# Summit Sound Inc.

## 1.800.403.9755

# The Independent Artists Recording Guide

*Everything You Need to Know*
*To Make A Custom CD*

**Recording**
**Studio Production**
**Studio Musicians**
**Mastering**
**CD Manufacturing**
**Cover Design & Printing**
**Copyright Issues**
**Mechanical Licensing**
**... and more**

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# Background

## Purpose of this Resource
34 years of answering questions and providing advice to thousands of artists making custom recordings has led to numerous articles by Summit Sound owner, Dave Daw for various music magazines, plus the development of some amazing free artist resources at: www.summitsound.com

With so much information to share and the ease of supplying this electronically in a PDF format, we have decided to put all the things customers commonly ask about recording and CD manufacturing into one easy to read booklet.

## About The Author
David Daw began his music career as a young vocalist and musician, recording more than 5 complete album projects with his own group before graduating from high school and 2 more during college.

During this time, Dave's group toured North America playing up to 200 dates and travelling more than 100,000 km per year (all on weekends and during summer vacations) and had the opportunity to record their albums at studios in Toronto, Atlanta and Nashville. This experience gave Dave" the studio bug", and he began finding himself helping friends with their recordings and album production even while still a full-time student.

Through the experience of helping friends with their recording projects, David realized the potential to offer a service based on his own experiences to help other artists avoid costly mistakes.

Dave graduated from the Communications Studio Techniques programme at Loyalist College in 1972 and opened his own recording company Summit Sound in 1974. They were one of the first in Canada to offer complete recording packages including session musicians and manufacturing services for independent artists; taking clients from studio to finished packaged product - with all services provided by a single supplier.

As the owner of a recording company for more than 32 years, Dave has been involved in every facet of custom music production from vocalist and studio musician, to producer, engineer, graphic designer, and album production co-ordinator.

Dave married Kathy (Johnston), a  musician, singer and graphic designer in 1979, and together they currently own and operate Summit Sound. They have 4 children and live near Westport, Ontario Canada, (midway between Toronto & Montreal) which is also home to Summit Sound.

David Daw has produced, engineered and mastered thousands of recording projects for clients from coast to coast in both Canada and the USA, from as far south as Florida and Cuba and north to Arctic Bay, NWT.

## Questions? - Contact the Author Directly
If you have any questions not covered in this booklet, please contact Dave Daw directly at Summit Sound by calling toll free 1-800-403-9755 OR you may email Dave directly at <dave@summitsound.com>

Many additional resources are also located at: http://www.summitsound.com

# Introduction

In today's changing music business, many new options exist for artists when it comes to recording a music project or releasing a CD.

The advent of affordable home recording equipment and the digital revolution has changed many of the ways people record (and even the way they design their CD cover). While some multi-talented musicians have embraced this new technology and set up home studios, to do their own recording, many others still prefer to just play and sing music and leave the technical side of recording and production to the professionals. Others clearly need the expertise of a producer, studio musicians, background vocalists or engineering advice and/or professional mastering services which are not available in a home studio environment.

At Summit Sound, we have over 34 years experience filling in all these gaps for customers, and we are constantly updating and adapting to ensure we can offer our clients the very best options available to meet their unique needs.

If you already have a home studio and plan to do your own recording, many of the techniques described here may be beneficial to help you work more efficiently *so you can actually complete that project you've been working on for the past 6 years!*

If you plan to use the services of a professional studio such as Summit Sound, the following will give you useful insight into the many options available as well as practical ways to get the most for your recording production dollar.

# Studio Selection

One of the most common mistakes we see clients make, is choosing a studio based strictly on published hourly rates. Let's face it, everyone has to start somewhere, so not all studios offer the same level of experience or technical capability... and they charge accordingly.

Dealing with an experienced studio and engineer *(even with rates double those of a lesser facility)* can often cut your required recording time by up to two thirds (producing your project in much less time), eliminate a lot of stress and ultimately save you a lot of money as well as making the whole experience much more enjoyable! Of course just being more expensive does not guarantee a studio being better, but if you look at the hours budgeted for the same tasks by different facilities it will give you a good idea how efficiently each place works... also contact the customers of competing studios, to find out how much time they actually spent recording, to determine if your estimate is realistic or just aimed to get you in the door and then force you to keep going until you are out of money! *This is one place where you often truly do get what you pay for, so paying a little more per hour is very likely to actually save you more in the end!*

Please read on to get a better understanding of this entire process!

# The Recording Process

We'll begin with some easy to follow, steps to get you on the right track to begin the recording process.

## Checklist & Tips for Recording Artists Preparing To Enter the Studio

1. Make a *basic* home-demo recording of your music and send this as well as emailing a double-spaced copy of all your song lyrics to Summit a minimum of 2-4 weeks in advance of your starting session date. *(this applies to both self contained and studio musician projects)*

2. If playing your own music in the studio, be sure to have your instruments & amplifiers in optimum working condition with new strings installed a day in advance... be sure to bring all cables plus owners manuals to the studio. It's even a good idea to have all your gear checked by a tech before your session. If your personal gear is not up to the job, consider renting better equipment far enough in advance to be completely comfortable with it before you get to the studio.

3. If playing your own music, practice in advance rehearsing the music tracks without vocals or using just one singer (ideally someone who does not play an instrument) doing a demo vocal track.

4. If you are a vocal group or plan to do vocal harmonies in the studio, be sure to practice all your harmonies accapella *(without music background)* to ensure all the harmony parts are correct. Make a home recording of this to critic, and make corrections to arrangements before you get to the studio... You may even want to practice singing with headphone monitors to orient yourself to this process.

5. Bring copies of your music and lyrics or any CDs etc. as notes for yourself to use during the session.

6. If you plan to play to a click track or metronome in the studio, practice this way before you come to the studio... if you are not comfortable doing this, it's best to make this decision before you are in the studio. Sessions with studio musicians commonly are done to a click. It's best to avoid arrangements that break time, or have rubato sections, as these can be very complicated to synchronize when recording parts of the music or vocals separately, and also difficult to sing with if you plan to perform live using your album tracks.

7. All studio time and talent fees are payable at the completion of each day in the studio. If you will be using studio musicians, be sure to come prepared *(with cash or several cheques)* to pay each of the musicians and BG vocalists, the engineer, and studio separately. *(ie. bring a dozen or more blank cheques)*

8. Get plenty of rest the night before your session. You may even want to consider arriving at the studio the night before your session and staying in one of our comfortable client-guest rooms so you are relaxed and ready to start the next morning.

