



First musical

JAZZ PROJECT

Choosing Material

There are lots of approaches to beginning any CD project. This is only one. Use any of the ideas independent of the others, pick what works for you and cast the rest aside.

1.

Choose a few words that describe the type of CD you want to make. Romantic, groovin', swingin', danceable, musically challenging, avant gard, groundbreaking, incendiary. Think about what you want to happen to the audience when they hear your CD (get cuddly, get up and dance, step on the cat, practice more, meditate, get energized, save the rain forest, etc.) Be specific. This is only one CD of a whole series you will be doing in the future.

2.

Think about what you are going to do with this CD when it is done. Do you want radio play, more gigs, and a bigger audience (of course you do.)? However, not every radio station is going to play your music so what particular radio station(s) do you have in mind. Where do you want to play? Who is playing there already and what are they playing to get there? This is research into your market. Just look, listen and observe.

3.

Think about yourself. What is unique about you? Ask friends and family how they would describe your music. Ask them for suggestions as to what their favorite songs are that you do. What do they like when they come to hear you? Don't ask what they don't like although some will have to tell you anyway. Here you're just looking for audience response.

4. _____

Choose 5 CDs that you've always loved. They do not need to be in your style. Listen to them carefully and describe what you like about them. Consider the sound, the mood, who they feature, what they feature. When do you play these CDs? For a party? For background?

5. _____

Make a list of every tune you might even remotely consider. No censoring at this point, just a big old list. Next divide the tunes up into styles, or feels or tempos. Think about your answers to the first 4 questions and begin eliminating the material that doesn't fit your concept for THIS project.

6. _____

Decide how much recorded music you want to put on the CD. Somewhere between 55 and 70 minutes is standard. If you are going to record tunes about 3.5 to 5 minutes in length, you will want to choose about 13 to 15 tunes to record. Keeping in mind your overall concept or mood for this record, look for a group of tunes that express that mood but have variety. Even if you are creating a romantic record with a mellow mood you will want some contrast in the tunes you choose. Different keys, differing styles, differing tempos, but all within the concept you have chosen. For instance, if you have chosen to create an energetic record that shows off your virtuosity on your instrument, include the styles and pieces that show you off. This is a good time to go back to some of your most favorite CDs and reexamine what it is you like or admire about them. All artists borrow from one another at least some of the time. It is not necessary to "reinvent the wheel," but if you feel like it, go ahead and try.

7. _____

Express your uniqueness. What makes you YOU is what you have to offer. Sing what you like. Play what you like. Create a recording that you would like to listen to. Enjoy the process. Make a statement. Listen and be guided by what you think is "good." If this is your first musical project, remind yourself that it is not your last.