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Welcome to this edition of Making Tracks. This newsletter is written to keep you up to date with what is happening in the world of Tracks of the Desert Inc, pass on tips about recording and related matters, and to talk about other interesting matters as they come up. As I write this I'm on a recording trip for the new album from the Apu Cross Ministries, Indulkana. Maybe you'll hear their music between the lines as you sit back and enjoy this edition of Making Tracks!

IN THIS EDITION

- * Latest News
- * Recording tips
- * Questions from our readers

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LATEST NEWS

* Firstly an apology... sorry for the lateness of this e-newsletter. Tracks of the Desert Inc has been a very busy place over the last several months, and it has been hard to sit down and write this newsletter. So sorry for the wait but it is anticipated that future editions of Making Tracks will be more regular.

* The book and associated audio recording of 'The Gospel of Mark in Anmatyerr' was recently dedicated at Ti Tree (or actually, six mile, which is about 190 klms north of Alice Springs). Anmatyerr is the language of the people from that area. The Gospel of Mark is the first book of the Bible to be translated into Anmatyerr, and so this was a great milestone. Tracks of the Desert Inc undertook the recording of this project, and there were some interesting background noises as the recording took place in various locations around Ti Tree (the School, the Council Office, someone's lounge room). There were frequent storms and rain, and guess what follows rain... frogs! But most of the frogs didn't make it onto the recording as they were eliminated in the editing process.

* A new album from the Alywarr at Irrultja (near the Sandover Highway, about 250 klms north-east from Alice Springs) is almost ready to be launched. It is called Inkart Aylelhey-gospel, and features 27 popular songs from that area of country. Keep an eye on the news section of www.tracksofthedesert.com, as this album should become available within the next 2 weeks.

* Malcolm Moore, originally from the Ilewerr Gospel Band, has recorded his own solo album, due to be released in early May (it is currently away being manufactured). Great songwriting skills (Malcolm wrote all the songs) and a clear understanding of how we need the Lord come through in this album. Again, keep an eye also on the news section of www.tracksofthedesert.com for when this album becomes available.

* Harold Dalywaters has been busy recording a new album. It was recorded in Elliot (halfway between Alice Springs and Darwin) in March of this year. It can be said that much sweat went into this album - I think all the musos must have lost several kilos each from sweat during the recording sessions, as it was about 70% humidity and 36 degrees all week. All this makes for a fun album! Harold was also keen to involve younger musicians in this project, which proved to be a smart move for several reasons. This album should be out later on this year.

* As mentioned above, the Apu Cross Ministries are just at this moment embarking on their 4th album. This group from the Church at Indulkana have a great ministry through the songs they write. God has surely blessed them with an abundance of songs! This album is also shaping up to be a double album. They only have another 100 songs to record after this album...

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RECORDING TIPS

How do you make a cover for your album?

So you're nearing the end of your time creating your music, and you've been wondering what to do about a cover for your album. Don't worry - this happens to lots of people. But the cover is also a crucial part of your album. It is the first thing that people see with an album. The cover is what attracts a lot of people to look at the album in the first place. If you can have a cover that stands out from the rest, it will make a lot of difference to the popularity of your album. Mind you, the quality of the music also has a large effect on how popular your album is too. I guess what I'm saying is that the music is the most important part, while the cover attracts people to the album in the first place.

Something to think a lot about while you are recording your music are ideas for the cover. Do you want a theme for the cover, something that ties all the pages together? Do you have no idea? Are there other covers that you have liked in the past? Getting an idea of what you want/themes through the cover will help you a lot. Once you have ideas, a graphic designer can turn these into a cover for you.

Choosing a graphic designer is also a crucial step in the process. There are lots of graphic designers around the place, but you need to find one that can make a cover that you will like. A place to find a designer is to ask some local musicians about where they got their album cover designed, and if they liked the design and how much it cost. If you can find someone who is recommended by other musicians, have a look at their past cover designs. If all looks good, and if their price is reasonable, they could be a good person to have to design your cover. If you can't find anyone this way, graphic designers can be found in the telephone book under printers or marketing companies.

Always work out how much you want to spend beforehand, and compare this to how much the designer wants to charge. Some designers will be reasonable in price, and others will make you feel like you have been burgled. Price doesn't necessarily mean quality, but experience does generally mean quality. Make an agreement before you start about the price of the design. This can be agreed upon before the work is started, and there is a good template for an agreement of this sort at

<http://www.simpsons.com.au/documents/music/lettersforms/Commissi.pdf> - the Simpsons are Entertainment lawyers, and have a whole book as well as various agreement templates related to the business of music on their website... all free to download (quite amazing when you see what is in the book). You need to find someone who has had experience in designing album covers, not posters or books. See if the designer is familiar with the manufacturing facility's printing specifications (get these specifications from the manufacturer's website eg. www.dexaudio.com.au or www.aavregency.com.au). If the designer is not familiar with album covers, it will no doubt take more of their time and maybe more of your money.

Once you have decided upon the theme of the cover and found a designer, you need to know where you are having the album manufactured, as each manufacturing facility has different cover design specifications. So a design ready for one manufacturer will not necessarily work for another facility. Once you have found the artwork specifications from the specific manufacturer, give this to your cover designer, or tell your designer to download these from the manufacturer's website. Be clear to the designer that your cover design has to meet these specifications.

Lastly, before you give the designer the go-ahead, you need to get all the info together that is to go on the cover and check and double check that everything is correct. Make sure you have all the song info, album info (title etc), photos, catalogue number if applicable, copyright info (incl the c and p signs) and any other info you want on the cover. Get all this info together and give it to the designer in one package. The designer will appreciate having all this info given to them at one time and not in bits and pieces. Computer files are the best format.

Keep checking back with the designer as to how the cover design looks, and talk about it if you want changes made. A good cover seems to be very pleasing to the beholder.

One thing that is important in recording and that you need before making a cover design, is the correct copyright information. The next issue of Making Tracks will look at the issues involved in copyright and recording.

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QUESTIONS FROM OUR READERS

* This section of the newsletter is dedicated to questions that our readers might have. So if you have any questions about recording, or about Tracks of the Desert Inc, or anything related, just email us here at Tracks of the Desert Inc and your questions might make it into the newsletter (don't worry - I'll ask you first, and if you have a question but don't want it in the newsletter, I can still answer it without putting it in the newsletter).

* Well, no questions have been sent in, so this is rather short again.

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* There goes the third edition of Making Tracks. If you would like anything in Making Tracks, or have any feedback, just let me know at contact@tracksofthedesert.com . If you would like to be taken off the email list for Making Tracks, just let me know as well and I will take you off the list!

Until next time, enjoy that music!

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