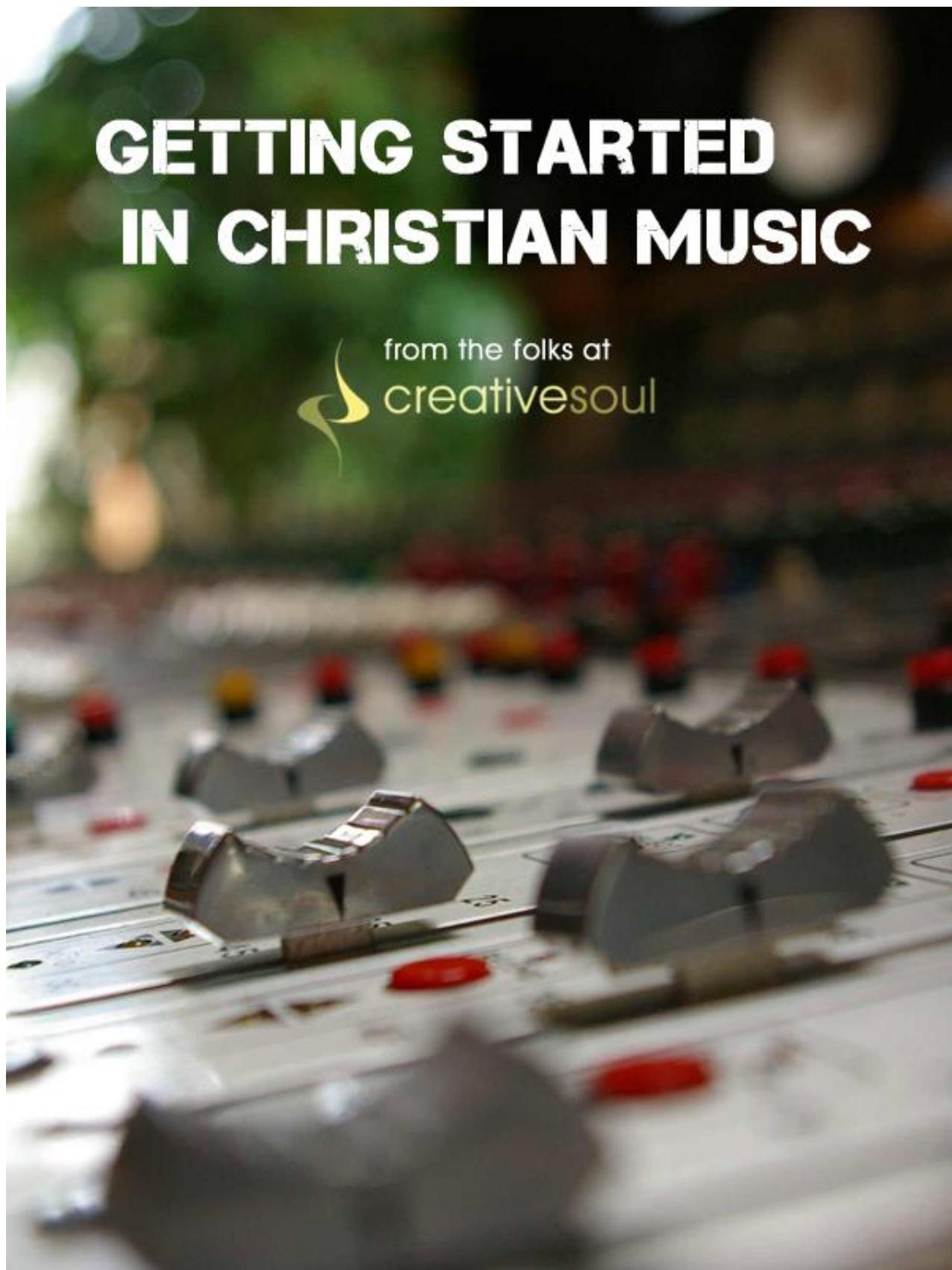


GETTING STARTED IN CHRISTIAN MUSIC

from the folks at
 creativesoul



Getting Started in Christian Music

By Eric Copeland of Creative Soul

Welcome to what could be your first step in getting going with your music ministry, or moving to a whole new level from where you have been.

