

# It's Time to Teach Music Production! Now What?

Everything You Need to Know to Get Started



# What?

## What is digital music production?

- The process of creating, capturing, and manipulating music using primarily software programs and digital hardware such as a computer and MIDI controllers

# The Technology



# Hardware Tools

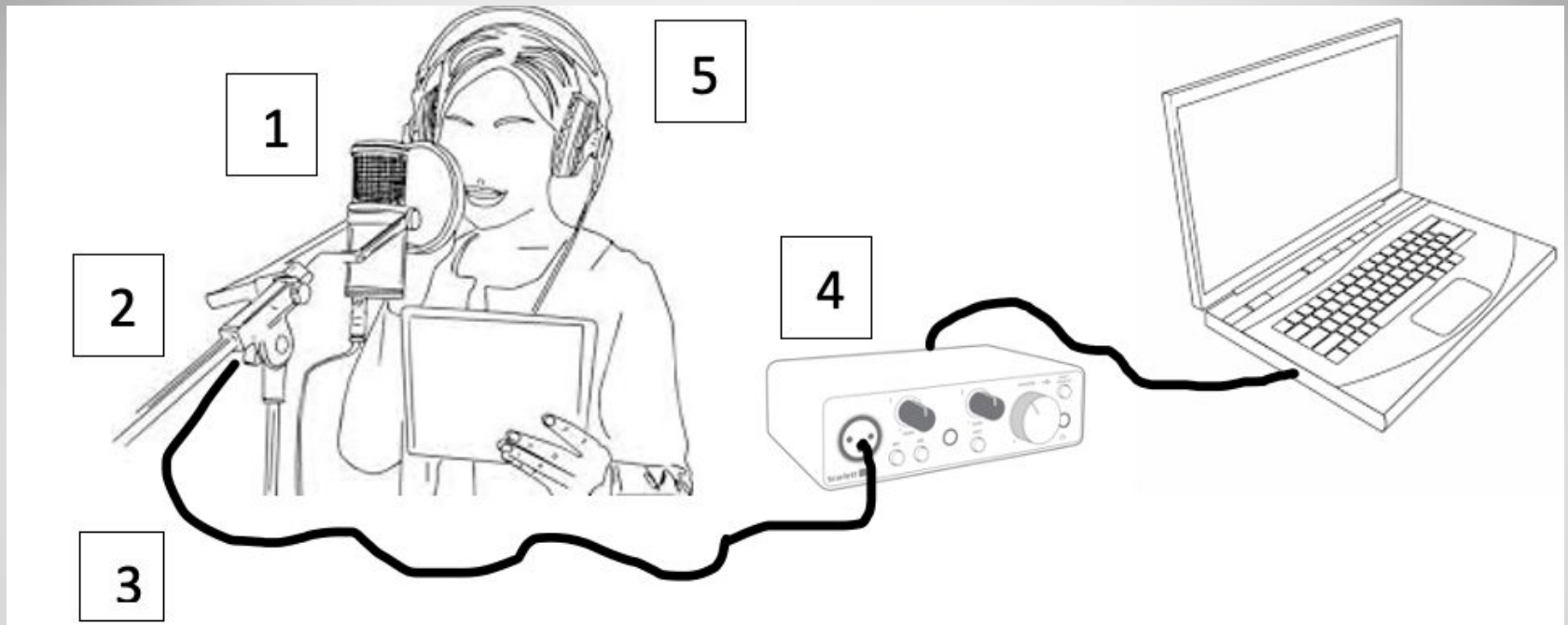
- Computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone
- Something to listen with: headphones, earbuds, speakers, studio monitors

(Optional Tools)

- MIDI controllers: MIDI keyboard, MIDI pad controller
- Audio interface, microphone, cables

**If you don't have a budget for hardware supplies, you can use just a computer with an internet connection**





1. Microphone - Dynamic or Condenser
2. Mic. Stand
3. XLR cables for the microphone or  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch cables for instruments
4. Audio Interface

# Audio Interface



- Contains inputs and outputs (I/O) for recording equipment
- Converts audio sounds into digital data
- Helps with monitoring (hearing the sound in real time while recording)

# Software Tools

- **Digital Audio Workstation (DAW)**
  - A multifunction software tool that can be used for a wide range of audio production tasks including composing, recording, editing, and mixing
  - The DAW is at the center of music production

# What to Consider When Choosing a DAW



- The two main types of DAWs are **online-based** and **software-based**
  - Online DAWs do not download onto your device. They exist as cloud-based applications that you access on the internet.
  - Software-based DAWs download and install on your computer.

