Making Living out of Producing
Building Sustainable Business as a Producer

Joona Pietikäinen

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this thesis is to provide information on the work of a producer and tips on creating sustainable business out of producing. It is written as a handbook for people who are interested about becoming a producer, but do not have clear thoughts about the business side of it. This thesis discusses the different areas of income for a music producer but also explores what it takes to be a producer in the music industry and how the changes of succeeding in the business can be increased.

The data for this thesis were collected from multiple reliable online articles from internet sources and through interviewing professionals in the industry. These interviews provided realistic information about the journey to become a fulltime producer.

The thesis is consisting of a media part of two songs that are accompanied with information about their backstories and some of the negotiations about royalty and copyright splits.

Key words: producer, production, business, royalty, publishing, agreement
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### GLOSSARY

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<th>Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>A&amp;R</td>
<td>Artist and repertoire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Label</td>
<td>Warner Music, EMI, Sony Music, BMG and Universal Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitch</td>
<td>Brief sent out by publisher or label when looking for songs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Placement</td>
<td>Artist or label decides to use and release your song/production</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Master Recording, essentially the first recording of a song.</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDM</td>
<td>Electronic Dance Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beat</td>
<td>Instrumental production, often send out to artists/labels.</td>
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1 INTRODUCTION

Every music producer loves making music. The challenging part is taking that passion and turning it into money so you can cover your bills and keep making music. Music industry has some of the most diverse income streams imaginable for those who want to build a career. (Lombardi.) There are so many things to cover in music business, but we are going to focus purely on parts that matters to a producer. The job of a producer is hard to describe nowadays because of the huge diversity of work that can be done in the field of music production. Even though it's creative industry it's important to understand the business side of things, knowing your rights and worth as a creator.

In this thesis we are going through the different ways of making income as a producer and building your own network of people, that is needed to build sustainable career in music. It takes serious time building a career, but those taking it seriously are willing to put that time into it.
2 EXPERT INTERVIEWS

2.1 Axel Kala

Axel Turunen also known as Axel Kala is a Finnish producer/artist. He's been working on multiple Urban projects in Finland over the years and build for example successful urban group Mouhous from the ground up. He's currently signed to Sony Music Finland as an artist and he's working on the debut album currently. (Turunen 2019.)

2.2 Marijn Balkema

Marijn Balkema is a Dutch producer/songwriter. He's been working with dance & pop records over the years with a great success. He's catalogue includes releases under Spinnin' Records and Protocol Recordings just to name few. He's is signed to BMG Talpa publishing. (Balkema 2019.)

2.3 Petri Hautala

Petri Hautala also known as Kooma, is a producer/artist from Helsinki, Finland. He's been working under the artist project of Kooma with great success globally, gaining attraction and collaborations from different parts of the world. Petri is taking care of most of the releases he's been part of gaining unusual information about releases, promoting and the way digital streaming works. (Hautala 2019.)
3 PRODUCING AS A CAREER

The definition of a music producer and their involvement varies from producer to producer. Music Producer is the responsible who oversees, manages and guides the process of making a record. (Matla 2018.) These can include choice of instruments, musicians and vocalists and who those instruments are arranged to deliver a cohesive product for a label or artist hiring a producer. Music producer job can be compared to a job of a film director that oversees and makes sure the film is delivered in time and in a required shape. (Petulla 2019.)

On a practical level music producer is hired by an artist or record label to provide technical and musical skills that the client lacks and help. (Balkema 2019). Being a producer is a versatile job, one day you have to be extremely creative and the next day you’re working on something completely mechanical (Hautala 2019).

As a music producer you are expected to follow trends that occur globally in the music scene, so you have to be genuinely interested in all different styles of music. This is important so you can deliver the requested style or sound that the artist or label is looking for. (Turunen 2019.)

3.1 What It Takes to Be a Producer

Producing is an extremely competitive field, and advancement comes with diversifies on the skill set or works with prestigious artists. There are no guarantees for financial success, competition is crazier than ever and the current demand for free work and content doesn't help. (Luksa 2019.)

Working with an artist in a studio most of the time can be really personal to the artist which means that you have to observe the overall feeling constantly to make sure the artists vision is coming through and that the artist feels comfortable creating this vision with you. Sometimes working with artist can be really emotional and you have to put your feelings as side and listen what the artist wants to succeed with the song.
Working hours of a producer vary constantly, there's no fixed days of working and it can be draining. Also the income especially at start can be really irregular and small which can affect the motivation for work. It's normal that you might be working on a project for six months without getting paid but once the project is completed and invoice can be sent the income of it covers those six months afterwards. (Turunen 2019.)

On a personal and emotional level being a producer is a cocktail of crazy fun and a lot of frustration. Connecting with new like minded people but also long lonely hours in the studio. (Balkema 2019.) Being patient and flexible as a person plays a big role as a producer because the people you might end up working can have all different sorts of personalities. This can make a job as a producer emotionally difficult in certain situations. (Turunen 2019.)

3.2 Producing Today

Over the past 10-20 years, producing and music making in general has become a lot more accessible for everyone. Professional quality music can be made on only by using a laptop. Any expensive hardware or other music equipment isn't required anymore for creation of music. (Matla 2018.)

