

The Ultimate Guide To The Music Business .

How To Rock: The Ultimate Guide To Making It BIG In The Music Business

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# How To Rock

The Ultimate Guide To Making It BIG In The Music Business

Written by someone who's MADE IT!

**Kyle Morrison Lovely**

of

 SHATTERSPHERE

B.A – Music and Sound Recording

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# CHAPTER 1

## ***WHY THIS BOOK DOESN'T TALK ABOUT MUSIC***

You'll find that there is very little discussion in this book about the actual music your band makes. My book *Music Theory For The Modern Rockin' Metalhead* covers that subject in depth and I suggest you read that book before you read this one. *Music Theory For The Modern Rockin' Metalhead* is a book dedicated entirely to writing better songs and expanding your knowledge of the science of music, while this book is dedicated to getting those songs the attention they deserve, and to share with you the techniques I used to get my songs more attention than the average band. This book focuses on all of the other aspects of the music business that will play a factor in determining the length, growth, and excellence of your career. Contrary to the general belief of the average musician, the actual music your band makes counts for only a small portion in this business. There are many other aspects of the music business that will play a role in deciding your fate; your ability to simply write good songs is just one aspect.

A large number of both independent and professional artists of all genres have assistance from professional songwriters when they compose their music. Professional songwriters will sometimes compose entire songs for an artist, and even record the entire album. If someone like Britney Spears can't write a hit song herself, then why is she one of the best selling artists in modern times? Why do the top selling artists in most genres of music spend money on image consultants? Why do companies that have nothing to do with music (such as Coke, Pepsi, and ProActive) endorse and sponsor musicians? There is more to this business than meets the eye, and more to this business than most musicians ever realize. The bands that "make it" in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are not necessarily the best musicians. The bands

that are making it now are the best *thinkers*. The modern day musician has an entrepreneurial mindset that is focused on building his band as a business. The modern day musician takes marketing and image just as seriously as music and composition. The old dogs don't think the new tricks don't work, so the old dogs end up losing their audiences; and there is no shortage of old dogs that are playing in the new yard.

## **THANK YOU TECHNOLOGY**

Technology is rapidly changing the world we live in today. 20 years ago I would have been writing this book on pieces of paper, flipping through a dictionary to check my spelling, and then typing up my final draft on a typewriter. Fortunately I am able to type this on a computer that automatically corrects most of my horrible misspellings, makes editing a breeze, and cuts the time it took for this project by 80% or more. I am able to work faster and more efficiently than another author using old methods. A few decades ago, musicians were primarily responsible for writing good songs and putting on a great show. Tasks such as booking, promoting, management, accounting, distribution, and more were outsourced to other people in the early stages of their career in order for the band to focus on their primary responsibility. Money was abundant in the music business because music piracy was still in its infant stages, and there was a clear-cut system of how to turn a profit. The advancements in technology have led to the downsizing of music professionals. Individuals and corporations are now expected to take on a huge variety of tasks all at once. A new age has begun and only those who can adapt to the changing environment will survive. Today's musician must be a good performer, businessman, promoter, booker, marketer, and more all in one sleek looking package.

## **A NEW AGE HAS BEGUN**

The MP3 has revolutionized the business, and it's going to be up to you how to utilize new technology to your advantage; stopping it or

ignoring its presence is not an option. The average person on broadband Internet can download over 100 albums in a 24-hour period, and they don't have to pay a cent to the artists that created them. The boundaries of copyright, publishing rights, and controlled distribution are slowly disappearing. The Industrial Age of music is over, and the Information Age has begun. In the Industrial Age, you had no choice but to pay for a copy of the music you wanted in the form of a cassette or CD because the record labels controlled the reproduction. In the Information Age, a child can download an album and burn it to a CD in a matter of minutes. The advancements in technology now enable children to accomplish the same tasks that teams of employees were assigned to not too long ago.

