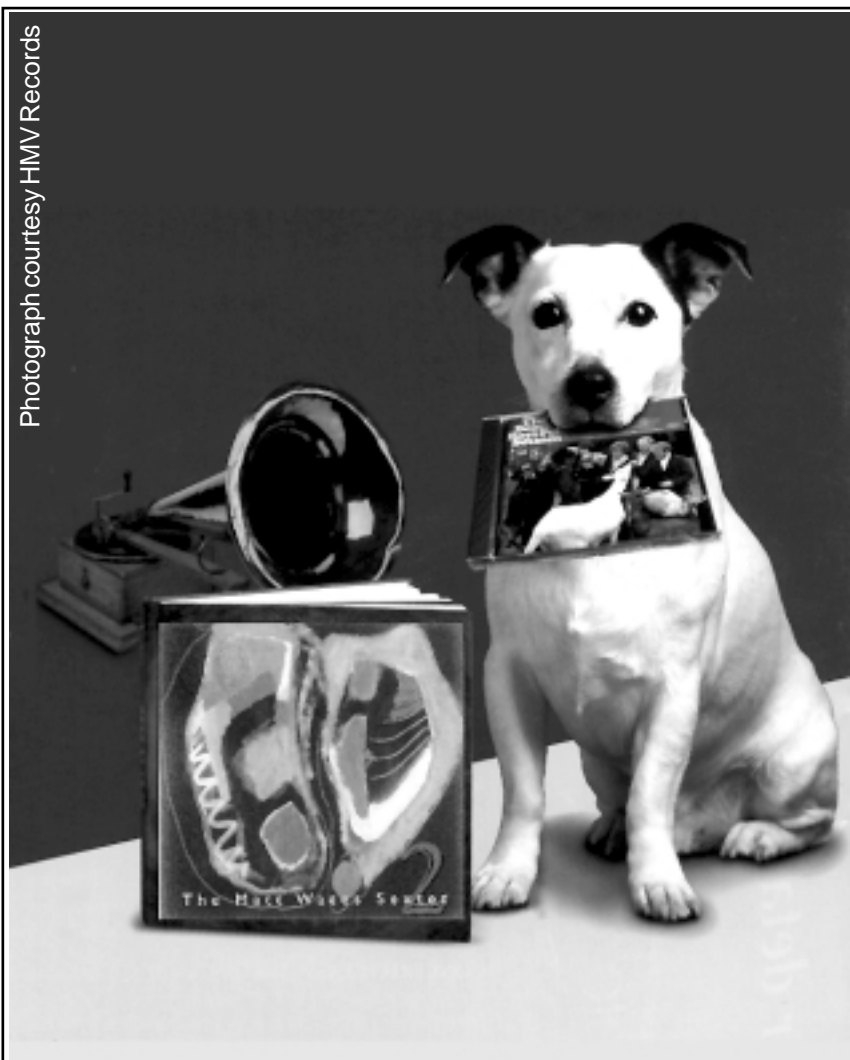


Photograph courtesy HMV Records



**jazz**  
**SERVICES**

A VOICE FOR JAZZ

## A Guide to Making Your Own CDs

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## INTRODUCTION

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Humphrey Lyttelton in *Take it From the Top* penned his own amusing obituary which - with an appearance on *Any Questions* and a chat with Michael Parkinson - led to an extended soubriquet of "well known Old Etonian - ex-Guards Officer - jazz trumpeter - broadcaster - cartoonist - bandleader - bird watcher - gastronome - humourist - panellist - TV personality."

It is probably too late for Malcolm Creese to enrol in the Guards, but his career to date is taking on a similar well-hyphenated appearance: sought-after musician-teacher-bandleader-record producer-record label owner-author and an all-round good egg.

All of us at Jazz Services are very grateful for Malcolm Creese who has generously agreed to write this *Guide to making CDs* which complements our first music business manual *Marketing Your Band*.

This publication is written with jazz performers/groups in mind, however it should be useful to people in most other areas of music.

We are also grateful for financial assistance from the Musicians' Union which has allowed us to publish both our guides for free distribution. Both manuals can be found on the Musicians' Union web site at [www.musiciansunion.org.uk](http://www.musiciansunion.org.uk).

Whilst you are visiting the MU web site, why not visit Malcolm's web site [www.audio-b.com](http://www.audio-b.com) which contains a wealth of detail on his many activities promoting jazz and will no doubt carry news of the latest edition of his epithet which is expanding at a rapid rate of knots.

**Chris Hodgkins**  
**Director, Jazz Services Ltd.**

## MALCOLM CREESE - A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR



Malcolm has been in the music business all his working life. He has extensive experience as a record shop manager, music publisher, tour manager, promoter, record producer, teacher, author, and performer at the highest level.

After school Malcolm attended London's Guildhall School of Music, where he studied classical cello. As well as pursuing a career as a performer and teacher, Malcolm decided to gain further skills in the music world, and he began working in a record shop. He studied retail management, and after gaining his qualifications in 1978, he was appointed manager of a large record and musical instrument store in Wembley. Malcolm later worked as an administration and sales manager for an American music-publishing company, and as a musical instrument demonstrator for Yamaha and Roland.

In the mid 1980s, Malcolm's love of jazz resulted in a switch from cello to double bass. His broad knowledge and skill in both classical and jazz genres ensured that he quickly became one of the busiest bass players in Britain. The diverse list of top artists with whom he has worked includes Lee Konitz, Clark Terry, Johnny Griffin, Mel Torme, Scott Hamilton, George Shearing, Kenny Wheeler, John Etheridge, George Benson, James Galway, Barbara Cook, The London Symphony and London Philharmonic Orchestras, Diana Ross and Sting. In the 1990s Malcolm toured extensively with pianist Stan Tracey, and in 1991 he joined Cleo Laine and John Dankworth's band.

In 1990, Malcolm formed his own record label in order to record some of the groups in which he plays. Today he is a respected record producer with more than twenty albums to his credit - on five different labels. In ten years, Malcolm's award-winning company, Audio-B Ltd. has grown to become one of the leading independent labels, dedicated to producing fine recordings of British jazz artists.