This E-Book is meant to be a primer, but is certainly not just for beginners. This is for anyone looking for the right steps to take, to get things moving in their ministry...finally!

Where You've Been

We know exactly where you are and where you've been. We know it's been challenging to find the right roads, the right people to help, and the right advice to trust.

How do we know? We've been there with our own talents and with those of our clients for 20 years. Getting a grasp on your talent, honing that talent into a craft, and then getting that artistic thing out into the world is a very daunting thing.

Add to that the pressure and leading that God has placed on your heart to minister and get the word out, not to mention use the talent He gave you...whew. That's a lot on your shoulders.

You may have tried to find someone locally or in your church or school to help, but there has just not been anything that's felt right. So, you just sit there, knowing you have talent and ministry to share, but no idea where to turn next.

Well, to find out the next road, you have to know where it is you think you might need to get to.

Where You Want to Go

If you are a singer or performer, you probably have it in your mind that you need a record deal, because that's what you see on TV happening to other talented people. While this still happens, it's really for a very small percentage of artists, and these days it's artists who have a tremendous following already built in (American Idol/Voice contestants, YouTube Viral artists, etc).

But there is another way that has especially over the past few decades become much more common, sensible, and even preferred: Doing it yourself. Finding someone to help you (usually in a music center like Nashville where there is amazing talent, and companies that can help you promote as well). Then just getting out and building your following.

Is this easy? No way. But, if you feel God has given you talent, and wants you to use it for His Kingdom, then this becomes the only choice. Unless you just *like* sitting on your hands for years, or standing in line at The Voice tryouts with other wannabes, or waiting for someone to recognize your genius by a random demo crossing their desk).

If you are a songwriter, it's very similar. You have to get your songs to audiences or, if you aren't an artist, to other artists to sing and record. Again, this is done in a place like Nashville.

Note: We will probably mention Nashville a lot, because to be honest, it's the center of Christian music publishing, production, and promotion. (And it's where we work. So, there.)

How to Get There

Well, you can drive or fly...

Seriously, the next step is getting in touch with someone who can help.

In the old days, you would hope for that lucky break where someone would put you in front of an A&R (Artist & Repertoire) person, or music publisher, who would be so overwhelmed by your talent, he had to sign you on the spot!

Today there is an entire industry on the Internet ready to serve the new, returning, or professional artist. All you need do is get in touch.

You also need to be armed with information (like this free E-Book! ;). At any bookstore or library you can find books on the music industry. Some may be out of date, but read them anyway. If you are a songwriter, check out any issue of the Songwriters Market at a local library. There is great info in the front part of these yearly market guides.

And of course, use the handy, dandy worldwide interwebs to find someone who can help you in your specific genre (for instance, search Christian Music Producer, or Christian Music Publisher in Google).

Find someone you trust. Someone who does good quality work. Then reach out and see if you can work with them.

What Is Your Dream?

What is the thing you want to do? Is it to be singing and ministering in front of people? If so, then you are fairly certain God gave you the gifts and talents to do this.

The Old Way: You hope to be "discovered" and some record label takes a chance on you because they are rolling in dough, because they are selling so much music. They sign you, pay for an album, pay for marketing, you don't sell enough to make a profit, and they release you. You own nothing. They keep the masters. You are back to doing this alone. Oh, and by the way getting signed happens to about .1% of the artists out there.

The New Way: You take control yourself. You find a producer and company that can help you realize this dream. You find an investor, or invest in this yourself, and own everything. You get out, using all the new tools including social media, build a following, and play to them the rest of your life. And did we mention you own **everything**?

Do you want to be a songwriter that writes for other people? If so, you feel God has given you the gift to write very good songs.

Old Way: You send your songs in blind to a music publisher, or “pitch” them live. The music publisher decides they like you and signs you to a publishing contract, does all the work, finds home for the songs, and you sit at home eating bon-bons. (Not sure this really ever happened.)

New Way: Actually this hasn’t changed all that much, except there are plenty of things you can do to own your own publishing, find avenues for your songs online, in TV, marketing (licensing), and approach more artists and producers directly. (And successful songwriters really eat less carbs these days, FYI).