It's not unusual to have multiple producers on one record nowadays working on different areas. One person may be working directly with the artist, training them and making sure the song fits the artists and that the artist can deliver the best results for the record. In the mean time other producers may focus on the sonic quality of the track, working on the mix getting the record sound right. (Matla 2018.)
4 STREAMS OF INCOME

Music production is a very diverse field. You can produce music for a singer or rapper, write music for commercials and movies or even design sounds and music for video games. There are plenty of career opportunities as a producer to make a living. (Matla 2018.)

You might be hired by an artist or label to produce a record from scratch or work on a song that was created prior that you are requested to finalize and produce to a ready product. Nowadays one stream of income for a producer can be even renting equipment or a studio space. Some producers might have a collection of equipment or a studio space that other people working on productions lacks so this can be a great way to increase the total income for a producer. (Turunen 2019.)

Other solutions can be for example selling pre made instrumentals or even just sounds over internet which we are going to go through more in detail in the selling beats section later on.

4.1 Production Fee

Once the production is finished and delivered to the record label producer will usually charge a rate per master (song), this is normally called production fee. Any production fee depends greatly on negotiation and individual bargaining power. At the lower end this fee can be anything between 300€ to 1000€ per song. At the higher end these numbers can go anywhere between 200€ to 10,000€ per song. Top producers can charge considerably more than this though. 20,000€ to 80,000€ per song is not unheard of, especially if the song is set to be a lead single of a big artist. (Salmon 2008.)

The production fee, or part of it can be recoupable against future royalties, this can be negotiated with the record label. Timeline of these production fee payments is normally half before recording starts and half once finished and delivered to the label. (Dahl 2018.)
4.2 Setting Up Your Price

The amount of a per song fee a producer can ask is relative to the level of a producer's experience, network strength and quality of the production. When figuring out a price for your work don't let any emotions come in a way. If you ended up making a quality production in no time that means you have likely still invested money and time for years of practicing in order to reach the level of productivity you are currently. Clients budget can also adjust the pricing of your production. (Deniel 2019.)

At first when starting to work as a producer it can be difficult to set up the price for your work. This can be effected by the lack of experience, contacts or by your confidence. It's really common that less experienced, unknown producers work for free at first in order to build a resume and name in the business. (Turunen 2019.)

Once you've build a solid client base it gets easier. Optimal situation is of course that your clients are happy to work with you and are willing to pay the price you ask. Estimating how much time you're going to end up working on a certain project can give you good idea for a price to ask for it. (Balkema 2019.)

4.3 Publishing

Music Publishing confuses most producers and songwriters at first, it's a complicated subject but has a lot to do with how you make money from your music. In short terms, music publishing is all about songwriters and their copyrights. When a piece of music is used commercially (sold, licensed or publicly performed), the owner of the copyright is owed royalties. (Tunecore 2019.)

Publishing is essentially a copyright, a designation of intellectual property similar to trademark or patent. Once an original composition has been made in a medium from which it can be reproduced, the composer is granted exclusive rights to that piece of composition. This includes rights to reproduce, distribute or perform the song. (Robley 2013.)
4.4 Producer as a Co-writer

Aside from the programming and production tasks, it's normal that the producer collaborates with artists on songwriting and on song arrangement (Salmon 2008). The producer might help write lyrical content, add entire parts to a song, suggest changes to written material or even change the chords and melodies therefore taking the song to the next level (Dahl 2016). In a case like this, the producer will be a co-writer on the song and therefore entitled to a share of copyright as well as a share of all publishing revenue. (Salmon 2008).

Currently the lines between a producer and songwriter are very blurred. It's nowadays really common thing for a producer to get publishing from a project, especially if the producer has been in the room during the writing session with the other writers. (Balkema 2019.)

4.5 Publishing Deal

In general terms, publishing deal concludes the assignment of part of the ownership of your songs to a publishing company in exchange for a share of the royalties received by the publisher for the exploitation of the songs. Publisher can also offer co-writing opportunities based on their relationships in the industry and opportunities to pitch the published songs to labels and artists looking for songs. The credibility that comes from signing with an established publishing company can be a powerful tool to open doors for a producer starting out. (Goldmacher 2010.) Publisher will copyright any musical compositions and making sure that the composition or song is also protected in foreign countries (Brabec 2011, 2).

Another necessary function of a music publisher is to properly administrate the musical compositions. Registering the copyrights, filing necessary information to mechanical and performing rights organizations, reviewing royalty statements and making sure they are correct. (Brabec 2011, 4.)
On the creative side, music publishers can focus on the use and exploitation of the copyrights they administer by securing placements in the form of "Sync Licences" for TV ads, Film, video games and others (Tunecore 2019).

There is no such thing as a standart publishing agreement. Each publishing company has its own particular contract to offer and a particular view of its relationships and their maintenance with its published writers and producers. (Brabec 2011, 11.)

4.5.1 Single Song Publishing Agreement

Under the terms of the individual song contract, the writer assigns to the publisher the copyright to one or more specified songs. This means that the writer can go to a number of different publishers with other songs and give each one only those songs that it is really interested in promoting and potentially pitching. When a writer signs this kind of individual publishing agreement, the writer always retains the right the option to place other material with other publishers. (Brabec 2011, 12-13.)