### THE AUDIO-B CATALOGUE

ABCD 1	Jonathan Taberner Trio 'Jazz From The Cafe' (Now Deleted)
ABCD 2	Matt Wates Sextet 'Relaxin' At The Cat'
ABCD 3	Vic Ash Quartet 'The Eyes Have It'
ABCD 4	Tony Coe & Co. 'Blue Jersey'
ABCD 5	Matt Wates Sextet 'Two'
ABCD 6	Tony Coe, John Horler & Malcolm Creese 'In Concert'
ABCD 7	John Dankworth Quartet 'Moon Valley'
ABCD 8	Kate Williams Trio/Quartet 'Sycamore Song'
ABCD 9	Matt Wates Sextet 'Smallbills Garage'
ABCD 10	Christian Garrick 'Different Strokes'
ABCD 5011	Cleo Laine 'Christmas at the Stables'



#### To come in 2000/2001:

More from Cleo Laine, Matt Wates, John Dankworth, Christian Garrick & others.

For more information, or to order CDs, please write to: Audio-B, P.O.Box 16797, London, W3 6ZS, or visit the Audio-B web site: [www.audio-b.com](http://www.audio-b.com)



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# 1 AIMS

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Only a few high-profile jazz musicians in Britain get the chance to record on major labels. Even when they do, they may not have as much artistic control over the recordings as they would like. The Musicians won't have much input into sleeve design, recording techniques, marketing and financial policy either. DIY Compact Discs (CDs) give artists the ability to record their work and to have total control over every aspect of the finished product. With a good CD an artist or band has almost the perfect "calling card". They look good and sound wonderful. They're small and fairly cheap to replace, so giving them away to the right people is an excellent way to promote and raise the profile of the musicians or band, attract media attention and secure work for the band.

When you get to the gigs, of course, you then have a perfect "souvenir" to sell to the audience, thereby generating some money to help pay for all this. You also have a record of your creative output which should last forever and, hopefully, some reviews and radio airplay to back it all up. It should "snowball" from here. Eventually you may even make a profit, although this should probably not be your primary motive. There are, apparently, more reliable ways of making money, however, the benefits of producing your own CDs should make it worthwhile.

Much of the following text is in the form of tips or snippets of advice to help the novice through the maze of CD production. Some readers, however, particularly experienced musicians, will already know about how to work in a studio, for example. I hope they will understand the need to advise those who are less experienced. Furthermore, every CD project will be a unique one. So any examples used are only guides. Costing examples in particular should be considered with a large pinch of salt. Many of your costing figures, especially items such as artwork and printing, will start off as fairly wild guesses. However, as your CD project progresses it is helpful to draw up revised figures from time to time.

You could consider cassettes as well as CDs. They cost almost as much as CDs to produce but they can only be sold at around half the price. There are prospective customers who don't have CD players so they might consider buying a cassette. However, you will also risk selling a cassette to someone who does have a CD player, thereby losing income. When you consider that the CD produces a far more impressive sound quality which will be beneficial to your music, I suspect you will rule out cassettes initially. CDs look much more impressive as well.

Downloading from the Internet is now a very important way of buying music. As this technology becomes faster and more widespread, CDs will inevitably become less common. But they won't disappear completely for a very long time. There are millions of people around the world who have CD players at home and in their vehicles. Buyers also like to buy "physical" souvenirs at gigs and for presents. Collectors, particularly of "serious music", will surely continue to require packaging with their music, including photos, sleeve notes, printed lyrics and even autographed copies. You can't really autograph an MP3 file after a gig (yet)! This publication touches on the rapidly changing Internet world. However, this may be the subject of the next publication. Meanwhile we still need jazz CDs, and the Internet can help us sell them around the world.

## 2 PREPARATION

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### A) BUSINESS

You don't need to have a Company in order to make and sell CDs. It is important, however, to keep accounts for your own benefit. Also, if you're fortunate enough to eventually make some money from CDs, you will need to pay income tax on your profits. You can also offset your expenses against income tax, so you should talk to your accountant about it. It's sometimes sensible to have a separate bank account for each title otherwise you can end up in a mess. Watch out for bank charges, though. If you're not registered for VAT already, there is no need to get involved with it unless your turnover exceeds the set threshold. If you are VAT registered you have to charge VAT on every sale, but you can reclaim the VAT from your outgoings. You need a label name, a permanent address and a logo. If you're worried that your chosen label name has already been used, ring the Mechanical Copyright Protection Society (MCPS) to check. You should have some headed notepaper printed too.

It's well worth considering using a post office box number for all your CD-related business, particularly if you think you may move house in the future. This could be used for the CD "sleeve" as well as preserving some privacy at your home address. You don't want disgruntled listeners turning up on your doorstep to discuss the chord sequence on track 3! Contact the Royal Mail for information on PO Box numbers - they are not expensive.

### B) COSTING

You need to decide how many CDs to make, and work out some fairly accurate figures for the cost of the whole project. Some of the costs, such as pressing and licencing tunes are generally set and therefore predictable. Others, such as artwork, recording and paying musicians are much more variable. Some of these must be decided according to how much money you can raise.

I have prepared a cost chart for an imaginary CD - *XXCD 001* (see fig.1). This may be useful as a rough guide but your figures may look very different. The cost of making 1000 CDs is unlikely to be less than £3,850 but you could spend a lot more. You also need to consider who and where your market is and how many units you think you will sell over a set period of time. Except in the case of well-known musicians, you will probably sell more CDs at your own gigs than in shops etc. So your sales projection may largely depend on the number of gigs you can secure in the year or so following release of the album.

If you decide to have 1,000 CDs pressed, for example, you will be able to work out a break-even point in your sales projection. For example, if you spend £3,850 on your 1,000 CDs and you sell them at gigs for £10 each your break-even point is 385 units. Bear in mind that distributors will only give you £4 to £6 per copy at most, so overall you may need to sell 500 or so to break-even.

Don't forget you will give a lot of copies away free to radio stations, reviewers, venues, etc. In this case, let's say 250. So, looking forward maybe one or two years, you have 250 CDs left and you've paid for everything, so these 250 have really cost you nothing. Now you're in profit, so each one you sell from now on is a real bonus. However, you may want to consider pressing a 2nd 1,000 CDs if it looks as if you'll sell out. In that case you need to make financial provision for your re-pressing. This may mean holding money back instead of allowing profits to be taken out. Re-pressing, incidentally, is quite cheap because you don't have recording costs, music arranging, musicians' fees, mastering, post-production, printing or artwork costs this time around. All you need to pay for is

licensing the tunes and re-pressing the discs which could be around £1.50 per unit, so you can obviously make more money on the 2nd 1,000 units. Plenty of British jazz CDs never make this stage, I'm sorry to say, but with hard work and a lot of luck you may well manage it even if it takes two or three years.

