

A close-up, black and white portrait of a man with dark hair, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is solid black.

MUST HAVE BOOK FOR INDEPENDENT ARTIST

ARTIST

ALEXEY KOMOV

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Artist

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Аннотация

In this book, Aleksey Komov will share his knowledge in the field of the music industry, which he has accumulated over 20 years of work. Aleksey Komov has been a performing musician since 1996, leads his own musical project “Zeskullz” is an artist of UMG, also an ideologist and co-founder of the IT platform “The Amadei” which helps and educates independent musicians around the world.

In this book, Aleksey will talk about basic knowledge in order to successfully launch a musical project, what important stages in the formation of Artist's profile should be taken and what mistakes young artists make.

This book is made as a reference book for constant practice and work with it.

Anytime you can open this book and get an answer to important questions about the workflow.

Aleksey wishes good luck to all musicians and success in their careers and he hopes that this book will help to achieve goal faster and find answers to important questions!

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Алексей Комов

Artist

The author expresses gratitude to his team, without which this book would not exist:

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Forewords

Why you will find this book useful

About the author

«I always wanted to create music that will influence the next generations and inspire them. Well, really, who has the interest to be mortal?»

M. Jackson

I know the difficulties of a new business, hence, I want to give you a hand. The secret of long-term success lies in obtained skills and accumulated knowledge. I want to share it with you.

You will find information about:

- how to make a career in the music business from the zero
- who do you need in the beginning
- how to create a successful team around you
- how to stay to your principles during your work with managers
- how to start earning right away
- how to properly distribute your earnings
- what kind of unexpected difficulties and problems may occur
- tips for a newbie to avoid making mistakes
- how to become a popular and important person in a musical career

I am doing a musical career for 22 years now. I don't want to praise myself, but I know how it works. I have created this allowance to describe all the specifics of this career in the music business. In addition to this, it helps newbie musicians to make their dream come true.

I doing musical business since 1996. I perform my music all around the world, including Asia, Europe, Russia, and USA. For now, I am doing several musical projects.

I am a «Universal Music Mena» artist now. During my whole career, I was collaborating with an enormous amount of fashion brands, and I was performing my music on their close event parties. Those brands are:

«LVMH» France («Louis Vuitton», «Moet Chandon», «Henessy»), «Givenchy» with Liv Tyler, «Russian Music Awards» with Missy Eliot, «Fashion TV» in London, participated in the opening of a jewelery store «Carerra& Carerra», «Stephan Webster», in a show «Dolce&Gabbana», «Christian Dior», «Neil Barrett», at afterparty «Fillip Traicy» and in the show «Julian Mcdonald», I was making a music mix for «GRAZIA magazine» (120000 copies sold), «Elle Style Awards», also participated in «Filipp plien», «Trussardi», «Mtv Movie», «Versace party» with Donatella Versace, «L'etoile Party» with Patrizia Kaas, during their presentation of a new cosmetic products «Christian Dior» with Sharon Stone, also participated in presenting of a new perfume «Kenzo», at the

«Vogue magazine» parties, and «In style magazine», also I was participating at presenting of a new perfume from Paris Hilton, finally I was a part of jury team at «Elite Model Look», and I was representing «Givenchy»(men's cosmetic products), and participated in the opening of the barbershop «Tony&Guy», in the show «Martin Margela» and «Brioni».

Also under the nickname Zeskullz, I was making an official musical mixes for «Victor&Rolf», «Antonio Marras», «Elle fashion days», «Bosco Liliegi», «Alberto Feretti», «Jil Sander» and many others.

In addition to this, I published my tracks on the most popular world labels such as Universal Music, Dim Mak Records, Mad Decent, Armada Music, Sony Music, Warner Music, and others.

I performed on the same stage with such great musicians of electronic music such as Steve Aoki, David Guetta, DJ Snake, Diplo, Skrillex, Yellow Claw, Martin Garrix, Tiesto, and they played my tracks.

