



PRETEND MACHINE

Recording

Information Packet

Pre-Production

1. Do you know what songs you want to record and are they 100% written?
2. Do you know what key signature, time signature, and tempo your songs are?
3. Can everyone in the band play his or her parts correctly to a click track at the tempo you selected?
4. Have you listened to everyone play their parts on their own to ensure they're playing them correctly?
5. On top of the recording cost have you budgeted for equipment? **(i.e. Drum Heads, Sticks, Strings, Instrument Maintenance, etc).**
6. Aside from basic tracks such as drums, bass, guitar, and vocals have you gone over your songs to determine overdubs you want? **(i.e. Guitar Solos, Vocal Doubles, Vocal Harmonies, Strings, Keys, Samples or FX, Shakers, etc).**
7. Does everyone involved know their individual schedules and have you compared schedules to ensure that you have enough time together to complete your project?
***(typically one song requires 1-2 eight hour sessions to record completly)**



Instruments

Drums

Ideally all drum skins should be changed before recording, but at the very least you'll definitely want to replace any dimpled heads

Bring extra sticks and tuning keys

Inspect your kick and hi-hat pedals to ensure they won't fail.

Are your stands in good shape? If they're likely to come loose and move at all its best to fix or replace them right away.

No squeaky hardware or missing parts.

Guitars/Bass

Gear is endlessly configurable so just because you're using what would appear to be the same guitar as another musician it doesn't necessarily mean you'll get the same results, a Gibson Les Paul will sound different with Bare Knuckle vs. stock pick-ups, a guitar cabinet with Celestion Vintage 30's will sound noticeably different from one with Celestion Greenback's, Flat Wound strings sound different than Slinky. The devils in the details and things like this need to be figured out BEFORE hitting record.

Strings, Cables and Picks, you can never have too many.

Put fresh strings on your guitar the morning of your session.

Don't forget replacement fuses and tubes for all amps as well as batteries for pedals and active pick-ups.

Tools are available in the studio but you should always bring your own, especially if your guitar or bass requires a speciality tool.

Back up guitar(s) – Either in case of technical problems or just a fall back tone.



Instruments

Vocals

Vocals are an instrument and all singers need to treat their voice as such and take care of it. Please don't play a show the night before recording, avoid being up late partying the night before a session, rest your voice as much as possible in the days leading up to recording, have a set warm up routine and practice it often.

Have lyrics printed out or emailed to yourself so you can read them from your phone.

Be prepared to double your vocals, sing overdubs and harmonies etc. and have practiced them ahead of time.

Please bring any other drinks you may need.



P R E T E N D
M A C H I N E

Recording

Drums

After pre production, drum tracking is always done next. Drums should be dropped off at the studio 24 hrs. prior to tracking so that the shells and skins have time to acclimate to the studio environment.

If you aren't 100% comfortable tuning your drums I highly recommend having someone do it for you.

Expect to spend 1-2 hours getting the drums mic'd and ready for recording.

Bass

Unless we decide otherwise in pre production all bass tracking is done direct (without an amp) through my standard DI

Expect to tune your bass after EVERY take.

Expect to change your strings after 8 hrs of playing.

Expect to spend approximately 1 hour per song for bass tracking.

Guitar

Expect to tune your guitar after EVERY take.

Expect to change your strings after 6hrs of playing.

Expect to spend approximately 1 hour per track / per song for guitar tracking. For example; one song with a left and right

rhythm guitar will require approximately 2 hours (even for a single guitarist). A

song with a left and right rhythm guitar plus an

Whenever possible I prefer to use the same guitar and amp setup for rhythm guitars and a different guitar/amp setup for leads

and other overdubs.



Recording

Vocals

Like guitars, expect to spend approximately 1 hour per track per song when recording. For example a song with Lead Vocals, Doubled Lead Vocals, Backing vocals and Gang vocals would require approximately 4 hrs so it is important to budget your time accordingly so that you are not rushing. Better to have too much time and not need instead of needing it and not having it.



P R E T E N D
M A C H I N E

Mixing

Provided all the prep work and pre production has been completed properly I should know exactly what you want in your mix by the time we've reached this stage. Because there's no "fix it in the mix" thinking here when you leave after your tracking is complete you'll be able to hear the direction your mix is going and be able to provide additional direction then if needed.

Revisions

*** Typically most projects require no more than 3 mix revisions.**

Provided that every member attended every session, fully participated in the studio prep, pre production and tracking etc., I am happy to make all reasonable revision requests until everyone is as close to 100% happy as possible, however, any revisions beyond 3 are at my discretion.

Adding new parts, re-tracking performances that you are not happy with etc. are not considered revisions and would be subject to an hourly rate.



Mixing

Please listen to all mixes on whichever speakers/headphones you listen to the majority of your music on so that your frame of reference is the same.

Mix Revisions is the stage where we fine tune / automate details within the mix.

(i.e. Is the snare too loud in the chorus? Are some of the vocals too low? Do the guitars need to be a little brighter?)

Please discuss all ideas as a band, compile all the changes you've agreed on into a single document and send that to me. Please do not send individual suggestions to me directly. Receiving information from 4-5 people at once is, unfortunately, impossible to manage.

When noting what section of a song you are referring to please be as specific as possible by noting the name of the section as well as the approximate time in minutes and seconds

(i.e. 2:04 - 2:15 snare needs to come down).

Level changes. If you tell me to turn something down “a little” I will usually turn it down approximately 1dB. If you tell me to just “turn down” something I will usually turn it down around 2dB. If you tell me to turn something down “a lot” I will turn it down 3dB or more. Please keep these in mind for a frame of reference so that we're all working on the same scale. I will, of course, use my discretion when fine tuning and make the appropriate changes based on your requests/needs, these increments are just basic starting points.



Miscellaneous

Task that credit be given as: Produced and Engineered by Don Bailey at Pretendmachine.com (Lawrence, KS)

unless another producer has been used in which case: Engineered by Don Bailey at Pretendmachine.com (Lawrence, KS), is appropriate.

One copy of any physical release (i.e. CD, Record or Cassette) for display in the studio is always appreciated.

If you do not give permission for one of your songs to be included in the studios online portfolio (streaming only) please let me know.

Bands are welcome to take all the photos and videos they like.

You are welcome to bring food and drinks into the studio, provided you don't make a mess and clean up after yourself.

Responsible drinking is allowed provided it does not interfere with the recording process

Have Fun! Enjoy these moments!
AND LETS DO THIS!



P R E T E N D
M A C H I N E