

Road Warriors:
DIY Artists and Touring as Independent Promotion

by
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Abstract

This thesis explores the creation and execution of a DIY artist career plan for Aslin, a singer-songwriter releasing her third EP *Inflight*. The project focuses on promoting *Inflight* through a regional tour of the Pacific Northwest while examining how business planning, goal setting, and the live performance ecosystem contribute to the success of independent musicians. Drawing from industry literature, the research highlights the vital importance of diversifying revenue streams—such as live performances, merchandise sales, and streaming royalties—for DIY musicians in today’s digital landscape. The methodology includes establishing an Artist Career Plan based on the framework from Paul Allen’s *Artist Management for the Music Business*, with an emphasis on tour booking, venue research, and digital promotion. By analyzing data from Aslin’s six-date *Inflight* tour, the thesis demonstrates how live performances can drive both financial success and digital engagement, offering a replicable model for other independent artists. Additionally, the thesis addresses the challenges DIY musicians face, particularly in balancing artistic goals with financial sustainability in a rapidly changing music industry.

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Gig Data					
Date	Venue	Market	Showtime	Set Length	Audience Members
8/18/24	Tigardville Bar and Grill	Salem	12pm-3pm	3 hours	15
8/21/24	Greenhouse Yellow Door	St. Helen's	7pm-7:45pm	45 minutes	40
8/22/24	Rhythms Coffee	Olympia	7pm-9:30pm	50 minutes	35
8/23/24	The Artichoke	Portland	7pm-9pm	40 minutes	30
8/24/24	SW Washington Garlic Fest	SW Washington	2:30-3:30	55 minutes	120
8/25/24	18225 NW Sauvie Island	Sauvie Island	7pm-7:30pm	30 minutes	15

Table 2 – Tour Revenue Table

Tour Revenue						
Date	Performance Fee	Cut of Tickets Sold	Tips	Merch sold	Ask Backs (y/n)	Total Gig Revenue
8/18/24	\$250	\$0	\$62	\$28	yes	\$340
8/21/24	\$25	\$0	\$20	\$0	yes	\$45
8/22/24	\$0	\$50	\$33	\$28	yes	\$111
8/23/24	\$0	\$150	\$70	\$70	yes	\$290
8/24/24	\$250	\$0	\$10	\$0	no	\$260
8/25/24	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	n/a	\$0
Totals	\$525	\$200	\$195	\$126	5	\$1,046

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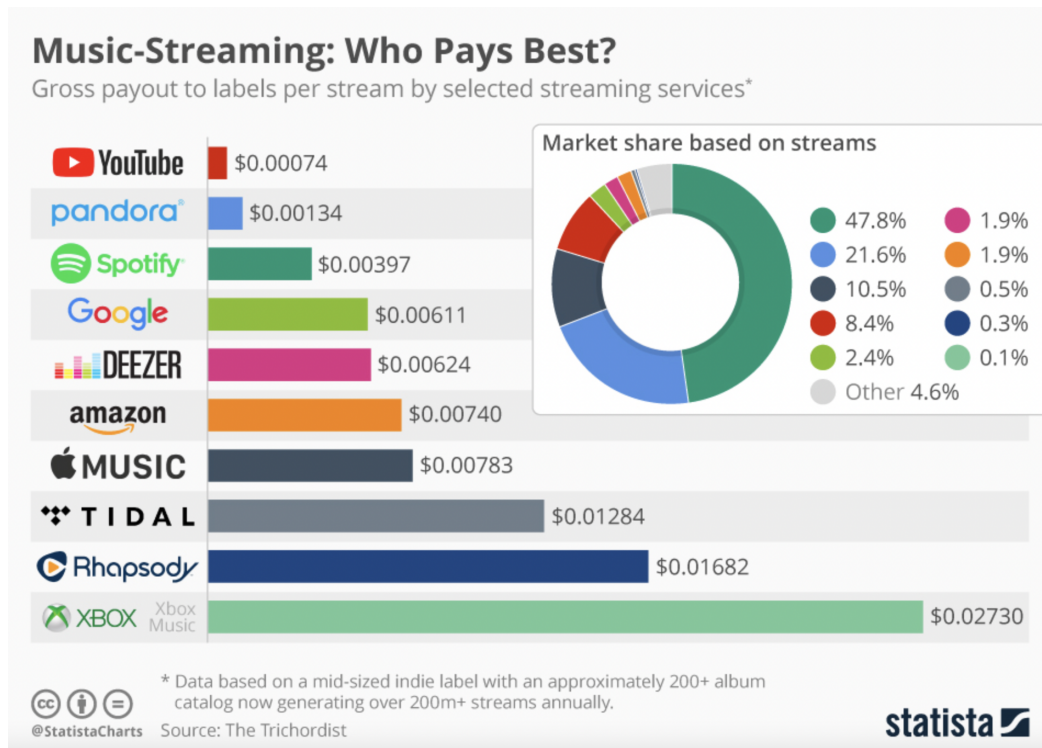


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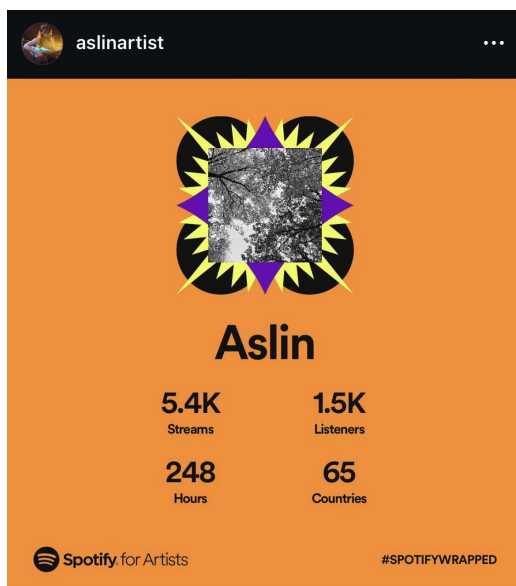


Fig. II — 2022 Spotify Data

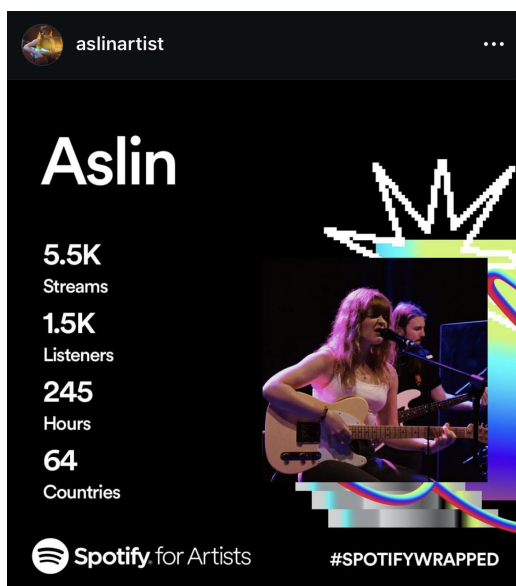


Fig. III — 2023 Spotify Data

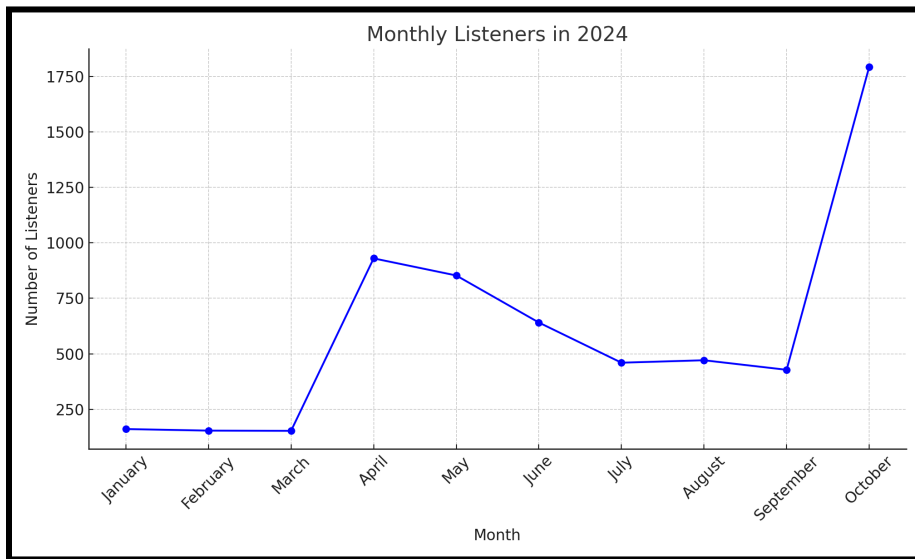


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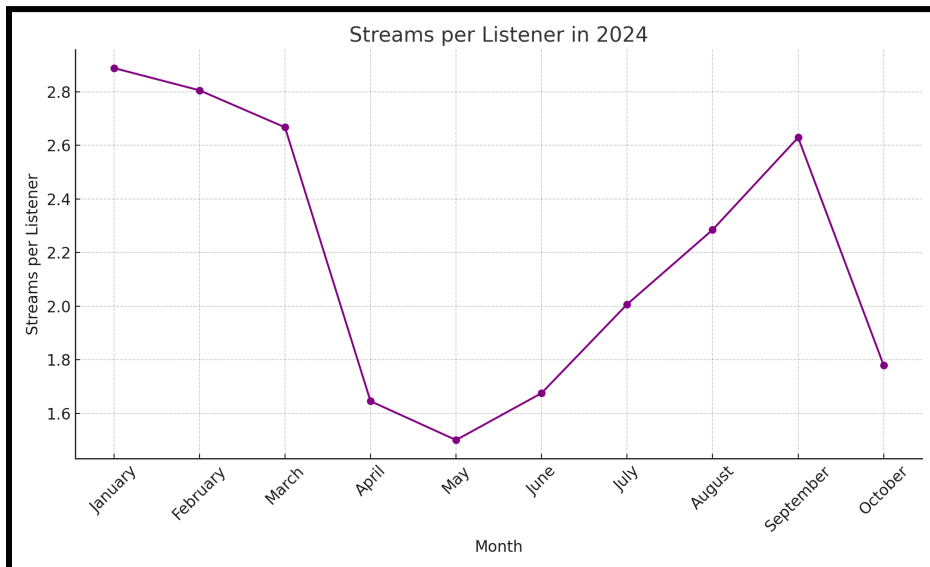


