

GET IT OUT

How to release the song that has been sitting in your folder.

"I got the songs ready, I just didn't like the studio quality I had, so I haven't dropped them yet."

AN ARTIST WHO BOUGHT A BEAT FROM ME

Why I wrote this

I emailed a few hundred people who had bought beats from me and asked one question: what did you make with it?

A lot of you answered. And the same thing kept coming back.

"It has been in my folder since February."

"I got the songs ready, I just didn't like the studio quality I had, so I haven't dropped them yet."

"Most of the beats I bought felt amateurly done on my end. I didn't understand mixing until this year."

"I would like to completely re-write and re-record it so it is less rushed."

**Nobody said they could not find a beat.
Everybody said they could not finish.**

So this is about finishing. It is short on purpose.

The song is more finished than you think

You have heard your own song more times than anyone else ever will. That does two things to you. It makes every flaw enormous, and it makes the parts that work invisible.

The listener hears it once, on a phone, half paying attention. They are not listening for your de-esser.

THE HONEST TEST — DO ALL THREE

1

Play it on your phone speaker, no headphones.

2

Play it in a car.

3

Play a released song you like, then yours, same volume.

If it survives all three and you would not be ashamed to send it to a friend, **it is ready.**

It does not have to beat the released song. It has to belong in the same room as it.

If it fails, it usually fails for one of five reasons, and they are all fixable in an afternoon.

The five fixes

Ninety percent of “it sounds amateur” is these five things, in this order.

1 The vocal is too quiet or too loud

Not a taste thing, a numbers thing. If you strain to hear a word it is too quiet. If the beat feels like it is behind a wall it is too loud.

2 Nothing is cutting the low end off the vocal

There is rumble under your voice you cannot hear on laptop speakers. High-pass the vocal, pull it up to around 80 to 100 Hz. This fixes “muddy” more often than anything else.

3 The vocal is not compressed

Loud words too loud, quiet words gone. Ratio around 3:1, pull the threshold down until the loudest lines reduce by 3 to 6 dB. That is it.

4 The S sounds are stabbing

If “sss” hurts on headphones you need a de-esser. Most free vocal chains have one. Two minutes.

5 You have no reference

Load a released song by an artist you actually sound like into your session and switch between it and yours constantly. Your ears lie after twenty minutes. The reference does not.

That is the whole list. Everything past this point is polish, and polish is not what is keeping your song in a folder.

You do not need a studio

Several of you told me you are waiting until you can record somewhere better.

Some of the biggest songs of the last ten years have a vocal recorded in a bedroom on a cheap mic. What separates those from yours is not the room. It is that they finished.

Voloco

Genuinely good vocal processing on a phone. If you record on a phone anyway, this closes most of the gap on its own.

BandLab

Free, runs in a browser, has a mixer and mastering built in.

Reaper or Audacity

Reaper is a full studio for about sixty dollars and there is no time limit on the trial.

A duvet

Throw it over your head and the mic. Sounds stupid, kills room reflection, works.

A blanket, a phone and a free app beats a perfect studio you never book.

When to stop

Set a limit before you start. Three sessions. When session three ends, the song is done, whatever state it is in.

Without a limit you will keep going forever, because there is always one more thing. That is not perfectionism. It is fear wearing a smarter outfit.

The song does not get better after the third pass. You just get more tired

You already own the right to release it

This is the one that surprised me most, so let me be direct.

If you bought a lease from me, **you are allowed to put that song out.**

Spotify, Apple, YouTube, all of it. That is what the licence is. You do not need to ask me. You do not owe me anything else.

Check the licence you bought for your specific stream and sale limits. And if you genuinely cannot tell what you are allowed to do, email me and I will tell you in plain English. That is a free answer, always.

Nobody should have a finished song sitting unreleased because they were not sure if they were allowed. If that is you, that is on me for not being clearer.

Getting it on Spotify, in an afternoon

- 01** Export as WAV, 44.1 kHz, 16 bit.
 - 02** Pick a distributor. DistroKid is about twenty dollars a year for unlimited songs. Others exist and they all work.
 - 03** You need the audio file, cover art at 3000 by 3000 pixels, a title, and the producer credit.
 - 04** Credit the beat properly in the title or the notes. Something like (prod. BE-TWIIN). Not for my benefit, it is how people find who made the sound they liked.
 - 05** Upload. Allow two to three weeks before your release date if you want a chance at playlists, or send it now if you would rather not wait.
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That is the whole process. It is genuinely an afternoon.

The checklist

Print this. Tick it. Release the song.

- ☐ Played it on phone speaker
- ☐ Played it in a car
- ☐ Compared it against a released song I like
- ☐ Vocal level sits on top of the beat
- ☐ High-pass on the vocal, around 80 to 100 Hz
- ☐ Compressor on the vocal, 3 to 6 dB of reduction
- ☐ De-esser on if the S sounds sting
- ☐ Referenced against a real song while mixing
- ☐ Three sessions used, stopping now
- ☐ Checked what my licence allows
- ☐ Exported WAV, 44.1 kHz, 16 bit
- ☐ Cover art 3000 by 3000
- ☐ Producer credited
- ☒ **Uploaded**

Send it to me when it is out

I mean that. I made the beat and I almost never get to hear what happened next.

The people who wrote back to me this month sent albums, music videos, voice notes, and one song that had been sitting untouched since February. That was the best day of work I have had in a long time.

Whatever state it is in, I want to hear it.

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