9. Dress comfortably for your session, because days in the studio can be lengthy. T-shirt, jeans and running shoes are standard fare for most recording artists.

10. If you plan to release copies of your recording on CD be sure to visit our website and click on the button "PDF Downloads" to access the Pressing Release and Duplication Rights forms which you will need to print out and sign before we can legally make your CDs. Be sure to read the section in this booklet on Mechanical Licensing for everything you need to know about how to legally record songs for which you do not own the copyright.

11. *Come to the studio prepared to work hard and also ready to have a lot of fun!*

## More Details On The Recording Process & How to Best Prepare

The purpose of this article is to walk you through the typical steps involved in making a custom recording. This material makes the assumption that you will be doing your recording project with us here at Summit Sound, but even if you record elsewhere - you should find the following useful to organize your session.

## Three Types of Typical Recording Projects

Basically there are 3 types of recording projects that are most common here at Summit Sound Inc.

**1. Self contained recording projects** - In this type of project, the artist would likely be a multi-talented soloist or self contained group and would enter the studio to record all their own music and vocals.

**2. Recording projects that use studio musicians** - The alternative to a project by a fully self-contained group is one where the client goes into the studio to record vocals, but uses studio musicians and possibly studio background vocalists to create their background music.

**3. Combination recording projects** - One could also choose to combine the 2 options above by singing/playing some of their own music and also adding our studio musicians/background vocals.

Many recording studios may be able to serve self contained recording artists, but offering a complete music production service, including providing professional studio musicians, is a specialty service not available everywhere. Summit Sound does all 3 types of projects (as above), but we are probably best known for our ability to provide a full compliment of studio musicians and backing vocalists to enhance our clients projects.This is a service we have offered since we recorded our very first project in 1974.

## Recording Production Options

Whether you will be recording all your own music and vocals, or hiring our professional studio musicians to back you up, there are many possible options for a production schedule, however, the following are four of the most typical ways that we would recommend you proceed.

**Option One:**

The most basic studio recording would occur when everything is recorded and mixed live off the floor. A soloist might play guitar and sing at the same time. For a group, everything gets miked-up and everyone plays and sings, (as in a live performance) and the music is also mixed live with no options to change the final mix, other than editing portions of multiple takes of the same song together. A very tight budget, or making a "live" demo to show what you can do in a live performance, are the most common uses for this kind of recording.

**Option Two:**

Another way to record would be to perform live in the studio (as in option one above) but to record everything to separate tracks, so that single voices or instruments can be repaired or replaced and then balances between vocals and instruments can be changed or re- mixed after all the initial tracking is completed. This approach will require separate recording and (additional) mixing time, but usually results in a better quality end product.

**Option Three:**

A third option involves recording each voice and instrument separately (one at a time), getting each as perfect as possible and then mixing after the tracking is complete. This option can allow a single person (with the ability to do so) to sound like a full band, but can become tedious (especially for an existing group accustomed to performing together) and obviously requires a lot more studio time. Some producers actually prefer to work this way, but many musicians find it to be a less musical (more mechanical) way to record. *It can also be very difficult to synchronize parts without the usual visual cues artists are accustomed to.*

**Option Four:**

Today many projects are commonly recorded by tracking the music in sections This can be a great compromise between live recording and tracking everything separately, as it makes musical sense for some musicians (such as a rhythm section of  keyboards, bass and drums - string players in a string ensemble

- horns in a horn section - or several vocalists in a group) to play or sing together, but it may not be practical due to space, isolation or scheduling issues, to get everyone into the studio at the exact same time. This approach makes sense, because it allows more attention to detail as each each section is recorded. This fourth option is how most professional recordings are done today, and it is our preferred method of working here at Summit Sound.

## Making the Most Efficient Use of Studio Time

To make the most efficient use of studio time, especially if recording using any of the last 3 options mentioned above, we would commonly record all the rhythm tracks (keys, bass, drums) for all songs in the project first. Next, if we were adding a something like a lead guitar, or saxophone etc., we would have the lead instruments do their parts on the songs for the project separately. If we were adding vocals, we might follow-up the music tracks by recording all the vocal solos for all songs, then after that, we could record all the group or background vocals for all songs. Finally we would mix the entire project, followed by mastering.

This approach can save a great deal of expense that would occur if you attempted to record all parts of each song individually from start to completion. This is because each phase of recording typically requires substantial set-up and tear-down, so it makes sense to keep going once you are set-up for each phase of the process. This could literally save you up to 50% on studio costs alone, and if you are using studio musicians, making the most efficient use of their time could save you considerably more than this!

## Hiring Studio Musicians and/or Background Vocalists

At Summit Sound we have an extensive roster of experienced studio musicians and singers that we routinely call upon for their services.We do not add booking fees nor do we take a portion of what you pay to them, although we will make all the arrangements for you, lining up just the right players for your project. You will be paying each of these people individually and directly, so plan to bring enough cash or cheques to cover this. (ie. bring at least a dozen blank cheques)

## How the Process Works When Using Studio Musicians & BGV's

A minimum of two to four weeks prior to your session date, you supply us with a homemade demo recording of all the songs you plan to record. This might take the form of a basic home recording of you performing the songs live, a recording (from CDs) of your songs as performed by someone else who's arrangement you wish to emulate, or you performing to pre-recorded music sound tracks. Along with this demo, you would supply a written list of all the songs in the order they appear on the recording, plus the keys you would like for each, along with any other relevant notes on each song. If you want a song in a different key, verses, choruses, or key changes added or deleted etc., be sure to list this here. When we receive this demo recording it will go to both the session producer and session leader. The producer will use it to determine which musicians to book and also to finalize your project cost estimates. The session leader will write musician charts for all the other musicians from your supplied demo which will expedite the recording process. You do not need to provide any written music or charts, as we create our own musician charts from your music demo. Even if doing all your own music in a self contained project sending this demo in advance of your recording is beneficial.

At the same time as you send us your demo recording, you should email a complete set of lyrics for all your songs to <info@summitsound.com> These lyrics will be used by the studio engineer during vocal tracking and may also be used by our staff to write background vocal arrangements if required on your project..

Depending on budget or any pre-existing arrangements, we book the musicians and vocalists for your project and prepare all the charts for the session. Booked talent will arrive as scheduled and will be handed charts that they will use as they record your music.