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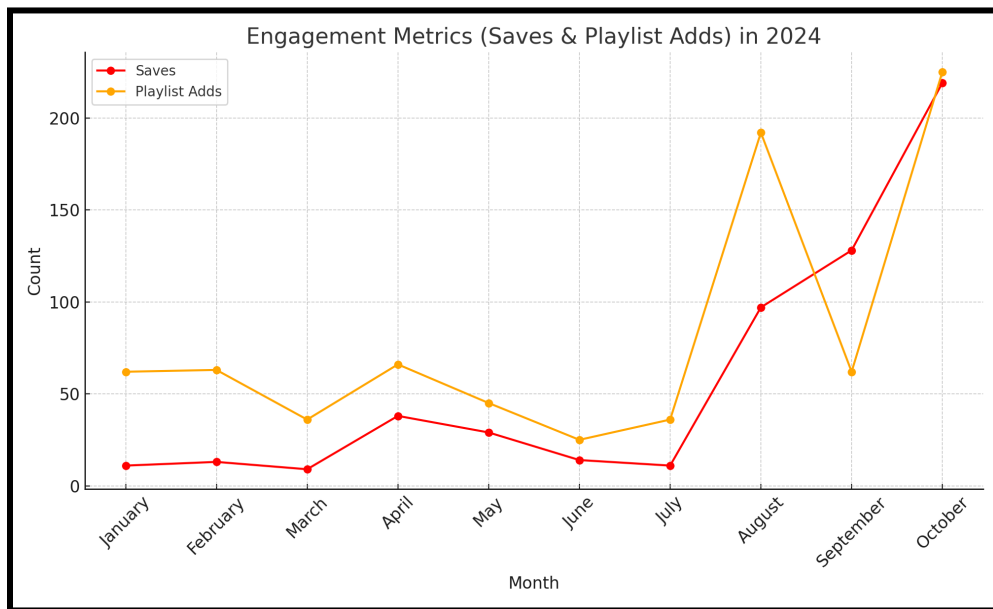


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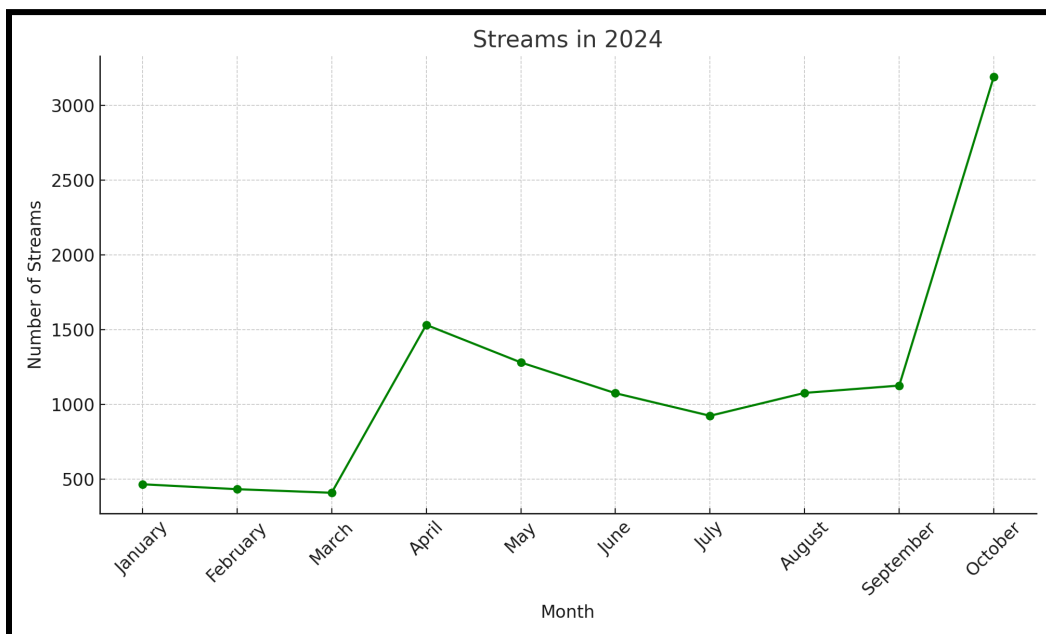


Fig. VII — Aslin Spotify Total Streams 2024

List of Terms

Artist Career Plan: A strategic plan outlining an artist's goals, marketing strategies, financial planning, and steps for growing their brand and revenue streams.

Ask-Back Rate: A key indicator of an artist's performance success, measured by how often venues invite the artist back to perform. A high ask-back rate means the artist made a strong impression.

Booking Inquiry: A process by which an artist or their manager contacts venues or event organizers to secure a performance slot, often including an electronic press kit (EPK) with details about the artist.

DIY (Do-It-Yourself) Artist: An independent musician who manages their career without the backing of a major record label. DIY artists handle multiple roles such as songwriting, producing, marketing, and business management.

Door-Split: A financial arrangement in which ticket sales revenue is divided between the artist and the venue. The split is typically based on a percentage of the total door sales.

Draw: Refers to an artist's ability to attract an audience to a performance. A strong draw means the artist has a good reputation or a loyal fanbase that consistently attends their shows.

EP (Extended Play): A musical recording that contains more tracks than a single but is shorter than a full-length album, typically featuring 3-5 tracks.

EPK (Electronic Press Kit): A digital package that showcases an artist's biography, music, performance videos, photos, and media coverage. It is used to promote the artist and secure performance opportunities.

Merchandise Sales: The sale of artist-related products (e.g., t-shirts, posters, CDs) at live shows or online. Merchandise sales are often a significant revenue stream, especially for DIY artists.

Promotion: Marketing efforts designed to raise awareness of an artist's music or performances. This includes social media campaigns, email marketing, and collaborations with influencers or other artists.

Soft Ticket Gig: A performance where the audience is attending primarily for the event itself (such as a festival or fair), rather than for a specific artist.

Streaming: The process of delivering audio or video content over the internet without needing to download it. Popular music streaming platforms include Spotify, Apple Music, and YouTube.

Streaming Royalties: Payments made to artists based on the number of times their music is streamed on digital platforms. Though royalties per stream are small, they can accumulate over time with enough plays.

Sync License (Synchronization License): A legal agreement that allows an artist's music to be used in visual media like TV shows, movies, or commercials. It provides an additional income stream for artists.

Touring: A series of live performances in different cities or regions. Touring helps artists build their fanbase and generate revenue from ticket and merchandise sales.

Venue: The location where live performances take place, ranging from small clubs and cafes to large arenas. Smaller venues are often essential for indie artists starting their careers.

Artist Statement: Aslin

The first time I felt frustration, I was sitting hostage in my mom's Volvo backseat after my sister's soccer game. She was peeling off her sweaty shin guards, going on about a referee's call, as I poked my mom repeatedly to get her attention. See – there was this one song I was addicted to when I was five years old. The song had magic vocals and an insanely danceable beat with the catchiest hook ever:

“Baby Pippin! We’ve been too strong for too long”

My Aunt Dinah had a dog named Pippin at the time and I was convinced that Mary J. Blige wrote her hit song “Be Without You” for my aunt's dog. Every time the family loaded into the car, I would ask to play the “Baby Pippin” song, but nobody understood my five year old request. Exasperated, I prayed that one day I would find that song. It was a frustrating experience feeling like there was this amazing piece of music being withheld from me simply because I did not know the title.

My obsession with music continued into elementary school. I was an avid listener of the Top 40 charts and would track weekly placements for my favorite songs. I bit my fingernails on Sunday morning errands with my mom, waiting to find out if “Airplanes” by B.o.B and Haley Williams would ever beat “California Gurls” by Katy Perry (unfortunately, it never did). I stole my big sister's CDs when she was at soccer practice and forgot to put them back. My sister went to college, leaving behind for me the gift of her room – furthest from my parents – allowing me to “woodchip” (singing loudly or off-pitch) for hours. I sang to karaoke tracks until I became skilled enough at guitar to accompany myself. Initially drawn to love story songs in middle school, I learned the entirety of *Speak Now*, *Fearless* and *Red* by Taylor Swift.

The school I attended in Portland Oregon – Central Catholic High School – built a new state-of-the-art recording studio my freshman year. Despite my academic advisor's best efforts, I filled my class schedule with choir, acting, music production, and live performance classes. I built a mentorship with my high school music teacher, Mr. McLean, who taught every music class the high school offered. He was also the choir director, band director and theater band director — a very busy man — and during the few free moments he had, would share with me how to produce and distribute my own original music.

