DASHBOARD. MOST DIGITAL DISTRIBUTORS ALLOW YOU TO SEE WHERE YOUR SONG IS IN THE DIGITAL ETHER - WHETHER ITS BEEN DELIVERED TO THE PLATFORMS YET OR STILL PENDING.

8. PROMOTE YOUR RELEASE

- **SHARE ON SOCIAL MEDIA, EMAIL LISTS, AND WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY**. I PERSONALLY LOVE MAKING EMAIL PROMOS FOR MY NEW MUSIC, SENT OUT A WEEK OR TWO IN ADVANCE, AND THEN ON THE DAY OF THE RELEASE. I ALSO RECOMMEND CREATING VIDEO FOR SOCIALS WITH YOUR SONG TO GET PEOPLE EXCITED FOR THE RELEASE. GENERALLY DEPENDING ON THE SIZE OF A PROJECT, I'LL START RELEASING PROMO A MONTH BEFORE SONG RELEASE (FOR SOMETHING LIKE AN ALBUM) OR 2 WEEK BEFORE FOR A SINGLE.

- **PITCH TO SPOTIFY PLAYLISTS OR USE PROMOTIONAL TOOLS** LIKE DISTROKID'S SPOTIFY CANVAS TO ADD MORE FLAIR TO YOUR WORK. I ALSO USE A SITE CALLED SUBMITHUB TO TRY TO GET MORE PLAYLIST AND BLOG PLACEMENTS. ITS WORTH A SHOT, AND YOU GET SOME DECENT FEEDBACK EVEN IF YOUR SONG ISNT ACCEPTED TO A GIVEN PLAYLIST OR BLOG. THIS IS A PAID SERVICE TO NOTE!

9. MONITOR AND ENGAGE

- TRACK STREAMS, ROYALTIES, AND LISTENER FEEDBACK. WE LOVE FEEDBACK!

- ENGAGE WITH FANS AND BUILD MOMENTUM FOR FUTURE RELEASES.

CHECKLIST

YOU CAN PRINT THIS PAGE TO CHECK OFF
YOUR UPLOAD PROGRESS AS YOU GO!

- ☐ FINALIZE TRACK
- ☐ CREATE PROMO AND SELECT DATES FOR RELEASE
- ☐ CREATE COVER ART
- ☐ SELECT DISTRIBUTER AND REGISTER
- ☐ INPUT METADATA
- ☐ SET RELEASE OPTIONS
- ☐ SET RIGHTS AND LISCENCES
- ☐ SUBMIT FOR DISTRIBUTION
- ☐ PROMOTE

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CONGRATS!

ET VOILA! YOU'VE NOW RELEASED YOUR FIRST SONG! AGAIN, CONGRATULATIONS, AND KEEP MAKING MUSIC. IT'S SO SPECIAL TO GET TO LISTEN TO ALL THAT YOU HAVE TO SHARE, SO IF YOU'VE USED THIS GUIDE TO HELP YOU IN YOUR PROCESS, LET ME KNOW – I WANT TO HEAR YOUR ART!

MY EMAIL: KRISTENMERRITTMUSIC@GMAIL.COM

MY WEBSITE: KRISTENMERRITTMUSIC.COM

AND IF YOU'D LIKE TO HEAR SOME OF MY MUSIC AND/OR FOLLOW ME, YOU CAN FIND ME HERE:

SPOTIFY
INSTAGRAM
TIK TOK
APPLE MUSIC
YOUTUBE
WEBSITE
SOUNDCLOUD
BANDCAMP