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# Chris Tyng helps emerging artists with the Grow Music Project



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The music industry is a large and often daunting world for artists to find their way. Great artists can become lost in the vastness of it all, competing for the attention of an audience who has more music available to them at their fingertips than they could ever listen to. Sometimes a great artist might not be able to afford the kind of professional time and equipment they need to really make themselves stand out.

That is where the **Grow Music Project** comes in. “The Grow Music Project is a launch pad that supports emerging independent bands and artists who we believe deserve to reach a wider audience,” says project creator **Chris Tyng** in my email interview with him. “At its core, GMP is a song incubator; we work with our selected artists to develop, record, produce, and mix a song they’ve written that we believe will be a stand-out track for them and a “calling card” for their talent.”

Composer/producer/musician Chris Tyng started the project in 2013 as a way to give back to the music community.



“GMP is our way of “paying forward” some of the good luck I’ve had in my own music career – and of giving back some support similar to what I received early on

*when I was getting my own start.*

*“I feel extremely lucky to be able to make music my own career, and wanted to find a way to give back. And just being in and around the music industry all of this time, it’s very apparent all of the challenges that emerging [and even established] artists face, particularly now. Between industry downscaling, minute royalties from streaming services and all the free downloading, it’s harder and harder for artists to make a living from their music; not to mention, the resources available for things like artist development, or a producer, or a recording budget that gives the artist enough studio time to make a great album in a top-flight studio – these are all in scarce supply. In various situations, I personally kept coming in contact with bands that I thought really deserved to be reaching a wider audience – not only did they have promising songs and a strong live show, but were diligent and focused, smart and working their tails off to make it – and they were running up against all of these walls.*

*Meanwhile, the much-ballyhooed promise of DIY and online self-distribution for indie artists has brought with it such a saturation of the webiverse that I believe there’s great music getting lost in all the radar noise. If you’re a music fan eager to find something fantastic and new, where do you go? The main online outlets and streaming services are looking more and more like the record stores of old, where only mainstream artists are available for browsing but very little emerging music is easily discoverable. Are you then really going to go to a site like **SonicBids** and click through thousands of band profiles until you find something cool? If artists aren’t able to afford to record something beyond their bedrooms or a basic demo, will you recognize that diamond in the rough along the way? I think most indie music still needs the benefit of some artist development to reach a sufficient place to really gain wide notice.*

*Grow Music Project came about to try to help solve some of these puzzles. Not only do we try to recognize and bring exposure for some deserving artists, but we help get their music recorded and represented at a level that can fully showcase their talent for fans to discover. And we do it without chipping away at the few sources of income they might have.*

Tyng is best known for his work scoring television shows such as **‘Suits,’ ‘The OC,’** and **‘Futurama,’** but got his start playing in bands. “It’s funny how careers sometimes take you

down paths you don't expect. While mine so far has led me to be recognized more for scoring TV shows and movies, I originally came from a band [as opposed to a composing or classical] background, and have continued to be involved with bands all throughout my career. I started as a songwriter and still write and produce songs for various projects and artists," says Tyng. However, this doesn't make his scoring work any less important to Grow Music. "I think the scoring side served most to make the contrast that much more obvious for where we might focus our efforts in doing something to give back, and why indie bands needed support the most – while scoring is still a challenging and very competitive road to travel, there are ways to make a living doing it, if you have talent, are diligent and persistent, and have some luck, etc. But I know too many examples of bands that have all of those qualities in spades, and simply still can't survive."

In fact, working on the Grow Music Project has reminded him of why he loves music in the first place: "the pure enjoyment of collaborating with other artists you're inspired by and the thrill of taking part in a cool new song as it comes to life. There's a "high" that's unlike anything else I've experienced when you hear a song really gel for the first time in the studio, and the performance is really locking together, and the red light is on and the reels of tape are spinning on the 24-track in the corner – the euphoria of knowing that it's being captured so that it can be relived and shared with the world – that's what the magic of making a record is about."

To get chosen for Grow Music, artists must first submit examples of their music through **www.GrowMusicProject.com**, regardless of sound quality (Tyng says they've even "taken artists based on an iPhone voice recorder demo"). The selection committee then chooses artists they think fit the bill. "Of course we are listening for great songs and unique artistry; and we're looking for artists that are interested in growing and refining their craft so that it can reach that next level... we hope that the artists coming through the program will take the opportunity GMP creates for them and really run with it – we try to choose artists that have organization, focus, drive, and determination, and who are working hard to push their own train down the track."

Once an artist is chosen for the project, Tyng works with them in his state-of-the-art studio for a three day session, producing a high quality recording of their best song to use however the artist sees fit to serve their career – all for free. "We do this all entirely for free and with no strings attached of any kind for the artists; we don't take any rights or points,

or have any ongoing ownership of their song in any way. We bring them into a world-class recording studio, provide access to great additional musicians and instruments if needed, and spend enough time on one song to really allow it to germinate, blossom, and realize its full potential."

In addition to the recording and promotional support, Tyng also relates another, "more unexpected outcome" of the project. "We've heard from the artists that Grow Music Project provides a bit of a 'reset' button. If there's a theme in the conversation so far, it's that being an emerging artist is incredibly hard and unending work with little available outside support. Artists often 'go without' in so many ways while they're putting everything they can into their music career, and that can be exhausting emotionally, psychologically and physically. Having someone say, "we believe in you, we want to provide you with some time and some resources so that you're free to focus on your best creativity," can be a re-charging experience. For the three days that the artists join us here, they become family – there are a lot of home-cooked meals and beds that are more comfortable than a band-van bunk, and there's time for discourse about the challenges and strategy of making a music career work. The studio we have here is located in rural Santa Barbara in a very idyllic and inspiring setting – so the whole environment is very nurturing and supportive, and artistically revitalizing."

Each artist's song is featured on their Grow Music profile, and gets debuted on the Grow Music Project website, which Tyng hopes will "become a hub for a wider audience to discover them." Through his own large network of music industry relationships and "working to build partnerships with music and artist conscious organizations, and companies," Tyng also hopes to "spearhead an altruistic industry model that can benefit everyone involved."

Grow Music Project is also about to launch a new behind-the-scenes video series in February, chronicling what happens during recording sessions. "**GMP • The Session Diaries**" is integral to our belief in the importance of building connections between music fans and the artists behind the songs." Tyng relates, "When I was growing up, a big part of my love of a particular band came from the connection that I felt from adding an album to my record collection; opening up that physical album and reading the lyrics, peering through the liner notes and pictures on the record sleeve – I relished that glimpse into the artist's world and the chance to connect in some way with the details that brought the

album to life.” “If an audience gets an insider’s view through our video series into all that goes into making great music – and hears from the artists themselves about their artistic experience and process – I think that creates the opportunity for a much deeper relationship and understanding that brings so much more value and meaning to the music we listen to,” he continues. “And who knows – it might even inspire the listener to want to pay for that download and put a little money in the artist’s pocket, rather than grab it somewhere for free!”

Grow Music Project was created to give support to emerging independent artists that could use a hand in finding their way in the music industry. With the way the music industry is moving, it is becoming harder and harder to find the real talent out there. By giving these artists a chance to record a proper single, Grow Music Project is making it a little easier for great artists to rise above the rest and be noticed.

For more about Grow Music Project and their artists, visit the project’s **website**.

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