## Sample of A One Week Album Session Schedule

From this point, projects can vary greatly depending on how many musicians or vocalists are involved, how complex the arrangements or what the project budget is. The list below would be typical of a project of 30 to perhaps 50 hours, if all scheduled on concurrent days in a single week. *Depending upon availability of certain musicians or other scheduling issues, items listed below on days 2-4 might be shuffled.*

### Session Day 1

We commonly begin with a rhythm section of keyboards, bass and drums, so on the first day of your session you would arrive at 10AM to begin working along with this core group of musicians. We typically track an entire album of 10-12 songs in 6-10 hours *(depending on complexity of material and/or arrangements)* On projects with 10 or less songs, after the 3 core musicians complete the first day of laying the bed tracks, the keyboard player often remains for 2 or 3 more hours, to add extra orchestrations such as string or other extra keyboard parts. *On projects with more than 10 songs if extra keyboard over-dubs are required, these would need to be done on a later day adding to production costs.*

### Session Day 2

Record all vocal solos for all songs while voices are fresh. Next we would typically begin recording any group vocals and perhaps later in the day we could have the first overdub musician come in for a 3-4 hour session in the evening.

### Session Day 3

If the project involves studio background vocalists or if the session is for a vocal group, this day would likely be totally taken up with recording these.

### Session Day 4

Usually used for additional musician over-dubs if session budget includes this. This might be 2 different musicians each coming in for 3-4 hour sessions, or possibly a string ensemble or horn section coming in to do 3-4 songs. Any extra time remaining, is often used to complete and/or double check any unfinished artist vocals.

### Session Day 5

With everything recorded, it is time to mix and master everything so this is likely to be a very full busy day working with the engineer and producer as final mixing decisions are made. Songs are likely to take at least an hour (or more) each to mix manually. If the mix is to be stored in a computer and automated, the mixing could even take 2 or 3 days (or more) averaging 2-5 hours per song. Necessary mastering is often done at the end of this process and is likely to involve anything from 2-6 hours for a project recorded here in our studio *(some outside recorded projects may require considerably more time to master)*

## Recording Info Summary

It is impossible to discuss every possible recording option in the scope of this booklet, but we trust the preceding has provided some valuable insight.

Some album projects clearly cannot be completed in a single week... while many demos are done in less than a day. More complex album projects can exceed 120 hours, so the client might opt to spread this out over three or more weeks or schedule many days over several months, so that they can be a part of each step in the process. Other clients might leave parts of the music over-dubbing or mixing for our staff to complete, after they have completed their part in the recording.

**Summit Sound Recording Credits**

Summit Sound was CD supplier to the summer Olympic games in Athens Greece for Ontario based artist Jeanette Arsenault. In the past 3 years - 4 clients produced by Summit Sound have been Juno Award nominees, including 2 CDs for children's entertainer "Mary Lambert", the debut release for Montreal based Contemporary Christian Band "Glory", and a project for blues performer "Georgette Fry".  Additionally, 4 of Mary Lamberts projects done at Summit Sound, have received "Parent's Choice" (USA) awards. Two projects recorded and manufactured for brothers Thomas and David Maracle took top honors as album of the year in the 2002, 2003 and 2007 Canadian Aboriginal Awards. Two Summit studio and manufacturing clients "New Wine" and "Daybreak" also won best gospel album of the year in the 2002 & 2003 East Coast Music Awards. Other projects recorded and/or manufactured by Summit Sound have garnered their clients dozens of Covenant Awards (from the Canadian Gospel Music Association) for best album, production, design and artist of the year - since the inception of those awards in the late 1970's.

# CD Mastering

There is little doubt that most audio masters will benefit greatly from professional mastering.

Upon request, Summit Sound will provide a free consultation service for your master, and can recommend the proper mastering services, along with cost estimates, to ensure a professional finished product.

Digital mastering in it's most basic form, is the step in manufacturing following mix-down, where this information is re-loaded into a digital workstation and a master "red book compatible" CDR is created, including the "P&Q" codes a CD player uses to identify selections, mutes and item timing.

More advanced mastering can be a very complex process involving additional frequency selective compression, EQ-ing, noise reduction, stereo enhancement, complex editing and overall loudness enhancement. Often mastering is used to match sounds or levels between tracks, or even to alter the over-all sonic content of the master.

The experience of Summit owner/engineer Dave Daw, who has mixed more than 2000 album projects over the past 34 years places him in a unique position as a mastering engineer - experience that is seldom matched by most others who claim to offer similar services. Dave utilizes a variety of both vintage analogue, and cutting edge digital, equipment in the mastering suite at Summit Sound Inc..

**FORMATS:**
Summit Sound is able to accept your original audio master in most popular formats. Recordable 16 or 24 bit audio CDR is probably the simplest and best way to supply your master, however, we can also accept your master on DAT or even on traditional 1/4" - 15 ips analogue reels.

All formats other than CDR and must be converted to CDR by Summit Sound at extra cost.

Beware: not everyone with a computer, a BIG hard drive, and a CD burner is a mastering engineer... (we commonly see serious damage done to perfectly good masters by people who don't know what they are doing).

Even the basics like proper P&Q codes and a printed log sheet are essential for track identification etc., so if you don't really understand how to get these, it may be wise to leave this job for the mastering engineer at Summit Sound.

Today there are people with less than 2 years audio engineering experience offering mastering services to clients... As chief engineer at Summit Sound for over 34 years I believe we offer a level of expertise in mastering that is unparalleled by many of our competitors.

# Supplying Your Own Audio Master for Mastering or CD Replication

**STANDARD FORMATS:**
Summit Sound is able to accept your audio master in most popular formats. Recordable CD (or CDR) is probably the best way to supply your master, however, we can also accept your audio master on DAT, or even on traditional 1/4" -15 ips analogue reels.

(All formats other than CDR must be converted to CDR by Summit Sound at extra cost.)

A continuously burned "Red Book Compatible" audio CDR with P&Q codes accompanied by a "print-out" of the song titles, sequence and track times is the best way to send us your master. If you don't really understand how to do this, it is best to leave the job to someone who does.

# 10 Steps to the Best Possible D.I.Y. Master

With a little thought, and some pre-planning, you can create a CDR master that should result in a good sounding CD.

