ASPECTS OF A RECORDING PROJECT
(and how you can best prepare)

- **Writing** your song(s) and ideally performing them multiple times before you record
- **Arranging** your songs for a *recording*
  - Your live versions might not translate well to a recording, so think about how they'll need to be tweaked in order to make your listeners happy.
- **Budgeting** for your project
  - A consultation with the studio is a must, especially for first-time recording artists.
- **Tracking**
  - Repetition
    - To be fully prepared to record, you should sing/play your song(s) 50-100 times before going into a recording studio. Repetition will not only help your performance in the studio, it will refine your song. If you're a singer, think about whether the high note should be in your falsetto or chest voice, where your breaths should be, etc. If you're a lead guitar player, work out your solo ahead of time. Drummer? Learn how to tune your drums properly. There's a lot you can do before going in to record that will save time AND get you better results.
  - Plan the Process!
    - In which order are the instruments getting recorded? If you're a band, are you playing live or single-tracking? Will you double track your guitar part for a bigger sound? Are you recording to a click track? These are all things that require planning ahead of time. If you find that wading through all the details is overwhelming, consider hiring a producer. For more info, see our blog post "5 Reasons You Need a Producer".
- **Editing: Comping, Pitching, and More**
  - Comping
    - A lot of people don't know about this step. Also, it can be a little controversial. In the olden days, people had to record a song all the way through just right or they'd have to do the whole thing all over again. Nowadays, we do something called comping. This is where you record 3-5 takes and as long as they are all accurate and don't suck in general, we'll go through them and pick the best parts, either section by section or phrase by phrase, creating a "composite" track of all the best parts. Some people are opposed to this and it is not required by

any means. But it can get you the best result in the shortest amount of time, so we typically "lean that direction" for most projects.

- Pitching
  - At JCP, we strive for a moderate approach to pitch correction. We like to fix the out of tune notes while not turning you into a robot. If you want the "autotune" sound (which is basically a stylistic choice), we can certainly provide that. If you don't want any pitch correction, we'll leave it alone. But "everything in moderation" tends to work well in the pitch correction process.
- Timing Corrections
  - So you and your band worked really hard on your song, in writing, arranging, and tracking process. The song are finished but as your listening, you notice there are still a few places where the timing just isn't quite right between the bass, guitars, and drums. If you'd rather not bring your gear back in and re-record, JCP can fix many of these timing problems in a relatively short amount of time.

- **Mixing**
  - This is where we take all the instruments in your song and blend them together to perfection, using compression, EQ, reverb, delay, and more.
    - To prepare: Be aware of the music you like the sound of, especially music that inspired your songs. Prepare a list of reference material for JCP to listen to - as detailed as you can make it - that will help your mixes turn out exactly the way you'd like them to.

- **Mastering**
  - Many people are still unaware of this extremely important process. Mastering takes place after all the songs are mixed. Rather than working with individual instruments, mastering engineers work with whole songs. They listen with "fresh ears" to determine which frequencies to boost and which ones to cut. They apply compression and limiting to the point that the overall volume of the track is at an industry-standard level. And they make sure each song on your album is at the same overall level.

- **Layout/Graphics**
  - What your product looks like will hugely determine how many copies you sell. Spend time giving it a look that represents the overall tone of your project and will make people want to buy it.

- **Duplication**
  - Think about how many copies you will be able to sell. Give yourself a goal to reach but be realistic so you don't end up with piles of CDs laying around collecting dust.