For more than 10 years I have been conducting my weekly radio show on the best dance radio in Russia «Radio Record» (where 2,000,000-3,000,000 or more listeners), together with them I do my events, which Bass music lovers gather for, and organize performances with the best representatives of Bass culture from America and Europe – Diplo, Snake, Borgore, Apashe, Yellow Claw, Carnage и and others.

My tracks fall into the rotation of the most popular world

radio: BBC1, Sirius XM, etc., they are in the top lists of Billboard USA Dance charts, Itunes, Shazam, Beatport, Spotify, etc. My video clips can be seen on MTV all around the world.

I also train young musicians to write music, to perform, to do management, marketing, and building a personal brand of themselves. I lead the artists and create them a complete concept from scratch as a personal manager. Also, for a long period, I made my parties, from small VIP private events to big raves.

A year ago, my team and I launched «The Amadei for Independent Artist». This is an IT music platform, which helps to start working from level 0 and quickly become a professional. Our platform includes all the tools for writing music, creating a personal brand, controlling the legal aspects of business, advertising, and product promotion. Using our platform, musicians can earn money by publishing their works. They also get to know each other and create collaborations despite being in different parts of the world.

I communicate with different people from business area and always ask them how they came to their success. As in any other field, in music, there is no simple answer and no formula for how to become a superstar, but there are important achievement rules that we must know and adhere to. In order to reach your goal and achieve everything you want, you need to take certain steps and adhere to a precisely specified goal.

I wanted to write this instruction book for musicians for more than two years, but my hands never reached it. Now I'm in Los Angeles, in the capital of the music stage, and I can't explain why, but there is such a strong creative energy that in the last month I have made more than 10 tracks and still can't stop. Ideas come by themselves, and waking up this morning, I realized that I was ready to start the text.

This is manual, assistant, and reference book for musicians. This is a reminder of how important it is to follow the rules of success, to discipline yourself, and to use all the available tools in life. Then we will succeed!

The back of the profession

«It's better to die on the roadside but to know that you did everything to achieve the goal. Rather than to live 100 years in abundance, realizing that you have cheated on yourself»

Robert Plant «Led Zeppelin»

Before I begin to tell you the basic rules of work, I want to warn you what kind of work it is and how difficult it is. I don't want to scare anyone, but I don't want you to waste your time anymore. After this chapter, some of you may suddenly understand that a musical career is not yours and you do not want to do it. This is normal since not everything is as simple and festive as it seems from the outside.

I'm going to take off your rose-tinted glasses. Right here and right now.

Sometimes people look at successful musicians and think that it is easy business and easy money, quick fame, recognition, fans, beautiful life and all that they dream about. Any long-term success is hard work, tough discipline, team spirit, faith in yourself and the team, the ability to anticipate trends, as well as internal balance, and understanding why you need it.

Professionals never stop learning. Also, you must be able to

communicate a lot and correctly with the right people, constantly engage in promotion, and protect your reputation. It is advisable to be active and travels frequently to increase your chances of finding yourself in the right place and at the right time. And always keep in mind that you are responsible for everything you do and your future depends only on your actions in the present.

There will always be those who want to lead you astray, but self-confidence, love of music, daily practice, and self-improvement in the discipline will not let this happen.

For example, when I started working in '96, the club industry in Russia was just emerging and my friends and I paved this difficult path to the future – we were confused and unwilling to accept electronic music as part of new youth culture. It happened that they wanted to kick me out of school for an informal appearance and an incomprehensible musical taste. Subsequently, these people will be proud of my achievements.

I was 13 years old when I met Sergey, my future teacher and music partner. Every day after school, we trained for 3–4 hours a day. Having no money for professional equipment, Sergey and I bought two old Radio Engineering turntables, changed their rotation system because it was no big deal, making it more advanced, and on this equipment, despite the dissatisfaction of the neighbors, training in DJing came.