With special permission from Central Catholic High School, Mr. McLean allowed me to create my own upper-division music production class after I had exhausted all the others. I was the only student registered, spending the class period alone in the studio, recording and producing my original songs. I was inspired by indie rock singer-songwriters like Lindsay Jordan of “Snail Mail” and Sophie Allison of “Soccer Mommy,” who both wrote beautiful albums about the growing pains of adolescence. My first short-form album, or “EP,” *Secondary* was released in June of 2019 and to this day, is the only album I produced entirely on my own. For context, in 2022 Stacy L. Smith and the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative reported women producers like me makeup a mere 3.4% of industry producers.

In 2019 I was accepted to New York University’s music business program and moved across the country. I studied vocals under renowned singer, songwriter, and voiceover artist Janice Pendarvis who had been on tour and sang background vocals for numerous popular recording artists such as Sting, David Bowie, Steely Dan and The Rolling Stones. In the January of my freshman year, I was hired by an indie music blog to report on concerts happening in Brooklyn and Manhattan. I got free concert tickets and a press pass to each show. I was receiving great feedback on my articles and building a music network. Then March 2020 came, and

subsequently, the music industry went silent. COVID-19 left me without a job, without concerts to report on, and with a sinking feeling in my gut about the live music industry as a whole.

The isolation of the pandemic was hard to navigate as a college student living across the country from my friends and family. I turned my anxieties over to making music, finding friends and collaborators I could work with safely. My second EP, *The Sauvie Island Project* was recorded in New York City during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic with producer and friend Jackson Resnick in 2021. The two original songs included, “Perfume” and “Slow Rush” are inspired by living on Sauvie Island, featuring sounds like native Oregon birds and windchimes from outside my childhood bedroom window. The release of *The Sauvie Island Project* was my first attempt to apply the music business tactics I was learning at NYU to my own music, including working with a collaborator/producer. I pitched my songs to playlists and curated an online presence to accompany my music including an Instagram and personal website (www.aslinartist.com). Standout single “Perfume” was featured on multiple college radio stations and the release was covered by a handful of indie music blogs.

For a number of reasons, NYU was not the right college for me. COVID-19 restrictions were slowly lifting, but post-pandemic New York City felt too urban, stressful, and expensive to make music in. After researching more affordable school options for a music business degree (with access to nature), I settled on one: Middle Tennessee State University. After an extended weekend trip to visit the MTSU campus, I made the decision to transfer from NYU and packed up my Manhattan shoebox apartment on 2nd Avenue alone. My friend Elena watched my boxes on the street for me as I made trips up and down three flights of stairs with everything I owned until the rented Nissan Armada was packed and it was time to drive to Tennessee. Elena later became the first member of my artist team, ironically, my tour manager.

Middle Tennessee State University had an amazing music community, but it also had trees, something I was desperately missing in Manhattan. I got a job at the outdoor recreation center on campus, signed with the campus record label “Match Records” and released the single “little white pills” in 2022. I was excited to build a network of friends who were musicians or were involved in the music community on campus. In the spring of 2023, an executive of Match Records and on the board of Student Affairs pulled me aside on campus to tell me I needed to apply to be the student opener for Middle Tennessee State University's Signature Spring Concert. She could not tell me who the opener was rumored to be, but assured me I should apply.

I got the call that I was chosen as the student opener for Phoebe Bridgers three days before the Signature Spring Concert on April 26th. My mouth dropped on the phone – I could not believe I was opening for one of my musical inspirations. The band I had pieced together from musician friends I knew were still learning my original songs day-of, but we were on cloud 9 as we were performing in front of 3,000 of our peers. Our twenty minute set was the highlight of my five-year long music career, and has remained a source of confidence as I begin working as a musician.

I was listening to Folk music more than ever in 2023. Artists like Gillian Welch, Zach Bryan, Steve Earle, Sierra Farrell and Bob Dylan caught my ear and invaded my playlists. Their styles eventually seeped into my own songwriting, developing narrative story songs with acoustic guitar and intentional harmonies. In the fall of 2023, I attended Americana singer-songwriter Steve Earle’s songwriting camp in upstate New York. Award winning songwriter Earle gave personal songwriting insights and critiqued songs during songwriting sessions. This is where I wrote my original song “wings” about my mom and where the writing

of *Inflight* the album began. *Inflight*, my third EP and the focus for my thesis project, consists of three original compositions with two covers of classic Folk songs.

I sometimes hoped I would get bored of music. On the days when the broke-artist jokes got old and I longed for the simplicity of an office job. During gigs when no one is listening and the pay sucks, a 9-5 work day with a lunch break sounds pretty nice. But for those like me, artists and entrepreneurs, we create because that is what we do naturally – we cannot help but create. Finding how to make a living off of creating is what is difficult. Lucky for us, being a “DIY” (do-it-yourself) artist has never been easier with the internet and access to independent online distributors like Distrokid and CD Baby. Ari Hernstand, writer of *How to Make It in the New Music Business* coined the term “DIY artist,” and reports that in the modern music age, “talent is a given and success must be earned.” My thesis aims to prove how to achieve this success through creating and establishing an Artist Career Plan for myself (Aslin) with the goal of completing a six night, financially successful, tour of the Pacific Northwest.

Introduction

Purpose of Thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to prove the importance of career planning for DIY musicians and to show DIY musicians how to route, book and manage an independent tour. The effectiveness of business plans in new venture businesses has already been proven by scientists Andrew Burke, Stuart Fraser and Francis J. Greene of the Cranfield School of Management and Max Planck Institute of Economics. These scientists ran a study on the Effects of Business Planning on New Venture Performance in 2010 that analyzed the performance of new ventures in

two categories — one group having written a business plan before starting business — and one group of businesses that had not written a business plan. The written conclusion of the study states, “the key result is that ventures with written business plans grew faster than those without written plans, having controlled for selection effects (406).” Based upon this research, implementing a written Artist Career Plan will increase Aslin’s growth as an artist over the course of 2024—the time period of Aslin’s Artist Career Plan. Assuming a DIY artist’s business is comparable to that of the small businesses surveyed in Burke, Fraser and Greene’s study, writing a business plan, or Artist Career Plan, for Aslin will increase her growth during the *Inflight* release cycle.

As previously proven, goal setting is a vital part of creating any business. A brand as a musician is a business and creative people cannot neglect the importance of goal setting if their aspirations include financial or commercial success. In fact, music blogger-journalist, and self proclaimed DIY musician, Ari Hernstand writes in his book *How to Make It in the New Music Business* that DIY musicians should be setting goals at the infancy of their career for 1 year, 5 years, 10 years and 26 years in the future (20). He assures these goals can change over time, but that the importance is writing them down and taking action steps forward. These goals guide a musician's career and are implemented into the music industry’s equivalent of a business plan for an emerging artist: the Artist Career Plan (Allen, Paul 183). In order to become a successful artist and properly manage a successful artist, these goals should be understood by both the manager and the artist. Then, in an evaluation of the artist and their career goals, a manager comes to understand how to maximize each revenue stream of the music industry for the particular artist and their set of strengths. This document, understood and created by both the manager and artist

is called the “Artist Career Plan” and is an integral part of the planning stage in any emerging artist’s career.

While books by working musicians like *How to Make It in the New Music Business* by Ari Hernstand and Paul Allen’s *Artist Management* were great theoretical guides for how to plan and manage a DIY career, I had never tried my hand at creating and implementing an Artist Career Plan for myself and my music. The primary goal of Aslin’s first EP *Secondary* was to develop recording and production skills while learning how to independently distribute an EP. The primary goal for releasing *The Sauvie Island Project* was to create an online presence for my music. I was concerned with building a community of fans through establishing a personal website and business Instagram for Aslin music news and updates. The knowledge I gained from one release cycle compounded into more knowledge the next release cycle and so on. For my third EP *Inflight*, utilizing the formal business framework of Paul Allen’s Artist Career Plan, my primary goal will be completing a local tour through the Pacific Northwest in August of 2024. This thesis – to create a tour for Aslin to promote the newest album *Inflight* – will give readers a hands-on look at the entire process of a DIY artist’s release cycle and tour, opening opportunities for replication in different genres or geographic locations.

History of the Industry

Before diving into the importance of business planning for DIY musicians, it's crucial to understand the historical context of the recorded music industry and how it has shaped the bargaining power of all artists, especially those working independently like DIYs. Historically, record labels held a disproportionate amount of control over the careers of musicians. In the early to mid-20th century, musicians depended almost entirely on major labels for recording, distribution, and promotion. The labels were gatekeepers, and artists typically signed contracts

that gave away the majority of their creative and financial control in exchange for exposure and marketing power.

The advent of recorded music in the late 19th century marked the beginning of this power imbalance. As record labels grew in influence, particularly during the 1950s and 1960s, artists were often locked into restrictive contracts that allowed labels to claim ownership of master recordings, dictate release schedules, and control royalty payments. According to *Hit Men: Power Brokers and Fast Money Inside the Music Business* by Fredric Dannen, the rise of large music corporations in the 1970s and 1980s further entrenched this system, with labels often prioritizing profit over the artistic integrity or financial well-being of musicians (91-94). Until the twenty-first century, artists' ability to “do-it-themselves” were simply limited due to the lack of industry resources and access to self-distribution methods.

Indeed, the digital age brought significant changes to the industry. With the rise of the internet, streaming platforms, and digital distribution services in the early aughts, musicians gained unprecedented access to tools that allowed them to produce, distribute, and market their music independently. According to David Hesmondhalgh in *The Cultural Industries*, the rise of the DIY (Do-It-Yourself) artist movement empowered musicians to bypass traditional gatekeepers of the music industry—like major record labels—but also required them to take on roles that were once handled by record labels, including business management, marketing, and distribution (230-233). These roles have since become easier to fill independently with new found access to digital technologies like portable laptops, online distribution services and the internet as a whole.

