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# MUSIC

TALKS



Turn your hobby into a profession.

**Angelos Mavros**

## Table of Contents

Talk #1	10 Music Production Tips For Beginners	4
Talk #2	A Brief History Of Psytrance	7
Talk #3	The Importance Of The Social Media & My Basic Strategy	10
Talk #4	15 Social Platforms You Should Be Using	16
Talk #5	How To Interpret An Artist's Social Media Numbers	20
Talk #6	Professional VS Amateur Comparison	23
Talk #7	Why Record Labels Don't Respond To Your E-mails & How To React	25
Talk #8	10 Reasons You Fail In The Music Business	29
Talk #9	How I Failed As A Web Developer & Why Failure Is A Good Thing	36
Talk #10	The Biggest Religious Lie You Have Been Told	39
Talk #11	10 Things Producers Don't Realize	42
Talk #12	Why Music Used To Be Better	48
Talk #13	Why You Shouldn't Create Underground Music	52
Talk #14	The Dark Commitment Behind Successful Careers	54
Talk #15	The Only Tangible Way To Survive In The Music Industry	56

# Music Talks: Turn Your Hobby Into A Profession

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About the Author:

The evolution of Angelos Mavros' music began with organ and harmony lessons at a very young age, way back in 1991. His productive career began in 1999, when he started making music on his home computer. For more than 2 decades, Angelos kept on releasing electronic music under the aliases "OutSid3r" & "Open Source". In 2020, he flexed his creativity and pulled down the walls between "electronic" and "organic" music, adding live instruments to amp up the cinematic feel of his pieces. His lifelong passion for instrumental music flourished, as he began releasing orchestral music under his real name and a fresh label.

Book Description:

All live talks that Angelos Mavros aka Open Source gave from 2018 to 2020. Most of these talks can be found on his youtube channel with video footage. Angelos mostly talks about music making, music promotion, music marketing and in general how to survive in the music industry & turn your hobby into a profession.

## **Talk #1**

# 10 Music Production Tips For Beginners

### **Panning**

Panning is the spread of a monophonic signal in a stereo sound system. This is crucial for making up correct stereo imaging. Panning adds space in a mix through placing the sounds a bit at the left or a bit at the right.

The most common mistake newbies make is to have all instruments playing in the very center. Only the kick and the bass should be positioned in the very center. All other sounds should be folding a bit at the right or a bit at the left. Especially drum-sets should never be in the middle. Imagine how a drum-set looks like; some hats are located to the right side and some to the left. You have to imprint the natural drum-set feeling on your mix by placing some hats a bit at the left and some a bit at the right. In that way you trick the human brain into thinking that the instrument is organic and not computer-generated.

### **Voluming**

Balancing the volume of your sounds is a fundamental procedure for every mix. You need to keep all channels of your mix at a balanced level. EQ and compression, although extremely important, don't help at all if your balance is out of whack.

A typical mistake young producers make is to have all sounds playing on the same volume level. You simply can't have all your instruments at the same volume. You need to do what I call "scaled voluming". Pushing up and down the faders and getting a balanced mix is essential. To put it very simply; some of your sounds must be playing less loudly while the loudness of others should be increased.

## **EQ-ing**

Equalizing is the ability to boost or reduce the amplitude in specified frequency ranges. There are many different types of EQs in use today in many widely varying applications, but they basically all do the same thing.

Nobody can teach you how to EQ your sounds, it is a matter of experience. However if I can teach you 2 things, those are:

#1 If you have 2 sounds playing on the same frequencies, reduce the shared frequencies in one of the 2 instruments. If it doesn't sound good, reduce the shared frequencies of the other instrument.

#2 Add a spectrum analyzer on your master bus. If you have a gap somewhere, create a sound that plays in this gap or else on those frequencies. Your goal is to spread frequencies to the whole range that is detectable by human ears. Fill in the gaps with the missing frequencies and then your composition will sound FULL. But remember NOT to have many instruments playing on the same frequencies. If that happens, cut some of them out.