The bottom line is that you don’t have to “wait” for anyone to begin achieving your dream of a more creative life. In fact, many times all that is stopping you is fear. More on that below.

What Is the Reality?

OK, so we are not going to sugar coat this for you. Very likely, you will NOT become famous ([and here’s why](#)). Sorry. We know you’re disappointed, but it has to be said.

The reality of music ministry is finding that place where being in the music ministry business fits into your *real* life. Not the fantasy life where you get a record deal and the industry comes and whisks you away. But the real life of driving a few hours to a church, singing a few songs or a concert, selling some product to people who were touched by your music, and then driving home, alone. No custom, fancy bus waiting for you with a flat screen and a bedroom in the back.

For songwriters, reality is trips to Nashville to have meetings with publishers, artists, and producers, hoping to find homes for your songs. Then driving home wondering if anything will come of those meetings.

But here’s another reality. You’re singing at that church that night, and someone hears something in your song that changes the way they think. They make a life-changing decision, and one more soul is added to heaven.

Or another reality is you write a song that sits around for a while. An artist hears it and loves it, and puts it on their album. That song becomes a radio cut, and somewhere in the middle of America, someone hears it on the radio and they have to pull over because tears are welling up. And they are changed.

That’s reality, and it has nothing to do with phrases like “getting signed” or “publishing deal”. It’s what you can do now in the new music world we live in, by just choosing to get started.

Getting Started as a Christian Artist

There's likely been something holding you back from even surfing around and finding this free E-Book, and that's just plain old fear. So let's throw caution to the wind and just get started!

First things first, you need to *become* an artist. How do you do that? While you or your ministry are the actual product, you will need an example of your talent to show pastors, sell/give to fans, and generally prove you are who you say you are. So, as much as it may sound self-serving coming from a producer, you really do need to make a recording of some kind.

Listen if you signed a "recording contract" with a label, they would just get you into the studio ASAP to record a project (it *is* called a "recording" contract you know). So if you want to get started why wouldn't you do that yourself? It only makes sense.

Any business who wants to succeed must either have a service or a product to succeed. As a Christian music ministry, you will have both, but you need actual music to start with! Otherwise you're just a nice person who can sing or play.

So, how do you get started down that road? Well, companies [like Creative Soul in Nashville](#) can sit down with you, explain the options, and help you down the roads of production, and later promotion.

It's all about finding someone you trust, and feel comfortable working with, then getting to work!

Getting Started as a Working Christian Songwriter

So you have lots of great songs (you think) that could be cut on albums being made all the time? Well, maybe it's time to get someone's thoughts on your songs. Are they really good? Do they have what music publishers are interested in?

I always tell writers the first thing to do is find help in the music center for their style of music. I will say that Nashville is the best music center to find publishers for country, bluegrass, and folk, but also certainly for the Christian market.

Then at some point, you want to come to Nashville and start having meetings, "pitching" your songs, and getting good demos of your songs recorded.

We have a great ongoing free blog and community especially designed for Christian songwriters at <http://SouloftheSongwriter.com>

You can also find us at Twitter at [@SouloftheSongwr](#) and Facebook at <http://www.Facebook.com/SouloftheSongwriter> to keep up with songwriter tips, opportunities, and ideas.

Staying Inspired as a Creative Christian

For the Creative Soul

It's tough to find inspiration, ideas, and encouragement sometimes in your local area or region. There just may not be a lot of folks you feel a musical or even creative kinship with. Being a Christian these days is tough enough, but to be a creative Christian is even harder. Finding like minds isn't easy.

That's why we work so hard to provide free info and encouragement through our **For the Creative Soul** brand at <http://www.FortheCreativeSoul.com>

Also, you can get daily inspiration on Twitter @4theCr8vSoul and Facebook at <http://www.Facebook.com/FortheCreativeSoul>

We also have a great devotional E-Book called "[For the Creative Soul, a 52-Week Devotional for Creative Christians](#)". Available [here!](#)

Navigating the World of Christian Music Making

The Music (Ministry) Business

We know how hard it is in this ever changing world of social media, technology, and changing music business landscape to keep up on things. That's why we have created The Music (Ministry) Business brand.