4.5.2 Exclusive Publishing Agreement

The other type of publishing agreement that a writer or producer may sign is an exclusive agreement. This means essentially a transformation of publishing rights to the publishing company from all songs written during a specified period of time. The term of this agreement can vary from one year to seven years commonly, with an optional provision for weekly, monthly or yearly advances. In this agreement the publisher has the right to publish and own all compositions written by the published act during the term of the contract. One further point what we're going to discuss later on in the next chapter is the advance given by a publisher, which is recoupable from all future writing royalties of a writer. One of the real values of such an exclusive agreement is the relationship with a publisher. This can mean steady income for the writer, to cover all day-to-day financial needs of a published act while pursuing a career in music.
Commonly in these agreements the writer is given the right to use publishing company's studio to record demos of the songs written which can be then placed by the publisher and therefore generate income to both. (Brabec 2011, 13.)

4.5.3 Publishing Advance

For a starting producer or songwriter, it can be extremely difficult to create music full time without having money to live on. This is where publishing advance come in handy. (Goldmacher 2010.) Advance is money given by a publisher to songwriter or producer against future royalties earned on the writer share copyrights. The advance is always recouped from the writers share copyrights. The amount of advance is often based on the writers successfully writing and delivering of songs to a publisher. Advance should always be recoupable and non-returnable; this means that if the published act is unable to recoup the advance through writing royalties the writer doesn’t need to pay back advance to publisher. In case of this unable recoup the publisher eats the loss, publisher understands the risk of not getting their investment back. (Plumb 2017.)

4.6 MUSIC ROYALTIES

Music royalties are payments from right to use intellectual property of a recording artist, songwriter, composer, publisher and any other copyright holders. These royalties are generated also for different types of licensing and usage of the material. (Rory 2018.)

4.6.1 Label Royalties

Royalties can also be generated for different types of licensing and usage. The different types of music royalties include mechanical, public performance, synchronization, and print music. (Rory 2018.) Record labels take normally a cut anywhere between 50-90% of the earning of a song. It's an industry standart for a new artist or band to receive only 10-16% of their record sales. The reason for
this high percentage is financial risk that the record label takes in order to dis-tribute and market the song or album. (Waczek 2019.)

4.6.2 Producer Points

These points are commonly referred to as points, producer percentage or pro-ducer royalties. One point is equal to one percent of the revenue earned by the song. These producer points are not to be mixed with songwriting credits. However, it's possible that a producer earns songwriting royalties through tweaking the song or helping to create the song from scratch. In this case the producer can be entitled to songwriting credits in addition to the producer points for his other work on the project. (Waczek 2019.)

4.6.3 Mechanical Royalties

These royalties are generated for the physical or digital reproduction and distribu- tion of copyrighter material. This applies to every format of music such as CD, vinyl, digital downloads, and streaming services such as Spotify and Tidal. Mechanical Royalties is one of the most important revenue streams of an author of the song. The term refers to per-unit payments made by the label to the mu-sic publisher for the reproduction of copyrighter musical compositions. Basically, each time some one buys a sound recording, publisher receives mechanical royalties, which are then passed on to the songwriter or other copyright holders. (Zimmerman 2005.)

The amount of royalties is commonly negotiated between the record company and the publisher. For the info, in nearly every country apart from U.S the publish- ers do not have ability to collect any mechanical royalties directly from the record companies. Instead, they are required to pay royalties to a collection rights society, to which the publisher must belong to in order to receive royalties. Sub-publishers are commonly involved as well, working on behalf of the original publisher by directly registering the songs and collecting the royalties. As a result, payments to the songwriters can take up to a year or more. (Zim- merman 2005.)
4.6.4 Public Performance Royalties

These royalties are paid to the copyright holder whenever a composition is publicly performed or recorded on radio, television, digital streaming services, concerts, and other music services. (Tunecore 2019.)

This includes all restaurant, clubs and other places where the music plays in public. Performance Rights Organizations (commonly known as, PRO's) collect these performance royalties and negotiates the licenses for public performances and keeps track on the use of their represented material. (Rory 2018.)

4.6.5 Sync Royalties

Synchronization, or sync royalties for short, are generated when copyrighted music is combined or synced with visual media such as TV, commercials, movie or video games. Synchronization license gives the holder of the license right to use the copyrighted music in their visual media. (Waczek 2019.)

This license (sync for short) is negotiated either by the copyright owner or the music publisher representing the original author of the copyright. There is no standard rates in synchronization business, costs and payouts are determined by the perceived value of the music in synchronization, what the budget of the requester is, and whether it is the original version being used or not. (Tunecore 2019.)

Music supervisors are the people in charge of picking the right music for films, ads and TV shows. Normally these sync placements require music publisher in terms of landing the placement, they are specialized in exploiting the compositions they represent and they have strong industry relationships and understanding of what the music supervisors, (those who are in charge of picking the music for TV shows, films, ads, etc.), are looking for. (Tunecore 2019.)
Other solution for licensing your music is thru music libraries and marketplaces. There are multiple different sorts of music libraries that normally represent a certain genre for example. Pop, Electronic or Rock and different type of music such as commercial singles or music for video games. Services like these oversees the use of your licensed music online, and, if your work ends up being used without a license, you have the rights to file a lawsuit for a copyright violation. (Ritvars 2019.)