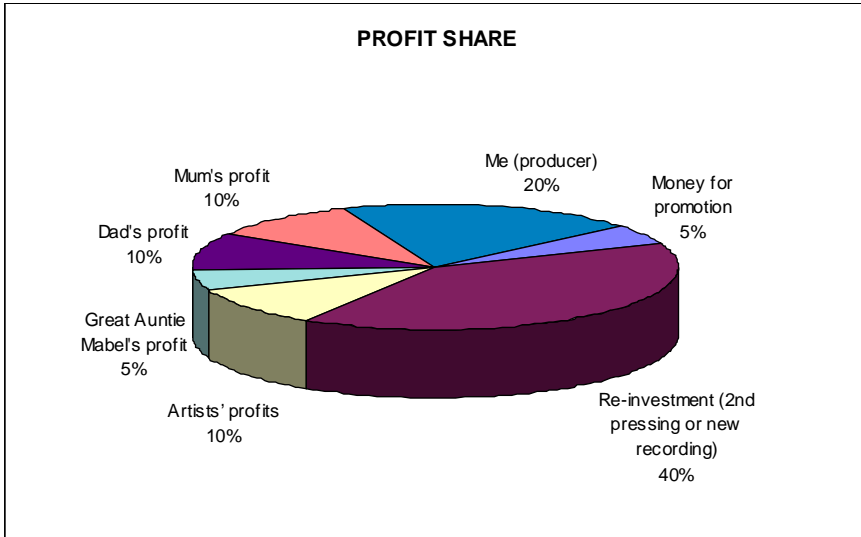
<b>Item</b>	<b>£ (inc VAT)</b>
Musicians' Fees	460
Studio Hire (recording)	600
Equipment Hire	80
Post Production Mastering/Compiling	220
Pressing (incl. Glass Master and Boxes) - 1000 discs	940
Photos, Artwork Origination/Films	480
Printing - Booklets & Inlay Cards (2100 of each)	350
MCPS Royalty (payable on 750 only because of promotional allowance)	300
Promotion	250
Sundries/Misc. Expenses (incl. Barcode, faxes, telephone etc.)	170
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3850</b>
<b>RE-PRESSING</b>	
2nd 1000 CDs (pressing)	750
MCPS (NB: promotional allowance no longer applicable)	400
Misc.	50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1200</b>

*Figure 1 - COSTING CHART (ESTIMATED)*

You may decide not to re-press a 2nd 1,000, but to record a new album instead. This takes a bigger investment, of course, and profits on the 1st album may not cover this.

### **c) RAISING MONEY**

Once you've worked out your rough costs and sales projection, you need to find some cash. If this is not easy in your case, you could ask a combination of friends, musicians involved etc. for some financial help in exchange for a share of any future profits. This may be better than borrowing from banks or institutions, but it can get complicated. It may be prudent to pay back all the money invested before profits are taken. This means, for example, that if Great Auntie Mabel lends you £1,000 towards making a CD, she should get all her money back within one or two years. If and when the CD goes into profit she could have a 5% share or so. It makes sense to draw a cake and divide it into slices like this:



*Figure 2 - PROFIT SHARE*

It's sensible to keep your cake as simple as possible, and maybe pay investors "lump-sum profits" instead of % profit shares. It's also important to write everything down in the form of an agreement with all parties involved, and to keep good accurate accounts.

## **D) ALBUM CONCEPT**

Your own musical vision is the most important factor when choosing musicians and material, but do consider your average customer, radio listener and reviewer. The very first track is the most important. It's often the one that will get played on the radio. It'll be heard first by most listeners, including reviewers and promoters, whom you are trying to impress. Indeed some may only hear the first track. If you composed it, incidentally, you will earn some money through the Performing Right Society Ltd. (PRS) if it's played on the radio. Some DJs, however, tend to prefer a "standard" tune that listeners will recognise.

If you are a composer and you're not a PRS member, you should probably apply to join (see "Useful Contacts").

If choosing musicians specifically for this album, pick people who work well in studios, read music fluently, if appropriate, and are interested in the project.

If you and your band are not well-known, you may consider bringing in a "star" guest musician on a couple of tracks. It must make sense artistically, of course, and whoever you invite must be right for the music. You'll need to pay them, too, but the benefits of added credibility and extra sales can be substantial.

Always prepare the music thoroughly and write it out clearly. This will save expensive studio time. Rehearse thoroughly before you go to the recording studio and more time and money will be saved.

Another idea is to give the album a theme such as “A Tribute to Frank Sinatra” or “The Music of Cole Porter”. This costs no extra money, but gives an identity to the project and a “hook” to hang it on which should attract attention and therefore sales. You may feel that this slightly cynical strategy has been used too many times, though!

You could also ask a well-known personality to write some or all of your sleeve-notes. You'll need to offer them some money and give a credit on the front or back. But, bearing in mind that they'll need to hear the finished album before writing about it, you may end up waiting for ages and holding everything up. In fact, you normally need to complete the printing before pressing the CDs so that the CD factory can pack the “sleeves” into the boxes by machine.

In the end it is often simpler and always faster and cheaper to write your own sleeve notes. You also have the advantage of knowing the musicians and the music as well as all the background information which is so helpful to the listeners. Printing more information will help listeners appreciate your music more.

## **E) LIVE OR STUDIO?**

Before choosing a studio, you may consider recording your album at a live concert. This can be cheaper, but can also lead to problems such as:

- less than perfect acoustics/sound problems
- audience and external noise
- reduced scope for re-mixing due to poor “separation” of instruments
- mistakes which cannot be rectified

Advantages of live recording include the possibility of a better “atmosphere” and added excitement, and some audience reaction (if you can hear it). Some musicians perform better in a live situation, and some record buyers prefer it. Some don't, however.

## **F) CHOOSING A STUDIO**

Price is usually a major factor here, and this can vary between £25 an hour and several thousand pounds an hour. You shouldn't pay for equipment and luxury that you don't need. Unless you have a “big-band”, you probably don't need more than eight or maybe sixteen track facility. Allow around five for a drum kit, two for a piano and one each for everyone else, as a rough guide.

Choose a studio that comes with a competent, experienced and friendly engineer. It's a good idea to meet the engineer before you book the studio and discuss everything with him/her. Make sure he/she can do all that you need. If you need a piano for your recording, this is often the biggest deciding factor when choosing a studio. Places with really good grand pianos tend to cost £50 or more per hour, at least.