The blog at <http://www.MusicMinistryBiz.com> is designed to help real world Christian artists and songwriters keep abreast of what's going on in the Christian music business world as it relates to the independent artist (and it's ALL relating to the indie artist these days!)

Also follow us @Cr8vSoulRecords on Twitter, and on Facebook at <http://www.Facebook.com/CreativeSoulRecords>

Going Further

So where do you go from here? We would be happy to answer any questions you may have about serving God with your creative gifts. First, look through our comprehensive and informational site at <http://www.CreativeSoulOnline.com> and then get in touch. We'd love to hear from you.

Also, just pray, and look into many options. Maybe doing nothing is what God is telling you right now (although we believe He's always telling us to do something!)

But be careful not to dilly dally too long, and regret later that you should have started earlier.

Thanks for reading this info, and enjoy a few extras below. Please feel free to email us at CreativeSoulRecords@gmail.com or call **615-400-3910** and tell us what's on your creative mind (and God's agenda for your ministry!).

Here's our first steps for serious Christian artists and songwriters:

Our Unique Christian Artist and Songwriter Workshop in Nashville, TN

For over a decade Creative Soul has been welcoming Christian artists and songwriters to Nashville for our unique Christian Artist Workshop. We start with every new project this way, but moreover, we feel it is a tremendous way for artists and songwriters to gauge where they are even if they are not ready to record right now.

Each month we schedule an exciting day for a small group of artists. This will be a full day where you will get to talk about your ministry, hear about other ministries, and get all the information you have always wanted to know.

The day begins at the luxurious conference room at a large Christian label headquarters like **Word Entertainment on Music Row** in Nashville, TN, or at a major recording studio in town.

Find out how you can attend this amazing, life changing day at the very epicenter of the Christian music industry. [Click here for more information!](#)

Another Option

The Christian Artist Workshop (PDF Edition)

Here's a more affordable option with all the same info, and no trip costs!

This is the complete PDF edition of everything we talk about in our Nashville consults. It's the entire outline of the workshop, but with all the information we share during the day. What you'll learn:

- Info about who we are and what we do
- All about our affiliation with Word Entertainment
- Finding your purpose and calling
- Our complete development and production process
- How you can expect to make income
- Explanations on publishing and royalties

- The importance of social media
- How to make a plan for your music and ministry

[Click here to get your copy!](#)

A Way to Get Some Feedback

The 3-Song Critique

Creative Soul now offers a cost-effective 3-Song Demo Critique Service for \$125.

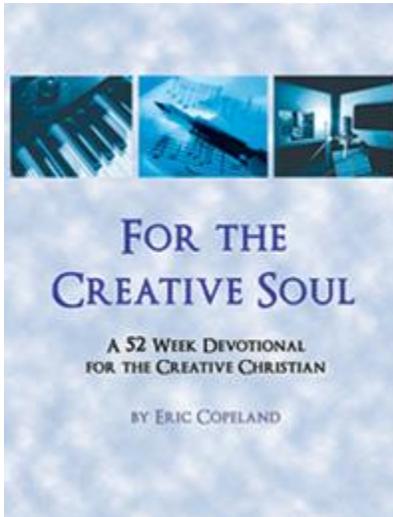
This package includes:

- **Extensive professional review (Up to 3 Songs per Consult)**
We will listen for several days to your demo in a few different systems and locations to get a feel for the music and it's commercial appeal. Other factors taken into consideration will be songwriting strength, originality, music talent, and heart.
- **Detailed email, and follow-up phone conversation if you like.**
We will write a long, detailed email about the songs and the topics listed above. Then, when you have had time to digest all that, we can schedule a phone call to talk more in-depth.
- **Suggestions for next step, publication, or industry contact**
Sometimes our best suggestion will be a few days of work at our studio, or we could suggest you send it to a publisher or record label. How good are you?
- **Discount off future Day Rate at Creative Soul in Nashville**
If you decide to schedule a day after your demo consult, we will take \$50 off the Day Rate price for that day.