While it is true that a reputable mastering facility (such as Summit Sound) can dramatically improve most masters; it is also true that many of the problems mastering rooms end up fixing, often could have been easily avoided or fixed even better at the mix-down stage. For example, if the kick drum needs more punch or the acoustic guitar needs more sizzle, the "right" time to do this is at mix-down, when you can fully isolate that instrument and EQ it alone -without affecting the entire bottom end in the case of the kick, or all the upper mids (including vocals) if you re-EQ for the guitar. Use your ears and some common sense and you can avoid an expensive lesson. At the least you should be able to keep levels consistent and hot. These items are not "rocket science" and any extra effort you make will pay-off in a better finished product.

1. Unless you plan to pay Summit to edit your master, make it EXACTLY the way you want it on a recordable CD with P&Q codes and a time accurate log print-out that includes all song titles and track times in the proper sequence. If you leave 2 minutes (instead of 2 seconds) between songs and the occasional count-in here and there, that's exactly how your finished CD's will be. Be careful! If you believe that your supplied master needs work tell us, otherwise you'll get a few hundred copies of exactly what you sent, your mistakes included. Supplying us a standard 16bit audio CDR, is the best and safest way to ensure the copies we make are exact "clones" of your master.

2. Record all levels as hot as possible without going over digital "O" and keep them consistent from song to song. There is a popular misconception that, because it's digital and you can't exceed "O " that you should leave a -15 to -20db buffer zone for transients. The truth is that for every 6db that your peak level decreases, you lose 1 bit of resolution. If you want to take full advantage of the 16 bits available on your final CD, keep your levels as close to "O" as possible (but NEVER over). A great tool to help you achieve this, is a quality stereo compressor/limiter.

3. Today most albums don't usually leave much space between CD tracks. (the audio CD Red book standard calls for 2 seconds, but you may deviate from this). Check-out some of your favorite CDs and you'll likely find something between 1 & 3 seconds between tracks... If we are doing mastering or re-sequencing for you, you must indicate the space you would like between tracks, or we will automatically make it 2 seconds.

4. When mixing, put on other similar styled CDs that you know are well produced and sound great, and A/B your mixes against these "reference" CDs. If you have access to a stereo spectrum analyser, this is an excellent tool to check the over-all frequency response of your recording as compared with your reference CD.

5. Burn your working mixes to a CDR and listen to them on as many sytems as possible to ensure that they sound good on a variety of equipment of differing quality. Compare CDs of some of your favorite music to your mixes on the same variety of systems, then adjust your working mixes, and/or re-mix, to ensure that your sound measures up.

6. For final CD burning, Mac programs such as "Toast" and PC programs such as "CD Creator" are satisfactory, but be sure to include a print-out of a time accurate CD master-log that shows all tracks, sequence, times, and spacing between tracks.

7. If you find that no matter what you do, you cannot match frequency response, sonic quality or overall CD volume of your mixes to the commercialy produced "reference" CDs you like, it may be time to consider some of the professional mastering services provided by Summit Sound. You will be amazed at the improvements we can make, and how reasonable the cost can be - We are always pleased to offer FREE mastering evaluations upon request.

8. If you are considering sending your master to another outside mastering facility, be very cautious about whom you trust. Remember that SUMMIT SOUND has over 34 years experience and is thus very well equipped to provide truly professional mastering services, including complex editing, frequency selective compression, noise reduction, EQing and overall loudness enhancement etc. Beware: not everyone with a computer, a BIG hard drive, and a CD burner is a mastering engineer... (we routinely see serious damage done to perfectly good masters by people who don't know what they are doing)

9. When it comes to your Production Master, never assume anything. Even if it's a "cloned" copy LISTEN to it before sending it out for manufacturing... The last thing you want is 5000 CD's with a digital "Glitch" in the middle of one of your songs... We want happy customers, so for your own benefit, PLEASE take the extra time and care to do things right the first time!

10. ALWAYS KEEP A BACK-UP "CLONED" COPY Of YOUR MASTER... couriers have been known to lose masters, so don't take any chances!

Summit Sound provides a free consultation service on your master, and can recommend the proper mastering services (along with cost estimates) to ensure a professional finished product.

# CD•DVD Manufacturing

Contrary to popular belief, all optical disc manufacturers, duplicators and replicators are NOT created equally and quality of finished CDs or CDRs can vary dramatically between suppliers.

Summit Sound continues to offer not only the highest quality available, but also some of the fastest turn times in the industry (3-12 business days depending on product) as well as the best prices... guaranteed.

In over 34 years as one of Canada's leading custom music manufacturers, Summit Sound has seen dozens of competitors come and go, and few remain with anything even close to Summit Sound's level of longevity or experience. The fact that Summit Sound is still in business as a leader in the custom music manufacturing industry serving hundreds of labels, studios and independent recording artists each year, is a testimony to our quality, integrity and great prices.

We provide manufacturing services for dozens of other studios and independent recording artists... so you don't necessarily have to record or even master at Summit to enjoy the advantages of our un-matched manufacturing services.

Nobody works harder than Summit Sound to ensure optimum manufactured product quality, service that is unmatched by competitors, on-time delivery and prices that can't be beat!

## Check-list For Clients Placing Orders With Summit For Manufactured Product
All items below must be completed for Summit to process your order

**1. Verify** current products, pricing and specifications by calling Summit at 1-800-403-9755 or email.

**2. Create a written purchase order** describing your requirements, quantities and the pricing you believe to be applicable, and attach to your order. All items will be confirmed by Summit before job begins.

**3. Deposit:** Attach a deposit of at least 60% of the total amount on your purchase order (including any applicable sales taxes and freight). Your job cannot begin until your deposit is received. Payment may be by cash, credit card, bank draft (or debit card if delivering the job to Summit in person). If you prepay 100% of your order including taxes and freight  in advance, any over-runs (up to +10%) are FREE.

**4. Copyright.**.. Be certain you have fully addressed all copyright issues and attach required Duplication Rights form, (download this form from our PDF downloads at this link: http://www.summitsound.com/ftp/) plus copies of mechanical licenses etc. to your purchase order. We cannot legally proceed with your order until we can verify proper copyright clearances (mechanical licenses) are pending. If you need help obtaining mechanical licenses, see pages 19 - 21 of this booklet.

**5. CD, CDR, DVD Masters:** Enclose final master with your order and double-check (by re-playing) master to ensure there are no errors or omissions. Clearly label master (on the disc surface) with artist and project names, catalog numbers etc. Include technical info print-out with all time codes and a complete list of tracks plus a contact email and telephone number for the studio or person who created the master.

