STRETCHLEARN · WORKBOOK

# Music Production for Content Creators — Workbook

This workbook is your hands-on companion to the course — every exercise corresponds to a skill you built in the lessons, and every template is ready to populate with your own project data. Work through each section in order: the earlier sections build the raw material (your DAW settings, your loop, your stinger) that the final section assembles into a deployable sonic brand. Return to these pages every time you produce a new audio asset for your channel.

## DAW Setup and the Content Creator Workflow

Confirm your DAW is correctly configured and your project folder structure is ready before you produce a single note.

### Exercise: DAW Comparison Decision

Before installing anything, answer the four questions below to identify which DAW is the right starting point for your situation. There is no wrong answer — the goal is to make a deliberate choice rather than defaulting to the first result in a search.

• Which operating system are you on, and is GarageBand already installed? (If yes on Mac, start there.)

• What is your budget for DAW software right now — $0, under $100, or flexible?

• Do you already own or have access to any audio hardware (audio interface, MIDI keyboard)? List them.

• In one sentence: what is the first audio asset you want to produce — background loop, stinger, or both?

### Worksheet: Session Configuration Record

Fill in these fields immediately after configuring your first DAW project. This record becomes the reference you paste into every future session.

DAW name and version

Sample rate selected (e.g., 48000 Hz)

Bit depth selected (e.g., 24-bit)

Buffer size selected (samples)

Plugin scan folder path

Default project save path

Free plugins installed (list each with version)

Template session filename

### Checklist: Pre-Production Setup Checklist

[ ] DAW installed and launched at least once without errors
[ ] TDR Nova EQ downloaded and confirmed visible in the plugin list
[ ] Valhalla Supermassive downloaded and confirmed visible in the plugin list
[ ] Limiter plugin confirmed available (native DAW or TDR Limiter6)
[ ] Youlean Loudness Meter installed and tested on a test audio file
[ ] Five-subfolder project structure created at the correct path
[ ] Gain-staged template session saved with a piano and a pad at -15 dBFS each
[ ] Master bus peaks below -6 dBFS with two tracks playing in the template

## Building Background Music Loops

Document your creative decisions, MIDI settings, and mix results as you build your first complete four-bar background loop.

### Exercise: Chord Progression Selection

From the three progressions presented in the course (I-IV-V-VI, I-V-VI-IV, I-VI-IV-V), select one and complete the analysis below before opening your DAW.

• Which progression did you choose and why? Describe in 2–3 sentences how it fits the emotional tone of your content.

• Write out the four chords using note names in C Major (e.g., C Major, F Major, G Major, A Minor).

• Which instrument preset will you use for the chordal layer, and what mood does that preset convey?

• Describe the type of content (YouTube video topic, podcast episode type) this loop will accompany.

### Worksheet: Background Loop Build Log

Complete one row per track layer as you build the loop. This log makes it easy to recreate or revise the loop later without opening the DAW project to reverse-engineer your decisions.

Track layer name (e.g., Bass, Pad, Texture, Rhythm)

MIDI instrument preset name and DAW plugin

Note range programmed (e.g., C2 for bass root notes)

Velocity range (min–max)

Channel strip peak level (dBFS)

EQ cuts applied (frequency and dB amount)

Compression settings used (ratio, attack, release)

Final rendered filename

### Checklist: Background Loop Quality Gate

[ ] Four-bar loop plays seamlessly when looped (no click or gap at the loop point)
[ ] All individual tracks peak between -18 dBFS and -12 dBFS
[ ] Music Bus high-shelf cut applied at 3 kHz to reduce masking in the voice range
[ ] Bus compressor on Music Bus with 2:1 ratio and slow attack inserted and active
[ ] Limiter on master bus with -1 dBTP ceiling inserted and active
[ ] Youlean Loudness Meter reading: integrated LUFS within 1 LU of target (-14 or -16)
[ ] Loop exported as 48 kHz / 24-bit WAV with correct filename format
[ ] Exported file moved to the 02-backgrounds/ folder in the asset library

## Designing Your Intro Stinger and Sound Effects

Plan and document your stinger design choices, then confirm each sound effect is export-ready and named correctly.

### Exercise: Stinger Design Blueprint

Complete this planning exercise before opening a new DAW session for your stinger. Answers here directly inform every MIDI and automation decision in the build.

• Which of the three stinger structures did you choose (rising whoosh hit, three-note motive, or ambient bloom)? Describe in one sentence why it fits your channel personality.

• Write down the exact three to four notes you will use (e.g., C4, E4, G4 for a tonal hit). Are they from your established key and scale?

• What instrument or sound will carry the tonal hit (marimba, plucked synth, piano, etc.)? What feeling does that choice communicate?