If you've prepared well you may need as little as two six hour days in the studio. One day can be enough, three or four is more comfortable but two is probably OK for a tight budget. As a rough guide, three hours will be required for setting up and one hour per tune. This gives you the chance to do some different “takes” of each tune and allows you some invaluable listening time.

Check that the studio can schedule an extra day or so if you run out of time. It would be a shame if the next available day was three months away. Some may take a booking for three days with an option on a fourth, for example. Allow at least one extra day for mixing, balancing, etc.

### **'DRY' VERSUS 'WET'**

Some studios are 'live' and some are 'padded cells'. Most small studios are of the 'padded cell' variety, which means they have very little echo or 'acoustic' characteristics. This 'dry' sound makes recording and hearing each other easier. It eliminates many of the problems of echo, 'spill' and instruments like drums and cymbals drowning everything else out. You may need to add electronic reverb and other effects to your music in order to give it some life. This is quite normal, and these days usually very acceptable.

However, for some jazz, particularly non-electric or music without drums, it can be preferable to use a 'live' studio. This will have some natural echo and a particular set of sound characteristics, and will minimise or eliminate the need to use electronic reverb and other trickery. But there can be problems with 'over-spill' and clarity, especially with bass instruments. Also rhythm sections may find it hard to hear each other and play in a tight and accurate way. (Imagine playing a concert in a swimming pool, for example!). Mixing and editing, if needed, can also be difficult.

When choosing your studio, talk this over with the other musicians and with the producer/engineer, where applicable.

### **ANALOGUE VERSUS DIGITAL**

More and more recording nowadays is digital. Without getting too involved, you can usually record in 8-tracks (multitrack) digitally in most modern studios. This gives you a marvellous noise-free sound quality, at low cost. The analogue alternative requires very expensive multitrack tape and various 'mix-down' processes and often produces an inferior sound quality. If your music is highly complex and involves many musicians, you may need analogue multitrack facility, however.

Technology changes very quickly, but recording in the future will be largely digital. Do ask advice from experienced engineers and beware of studios that can't record digitally.

### **G) THE PRODUCER**

The job description varies enormously (finance, musical direction, engineering, sleeve design, marketing etc.). This will probably be you i.e.: the person who masterminds the whole project from beginning to end. However, you may decide, especially if you're inexperienced in studios, to use an independent producer for the recording sessions. Normally the producer will be in the control box with the engineer during recording, mixing and mastering. The producer is responsible for the sound of the album in this instance. It is possible to be the producer and at the same time play on the album. It entails a lot of hopping around between recording area and control box, but some experience in studios is really vital. If you're the MD or composer, your ears are probably the most important, though, so if you bring someone else in, make sure you get on well and trust each other's musical judgement. As usual, doing it yourself saves money. For the purposes of this publication, we will assume that the Bandleader /MD/Producer and general dogsbody are the same person.

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## 3 RECORDING

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### A) SETTING UP

The producer and the drummer should arrive first. The producer and engineer should discuss the time schedule, the positions of each musician, the microphones required, planned 'over- dubs' and editing, food and drink (prepare first if you can) and any other subjects. Talk about the style of music and the sound you want.

#### Mics VERSUS DIs

Generally with electronic instruments such as synths, DI (Direct Injection or line input) is a clean and efficient way to record. But with guitars and double basses, you may prefer to use microphones to get a more acoustic and 'real' sound. If you have enough tracks available in the studio, try using both microphones and DIs and later, during the mixing session, you can balance the two to get the best results. Guitarists often prefer to use an amplifier with a microphone in front of it, and double bassists may prefer a microphone in front of the actual instrument. Sort this one out in advance, if you can. Meanwhile, the drummer can be setting up his kit. Next the drums need to have microphones set up and sound levels balanced. This can take some time.

Other musicians should probably be booked to arrive half an hour to an hour later, by which time you can tell them where you want them to position themselves. You should now be ready to do some individual sound checking. The engineer will estimate the correct sound for each instrument in turn. You should record a minute, or so, of each instrument (solo) onto tape and then invite the player to go into the control box and listen to his/her sound. Then adjust it accordingly so everyone is happy. Then record a couple of minutes of the whole band. Use a quiet piece and a loud piece, then all listen and adjust to suit everyone. Now you're ready to record the first piece. You don't have to record each track in the final order. You may design the recording schedule based on factors such as not overworking brass players' lips, or tracks with fewer or extra musicians on them. Players should have been booked accordingly, of course.

### B) RECORDING

Once you have started, if someone makes an unacceptable mistake, especially if it is near the beginning of the track, stop the recording immediately and start again. This will save time on the day. Fixing mistakes later is an expensive business too.

If minor mistakes occur, they can often be solved using 'drop-ins' or 'over-dubs'. The engineer will always advise on this. It may be better to cut your losses and start again.

Finish one track before moving on to the next. Many artists find that, if they're well prepared and warmed up and if there are no mistakes, the first 'take' of each tune is often the best.

Take short, regular breaks. They're often good times to listen to completed tracks and relax a bit.

Ask the engineer to make an ordinary cassette or CDR copy of all your 'takes' so you can go home and listen to it all. This will enable you to plan well for the mixing session and decide which takes you like or dislike.

At the end of the final recording day, you should have a 'studio master' tape or CD with all the finished works on it in the wrong order and unmixed. Leave this at the studio and take your copy home. At home, list all the tracks with their durations, keys and tempi. Using this information you can start to think about the final track order.

### **c) MIXING**

This is best done on another day (or more) in the same studio with the same engineer. You should be armed with detailed notes from the recording session. Trust your engineer who knows his equipment and the characteristics of the sound in his particular studio. The engineer will do all the knob-twiddling and you will be his ears. It can be useful to bring to the mixing session one of your favourite CDs and listen to it on the studio equipment. This will give you a good reference point for comparison with your familiar home hi-fi sound.

Work on 'equalising' the sound of each instrument and balancing the various instruments. Also work on fade-ins/fade-outs and other effects. Find a reverb that you like the sound of, if needed, and apply it to each instrument accordingly, then check the overall effect. At the end of the mixing stage you should have a stereo (two track) DAT master tape (and a spare copy for safety). If the tracks are still in the wrong order, it doesn't matter, as long as you are going to have a final mastering/compiling session.

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## 4 POST PRODUCTION

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### A) MASTERING, COMPILING AND PQ ENCODING

If you're on a tight budget you can leave the mastering and PQ encoding to the manufacturer, if he has the necessary facilities to do the compiling at the final mixing session.