**6. Cover Design: (i)** If Summit is providing your cover design you will need to provide cover photos and email all cover text and credits to our designers. You will receive cover proofs of our design and must sign a design approval and proof-reading form... attach it to your purchase order. **(ii)** If providing your own design, your layouts must be on one of our Summit Templates and provided to Summit on CDR in a 300dpi printable PDF format with all colors converted to CMYK and all text and images embedded. Be sure to fol-low all design instructions provided on our website to avoid extra costs. Designs not supplied on Summit layout sheets will be charged a minimum fee of $60. to place your files on our templates. Designers must also attach a reference print-out of all cover art, before we can proceed with printing and production.

**7. Uploading files to our FTP site:** You may electronically upload your design files (and audio master) to the Summit FTP site. If you wish to do so, please email us and request your Summit ftp site account ID and password. This can be an quick way to send original files or corrections, but if you are sending an your CD by courier anyway, you may just want to include the design files on a second CDR to ensure that we receive clean locked files. Even if uploading design files to our ftp site, you should courier us a hard copy color print-out for us to compare colors before going to press.

**8. Package all items as listed above carefully and securely** (being certain to keep safety copies of EVERYTHING in case anything is lost in shipping) and deliver in person, or ship by a reputable courier such as UPS, FEDEX or PUROLATOR to: **Summit Sound Inc., 184 McAndrews Rd., Westport, ON K0G 1X0 Canada.** (we recommend that you do not use the post office) NOTE: Packages sent from outside Canada must not have a declared value exceeding $10. US funds, or client will be liable for any extra customs, duty or brokerage fees we incur in receiving your package.

**9. Delivery and payment of any balance due will be handled as follows:** When your order is complete, you will receive a telephone call or email from Summit advising you that your job is ready, and inquiring if you will pick-up at our plant, or have us ship to you via UPS. Any invoice balances due (including any adjustment for final quantity over or under-runs plus applicable shipping costs) are payable prior to shipment and may be made by credit card, cash, or debit card. Jobs cannot be shipped until all invoice balances are paid in full.

*If you have questions don't hesitate to contact us before sending your materials!*

# Shopping For Professional Design Services

Your cover is VERY important, and like it or not, the contents will be pre-judged by what people see on the outside. A poor looking cover can scare potential customers away from a great product inside.

Few people who own a PC and a copy of "Corel Draw" are trained as graphic artists, and even fewer have any experience with CMYK output for high-end offset printing. This process differs greatly from web design and has very different specs that can be difficult to understand.

When shopping for a "professional" graphic designer, the first question to ask is what platform they work on. Our experience has shown that doing your design on a Mac using QuarkXPress with Adobe Photoshop & Illustrator, and exporting the final layout from Quark as a printable PDF will ensure the best results with a minimum of printing complications.

The design team at Summit Sound is active creating new music or video related graphic projects every day, Our staff have designed thousands of album covers, have the experience, and are fully equipped with all the industry standard computer hardware and software to ensure your project meets major label standards.

## Summit Graphic Design Services *Why use Summit Sound for your Cover design?*

The importance of a professionally designed CD cover and properly prepared digital files for process color (CMYK) printing is often overlooked by those new to custom music manufacturing.

A professional grahic designer can give your project's cover the extra boost that will ensure that people take your CD seriously. This will result in a more professional image and usually translates to more sales too. Like it or not, "people often do judge the book/CD by the cover" - so even if there is a million dollar production inside, they may never hear it, if an amateur looking cover scares them away.

The art department at Summit Sound has been producing album covers since 1974, progressing from manual hand-drawn art and process camera separations back in the early 70's, to the very latest Mac based computer graphics hardware and software of today.

Kathy Daw - who holds a college degree in Creative & Visual Arts - heads up the Summit design team and her experience includes designing, trouble-shooting and overseeing the production of literally thousands of CD, DVD, VHS, record and tape covers.

Like most professional graphics studios, Summit Sound is strictly an "Apple/Mac" environment, utilizing the latest Apple computers and the top graphics page layout programmes such as QuarkXpress and the Adobe Creative Suite - with digital photo manipulation and illustration via Adobe's Photoshop and Illustrator.

Summit Sound's graphics department is able to take your rough cover concepts and transform them into a great cover design, or to come up with a complete graphic concept, design and cover layout to give your project maximum marketing impact.

Summit can also accept clients' digital art/photo files in both Mac & PC formats, and is often called upon to enhance or repair supplied files and layouts from amateur designers and to solve technicsal issues with files that do not meet industry specs.

Although recent changes to the pre-press process and the use of printable PDF files for direct-to-plate printing, now make it possible even for PC users to create usable graphics files, still, many common PC programmes such as Microsoft Word or Publisher may still be impossible to use for CMYK - printable PDF output. Truthfully there is no substitute for having a trained graphic designer (using a Mac) working on your cover design aided by their experience, technical skill and equipped with all the proper tools of the trade.

# Cover Design Considerations

**Designers Top 10 Check-List**

1. Begin by using one of our Summit Layout Templates to ensure proper cover layout sizing.

2. All files and images must be in the CMYK (process color) format. RGB images are unacceptable.

3. All photo Images must be cropped to finished size at 300dpi.

4. Keep all text a minimum of 1/8" (inside) from any finished edge, crop-mark or fold.

5. Add 1/8" bleed (to later be trimmed off edges) to all outside edges of your design.

6. Mac designers if supplying working files, be sure to include all images & fonts used in your QuarkXpress layout, then export final layouts to 300 dpi printable PDF.

7. PC designers must embed all text & flatten layers in Adobe Photoshop or In-Design and/or convert all text to curves in Adobe Illustrator, (vector format) then convert final layouts to 300 dpi printable PDF.

8. See Preferred, Alternate & Unacceptable Formats below.

9. Courier your completed digital design files to Summit Sound, 184 McAndrews Rd. Westport, ON K0G 1X0, on CDR or DVDR along with a printed color proof. You may also upload design and audio files to the Summit ftp site.

10. Be sure to include your CATALOGUE NUMBER and MADE IN CANADA on all cover & CD or DVD imprint graphics. UPC BAR CODES are available from Summit Sound at our cost of $50. each.