As a result, modern DIY musicians now have more freedom and control over their careers, but this comes with the added responsibility of running their artistic ventures as businesses. Without the backing of a traditional label, DIY artists must navigate the complex music industry landscape independently, taking important time and effort away from making music. This is where the importance of business planning becomes crucial. DIY musicians of today must think like entrepreneurs, setting clear goals and strategies to grow their careers. This evolution in the music industry underscores why modern musicians, even those just starting out, cannot neglect the importance of goal setting and business planning if they hope to achieve long-term success.

Research

State of the Industry

The music industry's 100-year financial ecosystem has been built around three primary sources of revenue: music publishing, live performances, and recorded music. Each of these segments plays a crucial role in sustaining the industry's health and evolution, with significant implications for both established and DIY musicians. Notably, music industry researcher Mark Mulligan predicts substantial growth in the next five years for musicians who successfully cultivate multiple revenue streams in his year end review of the music industry (Mulligan). This essay examines these three pillars in detail, analyzing their recent trends and their specific impact on DIY artists.

Music Publishing

Music publishing revenue comes from the ownership and exploitation of copyrights in musical compositions. An important distinction about music publishing is that these royalties are

only paid to songwriters, not artists. Songwriters write the written composition, melody and lyrics to the song. Whether or not a songwriter ends up recording their own music, they are entitled to music publishing royalties—even if the song is recorded and released by another artist. Key sources include public performance royalties, mechanical royalties from album and single sales, and synchronization licenses for TV, film, and advertisements (e.g., music licensed for TV shows, films, or commercials). For DIY musicians, these royalties are essential, as they provide passive income streams even if an artist isn't constantly touring or releasing new music. A Performance Rights Organization (PRO), such as ASCAP, BMI, or SESAC, plays a pivotal role by collecting performance royalties on behalf of songwriters whenever their music is played publicly (e.g., on radio, TV, or live venues). This is a vital revenue stream, especially for DIY musicians who may not have the resources to chase down these payments themselves.

For DIY artists that write their own music, music publishing royalties are an important revenue to keep track of. With the rise of streaming platforms, music publishing has evolved dramatically. In 2023, U.S. music publishing revenues grew by 10.7%, reaching \$6.2 billion, driven by the growth in paid streaming subscriptions (Waddell). This is a positive trend for DIY artists who can register their works with a PRO and collect songwriter royalties from their music on platforms like Spotify, Apple Music, and YouTube. However, there are challenges. Bundled services like Spotify's audiobooks, which have drawn criticism from the National Music Publishers' Association (NMPA), threaten to reduce the revenue portion allocated to music, which could mean a \$150 million loss in songwriter royalties (Music Business Worldwide). For DIY musicians relying heavily on platforms like Spotify, any reduction in revenue could significantly impact their financial sustainability, making it crucial to diversify revenue streams within music publishing.

Live Performances

Live performances—concerts, festivals, and tours—are not only a way for artists to engage with fans but also one of the most direct and lucrative revenue streams. For DIY musicians, live shows can be a key source of income, offering opportunities to build a fanbase in an intimate setting, sell merchandise, and even attract attention from industry professionals that may be interested in working with them. After the global pandemic halted live performance events in 2020-2021, 2022-2023 saw an explosive recovery in the live music sector. Pollstar's 2023 Year-End Report revealed the live music industry generated \$9.17 billion from the top 100 tours alone (Waddell) and halfway through 2024, the music industry continues to grow (Allen, *Pollstar*).

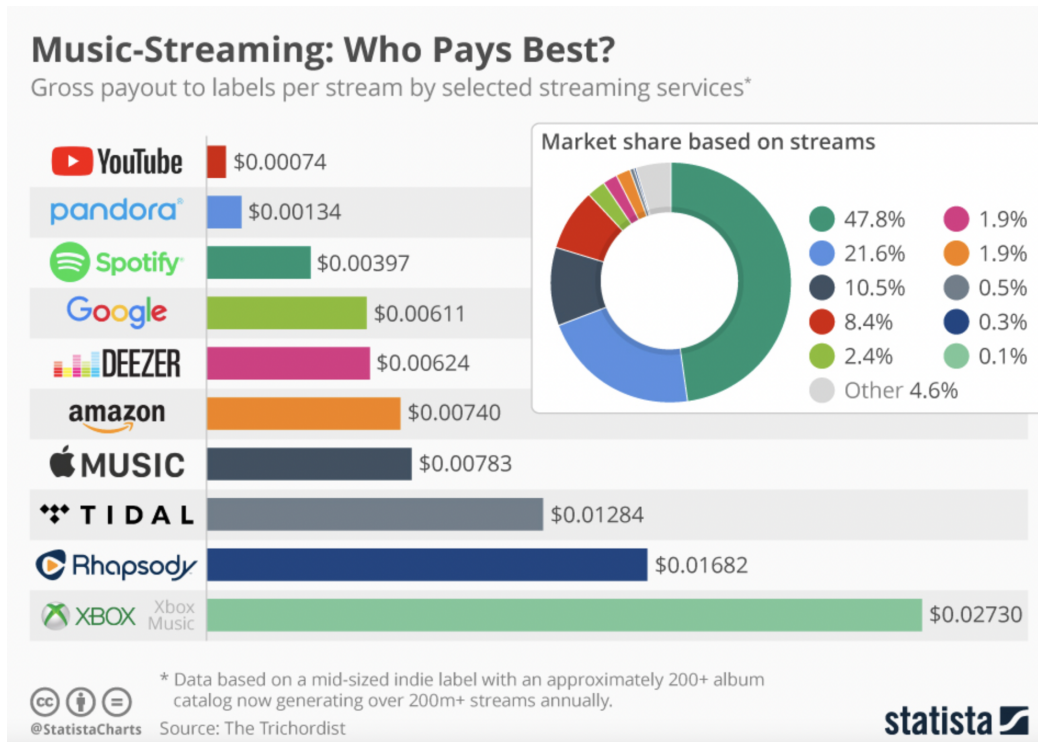
This surge in live performance revenues underscores the public's hunger for live experiences, and it signals that even smaller, independent artists can benefit by performing at local venues or festivals. DIY musicians often rely on live shows to drive direct income, given the lower per-stream payout rates from streaming platforms. The success of artists like Taylor Swift and Beyoncé in 2023 highlights how live performances can transform an artist's career, but it also emphasizes the potential for emerging musicians to carve out a sustainable career through consistent gigging and grassroots touring. For DIY artists, working with a PRO ensures that they receive royalties when their songs are performed in live settings, even when playing smaller venues, which can add another revenue layer to their performance income.

Recorded Music

Music publishing revenue, as previously discussed, is made on the original composition (or written melody, chords and lyrics). Recorded music revenue is made from the sound recording of the original song, a right negotiated in major label records deals that typically gives

ownership of the sound recording to the label. Recorded music revenue encompasses any money made on digital streaming, physical sales, and synchronization deals, and it is a major revenue source for these labels. However, for DIY artists who own their own sound recordings, they have full financial control over their own music unlike their major label counterparts. The internet and the streaming era has fundamentally transformed how DIY musicians reach their audiences and the ways in which they can leverage the ownership of their own master recordings to increase their recorded music revenue earnings.

In 2023, the U.S. recorded music revenue grew by 8%, totaling \$17.1 billion, driven predominantly by digital streaming services (RIAA). For DIY artists, this growth presents both opportunities and challenges. While streaming allows for global reach, it also comes with low per-stream payouts. In 2023, Spotify's per-stream payout rate averaged between \$0.003 to \$0.005, which means a DIY musician would need millions of streams to generate significant revenue from streaming alone (Dylan Smith). While streaming platforms like Spotify dominate recorded music revenue, it's critical for DIY musicians to understand the importance of diversifying income streams within this category. Physical formats, particularly vinyl, have seen a resurgence, contributing 18% to total recorded music revenue. This has opened opportunities for DIY artists to sell limited-edition vinyl or merchandise bundles, which can create a sense of exclusivity and offer a higher profit margin compared to digital streaming (Smith).



The Mechanical Licensing Collective and SoundExchange all also play an important role in recorded music by collecting royalties for music used for streaming and terrestrial radio. SoundExchange collects and distributes digital performance royalties to performers and sound recording owners for non-interactive streaming. In contrast, the Mechanical Licensing Collective (MLC) handles mechanical royalties, paying songwriters and publishers for the reproduction and distribution of musical compositions on interactive streaming platforms like Spotify.

Conclusion

Understanding and maximizing the three primary revenue streams of the music industry—music publishing, live performances, and recorded music—provides a critical income advantage for both established and DIY musicians. Music publishing benefits DIY artists through PROs, which help collect royalties from public performances and streaming platforms, though challenges like bundled services may impact future earnings (Music Business

Worldwide). Live performances have rebounded strongly in 2023, presenting DIY musicians who are also songwriters with the chance to earn direct revenue while building fan engagement, with PROs ensuring they are compensated when their songs are performed live. Recorded music sales continue to thrive, but DIY artists must navigate low per-stream payouts, making it crucial to diversify income sources through physical sales, merchandise, and sync deals (Dylan Smith). As these revenue streams evolve, DIY musicians must continue to adapt to the changing industry landscape, ensuring they capture revenue from all available sources, including their partnerships with PROs like BMI, SESAC or ASCAP.