However, if you want more control over the finished product, it may be worthwhile seeing it through the final stage yourself. These three processes can be done together at a specialist studio in three to five hours for £200- £300 or so. Your studio/mixing engineer will recommend somewhere to go to if he can't do all of this. A specialist high-tech studio and engineer with sophisticated computer equipment may be needed. Here are some brief notes:

**Mastering** is largely a fine-tuning process, although it can have a dramatic effect on the overall sound of an album. The engineer, with your invaluable ears on hand, will listen to the music and monitor various aspects of it using meters and computers. He can then work on individual 'funny' notes or nasty 'spikes'. He can adjust the overall 'EQ' (equalisation) and get rid of any boomy notes or strange noises. He will match up the relative levels of the tracks and tidy up any fade-ins or fade-outs. Limiters and compressors may be used to even-out very loud and very quiet sections slightly.

Mastering is an important stage in the process. If it is done well, your music will be heard at its best. If not, it can ruin the sound. If you can, choose a mastering engineer based on hearing his/her results on another CD or get a reliable recommendation.

**Compiling** is putting the completed tracks in the correct order and setting the gaps between them. It's best to set your gaps using your ears rather than a stopwatch. The final track-order is very important, particularly your choice of opening number (see section 2 D). Your chosen manufacturer may require you to record some 'test-tones' and 'peak levels' information onto the final tape. The engineer will do this but you should check to see if it is necessary. NB: If you're not having a separate mastering session you may need to do this at the mixing session.

**PQ Encoding** is the applying of computer code information which tells your listener's CD player all it needs to know. For example, when you insert a CD into the player it displays the number of tracks on the album, and it will also display the number of the particular track you are listening to at any one time. The player can also find the beginning of any selected track for you. This encoding process usually happens last. Again, if you aren't having a separate mastering session, this can often be done by the manufacturer, but he will charge you for this (£100+).

The final tape that will emerge after all these post-production processes will sometimes be a larger one called a 'PCM' or a '1630'. Check with your chosen manufacturer again. DAT and CD formats are usually acceptable.

The whole thing is now ready for the factory. Transfer to this final format can be done (with PQ encoding) at the factory but, again, they may charge extra for this.

This is a good time to ask for personal copies, too. Many mastering studios will offer "one-off" CDs for £3-£30 each, or so. It is very important to have a second "master" tape or CD known as a "safety copy". You should leave this at the mastering studio in case anything should go wrong with the "production master".

## **B) CHOOSING A MANUFACTURER**

Quality, price, speed and additional services offered should be the deciding criteria here.

Quality, however, hardly varies between manufacturers. They are all good and, as CDs are digital, they either work or they don't work. Faulty discs are very rare and you can always send any back to the factory for refund.

Prices vary considerably. The basic unit price will usually include a 'jewel case' (perspex container), 'on-disc' printing, and automatic packing of a booklet and inlay card. This should be around 35p to 70p + VAT, when you order 1000. (Slightly more on a run of 500, if available). This unit price has fallen steadily during the '80s and '90s, but it may not fall much more now. It's worth shopping around though. There are numerous 'middle men' or agents whose prices can often be cheaper than those quoted by actual factories. This is because they sometimes have bulk deals for many thousands of discs each year. It may be worth looking abroad for price-quotes too, but allow some extra time.

Delivery speed is typically two to four weeks, although some manufacturers will offer a much faster service. Some charge separately for delivery. Additional services offered can include the various post-production processes as outlined in 4 a).

Manufacturers or agents will sometimes offer artwork and printing facilities too. You can cut a few corners here, but you may find you lose some control over the finished product. But some package prices can save you a lot of time and money, so they should be investigated. Sometimes manufacturers or agents will allow you to work with them on the artwork, but get proofs at every stage and check them very carefully. There are always mistakes and adjustments to be done.

Overall, for someone doing this for the first time, I think I would recommend a package that includes artwork and printing as long as you can have sufficient input yourself. If you decide to do your own artwork, printing, mastering etc. be sure to get accurate and detailed specifications from the manufacturer or agent for each process (e.g.: paper thickness and dimensions, film type, bar-code size, etc.). Each CD factory has its own special criteria here, so don't presume the specification for one will work for another.

## **c) MCPS LICENCE**

The Mechanical Copyright Protection Society Ltd. is a non-profit making agency which collects money from record companies/labels and distributes this money to publishers (and hence composers) of recorded music.

You need to ring them (on 0181 769 4400) and ask for an 'AP2' form (four parts). This is an application for a licence to manufacture the product. Fill this in and send it back. Then they will send you an invoice. You have to pay this before the MCPS will issue you with a licence to press your CDs. (They send a copy of the licence direct to your chosen factory.) This set of forms also requires you to give accurate details of each musician's contribution for an organisation called PPL, which collects radio royalties for musicians.

Make sure you claim your initial promotional allowance (maximum 250 for 1,000 run) for which you won't be charged. This accounts for the copies you give away.

If there are tunes on your album that aren't published or registered they go down on the form as "Manuscript" and are not chargeable.

If you have written your own music and had it published or registered with MCPS or PRS (Performing Right Society) you will be charged, but most of the money will be paid back to you, through your publisher, eventually. MCPS take some money for their running costs before paying out.

You need to decide whether or not to publish your tunes. It can be favourable if they are played on the radio, as you will earn PRS royalty money.

It's worth noting that MCPS and PRS are linked and share a database. If you register or publish a tune after it has been released on an album your label will be charged retrospectively.

All this can get a bit involved, so do ring MCPS for more information.

## **D) ARTWORK/PRINTING**

### **'On-Disc'**

One side of every CD has printing on it. If you decide to design this independently you need to supply 'camera-ready' artwork (films) with the master tape. Your chosen manufacturer will supply you with the accurate measurements for this, and maybe a template. They will normally print one or two colours without charging extra. You shouldn't need more. You need to generate one 'film' per colour so there is no need to spend more money on further colours. Remember that once a customer sees the actual disc he/she has already bought it. There are some legal requirements here. You need to include the Phillips 'Compact Disc . . . Digital Audio' logo. You can borrow the artwork for this from another CD.

You need a catalogue number and copyright info (and then the year, then your label name or logo). You also need to print the 'bit round the edge' which is small-print informing people of the copyright implications. Again, you can 'borrow' this from another British CD.

Apart from these legal requirements, you will need to list the tracks and print the names of album and band. You can include pictures or designs; anything too fancy is unnecessary. Your manufacturer will specify the format for the 'films' to be supplied. It is crucial to get this right (example: 'positive, emulsion-down'). This also applies to films for the paperwork or "sleeve" (see next section).