[Click here for more information!](#)

Some Books You May Like

Special Preview: From “For the Creative Soul: A 52 Week Devotional”



Week 3. New Beginnings

No matter if you just got the Call (aka, the Signal, the Word, the Anointing, or some other Capitalized word that signifies God urging you to use your talents for Him) or maybe you're just like me. You've been at this since you were old to breathe, and subsequently been banging your head against walls for years.

It seems with every new spring, we have the chance to start again. To focus our talents, apply our experience in a smart new way, or roll out the newest, freshest version of ourselves.

I see nothing wrong with this at all as I am obviously also guilty as charged.

Years ago, when I was trying to figure out my ultimate road, and prayed a dangerous prayer (Whatever You want, I'll do!), God led me to serve as music director at a small church instead of immediately moving to Nashville.

Growing that small music team, and trying to teach them principles from the "Heart of the Artist" and other encouraging things, led me to start writing "For the Creative Soul". It's become a huge part of what I do, as consulting is sometimes ALL I do for certain clients.

The application here for you is that starting a new part of yourself, or just starting again, is sometimes the key to the other parts of your artistry or ministry to really start taking off.

Maybe serving on the music team at church in a more enhanced role is the key to becoming a stronger singer. Perhaps writing that book is the way to really grow your songwriting and lyrical chops.

Undoubtedly, I've found as a music producer that when an artist records that first life-changing, high quality album, it shows a new commitment and certainly gives them a new dimension to their ministry. The process of writing and recording with a professional is actually the best tool for artist development!

Whether you are completely just beginning to investigate what God has for you to do, or you are shifting gears a bit and trying a new road, do not be afraid or weary to start.

Instead have excitement for the new path set before you.

Romans 12:11-13 says *“Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality”*.

There is no shame in being new, or new at a skill you've previously not invested yourself in. Let the excitement drive you, not the fear of the unknown.

In this early part of the year, as the ice begins to thaw and the music ministry artists begin to come out of their hibernation, it's an exciting time for me as a producer.

New projects, new dreams, and new goals all take form. Artists eager to act on their resolutions (not to mention tax money), and new ministries starting from scratch! Fun!

Of course, new ideas and creative ventures are what drive me, so it's easy. But even for those of you who hate change and fear the possibility of failure, it's important to look towards the end result than the scary first hill to climb.

“The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride.”
Ecclesiastes 7:8

So, here's to new beginnings and new ideas. Striking out in a new direction. Boldly going and all that.

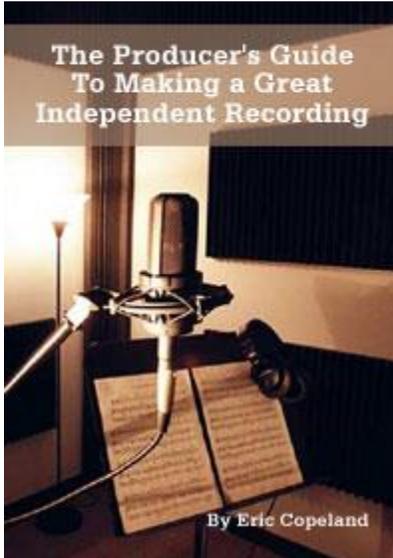
Sometimes deciding to make a fresh start is exactly what you need for a Creative breakthrough. Try it, and see.

For the Creative Soul this Week:

1. Can you make a fresh start with your creative passion? Maybe just a small change, a left turn of sorts?
2. What would you have to do to accomplish this? Relearn a talent? Change your habits?
3. Who would it affect if you had to start over creatively?

Get “For the Creative Soul: A 52 Week Devotional” at <http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/206492>

Special Preview: From “The Producer’s Guide to Making a Great Independent Recording”



Scenario One: You are sitting at the house, reading *Rolling Stone* and eating potato chips, and the doorbell rings.

It’s the UPS guy, and he has five big boxes for you.

You open up the first box, and inside are more boxes. Each box is marked “50 Count.”

You eagerly open up the box, and there are 50 beautiful, shrink-wrapped CDs, all with your name or band name emblazoned on the side.

Pulling one from the box, you look at the beautifully done cover and marvel at the way the back of the CD looks with all your songs listed, a producer named, and more pictures. Cool.