The Information Age is unlike any other era in history: It's *invisible*. It cannot be seen, it's not tangible, and it's changing faster than most people can keep up with. Trillions of data bits full of information are flying around the world at any given moment. The new becomes old faster than ever before because we are communicating at the speed of light. Today's musician must use a combination of technology and intelligence to pave new routes to success. The musicians of today must meet the ever-changing wish lists of today's listener. Many truly talented bands with great songs are simply lost in the mix because of the failure on their part to adapt to the changing environment. Those who are smart, cunning, and seeking new ways to utilize the latest technology are the ones that are winning. It's no longer a contest to be the best musician; it's a battle of wit, intelligence, work ethic, motivation, and business savvy.

## **CHANGING YOUR MINDSET**

In my time as a professional musician, I've seen far too many good bands full of good musicians fail because they have failed to adapt the right mindset. Far too many people are still under the impression that their only job is to write and play music. These people are similar to the people trying to enter today's current job market

without having any computer skills. They are still stuck in the Industrial Age, and no matter how good their skills *were*, they aren't up to today's standards. Those that wish to succeed today need to be able to compete with the musicians of tomorrow. Thanks to modern technology, people are succeeding younger, faster, and even with less money.

When I was first starting out in the music business, I had many assumptions about how to make it to the top. My Disneyland fantasies were quickly annihilated by the harsh realities of the music biz. I made a lot of mistakes along the way, but I learned how to adapt to the ever-changing world of music. I replaced the old assumptions with the new requirements; I looked forward to where the business was going instead of looking where it had been. I have learned so much about this business over almost a decade, and many of my lessons were learned the hard way. I spent a lot of time, money, headaches, heartaches, and energy trying to understand the nature of the beast. I sacrificed a lot during my journey including girlfriends, friends, college parties, my retirement account, my life savings, and much more. The glory of the music business doesn't come free of charge; there are prices to pay financially, emotionally, physically, and mentally. Your strength as a human being will be put to the test in ways you never thought possible, and they will come without warning. There are prices to pay for wrong answers and bad decisions. I wrote this book to minimize those prices for you and to help you pass some of the tests you will inevitably endure. Think of this book as your all around discount for the many lessons you could have learned the hard way.

Although I chose to make all of those sacrifices, my experiences in the music business are priceless to me. It all started with a dream and the guts to follow it. Many people have the dream, but lack the guts. I congratulate you for investing in your dreams and your future by taking the time to read this book. Your willingness to invest in your education already puts you in the top 20% of all aspiring rock stars out there. I'm convinced that everyone can make their dreams come

true if they just take the necessary actions to do so, be willing to work hard, and keep an open mind.

This book will teach you the self-discipline, work habits, and motivation required for this business; as well as provide plenty of how-to information based on my own personal experiences. Navigating the music business is not an easy task, but it becomes far less difficult if you have the right guidance. Some of the hardest battles you will fight will be with yourself. I've overcome many battles with my own mind regarding self-doubt, self-esteem, self-discipline, and even self-destruction. Every musician in the world has thought about throwing in the towel before they ever make it to the level they desire; and most of them actually do just that. Very few of them have enough fuel to keep going through the hardest of times. I am extremely proud of myself and my band mates for accomplishing all that we have. Nobody would have thought that a few guys from a small town in Connecticut would make a lasting imprint in music history. The odds were stacked against us, there were significant doubts from our friends and families, and disasters struck us that could have ended our careers very early if we had let them. Through all of this we managed to become quite successful, and the object of envy in the eyes of the many bands who tried to compete with us.

## **BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHECIES**

The path you are traveling on will most likely be the hardest one of your life. Chances are, you will encounter the same naysayers that I did. The names and faces change, but their negative attitude towards your attempt to do something great will never change. Many of my private music instructors told me at a young age that I wouldn't cut it as a professional musician, but I ended up graduating at the top of my class when receiving my B.A. in Music and Sound Recording. My music teacher in high school told me that I shouldn't sing because I sounded terrible, but I ended up winning awards for singing because I refused to stop improving. I failed English in high school because

my teacher thought I couldn't write, but my writing is now published worldwide.

The people that have forecasted these prophecies for me are still in the same places they were many years ago. They haven't changed, they haven't contributed anything major to society, and there's a good chance they give similar forecasts to the next generation of aspiring youth. Be very careful whose advice you listen to, and whose voice you let ring in your head for the years to come. You will get many different responses from people when you tell them your non-traditional career choice. Some people are very supportive, some are not, and most have mixed feelings. Here are some of the things I've heard on more than one occasion...

