

A Quick Guide To: CREATING A COMMERCIAL CLASSICAL MUSIC RECORDING

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1 RECORDING



Location, location, location!

The location of the recording session depends on the number of performers and the acoustics of a venue.

- **For a piece with many musicians** (ex. orchestra): a large space with high ceilings, such as a concert hall, is ideal
- **For a piece with a small group of musicians** (ex. string quartet): a smaller room would achieve a more intimate, focused sound

TIP: Choose a location with minimal background noise (cars, people walking by, etc.)



Essential Equipment

- **Stereo Microphones:** most classical music recordings use several microphones placed in strategic locations to capture both the performer's sound and overall sound of the room
- **Microphone Preamps:** takes output from the microphone and amplifies it to deliver a high quality, clean sound

Why use stereo microphones?

Stereo mics are used in classical music recordings because they best replicate the sound of a live performance and "creates the illusion of space" (Toft, 2020).

EDITING

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Mixing

Mixing music is the process of combining and adjusting multiple tracks together to achieve optimal sonic balance.

Common mixing tools:

- **Equalizer:** adjusts the frequencies of the audio
- **Compressors:** reduces the difference between loud and soft levels to achieve consistency in frequency level

Comping

Track comping involves piecing together multiple takes to create a "best of the best" recording, otherwise known as a **composite track**.

Successful track comping requires a good ear and the use of **crossfade** which seamlessly blends one take into another.

Mastering

Mastering is the final editing step. The goal of mastering is to **ensure the recording sounds its best before it is released**.

If the recording has multiple movements, mastering ensures each movement flows well into the other and the entire recording sounds consistent.

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POST-MASTERING

Creating an album cover

The album cover is an important visual representation of the recording.

Album covers can:

- Contain visual associations to the recording
- Evoke the recording's character or mood
- Feature the artist(s) or composers



Writing liner notes

Liner notes are a written guide for the listener and contains relevant and/or interesting information related to the recording.

Liner notes can include:

- Composer/performer bios
- Inspiration behind the work
- Music analysis
- Music/production credits

REFERENCES

Toft, R. (2020). *Recording classical music*. Routledge, an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group.