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10 POINT CHECKLIST

TO RECORD & RELEASE YOUR CHURCH'S MUSIC

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-INTRODUCTION-

Hello! Thanks for downloading this 10 Point Checklist to help you learn and understand the process needed to record and release your Church's music.

If you did not know, Kingdom Crew is a team of professional mixing and mastering engineers in the Christian music industry. When we're not working with the biggest Christian artists in the industry, we work with Churches or Worship Leaders just like you.

One of the most common things that differentiate a successful release from a non-successful release for an independent church or worship leader is the amount of preparation taken before recording takes place.

This eBook is a simple checklist on how to simplify the process and help you prepare whether you're experienced or not. The better prepared you are, the better results you will get and hopefully more success you will see from your release, which is what we at Kingdom Crew want to see happen: your music getting played over and over again on Spotify, Apple Music, Pandora etc so that you can have fruitful ministry.

Just a full disclaimer, this checklist is here to help you have a BASIC understanding on what it takes to get a project you're hoping to start off the ground.

You've probably been apart of other types of large projects that may or may not have been music related, and what do they all have in common? They all come across unique scenarios and issues that can delay the project moving forward as fast as you might want it to. So keep in mind that your particular situation to approaching this project might be different than others. But what it comes down to is this: **whenever we instruct anyone on how to get started, this checklist is exactly the advice we give.**

Without further delay, lets get started!

#1: WHAT TYPE OF RELEASE WILL THIS BE?

The first thing you need to determine is if this release will be a "live recorded" or a "studio recorded" release. The reason it is important to decide upfront is because it will obviously dictate the decisions you're going to make along the way of preparation. Each type of release has a different set of obstacles. But on a basic level (and for the sake of this eBook) you will still need to prepare in a very similar manner for both types of releases.

LIVE?

A few things to consider for a live recording: what does your setup look like for a live recording? Are you recording from a digital console? Do you have the ability to record on two rigs in case one rig goes down in the middle of the live performance? Do you have proper room micing techniques to capture the congregation singing, BUT also have the ability to record the direct mics of individual instruments well enough? Do you have the ability to do overdubs in case something wasn't recorded/performed very well during the initial live performance? These are a few things you need to consider for a live recorded release.

STUDIO?

A few things to consider for a Studio recording: What does your setup look like? Will it be able to record your music well enough? Do you have a stable computer? (very important if you're planning to use VST instruments). Do you HONESTLY know what you're doing when recording the different instruments for your music? (if you don't, Send Us an Email with subject line "*Recording Course from Kingdom Crew*").

#2: WHAT SONGS YOU'RE RECORDING

It's important to know which songs you will be recording to not only get all the music in place and plan for the rest of the points made in this checklist, but it's also important for publishing purposes especially if you are doing covers. If they are covers, you will need to pay for the right to record someone else's music without causing a legal issues. Covers or Originals, here are a couple tips to help get the brain working on what route is best for you.

ORIGINALS?

If your songs are originals, it would be smart to get them copyrighted to cover your butt up front. Technically, you DO NOT HAVE to do this because the moment you record your original song and release it, it's as good as owning the copyright and others cannot use your song without your permission. But it wouldn't hurt to get it Copyrighted. If you're in the US, you can do this by going to Copyright.gov.

COVERS?

Covers are a different story. You need to get permission to record someone else's song if you're planning to release it and it will cost money to do so. Thankfully *almost* all Christian/Worship Music is licensed by Capitol CMG Publishing. To find out how to do this exactly or to help answer your detailed questions, check out their F.A.Q. page and see if anything there will help answer your questions. LINK HERE: http://www.capitolcmgpublishing.com/?cid=26839

#3: WHO WILL BE PERFORMING THE SONGS?

Will you have all your bases covered with the musicians in your current praise band? Or will you need help getting studio musicians to record your music to sound awesome?

This is important to plan ahead because anyone who can't play the parts properly or as good as you would like, can slow down the recording process very significantly and you will need to find someone else who can play the parts properly.

BONUS TIP:

Encourage your musicians to practice individually on their down time. The better they know their parts, the more confident the recorded performance is going to sound. A good rule of thumb is that every musician should be able to play the song together as a group at least three times through FLAWLESSLY without the need to look at the sheet music before considering entering the studio or recording the song as a live performance.

#4: RECORDING SCHEDULE

Its time to figure out a schedule to get everything recorded efficiently. What you're going to want to plan is almost a full 8 hour day to record one song (*10 songs equals 80 hours total*). The most efficient way to get the best results is to record each instrument in batches.