You rip open the cellophane and open the jewel case, and inside lists all the lyrics of your songs, the album credits that list all the people involved, and a beautiful color CD.

With no time to spare, you put in the CD in your player and... WOW!

You’ve done it; your music is playing through your speakers in all its pristine digital glory, and it sounds fantastic.

Scenario Two: You’re at a gig. When you get done with your last song, people are lining up to say hello, tell you how much they enjoyed the music, and perhaps get an autograph!

Then it hits you—the question that every singer, group, and band either dreads or longs to hear:

“Do you have a CD I can buy?”

At this point, your reaction will be horror, self-loathing, and cringing while you make excuses...

“Well, we’re getting ready to make one...”

“Um, I’m waiting for the stars to align correctly!”

“Uh, no, but I can come to your house and sing for you...”

...or you will smile and say,

“Yes, it’s on sale right here at the merch table!”

There’s no better feeling than to sell the music you made to people who want to support your talent.

Scenario Three: You’ve been working making mixes and helping people make music in your home studio or maybe even going around to local studios a bit to work on projects.

But what you’d really like to do is make this an income. You’d like to be known and make a living as a music producer.

But how? What’s the process? How can you ensure quality on each product you make? How can you possibly know all the steps without years of experience and trial and error?

This is a problem for both would-be artist and producer: you need at least one great product to show off, and to do that you need to know all the processes of recording and how to cover all the bases.

What This Book Is About

This book is designed to be a step-by-step checklist, manual, guide, and watchdog so that you can avoid common pitfalls and problems that the long recording process can bring.

The options are endless on how, where, with whom, and what to record on your new album project. Hopefully, this book will help you decide which path is best for you and your project.

This will also be a real-world guide for anyone to follow, whether you are an artist recording your first product, a musician tasked with producing the recording, or a new producer wanting to know the ins and outs of the process.

The purpose of this book is to provide you with real-world information on how to make an amazing recording in the middle of nowhere or in one of the top music centers of the world.

Who I Am

I'm a music producer, songwriter, arranger, keyboardist, and consultant for musicians and artists. I spend every day working for dozens of independent clients worldwide who need help creating a music project. I work daily in large multi-room studio facilities, smaller one-room studios, musician's home studios, or with musicians, engineers, and clients online sending files back and forth.

I do other things for artists like consulting, coaching, web design, graphics, marketing, etc. But all that flows to and from music production work. It's our core business.

My producing background comes honestly. It's just what I have always done, even as a kid.

When friends came to my house to spend the night, instead of staying up all night watching movies or telling ghost stories like normal children, we would record—sometimes music shows, sometimes songs we wrote and sometimes just silly stuff. But recording was in my blood from an early age.

I come from a very musical family. My dad was a band leader and trombone player; my mother a piano teacher and organist at church for over forty years. From age twelve, I was in touring choirs at church and competitive high school bands getting a lot of great music memories and traveling across the country.

In high school, I would record various songs I wrote and bring band and orchestra members to my "studio" (Dad's basement). Different friends and family members would seek me out to record a song for someone.

Later I joined various bands, toured the Midwest, and eventually landed in Chicago.

It was there that I began working with Jazz and R&B artists and musicians and began recording with a few local musicians with various studios.

In the early 90s, I relocated back to my home area and began working in the corporate world, all the while producing friends, coworkers, church members, and family on the side.

Over the years I developed a following and began to be tapped to produce local and regional Gospel, Jazz, and Pop artists. Soon, via the internet and word of mouth, clients were coming from as far away as California, Michigan, and Florida to work with me.

In 1995, our first record label, Creative Soul Records, was born for my personal projects. But artists loved the logo and the idea of being affiliated with a record label. And so began my life as a pseudo-record label. More on that later.

In 2001, I formed a music production company, Masterscore Music, and my work increased to daily sessions with clients from across the US and overseas. The majority of my work was with musical artists, but I also worked occasionally doing jingles and film and video scores.

All along, I began slowly incorporating musicians, engineers, studios, and industry folks into projects, as Nashville was just a few hours away.

By 2004, we decided to make the move to Nashville to work with clients and now live and work there full-time as Creative Soul Companies. As I mentioned, our core business is music production, but we also do a lot of consulting, coaching, design, video, marketing, and other work for our clients.