### **PAPER PARTS (OR SLEEVES)**

There are two separate pieces of paperwork that will be packed by machine into the 'jewel cases' at the factory. So you need to supply the finished printed material at the same time as the master tape.

Unlike the 'on-disc' printing, this is crucial to the success of your album. We know that most CDs are sold to buyers who have not heard them. The 'sleeve', then, has to be extremely impressive, as it will be the main reason for people to pick up and buy your CD. Firstly, there is the 'booklet' which is usually a folded piece of paper which goes in the front of the case. Some have many pages and staples holding them together, but this is a real luxury. For this example we will assume you will use a 4-side/1 fold piece.

Secondly, there is the 'inlay card' which goes under the tray which holds the disc itself. This then provides the back and edges of the 'sleeve'. It needs to be perforated along two lines so that the machine can pack it into the jewel case.

As with post-production, you can have all this artwork and printing done as part of a package. However, if you decide to do it yourself it is more expensive and time-consuming but allows you more control. It helps if you or a friend have a good computer and the skills to use it for layout, typesetting, photo editing, etc. As before, you must obtain the exact specification and dimensions from your manufacturer.

You should repeat the Phillips logo, the catalogue number, your own logo and an address for returns or queries. Include the © and ℗ icons, followed by the year, and also the composers and the publishers of tunes. You may also need a bar-code (see below). All these things usually go on the back (inlay card).

The edges are important. There you should have the album name, band name and catalogue number only. Make sure they are the right way round (check against other CDs).

To save money you could print one half of the booklet in multi-colour and the other (inside) half in one colour.

It's good to give as much information as possible about the musicians, tunes, other releases etc. Much of this information needs to be readable without having to open the box, so the back (inlay card) might contain the track listings and times and the musicians' details.

People like to see photographs, particularly of the musicians. Check which format is suitable for your chosen printer (i.e. slides, prints, sizes etc.). You also need to check with the photographer that you have permission to use his/her photographs. This not only needs to apply to the CD printing and possible reprinting on further press runs, but also to possible inclusion in magazine reviews, publicity fliers, posters, mailshots, press releases, etc. It is advisable to obtain this permission in writing to avoid problems in the future. There is obviously a cost factor here also.

You could put publishers' details inside the booklet, as well as your sleeve notes. Have the band/artist name printed at the top of the booklet. In a shop CD rack, only the top third or half of each CD is visible.

You should credit all the people involved, if possible, including the studio, engineer, mastering engineer, sleeve designer(s), photographer, producer, etc. Don't forget the person who writes your sleeve notes.

Generally you should make sure that the printed material is bright, classy, un-fussy and informative. It really does have to knock people out! Have a look at every CD in your rack at home.

There is a lot to remember here, and you need to be a bit artistic too. You may need help from a graphic designer and/or competent a computer operator. You can spoil all your budget plans with this as well. The 'package deal' method is nearly always cheaper and saves time.

Speed is important here, too. It's worth remembering that you can't complete the sleeve notes, artwork or printing until you know the exact track times and the final order. But you do need to have it ready when you go to get your discs pressed. You can prepare, though. It's good to start collecting information, biogs, photos etc. as early as possible.

### **BAR-CODES**

A bar code is really just a number which can be read by a machine.

You don't need a bar code unless you intend to sell your CDs in shops. Even then, not all shops insist on them, but they are becoming more and more necessary as the technology spreads.

To obtain a bar code, ask your manufacturer, printer or artwork person; they should help you obtain one. If you have a distributor, they may also be able to help.

**SHRINK SEALING**

Although not really essential, shrink sealing or over-wrapping each CD with clear polythene improves the look and protects the discs and paperwork (basically a polythene film around the CD case). Your chosen manufacturer will give you a quote. It is not a particularly expensive process. Bear in mind that when sealed you cannot pull out the paper booklet in order to read it. Overall, it's probably a good idea.

## 5 MARKETING

### A) PROMOTION

It is important to make an impact when launching a new CD. You can maximise the impact by careful timing. Make sure that readers of reviews can actually obtain copies of the CD immediately. So delay sending out review copies until you are sure that shops and mail-order suppliers will have the discs in stock.

When costing the project you should have allowed for a quantity of promotional copies to be given away. You won't have paid MCPS royalties on these discs and their replacement cost is not much more than £1 each. So you can afford to be reasonably generous here. The initial aim is to gain as many reviews and radio-plays as you can. You should buy a large quantity (100+) of 'Jiffy bags' at around 20p-30p each. Some headed notepaper with your logo and address printed on it will be needed. The *Jazz Services Jazz Book* contains a current list of media contacts. Make sure you have the latest update. Armed with all this, you should sit down for a day or so with a word-processor and type a 'standard' letter which you can repeat easily. Your letter needs to be beautifully written, polite, informative and not too long. You have to knock them out with this. (Example: Fig.3).

If you know some of the media people on the list, change your 'standard' letter a bit in order to make it more personal. Incorporate the following points if you can:

- Introduce yourself and the other musicians involved. Give some biographical information.
- Briefly explain the concept of the music and its style.
- Mention your good gigs - past and future.
- Invite the reader to a concert or 'launch gig', if you have one planned. Send fliers if possible.
- Name your distributor and/or mail-order supplier and give a phone number. Also include a launch date.
- Mention any other recordings you have made, or intend to make soon.
- In the case of a radio presenter, you may wish to point out a particularly suitable track for his/her audience.
- Direct the reader to your web site if you have one.

Keep a copy of every letter you send, and make sure you have a list of all 'freebies' sent out.

Sometimes, if you don't know a particular media person, it's worth phoning them before sending a CD. You can then introduce yourself and check the address. This gives you another change to 'knock them out'. It also means there is more chance of them remembering your CD. Most reviewers have dozens sent to them every week, so you need to try to ensure yours doesn't end up at the bottom of a large pile.

Now, having written all your letters, go to the post office with your Jiffy bags packed. You can spend money on registered post, but it is expensive. Ordinary second-class is much cheaper, although you may find one or three don't arrive. Write the sender's address on the back and put 'Promotional Material' on the front. Also write "fragile" on both sides in big red letters. Always address each letter and parcel to a particular individual.