Call Summit Sound at: 1-800-403-9755 if you have any questions before proceeding with your design


## Design Basics - Graphic Design for CD Covers 101

A clear understanding of graphic color systems (CMYK, PMS, RGB etc.) file formats (EPS,TIF, JPG, PSD etc) image resolution (72, 300, 600dpi) line screens (ie. 85, 133, 150 line) as well as how computer programs deal with drawings/illustration and text (vector) and photo images (raster) is critical to obtain optimum results on your cover design.

While it is possible to do a complete cover design in a program such as Photoshop, you need to understand that because Photoshop rasterizes (which is ideal for photo images) it is not the best choice for text as it makes it less sharp. On the other hand, a program such as Adobe Illustrator which creates vector images (and is thus ideal for text) does not process photo images as well as raster based programs like Photoshop. This is why professional designers use page layout programs such as QuarkXPress for layout, as it allows them (for example) to combine both raster (photo) images from Photoshop and vector images (illustration/text) from Illustrator ensuring the best possible end result.

We do have clients who provide complete designs in Photoshop, or Illustrator with "reasonable" results, but you need to understand that this is not going to yield the best result. Doing your design entirely in Photoshop will optimize photos but compromise (especially smaller) text. Conversely, doing a complete design in Illustrator (or exporting to Illustrator) will optimize your text/illustrations but compromise photos... This is why we recommend you use our Summit design services or employ the services of another professional designer who can create your design using the correct software tools, with a full understanding of the complexities involved, when files will be printed by a commercial offset printer on a 4 color (CMYK) press. Doing your cover layout in QuarkXPress so that you can combine any vector (Photoshop) and raster (Illustrator) images is the proper way to create a design for professional output.

## Preferred Formats

The professional graphic design and print world uses Apple (Mac) computers with page layout in *QuarkXPress, photos or image manipulation in Adobe Photoshop and all drawings or illustration in Adobe Illustrator. When design is complete, these files are then converted to hi res printable PDF's. (*If using In-Design for page layout, be sure to note this in writing, so we can check files for errors before going to press)

This is the preferred format for all files supplied to Summit Sound, and the way we and the majority of other professional designers create their cover designs.

To ensure optimum results and to avoid cost over-runs, we highly recommend that you create your design using these industry standards. Finally, convert files to Adobe Acrobat (PDF format) with colors converted to CMYK, fonts embedded, resolution set to 300 dpi and files printer (not screen) optimized.

## Alternate Formats

In the event you intend to attempt your own design using a Windows based PC, it is critical that you provide your digital files in one of the 3 EXACT formats listed below:

1.  Adobe Acrobat files with colors converted to CMYK, fonts and images embedded, resolution set to 300 dpi and files printer (not screen) optimized.

2.  Adobe Photoshop or In-Design files with color converted to CMYK, images cropped to size at 300dpi and text embedded by flattening layers (rasterized) before saving in EPS or TIF format. Avoid text under 8 point for maximum legibility. When design is complete, these files are then converted to 300dpi printable PDF's. (If using In-Design for page layout, be sure to note this in writing, so we can check files for errors before going to press)

3.  Adobe Illustrator files with color converted to CMYK and text embedded by converting all text to curves and flattening layers (vector format) before saving as EPS or TIF. Avoid very small or condensed fonts when converting text to curves for maximum legibility. When design is complete, these files are then converted to 300dpi printable PDF's.

## Layout Programs to Avoid

We do not recommend the use of programs such Corel Draw or Corel Photo Paint as this software is not supported by most professional printers and results can be unreliable.

If you must provide Corel files, convert all colors to CMYK and always use "artistic text" so you can embed fonts and export in a vector format such as Adobe Illustrator. You must provide finished layouts as complete EPS, TIF or PDF (picture) images that combine both text and any photos.

Please note that choosing to use Corel software may result in extra set-up costs unless you can output as a fully completed 300dpi printable PDF with all bleed, crop and registration marks.

## Layout Programs That Absolutely Cannot Be Used

Any layout created in programs such as Microsoft Publisher, Microsoft Word or CD Creator etc. does not have CMYK output capability and as such is not acceptable except as a "rough mock-up of your intended design (unless it allows you to convert to CMYK and output as a hi-res PDF).

Designs supplied in any "non-standard" format may need to be totally re-created by our staff designers at additional cost.

## Direct To Plate Or Film Output

Most CD cover designs printed today, bypass the traditional CMYK film/color key stage, by going "direct-to-plate" using a new pre-press format that allows CMYK plates to be formatted directly from the designers printable PDF files. *(This is instead of requiring the traditional film separations and metal plates that were "burned" from CMYK negatives for this process.)*

This new PDF - direct-to-plate process has reduced production costs (due to the elimination of expensive CMYK films and metal plates) and replaces CMYK color key or color laminate proofs with electronic PDF proofs that can be emailed or printed for client approval.

## Direct-On-Disc Imprint Films

As CD or DVD surface imprints are done using Pantone or PMS colors applied in a high quality silkscreen process, films are still required for each color (plus any white backgrounds if needed). Our standard pricing includes up to 4 color CD imprinting although 5 & 6 color printing is available at additional cost. Films should be generated as right reading positives, emulsion side up, 2550 dpi using a 100 line screen with elliptical dots for any halftones. See Summit CD Layout templates for complete specifications and dimensions. *NOTE: Summit Sound also provides complete disc imprint design and film services, but these may be at additional cost on some packages.*

## Tips On Background Or Text Color Creation & Image Scanning

To ensure optimum color matching (and avoid being fooled by your computer screen) ALWAYS generate any colors using a CMYK color chart that shows a printed color swatch with values you can manually enter in your design program for each of the CMYK color values. Here is an example: If you wish to create bright red in your design and find a suitable red on your CMYK color chart (such as Pantone's process color S 73-1) in your design software, create a new color and enter the individual color values as listed on the process color guide such as:   C=0, M=100, Y=100, K=0 Once you have done this, when you look at this new color on your screen, if it looks different than the printed sample on your color guide (ignore your screen and believe the color guide) you may also wish to recalibrate your monitor to avoid confusion. Never create important colors at random on screen, as you will have no way to accurately estimate what they will look like when printed.

