

New to recording? Read this to make sure you're prepared and know how to ensure that your session runs smoothly and productively.

- What is an Engineer's job? Your session will include at least one recording engineer. An engineer's job is to record the artist's performance as accurately as possible with the best audio-fidelity. This includes many technical tasks like choosing the microphone and placement, adjusting the levels for recording and listening, and generally the person responsible for "pressing the buttons." He is not there to give creative musical advice, opinions, play or tune instruments for you. The engineer can add requested effects and make any adjustments to the sound of an instrument or voice needed.

- Do I need a Producer? If you want your recordings to have any instruments that you do not play or know how to arrange yourself, yes. Also, if you need creative input, help with arrangements, or directing musician's performances, then you usually need a producer of some kind. Some Songwire engineers are also talented and accomplished producers and can help out in this area. We can play many instruments for you or bring in professional musicians to play whatever is necessary. There is a producer fee and it should be decided well in advance of a recording session if any producing help is required. Email us for more info.

- Tune your instrument (drums too!). Don't expect your instrument (drums or voice for that matter) to sound like a professional record unless it actually sounds that way when you are playing it. An engineer can't record a sound that isn't there. Spend the time tuning and sculpting your personal sound and it will pay off.

- Setup time. Remember that it takes time to setup for a session. First, the band must get their instruments setup and tuned. Then, the engineer will place all the microphones and get levels from each instrument. You may arrive up to 30 minutes prior to the start of your session for setup that is "off the clock."

- Bring Your Gear Bring all of your instruments, accessories, guitar amps and cables. Let us know prior to your session if you plan to use any of our instruments, amps or cables so that we can have them available.

- Recording (tracking) Recording in the studio is the best environment for capturing the "perfect performance." You have unlimited chances to get it right. Do not accept mistakes, you can have as many takes as your time allows to play it right.

How many hours to record each song? How much time recording takes varies *greatly* depending on many factors. The style of music, number of instruments, how well rehearsed you are, and how much production (doubled guitars, background vocals, solos, etc) you are adding to your songs are some of the elements that effect recording time. It is extremely unrealistic to think that because you have ten 3-minute songs, you can record them in half-an-hour. Remember that some things are often overdubbed (vocals, background vocals, etc), setup time (above) and mixing (below) too and expect to play most songs several times.

- Your Headphone mix is important. While recording, you or the artist will be wearing headphones and will be hearing what is being recorded and the playback of the other tracks. It's important that your headphones sound good to you. If you're recording with a live band (all

instruments at the same time), Songwire is capable of generating 3 different headphone mixes. So be sure to tell your engineer whenever you need 'more or less' of an instrument in your headphones. It's makes a big difference in your comfort and performance.

- Playing with a Click. A click is a metronome that perfectly clicks (in your headphones only) the beat of the song at a selected tempo. It helps keep musicians from rushing or slowing down and playing "out of time." The more tracks you plan to overdub later the more important a click is for keeping everything together. Depending on the style or your music a click may or may not be appropriate, discuss this with your engineer before recording.

- Mixing. Plan for it. Mixing is a huge part of the process and too often rushed through. It is the adjusting of the levels and sound (eq, compression, etc) of each instrument/voice. At the high end of large-budget commercial record-making, it takes about a day to mix a complex song properly. But even on the low-budget demo, mixing is not instantaneous. Be sure to listen to your songs all the way through. A rough mix can usually be reached in 15-30min per tune. If, for example, your rock trio plans to record 6 songs in a day (8 hours). Plan at least 1+1/2 hours to get them to a rough mix and "bounced out" (exported from the recording software) to be recorded on your CD or media or your choosing. That leaves 6+1/2 hours for setup and tracking.

- Editing Fix it in the mix? Because Songwire records digitally into a computer, an extensive amount of editing is possible after the tracking process is complete. But remember that sometimes it takes more time to edit something than it does to simply play it right. Ask your engineer what is possible and he or she will suggest editing solutions if they are appropriate and practical.

Mastering This is the final step of the recording process. It involves eq, compression, raising the level (loudness) and other processing of the mixed stereo file of each song. If you are mastering an entire record, balancing the sound and volume from track to track is important so each song flows into the next. Songwire can offer a very basic master for demos or EPs, but we suggest taking your mixes to a dedicated "mastering house" for larger projects.

CD duplication We can provide you up to 2 CD's. For professional duplication and packaging for we have suggestions for other affiliate companies that can print as copies that you need.

Last but not least, Remember to Eat. - Sounds funny but this is easily forgotten. For sessions of 4 hours or more, bring some lunch or plan on ordering something. Your decision making and performance suffers when you are famished.

We hope this helps prepare you for your session at Songwire. Let us know if you have any more questions. We're looking forward to recording your music!