4.6.6 Label Advance

Label advance is essentially the same kind of an advance than publishing advance. Just instead of publishing royalties the label will recoup the advance against expected royalties earned on future sales of a record. Major labels will consider how much they are planning to use on promotion and marketing of a record and how many copies they think they can sell off your release in order to recoup the advance and make income after recouping. Label will consider your sales potential, often based on accomplishments before, as well as plans for touring and other ways of making income for the label. (McDonald 2019.)

4.6.7 Mechanical Streaming Royalties

While royalties gained through streaming services such as Spotify, Apple Music and Tidal are considered under the category of mechanical royalties, they aren't as straightforward as mechanical royalties from physical sales of a record. They are also not collected by distributor or performing rights organization, another party called Mechanical Licensing Agent is collecting these royalties from streaming.

A single stream generates both mechanical and performance royalties. These performance royalties can be negotiated between the streaming service and performing rights organizations. However, streaming services such as Spotify are not very clear about a worth of a single stream, their royalty calculation is based on a fixed per play rate currently.
Mechanical royalties from any streaming are calculated as 10.5% of the cross revenue of the company, minus the costs of public performance. This means that there's multiple factors that impact the amount of royalty such as in which country the song is streamed, the number of paid users of Spotify as a percent of total users. The more paid users of Spotify, the higher royalty rate per song. There are more and more free users signing up for Spotify daily so essentially this means that the royalty rate from streaming is dropping as we speak. (Waczek 2019.)

PICTURE 1. (CD Baby 2019)
5 OTHER WAYS OF MAKING INCOME

5.1 Selling Beats

A lot of producers end up having a lot of fully produced instrumentals that didn't necessarily go to a specific artist, these are called beats and there's huge market for them. Especially in Hip Hop music, beats are the driving force of a song that rapper needs to rap on. You don't have to be full-time hip-hop producer, if you can produce quality music, you can adapt to making beats.

Once you have some beats ready they can be then sold on established websites for beat selling. These websites offer normally commission-free sales so it's a great way to start the business of selling instrumentals. (Cymatics 2018.)

5.2 Selling Sounds

The use of samples and loops has become a massive part of music production in the last decade. Especially in electronic music production, producers are constantly gathering new, high-quality sounds to use in their productions.

These professionally processed sounds are essential to achieving a polished track. That's why companies focused on crafting sample packs are constantly looking for talented producers to hire for designing sounds of the latest trends. (Cymatics 2018.)
5.2.1 Setting Up Your Sample Packs

If you are confident that the sounds you have created are up to par with some of the other sample pack companies, you can always start your own sample store.

Before selling your sounds, you need to make sure they are labelled properly, making it easy to access by the future clients. Here's example how you can folder your sounds in a convenient way. (Cymatics 2018.)

![Folder structure example](image)

PICTURE 2. (Cymatics Blog 2018)

The final step is the labelling of the individual sounds. If it's a sound with any kind of tonal key, make sure to include the key on the labelling of the sound. In case of loops make sure you include the BPM (beats per minute) info so that the producers can select the loops that match the tempo of the track they're working on. (Cymatics 2018.)
The easy way of labelling individual sounds is to have your or your company’s name, sound type such as kick, snare or synth, number to make it easier with multiple same element sounds, and then the key if the sound has a tonal key (Cymatics 2018).

![Example of labelling individual sounds](Cymatics - Titan Kick 5 - C.wav)

5.2.2 Where to Sell Sounds

Once you have the sounds ready and organized now it's time to try to sell them forward. The first option is to contact existing sample pack companies to see if they have interest in your product. The downside of this option is that you must comply with the conditions of the company regarding the share of profit and distribution.

Most sample companies work on a share that ranges between 70/30 (for the producer) down to 50/50 split. The sale price is usually matched to the size of a pack, anywhere between 20 and 50 USD.

If you want to go the independent route, keep in mind that it will take way more promotional effort and can require you to invest money to gather budget for marketing, artworks for the packs and even for a basic web store. This way will allow you to keep 100% of the revenue of sold products and you can be in total control over the price, content, release and promotion. (Cymatics 2018.)
6 NETWORKING

Networking is essentially just a fancy word for talking to people who work in the same business as you (McDonald 2018). Developing and maintaining these relationships in the industry is a skill, and sometimes it can mean going out of your comfort zone. Nowadays building relationships through internet is made easy, but there's a lot of saturation since music production has become so popular these days. The key is to treat people how you would like to be treated, no spamming, offer help and be genuine.

Good ways of building your network even if you live in the middle of nowhere is to get involved in online communities for music producers and other people in music industry. Social medias such as Facebook, Reddit and Instagram has strong communities that can be worth looking at. You can find local artists or even labels in your area, send them a message beforehand and have a chat before a gig or meeting. (Darling 2019.)

Networking plays an important role in the music industry. There are tons of opportunities for music industry networking. Confidence is key when you are networking, let people know what you're doing. If you have people you would want to make a connection with, research about their business and current projects, so you come across more knowledgeable when talking with them. You don't want to go into conversations sounding like you've been practicing a script, but spending time on thinking how you will describe your work and you as a producer can be greatly useful. That one important person can see your stuff and become incredibly valuable to your career in future.