For front covers or any important photos, to ensure the highest photo image quality and color balance, hi res digital camera  images or use of a service bureau who will provide you quality  hi resolution scans of your prints or transparencies using a "Drum Scanner" are recommended. This is in contrast to the lower quality and less reliable scans you will get from a "Flat-bed" desk-top scanner or a lower -res digital camera. Drum scanners can cost several hundred thousand dollars so they differ from the $150. flatbed scanners most of us are familiar with. If you plan to use images from a digital camera use the highest possible resolution (minimum 300dpi to size) and consider having Summit Sound (or the service bureau of your choice)  "tweak" the color on these images, as digital images tend to be be very "flat".

The importance of the items above can't be over-stated, to ensure that your cover turns out as you expect it to, and in the colors you had originally envisioned.... Never trust your monitor or even your printer for critical color decisions, as most printers use color management software to match your print-outs to your screen - a process that will not be implemented when you go to press.

## Other Cool Stuff To Include On Your Cover

UPC Bar Codes: Most packaging today currently includes UPC or bar codes for scanning at point of sale. Summit Sound can create your bar code to meet all regulations for a fee of $50. Keep in mind that a  separate bar code is required for CD, DVD, VHS or Cassette of the same project so the point of sale register can differentiate between each. Call us for more information.

Listing the Country of Manufacture On Packaging: It is required by law that your product be clearly marked with the country where it is manufactured or printed. If you are supplying your own design files, it is your responsibility to include this information. Products to be produced by Summit Sound must include PRINTED / MADE IN CANADAon the packaging (usually at the bottom of the CD tray card on back of CD package and also on the disc imprint) The type font used for MADE IN CANADAmust be equal in size and weight to any contact or distribution information, address or other information listed along with it. Products without this information will be refused by import/export authorities.

Other: You may want to include your website, a telephone number, address, or other contact information on your cover. Other items that are often included are MAPL logos to indicate Canadian content, performance rights affiliation for songs you've written, as well as serving notice of copyright for any original material and/or the entire project.(ie. © 2003 John Doe/SOCAN)

## Important Additional Design Resources

Make sure to visit this link on the Summit Sound Website if doing your own CD cover design!
http://www.summitsound.com/design101.html

# Copyright Registration

Copyright is also known as Intellectual Property Rights... these two terms are interchangeable.

## Protecting your own songs

You do not need a mechanical license to record your own songs (written by you) and by virtue of current international copyright law, these are copyrighted at the moment of conception. You may wish to validate your copyright by some means, and releasing it on a CD with - the song title followed by the copyright symbol "©"plus the year, followed by the author's name - is one of several good ways to accomplish this. (ie. My Song © 2005 John Doe)

You may also serve notice of copyright on an entire CD project by using the letter "P" with a circle around it, followed by the year of release and print this information on the CD cover.

In USA, Canada and most co-operating countries, any original artistic endeavor (including the composition of songs or release of a CD) is copyrighted the moment it is conceived and/or released.

There is no legal requirement to register your copyright, however, one method of validating a copyright is to officially register your work.

Other common methods of copyright validation may include mailing a copy of your song or product to yourself by registered mail and storing it unopened, as dated evidence to be used in future possible court proceedings. Any means you can use to validate your copyright is worthwhile.

Recording in a legitimate recording studio (such as Summit Sound) and releasing a commercially pressed CD, are both excellent ways to accomplish this, since the studio has a record of your project and recording/manufacturing dates, which can be used in court as evidence to validate your ownership.

**Check These Excellent Government Links On Copyright Basics**
http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ1.html#hsc
http://strategic.gc.ca/sc_mrksv/cipo/cp/copy_gd_protect-e.html#section08


**CANADA**
Canadian Intellectual Property Office / Industry Canada
Place du Portage I
50 Victoria St., 2nd Floor
Hull, PQ K1A 0C9
Toll Free 1 800 567-2345
Tel. (819) 997-1725
Fax (819) 953-7620
http://cipo.gc.ca/
cipo.contact@ic.gc.ca

**U.S.A.**
United States Copyright Office / The Library of Congress
101 Independence Ave. S.E.
Washington, DC 20559-6000
Tel. (202) 707-9100
http://lcweb.loc.gov/copyright
copyinfo@loc.gov

# Securing Mechanical Licenses

**Getting permission to record other people's songs:**
When one wishes to record a song that is written by someone else, (not written by you) they need to secure a mechanical license which gives them the right to legally reproduce (in a mechanical format.... such as on a CD) a specified number of copies of them performing that song**. A mechanical license may take the form of a letter from the original author, or be a more official contract between the song publisher and the artist or record label to whom they grant license.

If a song, poem etc. has at some time been "published" or released to the public in some format (for example on a CD or DVD) the copyright owner cannot refuse you a license, but it is up to you to pay the appropriate fees and secure this license before you begin to make any copies. In the event that you hear an "unreleased" original work (not written by you) and wish to secure a license for this, the writer may retain "first right of release" - which simply means that they may refuse you a license - if they wish to have their work released first by someone more famous.

**Licensing fees:**
The statutory fee for a standard mechanical license in the USA is approximately 9¢ per song per copy released. Using a service such as CMRRA in Canada, the total cost also works out to about 9¢ per song per copy created (*if the song is under 5 minutes in length). If you required licenses for 10 songs on a CD (10 songs x .09 per song = 90¢ per CD).

Here is the typical current CMRRA fee breakdown: For a typical 10 song CD, you would pay a total of 81¢ (8.1¢/song/copy) per CD released, plus the 6% CMRRAhandling fee and applicable 5% GST. 1000 copies would then cost you $810. plus 6% handling fee of $48.60 plus 5% GST of $42.93 = Total of $901.53 and 500 copies would be 1/2 of that amount, or $450.77. *If you have songs over 5 minutes in length, you add about 1.8¢ per song - per minute - times the total number of copies. (Tip: round length to nearest minute, so you would list a song that is 5:29 as 5:00 minutes OR 5:31 as 6:00)

Multiple songs used in medleys must also be reported in detail, and thus can add substantial extra licensing costs as each segment of the medley is paid as if you used the whole song.

Although HFA (or NMPA) may issue licenses in the USA for less than 500 units, the current minimum for a license issued by CMRRA in Canada, is **500 copies. **NOTE: Should you plan to apply via CMRRA for a mechanical license for any quantity less than 500 copies, since CMRRA's minimum fee to process your application is for 500 copies, you will pay for 500 anyway, so if you apply for a license for 500 you will already be covered for the balance of 500 not used on the first order. However, if you only apply for a license for 100 copies even though you paid the same fee as if producing 500 CDs, you are only covered for the original 100 and you would have to pay again for the next 100 or any future re-orders.