For example, recording drums. Record the drums in one day with the same mic and drum kit setup for every song. This approach will help the sound to be consistent across the album, and allows you to only have to schedule one day for the drummer to come in and play their parts. Plus, you'll only have to setup the recording equipment and drum kit ONE TIME. Doing it all in one day for all the songs is a much more efficient and effective way of recording your drums verses multiple days. Make sense? And you can rinse and repeat this concept for all the instruments you intend to record for your project.

Obviously if you're making a live album, you don't need to be concerned about a recording schedule per instrument. You will be more focused on creating a practice schedule that will effectively prepare your team for the live performance the night of the recording. It wouldn't be a bad idea to do two "dress rehearsals" of the live concert with the team that will be recording your performance. This will help work out any issues before its time to truly record the live concert. Scheduling all of these times in advance will truly show your team how serious you are about getting a quality recording, but also help with having everyone on the same page so that you can have a successful release.

#5: MIXING

Mixing is a very special process whether you're planning to release a live or studio album, and it definitely should not be overlooked. It takes a lot of experience to make the right decisions in order to create a good balanced mix that people will not only enjoy but serves the song justice so that your listener will want to listen to your song again and again. Thats kind of the point of all this, right?

Mixing can definitely be a daunting task for any church, especially if they have never done it before OR don't do it consistently. Yes, there are TONS of youtube videos out there that can help you, but that alone can be another daunting task to find the BEST advice to help you get quality results that are comparable to what a experienced professional can give you.

This is where Kingdom Crew can help you.

Kingdom Crew is a team of professional mixing and mastering engineers who work with some of the biggest Christian artists in the CCM industry (see our website for a list of artists). We all do our craft for a living and we can guarantee you a professional end product to give to your listener (as long as the songs have been recorded well enough).

Our prices for mixing range from $400 to $600 (and that DOES include mastering). We also can help prepare/edit your recordings for mixing for an additional price and whole lot of other services. Check out our website for more details, or send us an email for more information.

Whether you hire Kingdom Crew or not, communicating with and having a mixing engineer in mind before recording takes place is a really good step to take in preparing for your release.

#6: MASTERING

Mastering is a process that compliments a good mix but is a COMPLETELY separate thing than mixing. They are not the same thing and need to be handled by a separate professional to make sure that you have a recording that will translate on various listening devices and digital streaming platforms.

Much like mixing, it can be very daunting and confusing on how to actually perform this process yourself. There are tons of YouTube videos out there trying to explain what mastering is. Some are pretty stinkin' close and some can be misleading.

Thankfully, Kingdom Crew has one of the best professional mastering engineers in the CCM industry; Mike Cervantes. He has worked with For KING & COUNTRY, Natalie Grant, Crowder, We Are Messengers and WAY WAY more. His rate starts at $85 per song. And here is the best part….even if you have decided to mix your church's music yourself because you have someone on your team that is legit at mixing, he can take that master to a professional and competitive level. He has done this NUMEROUS times for many churches.

If you're curious how your mix will sound mastered by a professional, we do offer a **Free Mastering Sample** on the Kingdom Crew website. This is totally a risk free way for you to hear your mix mastered by a professional. Give him a shot and check it out!

#7: ARTWORK

Have you ever heard the phrase "*Don't Judge a Book by a Cover*"? Sometimes this happens in the music world with cover art and its important you start to think of your artwork and what its going to look like ahead of time. Don't sleep on this! Getting good artwork made can go a long way. Sometimes people will even just give your song a listen because of the artwork. There is even a category to win a Grammy and Dove Award for best artwork! Clearly its important. Don't skimp here. Take some time and look on instagram to see if there is anyone you like and would consider working with for your upcoming release's artwork.

Its a good rule of thumb to start the artwork process no later than during the mixing process. This way your artwork can be close to OR completely finished by the time you have final masters from the mastering engineer in your possession and ready to prepare for distribution.

Here are a few people that make incredible artwork and are worth checking out for your upcoming release:

David Tigrett
Jason Smithers (*Instagram*)
Ryne Norman/Hardspeak Creative

#8: DIGITAL/PHYSICAL DISTRIBUTION

This is incredibly important because this will effect the date of when your music will get released and how it will be distributed to your listeners.