In the 90s, being a DJ was very expensive. 5 minutes of your music – is one track on vinyl, the price of which reached \$ 13

per vinyl. Within an hour I played over 30 tracks. And every month I had to update my collection of music in order to always be with the newest material. For me, it was a lot of money. I did not grow up in a rich family and I earned all the money on the vinyl records by myself. I worked as a laborer on a construction site, put up posters in St. Petersburg, handed out flyers, helped make parties for a minimal fee, just so that I had the money for the vinyl records. My beginning was not easy, there were many different cases. Once even there was a showdown with bandits when I went into debt to buy a large batch of vinyl records for the summer season.

But all of this did not scare me because I loved music, I had a goal, I wanted to perform, become a musician, and mean something in this culture.

At the beginning of my musical history, sometimes there was a misunderstanding on the part of the girls who started dating me and, seeing me as a popular musician, counted on an easy and comfortable life with me. But it was not as simple as it seemed from the outside. The girls wanted more comfort, advised to tie with a musical hobby, recommended to look for a high-paying job, and not show off. I always stayed true to myself and the music. There were times when I even refused large fees if this could damage the concept and understanding of me as an artist. I had creative friends who for the sake of money changed their image and adapted to the audience, which immediately ceased to appreciate them, as they intuitively understood that everything

was for the sake of earning.

In music, there is the concept of «True Artist». He works for himself, for pleasure, because he sincerely loves his job. Creativity ends when your favorite craft becomes an unpleasant routine of creating a product that you don't like yourself, but it brings money. I had a lot of friends from the musical environment, who turned on the path of empty earning and as a result quickly ended their careers, as they burned out personally. At the beginning of my career, I was lucky, and I managed to meet people in time who advised me to get out of such situations correctly.

When you love music and devote your whole life to it, it becomes a matter of your life and eventually brings returns.

In the music business, you should never stop. No matter how much you want to linger on the completed project and taste all the fruits of its success, you must immediately go forward. At times, it may seem difficult to complete one successful business and move on to a new unknown. I never gave up on what I was doing. And I was never afraid to move on. With experience, you understand that a new beginning will give more strength, ideas, creativity, and as a result of success. Flexibility and anticipation of the result are important qualities for successful creativity. Imagine a beginner surfer who sees the first wave and begins to rake it. At that time, when an experienced knows that you need to see the most powerful wave, wait for it and begin to rake until

you feel it. Because it is so strong and powerful that you simply will not have time to get on it if you do not prepare in advance.

In the musical sphere, two types of people can be observed: those who create something new and those who repeat after others. First of all, you must choose yourself which artist you will be. You must understand that by copying someone else's product you will never become a legendary musician, but you can probably make a lot of money. To create something new, you first need to study all the classical bases, electronic, non-format moves in music. With this foundation, you begin to expand your professional consciousness: to replenish your knowledge and supplement it with information from different fields, read books, be interested in what is happening in art and the world in general, get inspired, join in working with the best, travel and keep open perception, that is always looking for what can impress in the surroundings. And then at some point, a unique idea will come to you.

You should also draw your attention to a relevant topic in a creative environment: a quality product can only be created with a pure mind and a clear mind. There is a myth that alcohol, drugs, synthetic stimulants, or other psychoactive substances supposedly help to become more creative. Many of my friends made this mistake, and some of them now rest in peace, someone forgot about music and completely left the creative sphere. Besides the obvious fact that stimulants can permanently cripple

your life and health, there is a scientific fact that they negatively affect your aural abilities. That is, under the influence of doping, you cannot hear certain frequencies.

I'm not interested in reading notations to you. I just want you to understand what consequences you may face and whether you need it.

If even now you want to make music and devote your whole life to it, despite all the difficulties of this sphere, then we continue and move on to the next chapter.

Selection of genre and sound

«You can outlive anything if you pick the right song.»
Kurt Cobain

On the one hand, it is quite a simple topic of choosing the style in which your project will work. On the other hand, it is important to understand that there are classical music genres and popular hybrid «HYPE Music» genres that work one or more seasons and decide on this choice.

To start with, let's clarify that there are classical genres in dance music and what is HYPE.