• What is the intended end point — held reverb tail, hard cut, or percussive stop? How long after the last note does the stinger audio end?

### Worksheet: Stinger and SFX Build Log

Document each audio element in your stinger and SFX library as you render it. One row per final rendered file.

Asset name (e.g., intro-stinger-3s, sfx-transition-hit)

Duration in seconds

Instruments/layers used

Pitch bend range applied (start and end in cents)

Reverb plugin and settings (mode, decay, mix %)

Export loudness (LUFS)

Final filename

Confirmed in correct asset library subfolder (yes/no)

### Checklist: Stinger Delivery Checklist

[ ] Stinger plays correctly at 3–5 seconds duration with no unwanted silence at start
[ ] Tonal hit lands within the first half of the stinger duration
[ ] Reverb tail ends cleanly before the audio file ends (no abrupt truncation)
[ ] All notes are from the same key as the background loop
[ ] Transition hit, notification ping, and end card cue exported as separate WAV files
[ ] All SFX exported at -20 LUFS so they sit quietly in a video edit mix
[ ] Stinger tested by playing it before a VO recording — no frequency clash
[ ] All files named using the approved naming formula and placed in 01-intros/ and 03-sfx/

## Building Your Sonic Brand and Asset Library

Formalize the musical decisions made throughout the course into a written sonic brand guide and confirm your asset library is complete and ready for use in every future upload.

### Exercise: Sonic Brand Identity Reflection

Answer these questions in full sentences — the answers become the narrative section at the top of your sonic brand guide.

• In three to five sentences, describe the feeling a first-time listener should have when they hear your intro stinger. Reference specific emotions or associations (e.g., calm and focused, like settling in to learn something).

• Who is your target viewer or listener, and how does your audio identity align with what they expect from content in your niche?

• Name one well-known YouTube channel or podcast whose audio identity you admire. What specific element (instrument, tempo, energy level) did you borrow or adapt, and what did you deliberately do differently?

• What is the one audio element across your current asset library that you are least satisfied with, and what would a version 2.0 of that element sound like?

### Worksheet: Sonic Brand Guide

Fill in every field. This completed page is your sonic brand guide — print or export it as a PDF and place it in 05-brand-docs/.

Channel or podcast name

BPM (from background loop project)

Key and mode (e.g., C Major, A Minor)

Mood palette (3–4 adjectives)

Core instrument set (list each approved instrument and preset name)

Forbidden elements (instruments, processing, or genres to avoid)

YouTube loudness target (LUFS)

Podcast loudness target (LUFS)

Export format for video editors (file type, sample rate, bit depth)

Background loop primary filename

Intro stinger primary filename

SFX library: transition hit filename

SFX library: notification ping filename

SFX library: end card cue filename

Date of last library update

### Checklist: Final Asset Library Delivery Checklist

[ ] All five asset library subfolders exist inside a cloud-synced parent folder
[ ] Background loop (at least one) in 02-backgrounds/ with correct filename
[ ] Intro stinger in 01-intros/ in both WAV and MP3 formats
[ ] Minimum three SFX files in 03-sfx/ named by function
[ ] Sonic brand guide PDF saved in 05-brand-docs/
[ ] DAW project source folders backed up in 05-brand-docs/ or external drive
[ ] Video editor sequence template saved with pre-configured VO, music, and SFX track layout
[ ] Pre-publish audio quality checklist run on a test edit and all five steps passed
[ ] At least one full video or podcast episode edited using only assets from this library
[ ] Sonic brand guide shared with any collaborator, editor, or thumbnail designer who produces audio for your channel

## Your Action Plan

1. Install your chosen DAW and the three free plugins (TDR Nova, Valhalla Supermassive, Youlean Loudness Meter) within the next 48 hours
2. Create the five-subfolder asset library inside a cloud-synced parent folder before building anything
3. Configure your first project session to 48 kHz / 24-bit and save it as a reusable template
4. Build your four-bar MIDI chord loop using one of the three recommended progressions, with all tracks peaking between -18 and -12 dBFS
5. Layer bass, pad, texture, and hi-hat tracks and export the finished loop at -14 LUFS to 02-backgrounds/
6. Design and render your intro stinger to 01-intros/ — confirm it plays cleanly when placed before a VO recording
7. Produce and export three SFX files (transition hit, notification ping, end card cue) to 03-sfx/ at -20 LUFS each
8. Complete all fields in the Sonic Brand Guide worksheet and save it as a PDF to 05-brand-docs/
9. Build and save a video editor sequence template with pre-configured VO, music, and SFX tracks
10. Edit one complete video or podcast episode using only your new asset library and run the pre-publish audio quality checklist before uploading