

# PEGASUS STUDIOS – Nigel Pegrum

## TIPS – all cribbed – needs rewriting, editing & augmenting!

### GENERAL

1. Use "quiet" and comfortable clothes; condenser microphones are very sensitive so we need to reduce any unwanted noises.
2. Make sure the band is well rehearsed. This is extremely important. The quality of the sound comes mainly from the musician's fingers. A well rehearsed band will have an easy recording session. Most of the sound quality is due to the player or band or artist. If we recorded a bad performer on the best gear in the world, the sound recording would still sound only as good as the performer no matter how amazing the gear is. So remember to always be well rehearsed.
3. Make sure you have worked out all tempos for your songs and try getting used to playing along to a click track. You may not use a click track, but in some situations it is useful to do so.
4. Always listen carefully at what you just recorded. You may hear something wrong in the performance that the engineer did not necessarily pick up (such as a wrong note or inflection); and sometimes you can point these issues out to the engineer.
5. Write down as much information about each of the songs you are going to record; details such as song title, the key of the songs (or the key for each part of the song) and the tempo will all help at the editing stage should we need to do any vocal correction or adjust the timing of any instruments.
6. Make sure you bring all the accessories for each of your instruments.
7. Remember that recording takes longer than just playing the song. The setting up of the mics, choosing the right "piece of air" to record in and getting the right levels are essential for the recording quality. Be prepared to allow for some setup time.
8. Remember that if you want to achieve a very "personal" sound, you will need to set aside some time to experiment during the recording process.

### VOCALISTS

1. Try and stay away from alcohol before your session as it may tighten up your vocal chords.
2. Milk is also not a good idea as it lines your vocal chords and throat and may prevent you from reaching your full vocal range.
3. Apple juice, lemon juice and pineapple juice are great at clearing all the junk from your throat.
4. Remember that your voice needs to be looked after so try to reduce the number of cigarettes you have if any. Some believe their voice sounds better due to smoking heavily, but the reality is that it will

severely degrade the range and strength of your voice.

### DRUMS

1. The key of a good sound lies in a good sounding drum set and the drummer himself.
2. It doesn't matter how good the studio equipment, if the drums sound terrible it will be difficult to improve the sound in the recording stage.
3. Make sure you have a new set of heads, both top and bottoms.
4. Tune them a day before the recording session; once you're in the studio they'll probably sound different, but it will take you less time to retune them.
5. Remember that setting up the drums for recording can be laborious and time consuming. Be sure to set aside enough time to set up your drums.
6. If you like to hit the cymbals hard, consider rehearsing before you go into the studio and try to hit them a little more softly; this helps a lot in getting an overall good sound through the overhead mics.
7. Do not forget to bring spare sticks.

### BASS

1. Try to solve any Bass hum before entering the studio, otherwise it can take a lot of time to fix it.
2. Check the action and reduce any fret buzzing if needed.
3. Check the pots and electronics and, if you use some effects, make sure you know the presets.
4. Remember to bring lots of picks if you need them.

### GUITARS

1. Have new strings and break them in; also, always have a spare set.
2. Check all your pots and electronics.
3. Know your amp settings. If your amp needs to have the volume at 10, consider a THD hot plate or a Marshall Power Breaker (they allow you to reduce the volume while the output tubes are run at full power).
4. Have your guitar amp "sound" set up before the session, store any presets in your effects, but remember to also consider what the studio has to offer as you may find some better alternatives.
5. Use good cables
6. Check your effect boxes for noise;
7. Check the action and adjust to avoid fret buzz.
8. Always install new batteries in your stomp boxes before the session
9. or in your guitar preamps if they have active hardware or piezo preamp for acoustic guitars.
10. Remember to bring lots of spare picks.

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#### KEYBOARDS, MIDI AND SEQUENCERS

1. Save any settings so they can be easily recalled.
2. Always think to add live instruments to a sequenced track - percussion, cymbals, tom fills, live bass tracks or live guitar tracks.
3. If the band uses midi tracks, pre-production is mandatory. Regardless of the sequencer used during pre-production, the sequences can be dumped into the computer and then you can use either yours or the studio sound modules.

#### FINALLY

1. Final rule: Remember that nothing is carved in stone; experimentation can lead to a very particular and beautiful sound and you don't want to miss this opportunity.
2. And don't forget to bring your camera and/or your video camera. Recording is a lot of fun, and it's always great to keep your memories of the day.
3. Plus you can add pics and video of your recording session onto your website or even your CD as bonus material.

End of columns