The classic genres include techno, house, drum n bass, Disco, hardcore, trance, dubstep, hip hop, rock, EBM, and others. These are the main basic styles of music in the generally accepted understanding of the genre, they have been living for decades, has their huge fan base and ideology.

Directions including hybrid subgenres.

In modern music space, DJs like to mix and combine rather strange things, creating something new and unusual, but it is not guaranteed that such genres will live for a long time. For example, a lot of sub-styles emerged from classical House music:

tech house, big room house, uk house, bass house, dream house, deep house, and many others. This applies to all other classic styles that I have listed above.

How and why does this work? Often, this is the role of geopolitics – from which country a musician is and what features of sound he adds to a particular genre of music. That's how we get modern hybrid sounds of classic genres. Some of them take root for a long time and such songs are very successful, and some are played for a year and then they are forgotten. The younger the musical genre, the more likely it is to quickly go up, but at the same time, it can be easily forgotten.

You need to choose a specific genre before you start to engage in it. Especially if you want act not only as a DJ but to write your music and publish it on music labels.

If you choose classical techno sound or any other classical style, you guarantee yourself many years of relevance. In this type music it is often more difficult to break through, you will have to spend more time developing yourself as an artist. But if you go through these stages correctly, you will have a guarantee that you can practice this music almost forever, since this genre is well-established.

With trendy HYPE ways, you are more likely to quickly become popular. But the big mistake of those who begin to make such music in pursuit of success is not paying any attention to

long-term prospects. Copying music makes you a hostage for being late for the so-called fashion train. Now I will explain what this means: the music that you hear now on the radio and which is popular now, is approved for publication by music labels for 10 months and earlier. Thus, the creation of HYPE music at the peak moment of its popularity gives you at least six months behind the global trends that are planned for next season. Typically, such genres appear in the capitals of dance music in the USA, England, Germany, Holland, etc.

For example, while living in Russia, I always went to various music festivals around the world, where I was looking for something new. Thanks to this, I started to play novelties in Russia first, thereby becoming a trendsetter in my region. Of course, as in the case of everything new, at times misunderstanding and certain difficulties of promotion could arise. But I was the first, and when this music came to Russia for mass distribution, those, who were playing music at fashion parties were popular, and people wanted to hear you playing music for them.

It usually took one or two years for this or that new style of music to reach our region.

Now the situation is changing because the Internet has filled the entire planet and trends are coming very quickly even to small regions. The new generation of youth, having clip thinking, easily

change their minds and tastes. This affected the young musicians badly, since now, with such a fast turn of a musical product, it is more difficult for an artist to stay afloat and be popular for a long time.

What if you want to be the best?

Firstly, you need to experiment a lot with sound, try to create and mix something new, forget about prejudices, not be afraid of anything, take risks, collaborate with different styles of music, and different musicians. This is a very difficult task, but perhaps then you will create your trend.

If you choose to do simple copying and want to quickly become popular, listen to music a lot, and I mean completely new music. As soon as you see a new trend that appears abroad, take it. Despite the fact, do you like it personally or not. You forget about your preferences as well as prejudices and trust this trend. Start doing it right away and then maybe you can get on this trendy HYPE train.

Keep it in mind, that fame will fall quickly after a HYPE wave. The game of fashion trends is an endless search and the pursuit of this insanely fast and fast train. I play this game with one of my music projects «Zeskullz». It is not easy, but very interesting. In my city, promoters say about me: if Alex begins to play some strange style of music, then he will certainly be popular in two years. Which always happens.

Now, my city is not enough for me, so I ended up on another part of the globe especially to be at the forefront with those people who create trends, work with them in the studios and create them with them.

If you are ready for creativity and risk, I wish you good luck, strength, patience, and selfconfidence. I am sure that you will succeed.

Working in HYPE styles, you can jump from one genre of music to another and this will not create problems for your fan base. Usually, these people are constantly looking for something new and will only be pleasantly surprised and support you in the experiments.