Commonly the most important part of networking occurs the next day. Follow up with your new contacts by just telling that you enjoyed chatting with them and that you would like to keep in touch. (McDonald 2018.) Nothing compares to being able to look someone in the eye when you're interacting with them. Other great way of meeting new people is by introduction or recommendation by a mutual friend or business associate.
Be prepared to meet people that can help you. You never know who are you going to meet or who the person you just met might know. Put yourself in a position where you are constantly meeting new people.

Other important thing is to keep your promises. If you say you're going to give a call to someone, do it and do it in a timely manner. Getting the reputation as a man of your word can open doors for you because people will be more inclined to help you when they know you can be trusted. (Ribas 2011.) Networking is not about knowing everybody, it's about knowing people you connect with the most. It's important to treat your contacts as friends instead of just business relationships. (Balkema 2019.)
7 COLLABORATION

From someone from Europe it can be quite hard to get contacts and therefore sessions with other producers in states for example and you have to be creative to find ways of connecting with people on the other side of the world. This can be for example sending melody or drum orientated premade loops to more established producers that can use them in their productions. Most of the time these established producers are looking for these kinds of loops constantly to boost their productivity. Exchanging these loops is a big trend on the urban music scene at the moment and it can be used to get contacts or even placements for people that are out of reach of the big music cities such as New York, Los Angeles and London. (Producer Grind 2019)

Being overall socially active and reaching out to new people is the fastest way to build your name in the game. Internet has made collaborating with people from completely other side of the world so much easier. (Hautala 2019)
8 WORK SAMPLES

8.1 Marc Benjamin - Fall For You

Marc Benjamin
Fall For You

PICTURE 4. (Pietikäinen 2019)

8.1.1 Background of The Song

This song was originally a pitch from BMG Talpa that I received through my contact somewhere in March 2018. The brief was that a Dutch DJ/Producer Marc Benjamin was looking for a topline to a track titled as "JAVA". The instrumental that I received was uptempo 125BPM EDM track with a dark sounding chords and a big festival style beat drop.

8.1.2 Writing of The Song

The pitch was sent to me somewhere during the evening and the deadline was the next morning so I had to get on it as soon as possible. At this time, I was living in The Netherlands but I decided to call my co-worker Simeon Puukari from Finland. Together we decided to try writing for the pitch over Skype that evening.
We opened up a Skype video-chat and started working on the song. We got the melody down pretty fast in one hour or so and spent the rest of the time writing lyrics for the melody that we created for the song.

It was that late that I couldn’t get any singer to the studio to record the demo so we decided that I’m going to sing the demo myself in order to match the deadline the next morning.

8.1.3 Placement of The Song

We sent an mp3 file of the song to BMG Talpa who then forwarded it to the team of Marc Benjamin. Couple of days later my contact walked to a studio where I was working letting me know that the team of Marc Benjamin has chosen our topline amongst other toplines they received and would want to release it. It was great news for us since it was one of the first international placements as a writer that me and Simeon achieved.

8.1.4 Changes to The Song

Half a year later we ended up writing new parts for the song with Simeon in Finland and suggested replacing my demo vocals with vocals from Jenny, a mutual friend of ours. The artists team agreed and we recorded Jenny singing the song and did the same processing and editing than I originally did for my voice in the first place.

8.1.5 Negotiations

The song was going to be released and we started communicating with the artist’s team about the splits and shares of the song.

Artists team proposed to split all publishing royalties equally between me and Simeon and his producer team who worked on the song.

On top of this, because of our work on the vocal production side we decided to negotiate also points from the master. In this part we wanted to also gather points
from the master to Jenny who is featuring the song because no fee for a singer was presented at this point.

After our negotiations we ended up getting good amount per man with Simeon from the publishing. From the master royalties side of things, we negotiated the master royalties between me, Simeon and Jenny. From this we wanted to give Jenny a part hence her featuring of the song and split the rest between me and Simeon.

8.1.6 Release of The Song

"Fall for You" was released on first of March, 2019 through a Dutch Superstar DJ Nicky Romero’s record label Protocol Recordings. The song was instantly played on Nicky Romero’s radioshow Protocol Radio which gave a great push for the song to start with.

The record was supported and played by a bunch of DJ's including David Guetta, Firebeatz and Bingo Players. on their radio shows and gigs.

It was also made to be an official anthem for the Djakarta Warehouse Project festival in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Currently the song has gathered over half a million streams only on Spotify and according to Spotify’s data it is the third most listened song from Marc Benjamin.

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PICTURE 5. (Pietikäinen 2019)
8.2 Skywalk feat. Gerian - Fool

![FOOL](image)

PICTURE 6. (Pietikäinen 2019)

8.2.1 Background of The Song

This song was originally written on a co-write trip to The Netherlands arranged by TAMK in autumn 2017. We had a pitch from BMG Talpa to write a topline to existing track and we had something like 2-3 hours to do this. The song we wrote didn't really work on the instrumental we got from BMG so I remember saying to Gerian that there are other chords that really fits the song we wrote so we ended up going back to the studio to tweak the song. It was my first day working with Gerian and we instantly clicked musically and wrote the melody and lyric for what later on turned out to be "Fool" the second single to my artist project Skywalk.