Artists Examples of The Three Revenue Streams

For further clarification, the three primary revenue streams discussed previously—music publishing, live performances, and recorded music—can be applied to musicians Carole King, James Brown, and Aretha Franklin. Each dominated differing areas of the music industry, making a majority of their profits through primarily one revenue stream over the course of their individual careers. These artists' careers not only reflect the music business of the twentieth century, but also give the reader context for how an artists' goals and strengths as an artist shape their business dealings in the music industry. Throughout the twenty-first century, with the rise of digital innovations and the internet as a whole, musical artists have created fluidity between these previously rigid economic roles. These artists (King, Brown, Franklin) were major label artists signed to contracts with labels, thereby limiting some of their control over their music in exchange for mass exposure—the only real choice artists had at the time. DIY artists are now expected to make the most of all economic revenue streams (music publishing, live performance and recorded music), unlike their previous historical, musical counterparts King, Franklin and Brown.

Music Publishing: Carole King

Carole King is a legendary songwriter whose career began in the early 1960s in New York City's Tin Pan Alley, where she worked alongside her then-husband Gerry Goffin. Together, they wrote numerous hits that became essential to the pop canon, including "Will You Love Me Tomorrow" and "The Loco-Motion" (Knight). At that time, music publishing was focused on songwriting royalties, particularly for other artists performing these works, as recorded music technologies were not yet widely adopted. Radio eventually became a marketing tool to sell physical records as King was becoming considered a hitmaker writing songs for other artists to record. As King transitioned to recording her own songs, most notably with her 1971 album *Tapestry*, she became both the songwriter and performer, increasing her share of royalties. *Tapestry* generated significant publishing revenue, not only through record sales but also through covers and licensing deals. To this day, King's songwriting catalog remains a source of ongoing income, as her songs continue to be featured in films, commercials, and performed by other artists. Carole King's original song "Where you Lead, I Will Follow" is often recognized as the theme song for the early aughts *Gilmore Girls* TV show (King) providing Ms. King with ongoing royalty checks for the twenty-first century. King's business was primarily successful in music publishing and licensing, which aligns with King's initial creative strengths as a songwriter.

Live Performances: James Brown

James Brown, known as the "Godfather of Soul," exemplified the power of live performances as a major revenue stream. His tireless touring schedule and high-energy performances were a hallmark of his career. Brown's live shows were so popular that they

became a substantial part of his income. Unlike recorded music, where revenue depends on sales and nowadays, streaming, live performances generate immediate revenue through ticket sales, merchandise, and even sponsorships. Brown's performances, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, were not just concerts but cultural events, drawing massive crowds and solidifying his reputation as a performer (McBride 170-190). His ability to sell out venues across the U.S. and internationally demonstrates the financial potential of live performances for artists. Brown had success on the road, but struggled with the intense pressure to continue performing, affecting his relationship to himself and those closest to him (McBride 102-104). Unfortunately, touring is taxing on artists' personal resources such as time and consistency in a schedule.

Recorded Music: Aretha Franklin

Aretha Franklin, the "Queen of Soul," serves as a prime example of how recorded music creates long-term revenue streams. Franklin's career spanned six decades, and her recordings, especially hits like "Respect" and "Natural Woman," continue to generate income through sales, streaming, and licensing. Her recorded catalog, which includes over 75 million records sold globally, remains a vital source of income for her estate even after her passing in 2018. However, Franklin's fear of flying, which developed after a traumatic flight experience in 1984, made it difficult for her to tour extensively, limiting her revenue from live performances (David Ritz 310-314). Instead, Franklin focused on recording and performing closer to home, using her studio work to maintain her career and income. Despite her limited touring, her recorded music continues to thrive through digital sales and streams even into the twenty-first century.

Conclusion

Through the careers of King, Brown, and Franklin, it becomes evident how different revenue streams play distinct roles in supporting an artist. Carole King's songwriting provides long-term royalties through publishing, while James Brown capitalized on live performances as a direct source of income while he was able to physically perform. Meanwhile, Aretha Franklin's legacy as a recording artist continues to generate income long after her death, underscoring the lasting power of recorded music. Despite Franklin's limited touring due to her aviophobia, her focus on recorded music allowed her to remain financially successful and influential as an artist, achieving success in her own way. The careers of Carole King, James Brown, and Aretha Franklin showcase the importance of music publishing, live performances, and recorded music as essential revenue streams in the music industry. Each artist leveraged these streams in unique ways, ensuring their financial success and lasting influence on the industry.

While the music industry fluctuates, the revenue streams (music publishing, live performances and recorded music) themselves have remained constant throughout the industry's relatively short history. DIY artists are wise to know how revenue works in the music business and what their goals and strengths are in order to guide their career based on their personal goals. Why waste time getting good at performing live if being a songwriter for another artist is an artist's ideal goal? Or why waste money recording a million demos if the artist wants to be known as a stellar live act?

State of Touring

In the current music industry landscape, live performances and touring play a critical role in revenue generation and career sustainability for musicians. Touring, while long recognized as a vital component of an artist's career, has taken on heightened importance in a post-pandemic

music industry. For DIY musicians, in particular, touring offers not only financial benefits but also opportunities to build a fanbase and establish a deeper connection with their audience by engaging with fans in person.

The Economic Importance of Touring

Touring and live performances have consistently been one of the most lucrative aspects of the music industry in recent years. According to Pollstar's 2024 Mid-Year Report, the live music industry generated over \$3 billion in revenue despite signs of market cooling post-pandemic (Allen, “Pollstar 2024 Mid-Year Report”). The ability to tour extensively and consistently is often a key differentiator between commercial success and artistic stagnation, especially for DIY musicians. Festivals, small venue performances and “soft-ticket gigs” provide emerging artists with platforms that significantly enhance their visibility and overall reach. For artists operating outside the traditional record label system, live performances are often a primary income stream at the beginning of their careers. Small venues play an integral role in creating accessible spaces for independent musicians to perform and grow their audiences. These venues allow artists to engage directly with fans, building strong, localized support that often translates into digital streams and merchandise sales.

The Symbiosis Between Touring and Digital Streaming

Live performances can also drive digital engagement, a concept supported by research on the relationship between live shows and streaming behaviors. Concert attendees are often more inclined to stream an artist’s music both before and after attending a live show, illustrating the mutually reinforcing relationship between live music and digital consumption. This relationship is further emphasized by writer Ari Herstand, who notes that touring acts as a powerful

promotional tool for DIY musicians, helping to boost streams on platforms like Spotify and Apple Music (305). These increased streams generate more revenue for artists through digital royalties, although the payouts are typically small. Furthermore, research by industry reporter Gary Peoples demonstrates that well-executed tours often lead to substantial increases in streaming numbers, enabling musicians to expand their reach beyond the physical venue and into the digital sphere, thereby growing their fanbase and financial opportunities.

Touring Challenges for DIY Musicians

Touring presents significant challenges for independent and DIY musicians, who often lack the financial resources and infrastructure provided by major labels. According to *Exposure's* “2023 Music Industry Report,” rising expenses across multiple sectors of the touring ecosystem—including fuel prices, accommodation costs, and the need for marketing—have placed increasing financial strain on independent musicians. These costs can be prohibitive, particularly for artists who are just starting out or who do not have the financial backing of established record labels. The necessity to hire personnel or rent equipment can further stretch already limited budgets, potentially gatekeeping a band or solo act from touring.

The post-pandemic era has only exacerbated these challenges. According to the industry news blog *Luminate's* “Midyear Music Industry Report 2024,” inflation and economic uncertainty have driven up operational costs, such as venue rental fees and ticketing surcharges. In many cases, ticket prices have risen to cover these additional expenses, which can negatively impact fan attendance, particularly for DIY musicians who rely on smaller, more intimate venues. Additionally, rising costs in promotion and marketing are making it harder for independent artists to attract audiences to live shows without substantial investment in digital

advertising and grassroots fan engagement as noted by Herstand (306). Independent musicians must often take on these tasks themselves or with a small team, further stretching their resources and time.

Despite these financial barriers, touring also can be an indispensable tool for DIY artists. Unlike traditional revenue streams such as record sales or digital royalties, touring allows musicians to maintain greater control over their income and creative direction. Live performances enable artists to connect with fans in a more personal and immediate way, fostering loyalty and creating opportunities for direct merchandise sales and social media engagement. For many DIY musicians, touring is not just a financial necessity but a critical means of sustaining and growing their fanbase, often repeating “legs” of certain cities in regional areas to remain top-of-the-brain for listeners.

The intimate nature of small venues, where many independent artists perform, creates a direct and authentic fan experience that can be pivotal in building a loyal following. The *Luminate* “Midyear Report 2024” highlights the growing importance of small to midsize venues as crucial spaces for DIY musicians, where the fan-artist relationship is cultivated, and audiences are more likely to engage with the artist online, including streaming platforms like Spotify and Apple Music. In turn, this engagement can boost digital streaming numbers, which generates additional income through royalties and increases an artist’s visibility in algorithm-driven platforms. While the financial challenges of touring are considerable, the potential rewards—both financial and relational—make it a potentially vital strategy for DIY musicians to grow playing live. Touring allows these artists to retain control over their careers, grow their audiences at the grassroots level, and ultimately, create sustainable music ventures despite operating outside the major label system.