The first thing you need to do is find out who is going to distribute your music. In case you've been living under a rock, Digital Streaming Platforms are the norm (*Spotify, Apple Music, Pandora etc.*). This will be the most popular way your listener will consume your music. With this in mind, it is important to find a distributor that will work best for your needs. We at Kingdom Crew really like **Distrokid.** Why? Its very affordable, reliable and from our experience working with artists who have used it versus some of the other options out there, we have not experienced any problems. Go ahead and **Check Them Out** and make a decision for yourself! :) (*If you click on **This Link**, you will receive 7% discount off your first year using Distrokid. Our gift to you!*)

If your church has a congregation that still listens to CDs, this is another avenue you need to look into. Probably the biggest obstacle with CDs is getting the timing right with when the CDs are delivered before the release date. IF you're going to release and sell CDs, DO NOT schedule a release show or even plan a release date until you have the CDs in hand. Anyone who has been in the music industry has at least one (*or ten!*) stories of how the artist had it planned perfectly for the CDs to show up the day before a release show/release date. And then of course UPS didn't live up to their promises of the scheduled delivery, leaving the artist without a product to sell and a huge missed opportunity for their listeners to grab and consume their music.

In general, it is wise to not schedule a release date until you have the final masters AND artwork in your possession. This gives you two advantages:

1. Gives you plenty of time (at least 6 weeks) to submit your music to playlist curators (see the next section)

2. Allows you plenty of time to properly prepare for your release concert and all the marketing needed to release a successful release.

#9: MARKETING & HYPE

When should you start marketing and creating hype, and what should it look like?

Guerrilla marketing is the easiest way to get buzz going on your upcoming release. Creating some awesome content that advertises your release well and giving it to people you know who will post about it on social media is a great place to start. Using that content and starting the "promotion process" no later than a month before the release is a really great way to create buzz and hype leading up to the release day.

A great way to get some buzz going on release day is to try and get your music on some curator playlists on Spotify. This will not only help you get more plays, recognition, AND be discovered by people you don't know, but it looks great to your social media audience to show them that you have been added to popular playlists. It might be that last thing to push someone over the edge to get them to listen and give your music a chance.

If you've done your homework and created enough buzz leading up to AND on release day, it can result in tons of streams from many listeners. And if you've recorded, mixed and, mastered your music well enough to create music that your audience will also enjoy, you have a very good chance that your audience will listen to your album over and over again, giving you streams that turn into revenue that you can pour back into your ministry.

#10: BUDGET

THE BIG QUESTION…"What is this all going to cost to fully fund this project?"

This is the part that everyone doesn't enjoy as much. And if you've planned everything we already went through way too big and expensive, you will unfortunately have to rethink some of your plans to fit your realistic budget. Most of the points discussed in this eBook, you don't want to skimp out on with your budget.

Something to think about: Creating music to release on streaming platforms is a piece of content that should work for you and not against you. The better you execute the quality of the music and recording so that it is enjoyable to your listeners, the better chance you have that they will listen to your music over and over again. So it is very important that you release something that is of exceptional quality, so that you can earn from your investment of the budget you've been given.

-Bonus Tip: If you need to cut costs, consider signing up to be updated when we release courses on how to record, mix, and master your own music. These are courses we are considering making and releasing within the next year to help those who can't afford a mixing and/or mastering engineer and would rather learn how to do it at a basic level for themselves. It will cut the costs of hiring a Kingdom Crew team member and get you as close as you can to a professionally mixed and mastered product. **Send an Email** to info@kingdom-crew.com with subject line "*Recording Course from Kingdom Crew*"

10 POINT CHECKLIST
TO RECORD & RELEASE YOUR CHURCH'S MUSIC

- [ ] Do I Know Which Type of Recorded Release I Will Be Making? Live or Studio?

- [ ] What Type of Songs Will I Be Recording? Original or Covers?

- [ ] Do I Know Who Will Be Recording on These Songs?

- [ ] Do I Have a Recording Schedule planned and in Place?

- [ ] Have I Found a Mixing Engineer Picked or In Mind for My Project?

- [ ] Have I Picked a Mastering Engineer for My Project?

- [ ] Do I Have Someone Picked to Make My Artwork?

- [ ] Have I Picked What Type of Distribution I Will Be Doing and Who I Will Going Through for Digital distribution?

- [ ] Do I Have a Marketing Plan in Place?

- [ ] Do I Know My Budget and Will it Work With My Plans for This Release?

CONCLUSION

If you can check off all of the points above, you are definitely prepared and ready to start moving forward with your upcoming release. If you cannot, you should definitely spend the time needed in the area you can't check off and make sure you feel properly prepared in that area before moving forward.

Again, the better prepared you are the more success you can expect from your release.

Please let us know if you have any questions. We are here to help you as much as we possibly can!

And if you have any friends that need this eBook, please send them **HERE** to sign up and get a FREE download of this eBook and other free stuff.

We're happy that you've taken this first step, and we look forward to hearing your upcoming release!

Talk to you soon!

Sincerely,
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