8.2.2 Armada Music

Almost a year later I signed a record deal with a Dutch record label Armada Music. The agreement was for three singles plus three more with an option. The release date was set to July 2018.

The publishing was split equally between me and Gerian, the only writers of the song. Armada's publishing is taken care of by Cloud9 Publishing and we agreed to sign a publishing agreement with Cloud9 for this song.
The royalty split between Armada and me was set to 70/30 to Armada’s favour. From this 30% I negotiated to give 10% to Gerian for being a featured singer of the song.

8.2.3 Release of The Song

The record was released on 20th of June in 2019. Right away after it's release it was premiered on Mighty Fool's Armada Invites 218 radioshow.

The release got great attention in other medias as well, for example Nordic clothing company Junkyard posted about the release on their web magazine.

Music curators at Spotify also took notice of the release and placed the song to multiple new music playlists in Spotify. Currently the song is gathered almost a quarter million streams and it is the most popular song currently according to the data of Spotify.

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<td>4</td>
<td>✔️ One Missed Call</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>✔️ Let You Go - Skywalk Remix</td>
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PICTURE 7. (Pietikäinen 2019)
8.3 WHITEPINK - This Is My Time feat. To NY

8.3.1 Background of The Song

This song was a lead single for my hiphop project WHITEPINK. It's a side-project of Petri Hautala and me. Originally the beat was made somewhere during 2016 in collaboration with my colleague producer Petri. The beat took five to ten minutes to make and was on my hard drive for couple of years before it got selected by a New York rapper To NY. He wrote the rap parts on it and wanted to collaborate with it to do release of it together.

8.3.2 Splits of The Song

Since we released the song ourselves and there was no label involved it's easy for us just to sit down and talk through the splits between the parties involved. We decided to split the song equally publishing wise between me, Petri and To NY.

Me and Petri both use Distrokid as a distribution channel so sharing royalties is easy. We split the royalties (what was left after the PR Company's cut) equally between me and Petri and set it up through Distrokid so that the royalties are automatically paid to both equally.
8.3.3 Release of The Song

The song was released on 2018 through my music company Growstar Music in collaboration with a Swedish PR company to promote the single. The single did quite ok in Spotify during the first weeks but after a month it started to gather a lot of attention. The song ended up on Paraguay's Viral Charts in Spotify and was getting more and more attention in North and South America. Currently the song has almost 1,5million streams which is a big amount for self released single without a label pushing it. We recently landed a sync deal for the single as well, hoping to place it to sports commercials in future.
9 CONCLUSION

As a conclusion there are multiple ways of making income as a producer and it's important to understand all of them in order to build sustainable career in music. Anything from fees to advances and royalties can be negotiated and in order to do that the information about all of these is crucial. Music industry can feel like the most unprofessional industry in the world and this is true because even when there are rules and guidelines to agreements and percentages, not all people follow them through. This is why it's good to have a manager to handle all business side of things or educate yourself on it enough to be able to handle it.

Making money as a producer is not easy but it certainly is easier if you know where to ask for it. I keep hearing from people that there isn't no money in music anymore, but in my perspective there are more money in music than ever before. So many possibilities have been brought in front of you only in internet.

For example, Youtube and Instagram has changed the way producers market themselves and find new people to work with. It's incredibly fast to reach out to artists through these social media and start to build relationships.
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PIETIKÄINEN: Voitko kuvaila minkälainen työ tuottajalla on? Tai millainen ammatti tuottajana olo on? Mitä se pitää sisällään?


PIETIKÄINEN: Tuleeko muuta vielä mieleen tosta työstä miten se tavallaan miten tuottajana olo esim musiikki alalla eroaa muista musa alan töistä, onko siinä jotakin erinlaisia vastuuta tai kulmia mitä esimerkiksi artistina olossaan?

TURUNEN: No yleensä se mitä artisti sanoo mikiin studiossa tai muualla kun äänitetään on sille artistille ehkä henkilökohtasta ni siihen pitää suhtautua vastuullisemmin et se on monesti ihmiselle henkilökohtaan asia kun ne äänittää jotain, jotain biisiä. Ja aika luova ammatti myös sillei että töitä ei voi tehdä vaan sillei tekemällä vaan siinä jotuun kuuntelemaan miltä se tuntuu se työ mitä säs teet, se lopputulos pitää tuntua myös hyvältä mitä säs teet. Se ei oo sellasta mekaanista suorittamista joka tekee siitä haastavan.

PIETIKÄINEN: Minkäslaisia piirteitä näät että on joiden kanssa ei pystys toimimaan tuottajana, mainitsit että työpäivät ja ajat ei oo tavallaan pitäviä, onks jotain piirteitä mitä tavallaanei voi olla. Esim se että ei oo yhtään sosiaallinen niin se on ilmeisesti sitten hankalaa. Tuleeks mieleen jotain muita piirteitä et minkälainen tavallaan tyyppi pitää olla ihmisinä et tuottajana se ammatti sit sujuu?
TURUNEN: Käsivällinen ja mukautuva persoona koska ihmiset on niin erinlaisia kenen kanssa sää joudut toimimaan ja usein tosi taiteellisia ihmisidä niin siihen mahtuu monta erinlaista persoonaa. Sitten pitää olla valmis siihen myös että palkka ei tuu aina tiettyynä kuukauden päivänä vaan niinku ollaa että sää teet puolivuotta töitä ja sit sieltä tulee se palkka siitä biisistä joka on sit vähän isompik mutta ei oo semmosta niinkun rutiniina monessa asiassa.

