NAVIGATING THE BUSINESS OF MUSIC

STUDY GUIDE

MAKING THE CONNECTION:

- What is a Record Label and what do they do?
  - A record label is a company that manufactures, distributes, and promotes recordings, mostly musical.
  - There are 2 main types of record labels
    - Major – A large global corporation that owns their own publishing and distribution companies, sizeable marketing budgets, relies on major chart success.
    - Music Publishing Company – a company that owns the rights to songs and collects money on the writers behalf
    - Music Distribution Company – a company that distributes music (i.e. CDs, vinyl, etc…)
  - Independent – Smaller company with smaller budgets. More flexible with artists and does not rely as much on chart success as much as fan base success. Does not have as much “reach” as the majors

- What can a record label offer?
  - A budget for making a recording
    - Making a record or album is cheaper than it has ever been, however, it still costs money. Many record labels will offer an advance to pay for an album.
    - An “advance” is money that is paid out for services (i.e. artist, producer, musicians, studios, etc…) that MUST be recouped by the label before any additional money is paid out.
  - Promotion/Marketing
    - Do-it-yourself promo and marketing has never been easier thanks to social media outlets, however, it is very time consuming. Record labels have people, sometimes teams of people, in charge of marketing. Making sure your music and brand is seen and heard.
  - Tour support
    - Booking a tour or performances can be difficult for the average person to book. Labels have teams of people with great connections to venue booking people. Being that labels have multiple artists on their label, beginning artists could potentially open for larger audience, thereby building an audience quickly.
  - Access to high quality producers and musicians
    - Modern music production can be done by almost anyone who has access to a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW). However, if you want quality, experience, and unique ideas, you will likely need access to great music producers.

SAMPLE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS:

- Do you think artists or bands NEED a record label to be successful?
  - No, there are artists who have made a great living doing everything on their own. There are plenty of other ways of being successful in the music industry other than being in the top 10 on Billboard. It just takes A LOT of time and organization skills.

- If you wanted to book a tour on your own, how would you go about doing it?
  - There are two main ways to book a tour.
Once you have selected your target area, you should plan a driving route and find clubs or performances spaces along the way that match your style of music. Contact the person who books the venue. Once you have secured a booking, you can then contact other venues along the route and attempt to book those.

The second way to book a tour is finding an anchor date. An anchor date is a gig that usually pays very well and covers travel costs (hotel, gas, possibly food).

- Compare and contrast how being an artist/band is like being your own record label,
  - Being an artist today is no longer just about the music, its about content. Artists need to build a fan base, have great pictures and videos, and LOTS of interaction with their audience. In many ways, you must act like a mini label. It is a full time job.