If you do not want to take risks, but want to be a cool artist in the classical genre of music, remember that you do not need to reinvent the wheel. Work according to the established classical canons that are accepted in this musical genre. And then, step by step you will create your brand that will last more than just a year. To get started, analyze the best successful artists in this genre. Research what tools they are using in writing music and in the promotion. Try to do what already works and has been tested for years. Do it as high quality and as possible, and within the framework of a given style. It is very important to be a True Artist, that is, an artist working in the same genre and not betraying the style.

The classics do not like upstarts and those who are trying to do something radically different. Like a classic men's suit, it should sit properly. Do not change shape, just pick a clear sound that reflects the style and image within the community. Your main task is to achieve the respect and support of this community. Do not expect instant results. Trust can be earned for more than one day and more than one year, as they say in America: «Easy boy, don't rush!» Do your job, seek respect and support from reputable musicians in this genre of music and you will fall into the circle of the so-called family. When this happens, and it will happen if you have the patience. You can work for decades and create a classical style of music, which every year will only become more valuable for your fans and fans of this genre.

When working with classical music genres, I do not recommend making serious changes to your style, as you may encounter misunderstanding, a wave of negativity, and the loss of a fan base. And most importantly, it can threaten the loss of authority among other artists of the genre. You will be called a traitor – person, who betrayed the genre for benefits and money. Obviously, this is bad for the image and your profile. If you want changes, it's better to create a new project from scratch and not advertise what you did before. You can't sit on two chairs at the same time.

Now you know the difference in what you should choose for yourself first – the vector in which you will begin to create your

Artist profile.

Concept. Ideology. Myth

«Make your work fulfilled with life, not a life fulfilled with work.»

Kurt Cobain

Have you already chosen your style of music? If so, then we move to the next stage – your basic concept.

Why do we need this and how does it work? Today artists are loved not only for cool music but also for their visualization, presentation, idea, and environment – all of this can be named in one word «WORLD» of the artist. An artist who creates his world within the framework of the music genre has a better chance of becoming a part of the culture and be famous for a longer time. Try to remind yourself of the most famous groups and their performers. It was not just music. They had their unique world that attracted millions of fans: the semantic load and lyrics in the tracks, the presentation style of the appearance, shows at performances, and visualization in clips – all of this creates a complete picture and image of the artist. All elements of the artist's world must be integral and united. This world should have a dense confident core.

One will say: «Yes, it's all clear. But how to do that?»

You should start with the musical style in which you decide to work. You will explore the whole basic concept of this style:

- where did this genre originate and where is it most popular right now
- what institutions and on which venues is the best place to perform your music
- how musicians look like, their lifestyle and hobbies
- what fans are guided by while choosing this style
- how do the fans live, their hobbies and lifestyle

Studying the fan base is the key to preparing your image. When you have a clear idea of who your listener is, that is, your buyer, you will have answers to all the most important questions for work. Explore fans of artists in this genre.

Imagine that you are in ambush hunting your golden antelope. Collect all the elements of the style, like puzzles, and you will get a complete picture of the environment in which this style lives, develops, and stays afloat.

In my last project, I spent a whole year creating a world for an artist. And only after that, I launched: name, image, logo, visualization and of course, music. Everything went like clockwork because I already knew what and why I was doing.

After proper preparation, the creation of the project is much simpler and more understandable. With an understanding of the concept of the musical genre and your fan, you come up with the name of the artist, his image and music that are as close as possible to this spirit. You are purposefully working on

visualization for your social networks, concerts, videos, maybe entire films and video games, and unique merchandise that everyone wants.

Over the years, I have met many talented musicians who make great music but do not have their own «world». And this was a good reason why it was more difficult for them to break into Olympus, why music labels did not want to work with them, and why, unfortunately, they were quickly forgotten.

Some professional musicians invest big money in making the agency that creates «worlds» for them. They understand the significance of this part of the musical project.

There are also serious agencies that are looking for talented musicians and create from them superheroes with their own «world». But it is important to realize that if you are not writing your ideology, then it is likely that what you are offered may contradict your inner feelings and life principles.

