

Recording at Dockside Studio

Instructional Mini-Grant Application  
Spring 2009

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## **Project Description**

### Objectives

This project will provide an opportunity for students to work in a professional environment and produce a high quality product that they can then learn to promote and distribute.

Students in music media production classes will spend a day working in a professional recording facility, tracking and mixing in an acoustically-controlled space. The design of Dockside Studio follows industry standards, including sufficient space to allow students to act as assistant engineers and producers. A student ensemble will have an experience of recording their music in multiple isolation rooms that are acoustically isolated, wearing headphones and communicating visually through windows.

Following classroom discussion and input, a committee of students under faculty supervision will pick the style of music and which group to record. This will put them in the position of making the fundamental decisions that record labels face.

An art student wanting an opportunity to develop their portfolio will be hired as a student assistant to design a package that will be reproduced and sold.

Students in recording techniques and postproduction courses will be involved in a recording project at Dockside Studio, a local professional facility that offers an industry standard environment with multiple sound proofed recording rooms, large control room, and workspace for assistant engineers and producers.

Dockside Studio (in Maurice, LA) has produced a number of Grammy Award winning albums. Loyola University regularly takes students there to do recording projects similar to what we are proposing here. Many of our students are interested in working at the facility after graduation, and this will provide an introduction to the staff there, which may open up future contacts.

### Methodology

Half the studio time will be used for recording tracks, the other half for mixing them. The acoustics in the control room at Dockside are better than what we have in Angelle Hall. Mixing in a professionally arranged control room will give students an opportunity to participate in musical decisions based on more accurate sound reproduction, ultimately resulting in a better product.

Media students will make video recordings during the process and make music video clips of the songs.

After discussion in the media and music business classes, a student ensemble will be picked by a committee of students under supervision by the media faculty. This will generate discussions as to what style of music is most viable to promote in the

marketplace, and to evaluate the groups' skill, quality of original music, marketability, and commitment of the group to stay together over the course of the marketing period that will follow the recording. The ensemble will have two or three of their songs recorded and professionally produced, which they will be able to use to promote their careers. A contract will be written that provides for the reimbursement to Pepper Records for the cost of duplicating the 50 copies of the disks, to be paid back from eventual sales. The contract will also include an agreement as to how any further income generated from sales of the music will be divided among the student composers and performers. While the grant already covers the cost of duplication and we don't anticipate large amounts of money to result from sales, this activity will give students a practical situation in which to practice negotiating and putting agreements in writing.

An art student will be hired as an assistant to create a graphic design for the CD, case, and liner notes. The music industry class will distribute the recording through local radio stations, the Internet, and online music stores such as iTunes.

### Educational Significance

Students will have an opportunity to experience what it is like to work in a professional studio of the type used by record labels, in contrast to the teaching facility used for classes and projects in Angelle Hall, which has poor acoustics, little sound isolation, a cramped control room, and no booths for the musicians. While the recording studio in Angelle Hall is adequate for teaching purposes, this experience will put students in the environment many of them are aspiring to, which will motivate them to work even harder to master their craft.

The musicians will have a unique experience working in a professional studio, and benefit from the high quality recording that will result.

The music industry class will have an actual product that they can use for marketing and distribution exercises over the course of the following year.

The art student will gain experience working with clients outside their department, and have a piece of work to add to their portfolio.

### Timetable

Fall, 2008: Discuss in classes what style of music to record, and how the selection process will work for choosing a group. Form a committee of students and faculty to select the group to record. The music industry classes and officers of Pepper Records will negotiate contract with musicians.

Spring, 2008: Record, mix, and master recording at Dockside. Duplicate the product and distribute through online music stores. Announce in local papers and send to radio stations. Media students make music videos to post on websites.

Fall and spring, 2009-2010: Music industry classes continue to promote project.

### Evaluation

Students in all affected classes (MUS238, MUS276, MUS376, MUS377, MUS422) will fill out questionnaires to see what value they saw in the project, and how the final product could best be exploited. The musicians will be asked to describe their experience. Local press reactions will be collected. Hits on the band's website and online sales reports will give feedback on the public's response. Comments will be included on the SOM website documenting the project.

### **Budget**

| <u>Operating Services</u>   | <u>Mini-Grant</u> | <u>SOM</u> |
|---|-------------------|------------|
| Recording services for 1 day:<br>studio time and supervising engineer | \$565             | 0          |
| CDBaby.com: setup online sales and distribution                       | \$35              | 0          |
| Student assistant: graphic art student                                | \$50              | 0          |
| <u>Supplies</u>   |                   |            |
| Duplication of 50 CD copies:<br>CD-ROM, labels, inserts, cases        | \$100             | 0          |
| Envelopes and postage to mail to reviewers                            | 0                 | \$25       |
| Total Budget Request From Mini-Grant                                  | \$750             |            |
| Total Budget Request From School of Music                             |                   | \$25       |
| Total Project Cost  | \$775             |            |