PIETIKÄINEN: Mites sää millasia ne tulonlähteet tuottajan ammatissa oo jollakin? TURUNEN: Esimerkiks träkkipohjien myynti internetissää tai ihmiseltä ihmiselle jos on verkostoja ja kontakteja. Sitten tilaustyöt sää asiaks tulee studioon ja te teet sille sitten biisin tai levyn sitten on miksaus työt erikseen elä sää ollaa tietä biisiä mutta sää annat siinä viimeisen silauksen nittää sää ollaa laittaa ulos masterointiin. Studioinvuokraaminen myös koska monella tuottajalla on laitteita studiossa niin sää tilaa ollaa vuokrata muiten käyttöön.

PIETIKÄINEN: Tavallaan pitää olla luova siinä tulonlähteiden hankkimisessa myös. Et sää ei liity vaan yhtee tiettyyn asiaan vaikka tekis sää tuotantopuolta että sää ollaa vaikka sitä biisiä mutta sää annat siinä viimeisen silauksen nettää sää ollaa kahdet tulonlähteitä. Studionvuokraaminen myös koska monella tuottajalla on laitteita studiossa niin sää tilaa ollaa vuokrata muiten käyttöön.

PIETIKÄINEN: Mites sää millasia ne tulonlähteet tuottajan ammatissa oo jollakin? TURUNEN: Ihan internetistää opiskelemalla ja muita tuottajia seuraamalla on saanut idean näihin tulonlähteisiin. Mutta sitten toki ku paljon juttelee ja tapaa myös muita ihmisidä niistä saa ideoida ja kokemusta ja tietotaitoa sitä kautta.

PIETIKÄINEN: Millä tavalla sää ollaa verkostoitunut jos mietit sää biisistä tulonlähteiden kannalta, semmossi verkostoja joka on sää myömmin tuonut tulonlähteitä tai projektteja ja sitä kautta tuloo, mitkä ne väylät sää on sulle ollut oksa ne ollut internettä tai sosiallinen media?

PIETIKÄINEN: Mites sitten toi hinnottelu, miten sán hinnottelet itses tuottajan jos miettitään esim sitä träkkipuolta, minkälainen se hinnottelun on? tuleeks se muilta se hinta, onks se määriyty mitä muut ihmiset pyytää hinnoist, mennääksi siin fiilksen mukaan riippuu varmaan projektistä mut miten sán näät ton hinnottelu puolen?

TURUNEN: Kyllä mä seuraan ja kyselen muilta tuottajilta minkälaisia hintatasoja ne pitää, mutta aikapaljon voi kyllä mennä fiilksen mukaan jos tietää artistin tai asiakkaan taustoja enemmän. Et sillon ku puhutaan levy yhtiö artisteistä ni sit tietää että niillä yleensä on se budjetti joka tulee levy-yhtiön kautta ni sitä uskaltaa sit pyytää enemmän ja niihin uskaltaa sitoutuu enemmän niihin projekteihin.

PIETIKÄINEN: Onks ollu joskus jotain vaikeuksia sen hinnottelun kanssa vai onks se tullut luonnostaan? Miten sän oot sen kokenu? Jos miettii vaikka ekoja kertoja ku on pitänyt pyytää hintaa omast tekemisestä ja ilmottaa muille, onks se ollu helppoo, vaikeeta ja mitä sitä on niinku ollu?

TURUNEN: Vaikeeta, ihan ensimäiset työt mitä mä oon tehny tällä alalla ni mä tein ilmaseks mikä oli hyvä koska mä sain kokemusta. Sit ku mä sain vähän kokemusta ni mä tein jonkun hinnan sit se oli muutamia kypppejä. Ja sit mä junnasin siinä aika pitkään paikallaan, mä en uskaltanut enkää pystyny nostaa hintoja ku mä pelkäsin et mä menetän asiakkaat. Mutta sitku sen hinnan sai nostettua sinne mikä ehkä vastasit työmärää, työtunteja paremmin ni sen jälkeen se on ollu huomattavasti helpompaa hinnotella ittensä projekti kohtasesti. Et en mä laske aina tuntimäärää vaikka joskus lasken myös niitä. Vaan ehkä enemmän mietin sitä että kuinka paljon mä oon käyttäny aikaa sen asian opiskeluun mitä mä nyt sit toteutan studiossa tällä kertaa ja lasken myös vähän sen mukaan sen hinnan.
Appendix 2. Interview with Marijn Balkema

Date of interview: 26.9.2019

Interviewer: Joona Pietikäinen
Interviewee: Marijn Balkema

PIETIKÄINEN: How would you describe the work of a music producer?
BALKEMA: That's a broad question. I'll try to answer that on multiple levels. On a practical level my job is split up in 3 general branches: First, getting hired as a producer to provide the technical and musical skills that a client lacks. For this I write most of my invoices. Second, doing "pop sessions". Generally no fees are involved with this. These are pretty random sessions to make music with writers. It's usually a lot of fun and a great way to network. Depending on how the music turns out we decide what to do with the end product. It can be a bit vague sometimes. And third, making music for my own artist projects. This I do mostly solo. On a personal/emotional level being a producer is like a cocktail of crazy fun and a lot of frustration, connecting with a lot of awesome like minded people but also long lonely hours in the studio and being super proud of something you created and then hating it (& yourself) after you've been listening to it for 2 weeks straight.