Many will now say: «I am ready for anything for the sake of success.» Yes, firstly you simply work and do not pay attention to the fact that this is not your image. But over time, the internal discrepancy will grow and begin to slowly destroy you from the inside. When you begin to understand this, while being already a super successful and accomplished artist, the internal conflict can develop into an external one and lead to sad consequences.

There are situations when agents try to copy already successful musicians at your expense, making you a clown. They do not want to understand and feel you, they just make copy-paste of the music, image, and world of the artist who already exists. There is no guarantee that the second such project will also be in demand. And it is unlikely that they will also want to buy it expensively.

The most valuable and expensive is the concept of TRUE. When you stand on the stage, you feel lively emotions that pulsate from you to the public and back. This interaction cannot be specifically created or purchased. It arises when the artist is really in his image and his organic state of mind and body. This artist can even make grave mistakes during the performance, but still will be loved for who he is. He carries his music and his «world», fills the lives of his listeners, and receives from them a powerful return of love and recognition.

Therefore, it makes sense to look for your unique style, to be yourself and create your world. Stay individual and the public will fall in love with you.

Choosing the name of the artist

«Perfect music is silence, and musicians are creating a beautiful frame around this perfection.»

Sting

We already have a myth and understanding of the style of music in which we will work. Now is the time to come up with the original name of the artist.

What you need to pay attention to and what you need to check to avoid getting into a situation, that you meet an artist with the same name?

Firstly, your name should be written in Latin if you plan to work worldwide. Some regional artists come up with the name of the artist in their language and spell their name also in their native language. This is permissible if you want to work successfully only in those regions where they understand this language. Therefore, before you start inventing your nickname, you must understand where you want to be implemented.

Every year more and more artists appear, and cool words and pseudonyms are less and less. When you are looking for your name, be sure to check it first on the main Internet sites, such as iTunes, Spotify, Google Play, Yandex Music, Beatport, Shazam, etc., so that there are no artists with that name on these sites.

This is very important, otherwise in the future, you will have big problems when publishing your tracks and albums. You just won't be able to publish anything, since such an artist already exists. Consequently, you will not be able to perform either. But you can be sued for the illegal use of someone else's name of the artist for their purposes. There are sly ones who change one letter in the name and use it as their own, explaining this by the fact that the name is supposedly free in such a spelling. You can't do this if you want to become a professional, original artist, and not someone else's copy. You need a unique and memorable name. If you want to work really at a high level, you should never make such mistakes at the initial stage. It is important to understand that in the music business, the first person to publish a track or album under a specific name already has a 100 % patent for that name. Who was the first in time, that's own the name.

When you search for a name for yourself, you check not only all the Internet sites from the list above but also the availability of URL addresses in the main social networks: Instagram, Youtube, Twitter, Soundcloud, VK, Facebook. I recommend that all social networks have the same URL name. It happens, for example, that two social networks are free, and in the rest, this name is already taken in its pure form. But you can find an alternative in the form of a prefix to the name.

Example: the name Zeskullz is occupied on half of the sites by

some strange accounts. What can be done? We take the prefix: official, the, music, DJ, band, com (if you have such a website) and I'm sure that in some combination all social networks will be available.

It is important to analyze how your name will look in spelling and sound in pronunciation. Look at the beginning and the end of the name, how they are balanced among themselves – whether it sounds and looks beautiful and harmonious. The name should be simple, easy to remember, relevant to the time, and modern culture, not cutting the ears and eyes.

Again, as an example, my ZESKULLZ project. I was looking for something new and relevant, with a certain meaning, and that would look and sound rude enough. Initially, it looked like this: THE SKULLS (symbolic meaning – eternity). This name is ideal for heavy, rough, and fashionable music, but I was not happy with how it looks and is written – too simple. I changed the prefix THE to French ZE and made a mirror ending Z, in the end, I got ZESKULLZ. Now it began to look great even in plain text. And when I began to make the logo, I got a perfect balance, which immediately looks confidently on the poster.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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