Language translations require special permission, and may be refused at the sole discretion of the original author/publisher.

Songs written by an author who has been deceased for more than 50 years are generally considered to be in the public domain (PD) and as such may not require you to obtain a license to record them.

If you are recording a song by an unpublished author, they may agree to any special terms the two of you wish to negotiate in lieu of the standard rate of 9¢/song per copy, but you will need a signed, written copy of this agreement for it to stand as a mechanical license.

The requirement for mechanical licenses applies, even if the copies are given away for free.

**Availability of songs for mechanical licensing and the application procedure:**
The original author of a song may retain the right of first release or assign it to anyone they choose, however, you may obtain a mechanical license for any song previously released to the public in a mechanical form, and this can be accomplished by contacting the author/publisher of the song directly and negotiating the fees or by going through an organization such as http://cmrra.ca in Canada or http://www.nmpa.org or http://www.icgcopyright.com in the USA. The previously mentioned mechanical licensing clearinghouses, represent most major publishers and can issue mechanical licenses on their behalf, so that you can usually do all your licensing through a single source. These one-stop licensing clearinghouses in turn, pocket a percentage of what you pay in licensing fees, before remitting your payment to the respective publishers. (so the publishers pay them for this service)

If you are a US based artist, you should begin by contacting NMPA which is also known as the Harry Fox Agency. If you are a Canadian based artist, you should begin by contacting CMRRA because you will pay in CDN funds, adding GST. In the event that neither CMRRA or NMPA represent some of your songs, contacting ICGI in the US, can be a good next step, but bear in mind that they will invoice in US funds.

**Searching for titles, authors and publishers of songs:**
Since song titles are not copyrightable, you may find that there are several songs with the same title, so it is important when you file for licenses that you have determined the proper song title, author and ideally the publisher's name also. Failure to do this can result in obtaining a license for the wrong song. The easiest way to verify correct information, is to do a search of the performance rights associations song databases. You will find these at: http://www.ascap.com - http://www.bmi.com - http://www.sesac.com - (Canadian privacy law doesn't allow SOCAN http://www.socan.ca to provide a search engine yet, but the same information is on the bmi, ascap & sesac sites)

In the USA, http://www.harryfox.com/songfile/public/publicsearch.jsp is also an excellent resource to find applicable authors and publishers. For Canadians, http://www.cmrra.ca also has a search engine but if you look there by title and do not find the song, also double check by author as sometimes it will show up one way and not the other. Note: Harry Fox (HFA) or CMRRA cannot issue licenses for releases outside their respective countries.

All authors of songs and their publishers are usually members of these performance rights groups, since they are authorized by the FCC and CRTC to collect royalties for broadcast airplay or other public performance of live or recorded music. You simply log on to the ASCAP, BMI or SESAC websites and go to their search engines... then enter all the information you have for each song to see what comes up. If you don't find a particular title with one performance rights organization, the publisher may be affiliated with another of the 3 listed, so check each of them. If a particular title does not show up in your search also do a search by author and/or by publisher as sometimes you will find info that should be cross-referenced (but is not) by doing this. Once you determine the author and publisher's name, you can look further on that performance rights organization's website for complete contact information on each of their affiliated publishers.

Another excellent resouce to find music publishers is MPA "The Music Publishers Assoc". They can be found at: http://www.mpa.org Once you have found the correct publisher, you can choose to contact the publisher directly to request a mechanical license, OR go through one of the clearinghouses such as CMRRA, NMPA, or ICGI.

**Making application for mechanical licenses through licensing clearinghouses:**
If you use a one-stop clearinghouse such as CMRRA or NMPA (highly recommended) use their website to download mechanical licensing application forms, or fill these out on-line. You will need to fill out one of these forms for each song for which you are requesting a license. These forms will ask for the contact information of the person filling out the form, the name of the recording artist and the title of the CD, as well as a production catalogue number and the quantity of CDs being released. They will also ask you to specify if your CD is a vocal or instrumental release. In addition, you will need to project an estimated release date

for the CD, and be sure to provide either a pressing release form, a copy of your invoice for your CDs, or a quote for CD manufacturing - to validate the quantity of CDs that you will press. This validation of quantity from the manufacturer must accompany your application.

When you send these licensing applications in, you need to calculate total licensing fees payable and enclose a cheque for the full amount of all fees payable (including 6% processing fees plus applicable GST if going to CMRRA). When you do this, be sure to make photo copies of each license application and also of your cheque so that this may be used to verify that your licenses are pending. This is necessary before the CD pressing plant will press your CDs. You may also want to send this application by registered mail or via a courier, so there is a signature to prove receipt of your application.

**What to do if your songs are not covered by a licensing clearinghouse:**
In the event that the CMRRA, NMPA, or ICGI do not cover some of your songs, they will advise you and refund any payments you have made to publishers which they do not represent... At this point, it is still your responsibility to try another similar clearinghouse service OR contact the respective publisher(s) directly to obtain your missing license(s).

**Copy Important documentation:**
Keeping photo copies of all your applications and cheques, ensures that you have proof of your intent and action to obtain proper mechanical licenses, in the event that there is ever any question pertaining to your application.

**Using someone else's recording on your CD:**
You cannot legally make copies of someone else's recorded version of a song or music background track and put it on your CD without a special written legal agreement with the owner of that original recording... and that owner is not obliged to grant you such privileges. This is a completely different issue than you performing and recording a song that is written by someone else, for which they must grant you a  mechanical license.

**Examples:**
1. Sampling an existing recording: you cannot include any "sample" or reproduction of someone elses recording on your product without a license - and most copyright owners will not allow this, and are not obliged to do so (often a "dead-end street" as you cannot manufacture copies legally).
2. Using an existing performance track (or karaoke) track: requires that the manufacturer of that music background track will issue you a license to use their track on your recording - some performance track companies welcome this use but for a fee - others may refuse you this right. (fees are arbitrarily set by each manufacturer, but typically range from $100. to $250. per music background track you use, and may also have "extra fees per unit released" added, or additional fees payable if you re-order your CD)

# Additional Resources

**Summit Sound Website - http://www.summitsound.com**

**Recording Packages with CDs - http://www.summitsound.com/ftp/Summit Studio Pkg Specials.pdf**

**CD Pricing - http://www.summitsound.com/pricing.html**