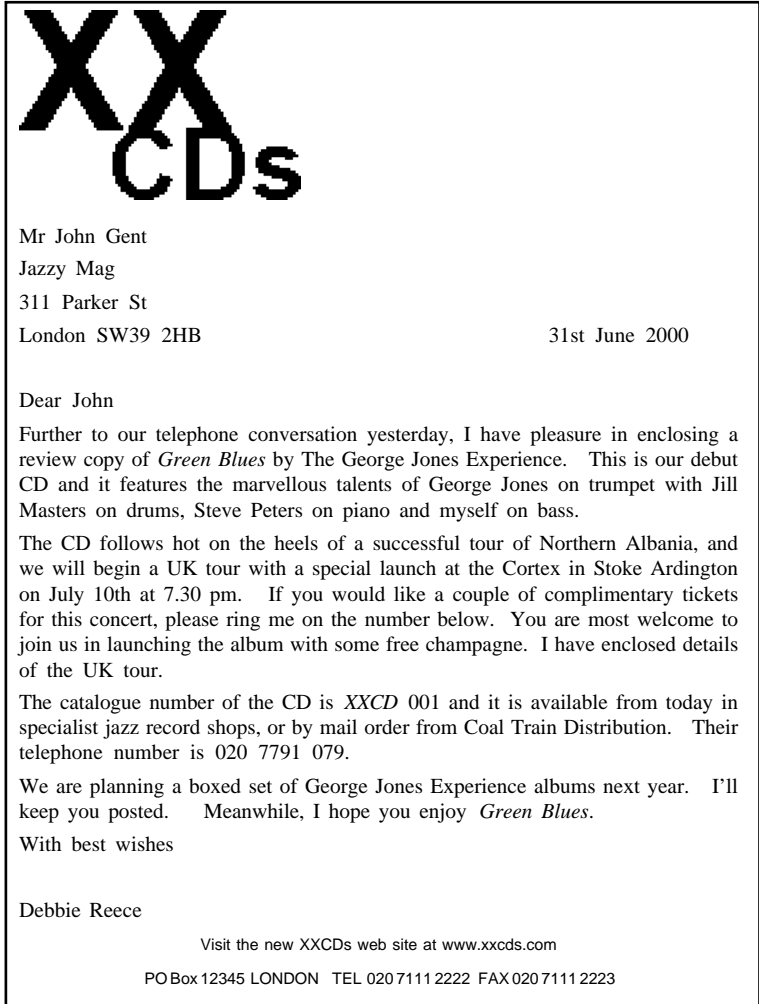


Figure 3 - REVIEW LETTER

## B) SALES & DISTRIBUTION

### SELLING AT GIGS

XXCD001 won't sell many copies in shops initially. Firstly, shops will be reluctant even to stock it as they may not know Messrs. Jones, Masters, Peters and Reece.

You should, however, shift quite a few copies at gigs. Bear in mind that the CD will help to secure gigs in the first place, and that the gig is your best market place for selling them, and also that you will make more money on each CD than on those sold through shops. Print up a sign which says 'New CD available here at Special Price'. Make up a nice looking box to present them in and try to sell them to people in the break and after the gig. Give the CD a couple of 'plugs' during the performance if you can.

It may be good to charge just below the average shop price (£10-£12 perhaps). You probably don't need to charge VAT, so that helps. Don't forget to account for each one carefully. If you have any nice reviews it is well worth photocopying a few onto a single sheet of paper and giving them to members of the audience. Also distribute gig-lists or tour leaflets. All publicity helps!

### **SELLING IN SHOPS**

You need a distributor. You can do it yourself, but it's nearly impossible. Most shops don't want numerous accounts with tiny suppliers. You can't travel the country servicing all these shops. Keeping accounts, invoicing, chasing payment, promoting, mail-order and all other associated problems are too much for one person and best done by professionals. However, there are not many good jazz specialist distributors in Britain. Have a look in *The Jazz Book* under 'Record Companies' and find the entries marked 'Activities: Distribution or Marketing'. You should be able to find a distributor who will agree to sell your CD and has a network of specialist shops as customers. Some are not very good at paying on time, and some are a bit mean with the prices they will pay you. Always try bartering.

As a rough guide, if your CD sells for £14 in shops, the Government takes £2.10 (VAT), the shop will want around £4 and the distributor will want around £2 of which 35p will again go to the VAT office. So you'll be lucky to get more than £4-£6 per copy. Now *XXCD001* cost about £3,850 for the first 1,000 copies. That's £3.85 each. So if you sell them to your distributor at £5 each, you make £1.15 on each copy. Compare this with the £6.15 profit when you sell one at a gig for £10, for example.

So when shopping around for a distributor, be firm about what you want to achieve, don't sign any exclusive deals (you need to be completely free to sell to anyone who wants your product) and insist on prompt payment. You should also help by printing up reviews and sending them on to the distributor who may or may not forward them to the dealers! Likewise with gig-lists and details of radio-plays etc. You will normally have to supply CDs on a 'Sale or Return' basis, invoicing monthly for those copies sold. Again, keep good accounts and stock control details.

### **SELLING BY MAIL ORDER**

Some distributors have their own mail-order service. This is good news for you and, of course, they make much more profit selling direct through mail-order. Bear this in mind when fixing your unit 'wholesale' price.

If your distributor doesn't do mail-order, you could look for another specialist, or do it yourself. If you do it yourself, you'll need to advertise your phone number everywhere, and this may be tricky. As mentioned earlier, you could consider a PO Box number - which would help - but you would still need a phone number. It's also a time-consuming business sending copies off and collecting the money. You will also get customers wanting to pay by credit card, which could be difficult.

I would suggest that you try to find a good distributor that does it all. It's worth asking around for a really good recommendation here.

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## 6 NEW TECHNOLOGY

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### A) SUPER AUDIO CD

This new type of compact disc produces a dramatically more accurate sound reproduction than ordinary CD.

The new SACD disc looks the same as any other and, importantly, it can be played as a normal CD in any conventional player. But it contains another layer of information that enables it to be played on a new generation of 'super CD' player. The music needs to be recorded using new equipment called DSD (Direct Stream Digital 24-bit technology), and if this new format takes off in the near future the equipment will become readily available. To appreciate the higher quality of sound, the listener needs to invest in a new machine. These are becoming available in British shops now, and they sell for around £600 - £2000.

The discs will be a little more expensive for the customer to buy, but all the prices should go down after some of the development costs are recouped.

There is a good chance that SACD will become the standard eventually.

The quality of the sound is astonishing. In direct comparison with conventional CD the difference is very noticeable. There should be an opportunity here to get one's SACDs into hi-fi shops (as well as record shops) and to get reviews in specialist hi-fi magazines, particularly while the SACD format is still relatively new.