Conclusion

Touring remains an essential component of the music business, particularly for DIY musicians who use live performances to generate revenue, increase streaming numbers, and build their fanbase. Despite the logistical and financial challenges of touring, the benefits in terms of exposure, engagement, and income make it a crucial part of the modern music industry. By navigating the complexities of the live performance landscape, DIY musicians can effectively grow their careers, leveraging both in-person and digital opportunities for growth.

Methodology

Establishing an Artist Career Plan

The Artist Career Plan, like a business plan for a new business start up, is an integral part of building a road map for the musical artist's success. In his textbook *Artist Management*, Paul Allen describes the necessary components in the Artist Career Plan that an artist and manager would discuss in order to fulfill a 2-5 year contract. As previously stated, music-journalist Ari Herstand would recommend this process be repeated throughout the artist's career for each release cycle and during any major career shifts. The sections for the Artist Career Plan include: about the artist, evaluation of the artist, evaluation of the manager, establishment of goals and timelines, a marketing plan, a business plan and a financial plan. Normally sections would be completed by the artist and manager individually corresponding to their roles while outlining the specifications of their working relationship. Because I am an unsigned artist representing myself, I will be both the manager and artist in the section descriptions below. This will be where I differentiate my academic strengths and weaknesses as a manager from my creative or artistic

strengths and weaknesses. These sections will help me to lay a foundational plan for the year built towards the goal of a regional tour of the Pacific Northwest.

Example of Paul Allen's Artist Career Plan

I. About the artist

Musical Genre

Biography

Talents

Live Performance Experience

II. Evaluation of the artist

Strengths and weaknesses of the artist

Strengths

Weaknesses

Opportunities and threats

Opportunities

Threats

Action points based on this evaluation

III. Evaluation of the manager

Strengths and weaknesses of the manager

Strengths

Weaknesses

Opportunities and threats

Opportunities

Threats

Conflicts of interest

IV. Establishment of goals and timelines

Major goals for the artist (and sample strategies and tactics to achieve them)

Major goal

Supporting goals

Timeline for each goal

V. Development of the Marketing Plan

1. The state of the industry
2. The target market for the artist
3. Detailed plans to reach the target music consumer

VI. Business framework

Form of the business

Personnel requirements

Insurance

Other

BMI, other union memberships

VII. The financial plan

A personal budget for the artist

Monthly Expenses

Yearly Expenses

Budget for career plan

Songwriting costs

Recording costs

Marketing costs

Touring costs

Production costs

Camp sites

Car rental

Personnel

Internet subscription cost

Total cost for career plan

(End of “Example Artist Career Plan”)

Researching and Booking Venues for a DIY Tour

The methodology for researching and booking venues for an independent tour is a crucial step in planning a successful DIY music tour. This section outlines a step-by-step process for identifying appropriate venues, initiating contact, and securing bookings, drawing from both practical experience and research using textbooks and Ari Herstand’s third edition of *How to Make It in the New Music Business*.

1. Venue Research

The first step in booking a tour is researching potential venues in the cities chosen regionally. Independent artists should prioritize markets and venues that cater to their genre, audience size, and experience level. DIY artists have a priority to keep costs low on lodging and transportation (Walfish, *Xposure*), making an independent tour through the artist’s hometown a great place to start. To conduct this research:

Online Databases and Resources: Utilize online platforms such as *Indie on the Move* and *Undiscovered Music Network*, which offer extensive venue directories categorized by city, genre, and capacity. These platforms often include contact information, past performance reviews, and details on how to submit booking inquiries. Before starting research, decide on what capacity is best for the artist's draw, what radius the artist is willing to play and the kinds of venues that best suit the artist's genre.

Social Media and Artist Networks: Independent artists can also research venues by networking with other musicians in their genre. Platforms like Instagram and Facebook are valuable for discovering where similar artists have performed. By searching hashtags related to a city or genre (e.g., #PortlandLiveMusic), artists can find grassroots venues like Portland's Mississippi Studios or Doug Fir Lounge that host indie or folk music.

Local Music Blogs and Event Listings: Blogs and online publications like *Willamette Week* or *Portland Mercury* regularly feature venue reviews and upcoming events. These are useful for discovering hidden gem venues that might not appear in national databases.

2. Contacting Venues

Once potential venues are identified, the next step is reaching out. This process typically involves sending a booking inquiry or EPK (Electronic Press Kit) to the venue's booking manager. The EPK should include:

Artist Bio: A brief introduction of yourself as an artist, including genre, past performance highlights, and target audience.

Press Kit: Links to your music (Spotify, YouTube), recent performances, and relevant press coverage. Include a high-quality promo photo.

Tour Dates: Clearly state the desired date or date range for the performance, including flexibility for other available dates.

Fanbase Information: Provide data on existing audiences in the city or region. Platforms like Spotify for Artists offer insights into where listeners are based, which can be a key selling point when booking a venue.

Personalizing the email to each venue by referencing their past events or artists of similar style can increase the chances of securing a booking. Templates can be useful but should be adapted to each venue's specific requirements.

3. Negotiating and Securing Dates

After establishing contact, venues will typically respond with their availability and booking terms. Some key points to negotiate include:

Payment Structure: Independent artists should clarify how they will be compensated, whether through a flat fee, a percentage of ticket sales, or a guarantee (a minimum payment regardless of attendance). Independent venues often work on a door-split model where artists receive a percentage of ticket sales after expenses are deducted.

Technical Requirements: Confirming technical requirements such as sound systems, stage setup, and lighting is essential. Some venues will provide in-house sound engineers, while others may require artists to bring their own equipment.

Promotion Responsibilities: Discuss who is responsible for promoting the show. In many cases, independent artists must handle their own marketing, which can include creating posters, running social media ads, and leveraging email lists .

4. Logistics and Follow-Up

Once the date is secured, it's crucial to stay in touch with the venue leading up to the event:

Confirming Details: Confirm set times, load-in schedules, and any other logistical details a few weeks before the show. This ensures smooth coordination on the day of the event.

Promotion Coordination: Coordinate with the venue on promotional efforts. Some venues may include your event in their online listings or social media platforms, but independent artists should also take ownership of this process by creating engaging social media content, reaching out to local press, and connecting with local fan groups.

Aslin's Artist Career Plan for 2024 is geared towards promoting the regional tour of *Inflight* in the Pacific Northwest. I began first by filtering the search engines used like "Undiscovered Music Network" with capacity limits—or how many people the venue can legally have inside during a performance. I am aware that my "draw," or amount of people I know will come see me perform, is 30 people. Because this is a low "draw" for a venue to agree to, I had a few options: add other artists to the show bill in order to increase the draw by utilizing their fanbase, or seek out what are called "soft ticket" gigs—performances at things like festivals where live music is not the primary reason to come to an event. I also wanted there to be at least 5,000 or more people in the towns I was looking to play in.

The markets chosen in the Pacific Northwest that met these criteria initially were: Medford/Ashland, Eugene, Salem, Portland, Southwest WA, Olympia, and Seattle. For each market, I found 5-7 venues in each location on the Undiscovered Music Network website – an online database of venues that accept booking requests for DIY musicians – and reached out in April of 2024 to schedule dates in August 2024 for the *Inflight* tour. Each email booking request included an EPK, or Electronic Press Kit, for the venues to review along with a personalized message and my contact information in case they wanted to move forward in booking. The following venues responded to hire me for the following dates, with various forms of payment, some hard and some soft ticket gigs:

Tour dates

August 18th – Aslin at the Tigardville Bar and Grill (Tigard, OR) from 12-3pm

August 21st – Aslin at the Green House Yellow Door (St. Helens, OR) from 6-7pm

August 22nd – Aslin with Cecilia Marie at Rhythms Coffee (Olympia, WA) from 7-9pm

August 23rd – Aslin with The Suitcase Ranchers at Artichoke Listening Room
(Portland, OR) from 7-9pm

August 24th – Aslin at the Southwest Washington Garlic Festival (Centralia, WA) from
2:30-3:30pm

August 25th – Aslin at Home! Garden Party (Sauvie Island, OR) from 6-7pm

Thesis

Thesis Address

Aslin's Artist Career Plan for 2024 serves as a primary example of a DIY artist release cycle, acting as one's own manager. This project combines academic knowledge of the music business and music marketing with personal experiences as a working singer-songwriter. When implemented, Aslin's Artist Career plan for 2024 resulted in a week-long tour of the Pacific Northwest that achieved the goal of recouping the initial cost of recording the EP *Inflight*. This project explores challenges directly facing DIY artists in 2024, necessary tools and skills required for DIY artists to succeed and implications for other DIY artists to replicate the *Inflight* EP and tour cycle in the future.