## Where to get a DAW for free:

1. Click this link for a list of the 10 best free online DAWs
2. Click this link for a list of 20 free software DAWs



10 free online DAWs

# edu.bandlab.com



IOS

# edu.bandlab.com



## Google Play

# Elements of the DAW's graphical user interface (GUI) to be familiar with:

- **Transport:** used to control recording and playback
- **Track header:** controls to mute or solo the track's signal, arm the track for recording, and set the volume
- **New track command:** creates a new MIDI or audio track
- **Regions:** blocks of MIDI or recorded audio
- **Workspace:** displays MIDI or audio regions
- **Sound library:** where virtual instruments are stored
- **Loop library:** where loops are stored
- **Editor window:** where you can add and manipulate MIDI notes and rhythms, and edit live audio in more detail

- Successfully teaching music production and songwriting requires some knowledge of two domains: **music technology** and **music composition**
- We do not use technology for technology's sake. We use technology in service of teaching musicianship.

# Songwriting/Composition

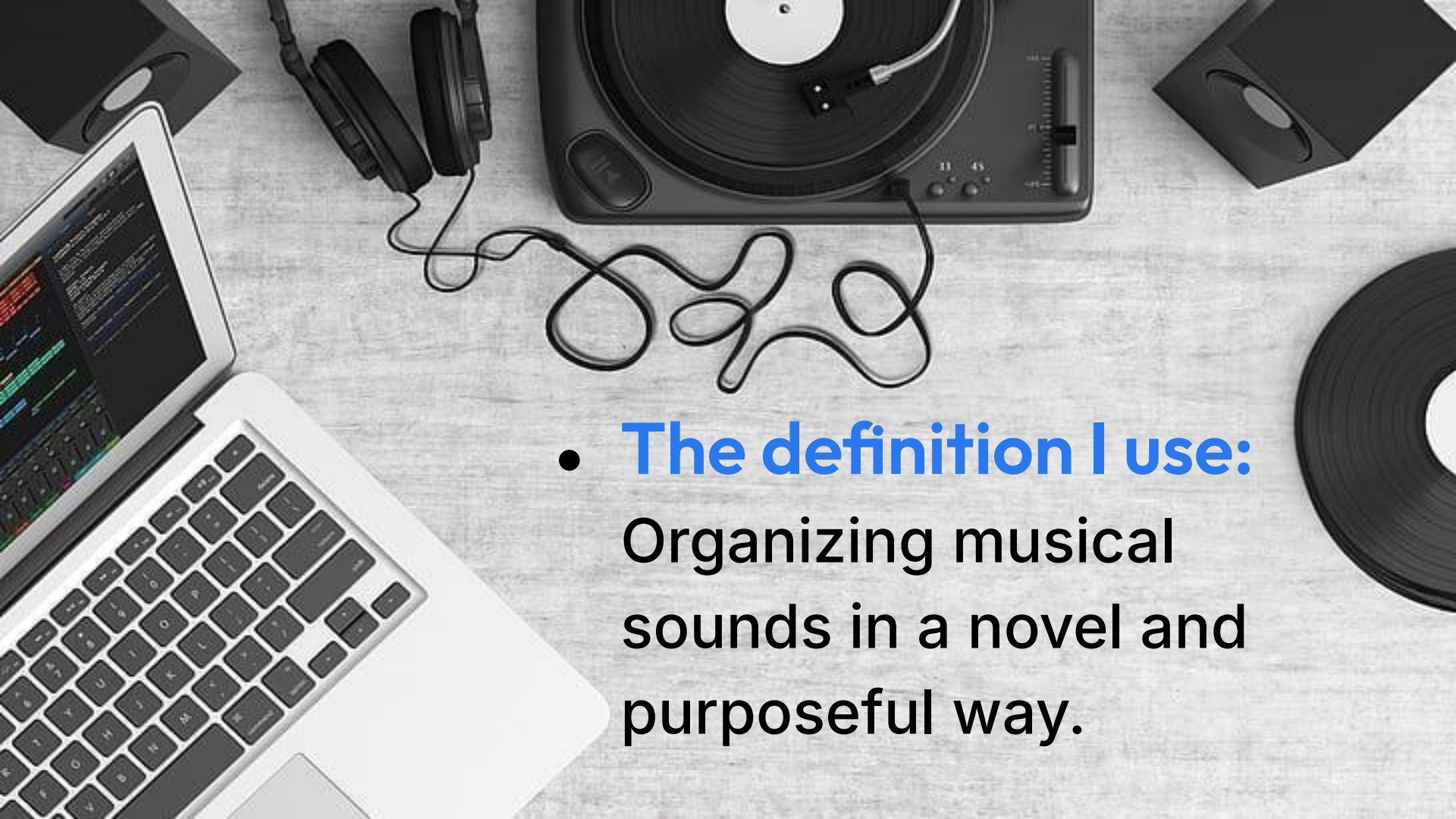


## What is songwriting?

- Songwriting is musical composition

What is your definition of musical composition?

What is your process of musical composition?



- **The definition I use:**  
Organizing musical sounds in a novel and purposeful way.

# The composition process I use:

1. Exploring sounds
2. Choosing, creating, and combining sounds
3. Listening and deciding if they sound right together
4. Accepting, rejecting, or revising the sounds
5. Finishing and sharing

# Lesson Ideas



**Loop-based compositions:** A loop is a short sound or musical phrase that can be repeated.

**Process:**

1. Students explore and listen to the loops available
2. Students experiment with combining different loops
3. Students accept, reject, or revise what they have