"You can't really expect to do that for a living."

"You should get a real job."

"You probably won't make it."

"You can't bank on doing that."

"What's your backup plan?"

"You can't be serious."

"There's a one in a million chance you'll make it."

"When are you going to look for a real job?"

I found that the only people that say things of this nature are the people who don't have the guts to do it themselves. They are often the ones who cling to their job security, afraid to try anything out of the ordinary, and are usually bitter towards people who act on their desire to become something more. A good number of these people are actually failed musicians. They tried it years ago and it just didn't

work out, and now they take their frustration of their failure out on you. These people love to watch others fail because it validates their thought of “If I can’t do it, nobody can.” Avoid these people like that plague, and never let their words mean anything more than ramblings from an old fool. Let them stay at the job they hate, let them live a life without recognition, but don’t give them the pleasure of making their prophecies come true.

## THE REAL QUESTIONS

It’s scary starting out in any business, and the music business is no exception. It’s even more difficult when you don’t know anyone in the business, don’t know where to start, don’t know who to talk to, or how you would even talk to them given the chance. I’d lie awake at night a cycle the same questions through my inquiring mind...

“Who do I have to impress to get somewhere?”

“How do I impress them?”

“What would I say to someone important?”

“How can I get on the *fast track* in this business?”

“How can I get some inside connections?”

“How did the famous bands make it?”

“What I am doing wrong?”

“Is it really possible to make it these days?”

“How can I compete against all of the other bands out there?”

“Will my band really get noticed instead of the millions of other bands out there?”

“What do they know that I don’t?”

“Will I end up failing?”

“What if this amounts to nothing?”

“What are the big secrets to this business?”

I could go on forever about the endless questions I had starting out. For many musicians, not having the answers to these questions will lead to fear; and it’s that fear of the unknown that paralyzes so many people. I wrote this book to answer as many of those burning questions as possible and settle your fears of the unknown to the best of my ability. As you read through this book, I ask you to keep an open mind about the solutions I will provide for you. Although I wish I had access to a guide like this years ago, I’m not sure if my mind was ready to handle some of the truths. Thankfully I met many people along the way who were willing to teach me some hard lessons and had the patience to let it sink into my thick skull. Some of the things I write about in this book will cause a bit of controversy within your mind, I just ask that you take my words for what they are and not as gospel. There is no end-all, be-all solution to making it big in the music business. If making it big in the music business was as straightforward as making a sandwich, writing a 350 page book on the subject probably wouldn’t be necessary. I’m here to offer you my experiences and share things with you that worked for *me*. You might disagree or criticize some of the ideas, statements, and suggestions I make, and that’s perfectly fine. All I ask is that you keep an open mind and be willing to look at things in a different light. People usually aren’t too quick to change and they often find it very difficult; and that’s precisely why most people never make it in this business.

I had two things when I started my professional music career: A dream and a \$99 keyboard from Radio Shack. Most successful musicians I have met in my life started out broke, bankrupt, or very close to it. We can all afford to start with nothing but a dream. This book will show you ideas of how to get money to fund your project and why you don't have to turn to a giant record label to do so. I didn't have any financial equity at 19 years old, but I had mental equity, friendship equity, and network equity. By utilizing and leveraging the equity I did have, the financial equity began to fall into place.

## **WELCOME TO REALITY**

I was a completely different person many years ago when I first started out. My childhood imagery of what the rockstar life was like ended up being the almost exact opposite in reality. The path I ended up following was much different than what was painted in my mind as a teenager. I thought I was walking into a party, when in reality I was walking into one of the most competitive businesses in the world. Although I was ill prepared, I worked very hard, overcame many obstacles, and quickly adapted to change. Many of my views have been changed on the subjects of money, business, music, and life all together. So keep an open mind, be ready and willing to change, and prepare yourself for success. This book doesn't talk about music, this book talks about *you*, who you have to be, the mindset you need to have, the company you keep, and what aspects of your life and business need to be rethought and redrawn.

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