Indicators of Success Data

Below is data gathered on Aslin's *Inflight* tour performance in terms of sales, attendance and the amount of repeat performance requests from venues. In Aslin's Artist Career Plan, the indicators of success for *Inflight*'s release are:

- Gross revenue sales of tour = \$500 to cover cost of recordings
- Average \$25 merchandise sale per show on tour
- 50% "Ask Backs"
- Positive growth in Spotify listeners in the Pacific Northwest

Gig Data					
Date	Venue	Market	Showtime	Set Length	Audience Members

8/18/24	Tigardville Bar and Grill	Salem	12pm-3pm	3 hours	15
8/21/24	Greenhouse Yellow Door	St. Helen's	7pm-7:45pm	45 minutes	40
8/22/24	Rhythms Coffee	Olympia	7pm-9:30pm	50 minutes	35
8/23/24	The Artichoke	Portland	7pm-9pm	40 minutes	30
8/24/24	SW Washington Garlic Fest	SW Washington	2:30-3:30	55 minutes	120
8/25/24	18225 NW Sauvie Island	Sauvie Island	7pm-7:30pm	30 minutes	15

Tour Revenue						
Date	Performance Fee	Cut of Tickets Sold	Tips	Merch sold	Ask Backs (y/n)	Total Gig Revenue
8/18/24	\$250	\$0	\$62	\$28	yes	\$340
8/21/24	\$25	\$0	\$20	\$0	yes	\$45
8/22/24	\$0	\$50	\$33	\$28	yes	\$111
8/23/24	\$0	\$150	\$70	\$70	yes	\$290
8/24/24	\$250	\$0	\$10	\$0	no	\$260
8/25/24	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	n/a	\$0
Totals	\$525	\$200	\$195	\$126	5	\$1,046

2024 *Inflight* Tour Insights

This section presents an academic analysis of the data gathered from Aslin's *Inflight* tour in 2024 and her corresponding Spotify streaming numbers. The analysis addresses key success indicators from the tour, such as audience engagement, revenue generation, and the potential impact on digital streaming growth, in line with her artist career objectives.

Audience Engagement and Performance Metrics

The 2024 *Inflight* tour consisted of six performances across different venues in the Pacific Northwest, with audience sizes varying significantly. Attendance ranged from 15 people at smaller shows, such as at Tigardville Bar and Grill, to 120 attendees at the SW Washington Garlic Fest. The discrepancy in audience size provides insight into venue types and their ability to attract attendees. For example, more intimate settings like *The Artichoke* in Portland drew only 30 attendees but generated \$290 in total revenue, suggesting that smaller venues may offer deeper audience engagement that translates into higher per-capita revenue from tips and merchandise sales. This supports existing literature on the value of smaller, more intimate venues for independent artists, which tend to provide better interaction with fans and encourage stronger merchandise sales (Walfish). It also shows that although larger events like the Garlic Fest attract more attendees, they may not necessarily result in higher merchandise sales, potentially due to the distraction of other festival activities, as is often the trade-off in playing soft-ticket gigs.

Financial Performance of the Tour

The total revenue generated from the tour reached \$1,046, with performance fees contributing 50.2% of the total, followed by tips (18.6%), and merchandise sales (12%). The breakdown of revenue illustrates that while performance fees remain a crucial component of financial success for DIY artists, secondary income sources like tips and merchandise sales are significant contributors to overall earnings, especially in smaller, more engaged audiences. Tips are a direct form of support fan to artist which is an important source of income for DIY artists. This aligns with Ari Herstand's emphasis on diversifying revenue streams to sustain independent artists' careers, particularly through merchandise sales and direct-to-audience income generation (399). The tour also achieved a 50% "ask-back" rate, meaning half of the venues expressed interest in hosting Aslin again in the future. This metric is crucial for independent artists seeking

to build long-term relationships with venues, as repeat performances can lead to stronger fan engagement for regular show goers as well as ongoing revenue opportunities when venues ask artists back to play. Oftentimes, an act will be invited back to a venue to play on a bill with another artist looking for an artist to team up with, streamlining the show advancement process and building the careers of artists the venue supports. Moreover, the recouping of *Inflight's* initial recording costs through tour earnings indicates the financial benefit of touring in addition to garnering attention for an up and coming recording project.

Recommendations for Future Tours

Enhancing Merchandise Strategies: Merchandise sales were a significant part of the revenue, particularly at smaller venues. Developing targeted promotions, such as exclusive items available only at shows, could boost sales at larger venues like festivals, where audience members might be more distracted by other activities.

Leveraging Audience Data for Streaming Growth: Given the positive relationship between live performances and Aslin's recorded music growth, promoting recorded music sales like CDs during live shows could lead to increased post-tour sales. Integrating digital call-to-actions during performances, such as QR codes linking to Spotify or exclusive playlists for attendees, could further drive digital engagement.

Focusing on Repeat Engagements: The strong ask-back rate suggests that cultivating long-term relationships with venues could lead to sustainable touring opportunities. Prioritizing venues where audience engagement and merchandise sales were high, such as *The Artichoke*, could optimize both financial returns and audience growth in future tours.

The 2024 *Inflight* tour was a financially successful endeavor, recouping the costs of the EP while also fostering venue relationships and increasing local audience engagement. The combination of live performance and digital promotion offers a solid foundation for future growth. By refining strategies around merchandise sales and leveraging streaming platforms, I can continue to expand Aslin’s career as an independent artist, with a focus on sustainable touring and digital growth.

2022-2024 Aslin Spotify Data

2022 (year): 5.4K streams, 1.5K listeners, 248 hours, 65 countries

2023 (year): 5.5K streams, 1.5K listeners, 245 hours, 64 countries

2024 (Jan-Oct): 13.2K streams, 6,444 listeners

Comparative Analysis

In 2022, the artist had 5.4K streams, increasing slightly to 5.5K streams in 2023. In 2024, Aslin saw substantial growth with a cumulative total of around 13.2K streams from January to October, more than double the previous years, with a positive trend in streams and listeners leading into the final months of 2024. This increase is illustrated with notable peaks in April, August, and October—correlating with the single release, album release, tour, and the Spotify ad campaign (Fig. VII).

In listenership changes, 2022 and 2023 both had 1.5K listeners, suggesting stability in audience size over the previous two years. Throughout 2024, the Spotify monthly listener count fluctuated significantly, peaking in October with 1,793 listeners (Fig. IV). This spike coincided with the Spotify audio ads campaign, which helped draw in more listeners. The streams per

listener in 2022 and 2023 were relatively stable where 2024 saw month-by-month variations. The streams per listener metric ranged from 1.5 to 2.9 throughout 2024 (Fig. V). Notably, August (2.285) and September (2.629) showed increased ratios, indicating replay behavior following the album release and promotional tour.

Saves and Playlist Adds in 2024 indicate higher engagement levels (Fig. VI). The Engagement Metrics Chart shows: August had 97 saves and 192 playlist adds—a probable response to the album release and tour. October improved upon the momentum of the album’s release with 219 saves and 225 playlist adds, reflecting the impact of the Spotify audio ad campaign as well. In 2024, although no country-specific data is provided, the significant increase in streams and engagement metrics suggests greater success in broadening or deepening penetration into key markets. The 6-night tour in August and the album release of *Inflight* drove a substantial increase in streams in August and September, while the Spotify audio ads in October further amplified audience engagement and listener growth (Fig. VI).

2024 was a standout year for Aslin, marked by significant increases in streams and engagement on Spotify. The tour and album release brought an influx of attention, and the Spotify ads in October helped maintain and even grow that momentum. Moving forward, continuing this mix of live promotion and targeted advertising could be key to sustaining and building on this growth.

Conclusion

This thesis illustrates the multifaceted process of developing the start of a career as a DIY artist, blending academic insights and personal experiences. Ideally, the process of this thesis will be repeated frequently throughout the cycle of a year, diversifying geographic locations, venues

and promotional tactics as my career as an artist evolves and I begin to build a local following. Through the creation and implementation of an Artist Career Plan, I have demonstrated the value of goal setting, strategic planning, and the management of multiple revenue streams for an independent musician. The case study of my tour to promote *Inflight* emphasizes the challenges and successes faced by modern DIY musicians in the evolving music industry, where live performance, digital streaming, and music publishing play vital roles in financial sustainability.

This project underscores the critical importance of planning in both creative and business aspects of the music industry. Drawing from established literature and real-world data, I have identified that independent artists must adopt entrepreneurial strategies to navigate an increasingly complex and competitive landscape that the music business has become. Through focused and adaptable planning, musicians can ensure that they capitalize on opportunities across various revenue streams while building strong, lasting relationships with venues and fans. Moreover, this thesis highlights the potential for DIY musicians to achieve success by leveraging newly accessible tools and platforms, rather than through the previously traditional, record label pipeline. The case study of the *Inflight* tour serves as a replicable model for other emerging artists. The analysis of data collected throughout the tour further proves that even with limited resources, independent musicians can create successful and financially viable tours when equipped with a strategic plan.

Building on this analysis, it becomes evident that the future of the music industry for independent artists rests heavily on the principles of entrepreneurship, adaptability, and strategic thinking. The thesis highlights that while the traditional structures of the music industry—dominated by record labels and top-down gatekeepers—may still exist, the tools available today can empower DIY musicians in ways previously unimaginable. By embracing

new technologies and a multifaceted approach that marries creativity with business savvy, independent musicians are able to carve out highly sustainable careers in a highly competitive environment.

One of the key takeaways of this project is the emphasis on the “Artist Career Plan” as a vital roadmap for success for the DIY artist. Much like a business plan in any entrepreneurial venture, this structured approach allows artists to set clear goals with action steps, while providing a framework for continuous reflection, assessment, and growth. The process of setting goals and reflecting on the strategies put in place to achieve these goals is often a missing step for unsigned artists. As demonstrated through the case study of the *Inflight* tour, having such a strategic plan in place enables artists to monitor key performance indicators—such as audience engagement, revenue from different sources, and streaming data—and make informed decisions on how to improve their approach.

The evolving landscape of the music industry places increasing importance on diversified revenue streams. For DIY artists, reliance on any single revenue source is no longer sufficient for long-term sustainability. The rise of digital platforms, the resurgence of live performances post-pandemic, and the expanding market for sync licensing all represent valuable opportunities for independent artists. However, navigating this terrain requires a deep understanding of the different revenue models available and how they intersect. This thesis has showcased how DIY musicians must develop expertise not only in their craft, but in areas like marketing, distribution, and audience analytics in order to maximize their income and impact.