Our artists have found success in top radio charting, national publicity, touring opportunities, national awards, and conference speaking. We continue to help many new artists in different genres develop, produce amazing products, and promote them in the marketplace.

Who You Are

If you are reading this, you are probably an independent music artist, band member, producer, or record company that is trying to put together a quality project, most likely outside a major music center.

Thanks for picking this up and admitting you don't know it all. I will also say I don't know everything there is to know. But one thing I do know how to do is produce a quality music product on just about any budget. My experience comes from doing hundreds of albums, singles, and demos, as well as knowing the processes, hurdles, and traps that can trip you up on your way to finished product nirvana.

What you are trying to do is spend the budget you have but make your product look and sound like the newest release by (name your favorite artist here).

It can be done, and if you're careful, in a few months you can be sitting there at home or at a gig, and the dream will become reality.

The Real Reason For This Book

It's a new day out there for musicians, producers, engineers, and just about anyone who wants to get involved in the music business.

These days making independent recordings of music isn't something only amateurs do--it's the way **most** people record. Labels have always outsourced production to producers, but now they are shrinking their budgets down to the size that most of us have been recording on for years.

Most musicians will admit to you that 80-90 percent of their work is for independent artists and projects. That's a huge change from 10-20 years ago when most of the top

players were doing mostly label work and didn't even have time to look at an indie project.

Tools have changed too. Amazing music production no longer requires large plush studios, expensive mixing boards, and outboard gear. A small project studio with a decent computer and software (and someone who knows how to use it, of course) can compete with most studios on the planet.

How? Well, I hope this book explains that. The main thing is, in order to compete in the marketplace these days, a quality product is needed. The computer will only do so much work for you. You'll need careful forethought, planning, the right people at every step, and a steady hand through the process.

That's what this book is all about.

What Makes This Book Different

I'm glad you asked.

You'll find a myriad of books written by folks who have been in the music business at some point, whether they worked at major studios, were somebody at a major label, or maybe a guy in a hair band 20 years ago who is trying to remember what being in the studio was like.

Those books are fine, and you can ooh and ah over the big names they throw around. But the reality is that if you are reading this, you are just a real person who needs to make a great recording. You need a good primer to keep with you as you go through these processes in the world you live in.

And not just for today but for months or years down the line as you keep at this music thing.

For that reason, and unlike many books that you will find about producing music, we won't be covering specific technologies, like how to use the current software out there that everyone is using or what sounds are hot today. That info changes by the minute. What is hot today will be yesterday's tech in a few months.

We also won't be covering specific microphone setups, complex waveform editing, making coffee in the studio, or how to tune a drum, a guitar, a cello, or a fish. Those are tasks for the engineer, the studio manager, or the musicians (or a marine biologist).

This book is meant to be a handbook for you as an artist or the producer. There are a myriad of things you might run into while trying to work with musicians, producers, engineers, mastering, studios, duplication, etc—stuff that anyone who was recording dealt with fifty years ago and will deal with in another fifty years. The information presented here will always remain relevant, as we will be concentrating chiefly on processes, people, and principles that don't really change.

But first, we have to start at the beginning, and since this is the *Producer's Guide*, the first thing we need to get out of the way is the role of the producer and why you likely either need one or need to be one.

Get “The Producer’s Guide to Making a Great Independent Album”, now at <http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/143242>

About the Author

Eric Copeland is a producer, composer, author, and consultant in Nashville, TN. He works every day with artists, producers, engineers, musicians, and a cast of thousands. His main work is in finding ways to help his clients be better at what they do, and have more success. It’s a new music business out there, and there are infinitely new ways to do everything.

For more about producer, author, composer, and consultant Eric Copeland, visit his site at: <http://www.EricCopelandMusic.com>

For more info on how to get started in Christian music, including how to find someone to help, consulting, studio production and more please go online to <http://www.CreativeSoulOnline.com>

If you are an artist or songwriter and would like to know more about the complete line of services and products available by Creative Soul and Creative Soul Records, check out: <http://www.CreativeSoulOnline.com> and <http://www.CreativeSoulRecords.com>