## **Environment**

Listen to your mix in different sound sets. Try it with speakers, in cars, in clubs if possible, in home studios. This will grant you great expertise on how we absorb and listen to music and you can adjust your sound accordingly. It will be hugely important in training your hearing and will eventually add quality to your outputs. Remember that a good painter is one who can see well; who can notice the small details and recreate them on his paintings. The same applies to music production; the good producer is the one with good ears. He who can detect with his ears what

others cannot and incorporate those details into his music. So train your ears in different sound systems.

### **Use Your New Self**

Use your new ears by leaving gaps between studio sessions. The other big mistake new producers make is to rush, since they are in a hurry to show off their abilities. That is probably the biggest mistake you could make.

**Don't rush.** Take your time. Surprise everyone. There are literally a billion guys out there with a laptop making music. You are competing not only with them but with all the previous producers before them. Because, let's say that you have created something good that has been created in the past by others, could it succeed today? It couldn't. The world always needs new music, new trends. You can adopt some influences from previous decades but still you need to adjust them according to the present trends.

### **The Factor Of Fortuity**

Leave something to chance. Add random sounds. Be spontaneous. Don't plan everything. Music is alive. It is essential to include the factor of fortuity. Use random automations. Let your mouse cursor leaf through options. Adding random sounds and notes is something that will help you proceed when you don't know what else to do. You would be surprised if I told you that all the melodies that I have made, were made by chance, by accident. I pushed a few random notes that I liked and then continued to finalize it into a melody.

### **Less Is More**

That which is less complicated is often more easily accepted and more appreciated. **Simplicity is preferable to complexity.** Brevity is more effective than verbosity. Simplicity and clarity lead to good sound design and

development. By reducing your sounds you are actually making your sound more clear and thus more easy to listen to. Be careful here not to decrease your channels, I am talking about reducing the sounds playing together. Don't have multiple sounds playing simultaneously but have many sounds playing at different times!

### **Infinite Development**

Nothing is ever over or finished. Probably the most important mistake that newbies make is this: They are in a hurry to release their new output and show to the world how good they are. The problem is that only the newbies are impressed. In order to impress the world you need to create something really extraordinary. Your output needs to be very special. So always try to improve it. You can always work more on it. Let it mature. Leave it for weeks, months. Forget about it and then work on it with new ears. It will then be like your alter ego hears your mix and tells you what he thinks of it. By using your own suggestions, from your new self, you can take your mix to the next level.

### **The Illusion of Modern Sound**

In reality, there is no "advanced" or "old-school sound". How we absorb Music is only subjective and based on trends and experience. Modern sound has nothing to do with the software or the hardware. All synths are built on the same principles. We can produce a track that sounds "modern" with the software that we had 15 years ago. So when you hear a song and you say "oh this sounds fresh", what you actually mean is, that it complies with the contemporary trends and production techniques.

For many years I used to think "Oh if I had those samples from Ace Ventura, I would create something similar.". "If I had the samples of Astrix, I would be on the same level."



That is totally not true. No matter if I gave you all the projects of Astrix in open DAW format, you would only be able to ruin them and not create something on his level. Because you lack experience. You lack all the steps that will get you from level zero to the level of Astrix. On the contrary, if you had the experience you would be able to create something spectacular without any ready-made sample or special software. In music production.. the studio, the samples, the acoustics, none of these matter. Only one thing matters; **the expertise of the producer.**

### **Respect Established Artists**

My last tip for beginners: Everyone respects artists that he likes, but try to respect successful artists that you don't like too. It's a step to self-completion and higher awareness. Try to respect popular music that you don't personally like by realizing its value. I've been struggling to understand why some artists are so popular when they create such bad music. Their music literally sucks. It's bad from every technical or theoretical point of view. But those artists are famous for a reason. People like their music for a reason. You must understand that in the music industry your opinion or my opinion does not matter. What matters is the opinion of the masses. The opinion of the crowd. How much the big audience likes a track is important, not how much individuals like a track. So pay some respect to established artists that you don't like. It will help you experience music from a new perspective.