4. Students share their song with the teacher or entire class

# Composing an original song in a DAW:

## Process:

Use your unique composition process each time you create any, or all of the following

## Suggested Roadmap:

1. Compose a rhythm track - *Produce This!* Pgs. 6-9
2. Compose a melody track - *Produce This!* Pgs. 10-13
3. Compose a harmony track - *Produce This!* Pgs. 14-17
4. Compose a bass track - *Produce This!* Pgs. 18-20
5. Arrange the sections of the song - *Produce This!* Pgs. 21-23
6. Record a vocal or live instrument - *Produce This!* Pgs. 26-28
7. Edit - *Produce This!* Pg. 28
8. Mix - *Produce This!* Pgs. 29-31
9. Share - *Produce This!* Pg. 32

**Mixing** - The process of blending and balancing all the elements of your song

## **Five main elements of mixing:**

- Volume
- Panning
- EQ
- Dynamics - Compression, expanders, gates
- Space/depth - reverb, delay

# Effects:

- Anything that changes the sound such as: distortion, chorus, flanger, etc.

# Suggested Book Resources

- Freedman, B. (2013). *Teaching music through composition: A curriculum using technology*. Oxford University Press.
- Kuhn, W., & Hein, E. (2021). *Electronic music school: A contemporary approach to teaching musical creativity*. Oxford University Press.
- Lyons, M. J. (2023). *Produce this!: Digital music production and songwriting workbook*. Neil A. Kjos Music Company.

# Music Technology Resources

- Facebook Group: I Teach Music Technology
- TI:ME - Technology in Music Education
- [teachmusicproduction.com](http://teachmusicproduction.com)

[matthewlyons@teachmusicproduction.com](mailto:matthewlyons@teachmusicproduction.com)

To download the slide presentation:



# My Contact Info.

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More help:



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PRODUCTION**

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