It makes sense to be up to date with new technology like this, as you will have a significant advantage over the people who haven't bothered.

### B) SELLING CDs VIA THE INTERNET

CDs are now available for purchase through hundreds of Internet sites or 'cybershops'. More and more CDs are being sold this way as they are just about the perfect commodity to buy through the net. If you dial up one of these music sites on your home computer, you can browse through thousands of albums, you can read about the artists or composers, you can look at pictures, you can listen to samples of the music and then you can order CDs using your credit card. Your order will arrive in the post within a couple of days, in most cases. (CDs are conveniently small, hard to damage and therefore easy to post.) All this without having to move anywhere or talk to anyone!

If you have a distributor for your discs, they will probably supply directly to some of these sites. If you don't have a distributor, make a list of sites you have seen or heard about, and contact them. Tell them about your music and they may buy your discs. You may find that many of these companies won't open new accounts with individual musicians, however. They often want to avoid having too many small accounts because of the amount of administration involved. You also may not want to open too many accounts – for the same reason. If you can find a way to supply these sites directly, you should be able to charge a bit more than you would charge a distributor, as there is only one organisation to make a profit. Internet companies may ask for 'sale-or-return' terms, however. They have to hold actual stock, as under present British law it is not permissible to offer something for sale via the Internet if you do not hold stock. This law is common in many countries.

In the next few years this method of selling CDs will grow and grow. If you don't have much success with supplying Internet companies directly, you may find that, if you create a bit of interest, a suitable CD distributor may be more tempted to take your product on.

If you have your own web site, make sure that your CDs are advertised on there. You will also need to attract people to your site in the first place. Leaflets advertising your web site at gigs are useful. Mention your web site in all your correspondence.

As with any mail-order business, you should make a collection of names and addresses of fans and customers (database). It is also well worth giving out cards for people to fill in with their details. You can then send regular e-mail messages to these willing recipients containing news of your gigs and recordings. All your gigs and biographical info can be put up on your web site also. You probably don't have retailer credit card facilities, but you can take orders via the old-fashioned 'cheque-in-the-post' method. If you do decide to offer CDs for sale yourself, it is really important to ensure that you can fulfil those orders efficiently and speedily. If you don't, there could be problems later. Remember that a bad reputation for your web-based business will last for a long time, and will spread rapidly.

You also have to watch the laws on privacy, tax and customer service. Many of these laws are under review at present, and as technology is changing so fast it can be difficult to keep up. If you are covering several different countries, you need to be aware of the different laws in each, as there are not yet any global laws on e-commerce. You will also need to know about different currencies, exchange rates and languages as well.

If you want a relatively easy life, you may decide to direct people from your web site to that of a CD retailer or distributor for buying purposes. This could be a sensible move at the present time.

Watch this space for further news.

### **c) DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION: AN UPDATE**

A revolution is taking place in the area of music distribution at this time. The new way for people to buy music from the Internet involves 'downloading' the music in digital form via a telephone line to a home computer or portable player. There are various formats including 'MP3' and 'Real Audio', and there is a whole new language of jargon emerging. This system obviously negates the need for discs or packaging as well as physical stock holding and distribution. Eventually this process may replace CDs completely. However, to many people there is still value in owning an actual CD with all its 'sleeve notes', pictures and packaging. Collectors still like collecting actual discs. Older listeners will be slower to take advantage of this technology, whereas teenage pop buyers are already well ahead. Single tracks can be downloaded as well as whole albums. A track will typically cost 50p to £1, although the process of charging listeners is still being developed. The credit card method is too expensive for low-value transactions, so methods of charging buyers through their telephone and other accounts are being developed (micropayments). This doesn't work, however, for children, and they account for a large percentage of the music buying public.

There are also some serious unresolved problems with copyright and piracy issues.

For those of us who wish to sell our own music, particularly classical or jazz music, we should be aware of the continual and rapid changes that are taking place, and bide our time. We should not sign any exclusive agreements with any digital distribution companies, particularly as there are many non-exclusive deals around. Those of us with web sites will eventually be able to offer downloading to customers, but there will be many administrative and legal implications to consider. As with the previous section on Internet CD selling, it is not a good time to give too much concrete advice because the business is moving so fast. At the time of writing this guide, most of us are still likely to sell more CDs at gigs than anywhere else. Listeners do like souvenirs, and of course, you can't autograph a download! But again, watch this space for further updates.

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## 6 POSTSCRIPT

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It doesn't really end here, actually. If you get to this stage and you've shifted a few CDs you've done well. You may have to decide whether to re-press or make another album. You may need to explore overseas distribution and other marketing ideas.

But you've probably succeeded in raising the profile of your band and you've probably brought the music to a lot more people. You should also have a lasting record of your creativity and an invaluable 'calling card'.

You are probably also a 'Record Producer' now, which may sound better than 'Musician' when applying for such things as mortgages and car insurance!

Jazz Services would welcome any feedback from you. Some of our suggestions may become outdated and we will endeavour to update them periodically. We would like to hear about your ideas, problems or success stories. Please phone or write to Jazz Services at the address below.

Good luck.

## **USEFUL CONTACTS**

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### **MECHANICAL COPYRIGHT PROTECTION SOCIETY (MCPS)**

Elgar House, 41 Streatham High Road, London SW16 1ER. Tel 020 8664 4400.

### **ARTICLE NUMBER ASSOCIATION (ANA)**

11 Kingsway, London WC2B 6AR. Tel 020 7240 2912.

### **MUSICIANS' UNION (MU)**

60/62 Clapham Road, London SW9 0JJ. Tel 020 7582 5566.

### **PERFORMING RIGHT SOCIETY (PRS)**

29-33 Berners Street, London W1P 4AA. Tel 020 7580 5544.

### **BRITISH PHONOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE (BPI)**

25 Savile Row, London W1X 1AA. Tel 020 7287 4422. Fax 020 7287 2252.

### **JAZZ SERVICES LTD**

Email [admin@jazzservices.org.uk](mailto:admin@jazzservices.org.uk)

Internet <http://www.jazzservices.org.uk>

### **PHONOGRAPHIC PERFORMANCE LTD (PPL)**

Ganton House, 14-22 Ganton Street, London W1V 1LB. Tel 020 7437 0311.

### **ROYAL MAIL (FOR PO BOXES)**

London Sales Centre, 35 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1HQ; tel 0345 950950.