PIETIKÄINEN: What are your streams of income as a producer?
BALKEMA: I make most of my income from production fees. Mostly from ghost-producing tracks (a.k.a. making entire songs for clients (dj's)). Besides that I work on video commercials. I'm responsible for all the audio. So music, foley, mixing it all together and making sure the levels are on par with other commercials (mastering basically) Then of course there is income from the publishing of released songs. Which is about 5% of the total revenue stream.

PIETIKÄINEN: How do you see a producer as a co-writer of a song in a session, have you been given publishing (copyrights) as a producer on a session?
BALKEMA: I have always been given publishing in sessions. I have heard stories that back in the day producers got big fees and the writers got the publishing. Me personally I haven't really had that experience. The lines are very blurred between writers and producers right now. The ghost productions I do alone. There's no sessions with other writers. Still I usually split the publishing with the client on 50-50 basis. Since they do provide me with their ideas.

PIETIKÄINEN: Do you find it hard or easy to set up a price for your work? BALKEMA: In the beginning I did. At this point I have a pretty solid client base. They like my work and are willing to pay me the price I ask. Also I'm now at a point where I'm better at guessing how much work a project will take, which helps a lot. So unless it's an unusual project, it's not that hard anymore.

PIETIKÄINEN: About networking, how important networking (other producers, writers, labels, publishers etc.) is for a producer to succeed? BALKEMA: It is very important. As long as there is a follow up that actually leads to results. Also make sure to have representable recent music ready. PIETIKÄINEN: How did you build your network and contacts? Tips on networking? BALKEMA: Mostly through friends and trough my publisher. I found that the best opportunities come through people you really connect with. So as for tips, I guess don't try to get to know everybody but invest the time people you connect with the most (and that also have things going on). They will probably have like minded friends and will introduce you to them. So maybe you'll become friends with their friends, and their friends and their friends etc.

PIETIKÄINEN: Finally, how have you been negotiating publishing/master royalty splits for you?
BALKEMA: Only one time a song got cancelled due to differences during publishing negotiations. One of the parties demanded basically all publishing. There was no clear explanation as to why the party asked for this. Together with the other writers we eventually decided to take the song elsewhere. It was sad and it left a bitter taste. Bit for the most part my collaborations go on equal split basis tho. For some projects I'm just a helping hand to finish the project. In that case I'll usually settle for a bit less. I am careful with demanding more than I deserve. That might work but only one time. On the other hand, I having clear boundaries is crucial.
Appendix 3. Interview with Petri Hautala

Date of Interview: 30.11.2019

Interviewer: Joona Pietikäinen
Interviewee: Petri Hautala

PIETIKÄINEN: How would you describe the work of a music producer?
HAUTALA: It's a versatile job, one day you got to be extremely creative and the next day you're doing something completely mechanical.

PIETIKÄINEN: What are some streams of income for a producer? What would you say is the most important?
HAUTALA: For me personally royalties from the digital streaming platforms, especially Spotify are the most important income. That's only possible because I own most of the time 25-100% cut from most of the masters I've been part of. I would think that a major label producer main income would come from track buy outs and mechanical royalties but for me those are just a tiny percentage from the whole pie.

PIETIKÄINEN: How are copyright/royalties handled when working with multiple people?
HAUTALA: Most of the time I'm supporting equal splits for the involved parties because it's simple and most of the time fair. If there's a significant difference between the workloads then it's obviously something to be negotiated.
PIETIKÄINEN: Do you find it hard to set up a price for your work? Has that changed over the years?
HAUTALA: Pricing the work was a big struggle when I started but it definitely changed over the years when gaining experience from the industry. It became pretty easy to set up prices when I understood the value of my work and time.

PIETIKÄINEN: About networking, how important networking is for producer to succeed?
HAUTALA: Networking and collaborating in this industry is a key to success. In my opinion it is the most efficient and organic way to reach new audiences.

PIETIKÄINEN: How did you build your network and contacts?
HAUTALA: Messaging and emailing people, booking sessions with other producers and artists. Being socially active constantly.

PIETIKÄINEN: Couple words about collaborating with people purely over internet? HAUTALA: Internet has made international collaborations super easy. Even though the goal is to be in the same room with the artist or producer you're collaborating with, I don't see a problem working solely via email and sending audio files back and forth. It has worked well for me and to other producers as well.
Appendix 4. Work Samples

Here are links for the work samples:
Marc Benjamin - Fall For You
https://open.spotify.com/track/4cikZmfuuvg-PLOGfj5W8k?si=6xX0iSUJQm2SaBxo9nJq_A

Skywalk - Fool feat. Gerian
https://open.spotify.com/track/56qvA7g0STFgA9kLcqIkPs?si=sRypQyvIRDSMi5HYXh274Q

WHITEPINK - This Is My Time feat. To NY
https://open.spotify.com/track/4Qmae2vfR7MnrsgNV61LL2?si=gNbLisgNRQ-e4K61rLfQFQ