The thesis also delves into the importance of audience engagement and the role it plays in both live performances and digital spaces. As highlighted through the *Inflight* tour, venues with

smaller, more intimate settings provided more opportunities for meaningful interactions with fans, which often translated into higher revenue per capita through tips and merchandise sales. This suggests that DIY musicians should prioritize venues and events that foster deep audience connections, which can lead to more loyal fan bases and better financial outcomes over time. Reflecting on which venues played were most successful can give the DIY artist insights into the types of venues to research and reach out to for booking in the future. At the same time, the tour demonstrated the importance of optimizing digital engagement—whether through streaming platforms, social media, or targeted marketing efforts—to maintain momentum beyond the live performance setting. There is also a growing interdependence notable between live performances and digital streaming. These two areas of revenue have become increasingly symbiotic, as noted by music industry year end reports for 2023 and 2024, live performances often lead to a spike in streaming numbers and social media engagement, which in turn enhances an artist’s visibility and long-term revenue potential. Artists who effectively capitalize on these interactions are more likely to see sustained growth in both physical and digital audiences, further solidifying their position in the industry.

Additionally, this thesis touches on the challenges and limitations faced by DIY musicians, particularly in terms of resources. Touring, for example, remains an essential yet logistically demanding part of a musician’s career. Rising costs of transportation and accommodation pose significant barriers to independent artists, making strategic planning and cost management even more critical. Not to mention, the effects of climate change and global natural disasters also place an uncertainty on live performances. These casualties raise questions about insurance coverage and ticket cancellation policies that could negatively affect financially vulnerable DIY artists. The *Inflight* tour data indicates that while larger festivals or events can

attract greater audience numbers, the intimacy and engagement found in smaller venues often generate higher per-capita earnings through tips and merchandise sales. While acknowledging this may be specific to the *Inflight* tour only, independent artists today must navigate these trade-offs by being selective in venue choice and making cost-effective touring strategies.

Ultimately, this thesis aims to address a larger trend in the music industry: the shift from artist dependency on major labels to an era of artist-driven entrepreneurship. The tools and platforms available to DIY musicians today provide more control over their careers than ever before making a version of musical entrepreneurship possible. However, with this increased control comes the responsibility of managing multiple roles. New knowledge is required of these artists, from business strategist to marketer and live performer, artists nowadays are called to make every decision of their business in order to succeed. Artists with the ability to successfully blend creativity with business savvy, and adapt to the fast-paced, evolving landscape of the industry, will find the most success in this new era of the music business in 2024.

This thesis offers a comprehensive blueprint for DIY musicians looking to navigate the complexities of today's music industry. The lessons learned from Aslin's *Inflight* release cycle and tour provide valuable insights into the practical application of music business principles in a practical, artistic context. By setting clear goals, leveraging diverse revenue streams, and maintaining a focus on audience engagement both live and digitally, DIY artists are able to thrive independently. This model not only serves as a personal achievement but as a replicable guide for other emerging artists seeking to balance creativity with sustainability in their own music careers. Music business students looking to replicate the process laid out in this thesis could try exploring a different geographic region to tour in, or considering promoting a tour of a different genre other than indie folk. Another option could be to work with an artist to build an Artist

Career Plan built around their artistic and personal goals to use as a framework for another thesis. The intersection of creativity, entrepreneurship, and adaptability is the key to success for modern DIY musicians and through thoughtful planning and a focus on building multiple revenue streams, artists can maintain control over their careers while growing their fanbase and sustaining their artistic output without any requirement of signing with a record label.

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Aslin's 2024 Artist Career Plan

I. About the artist

Musical Genre: Indie Folk/Americana

Biography:

Born between two rivers, raised by an eagle eyed mama, indie folk singer-songwriter Aslin was raised on Sauvie Island outside of Portland Oregon. An avid reader and listener of family dinner table stories, Aslin grew up inspired by those closest to her. Her songwriting career was off with a bang after she managed to save up for a used sky blue electric guitar. In high school, Aslin busied herself with every musical outlet possible: music production, live performance skills, musical theater and choir. During her senior year, Aslin independently wrote, recorded and released her first EP *Secondary*. A five song indie rock album inspired by artists like Julien Baker, Phoebe Bridgers and Soccer Mommy.

Aslin entered New York University's prestigious music business program and left Sauvie Island at 18 with Bob Dylan-esque hopes of conquering New York City. Before she could move out of her freshman dorm, the global COVID-19 pandemic shut down her aspirations of live performance and music networking for the foreseeable future. Aslin's second EP, *The Sauvie Island Project*, released during a year spent in lockdown, making music with friends to keep from crying. Her lead single from the EP, "Perfume," was featured on the Quadio college radio hour in 2021. By 2022, Aslin was back performing, hosting weekly, socially-distanced performances at The Bean Coffeehouse in the Ukrainian Village of Manhattan.

Somewhat traumatized from living and working in New York City during a global pandemic, Aslin transferred from New York University to Middle Tennessee State University. With her, she brought her love of songwriting and passion for making friends, releasing new music and singing to the campus record label – Match Records – within her first year at MTSU. Aslin was chosen as the student opener for her childhood inspiration, Phoebe Bridgers, at Middle Tennessee State's basketball arena in the spring of 2023—a milestone moment for the young singer-songwriter.

In the last year of her undergraduate degree, Aslin has dedicated herself to her third EP *Inflight*. The five songs, mixing classic folk covers with Aslin's original indie folk compositions, tell a story of someone lost in dark patterns and thoughts as they turn to family and simple pleasures for comfort. The primarily acoustic album highlights Aslin's unique voice and harmony stylings, suggesting a cozy sense of firelight and stories told around campfires.

A lover of the recording studio, but also a broke college student, Aslin has yet to record a full length album. In the meantime, she's put her music business degree to work, managing herself and successfully booking a tour of the Pacific Northwest during the summer of 2024. After graduation in December, Aslin looks forward to learning more about Portland's indie music scene. She plans to establish herself in Portland's musical

scene as a local up and coming singer-songwriter, solidifying a self-sustaining musical career built on her own terms.

Talents: singing, playing guitar, stage presence, songwriting

Live Performance Experience:

- Portland, Oregon
Revolution Hall (February 2019)
The Alberta St. Pub (January 2020)
Green House Yellow Door (August 2022 and 2023)
Scotch Road Vineyard (May 2024)
- New York City, New York
Washington Square Park w/ Sub Wifi Pop Ups (June 2021)
The Bean on 2nd Avenue (Weekly Feb-June 2022)
Pink Frog Cafe (June 2022)* opener for Downput Vale
- Hillsboro, West Virginia
Hillsboro Public House (March 2024)
- Austin, Texas
SXSW Unofficial (March 2022)
- Greensboro, North Carolina
Flat Iron Productions Songwriter Showcase (June 2024)
- Murfreesboro, Tennessee
KUC Theatre (March 2023)
The Murphy Center (April 2023)* student opener for Phoebe Bridgers
Chris Young Cafe (September 2023)
The Dapper Owl (April 2024)
Ridenour Rehearsal Space (October 2022, April 2024)

II. Evaluation of the artist (Aslin)

Strengths and weaknesses of the artist

Strengths

- Songwriter with 100% ownership of master recordings
- Songwriter with 100% copyright ownership to all original songs
- An authentic stage performer
- Can accompany herself on multiple instruments (piano, guitar, ukulele)
- Natural storyteller and variety in songwriting
- Can write topline for existing tracks
- Previous body of work
- Backup singing
- Performing in outdoor environments

Weaknesses

- Lack of resources and connections in the Pacific Northwest

- Lack of follow through on small details
- Procrastinator
- Difficulty responding within the day to business matters
- Lack of physical rehearsal space
- Lack of production training in order to make demos or track individually
- Setlists are primarily acoustic
- Timing and playing to a click track

Opportunities and threats

Opportunities

- Connect with former drummer Nathan Dahlman to get “little white pills” pitched to author Beth Macy whose book “Dopesick” inspired the song
- “wings” from *Inflight* could be pitched to Mother’s Day playlists
- Family friend and country singer John Knowles has band and venue connection in Portland Oregon
- Family friend Mike Sturgill works at Britt Music Festival in Ashland Oregon and knows the booking agent for the side stage performance slots
- Booking connection to college house shows in Corvallis and Eugene
- Access to an interview or songwriter in the round sessions with the Women in Country Instagram account
- Personal connection Steve Piucci to the Pendarvis family that owns the land where Oregon’s folk music festival “Pickathon” is hosted each year
- Reopening of the historic venues in Portland that cater to intimate performances
- The Echo Grant is a non-profit organization for independent Oregon musicians to submit a grant to get a creative (non-performance) project funded

Threats

- Oversaturation of the indie folk/singer-songwriter in the market
- Lack of music money making opportunities in Portland Oregon as compared to Nashville, Los Angeles, New York
- Limited creative output due to lack of time since needing a full time job to support myself
- Lack of Americana talent in Portland to make a skilled and professional band in the genre of music I’m looking to play
- Playing gigs with a band makes 1/3 to 1/4 the amount of money as compared to playing solo gigs.

Action points based on this evaluation

- ☐ Solo 2024 Tour without a band
- ☐ Message Nicole at Women in Country and ask for performance slot or coverage for upcoming release of *Inflight*
- ☐ Designate 30 minutes a day to music business management catch up
- ☐ Apply for membership for Music Portland
- ☐ Apply for the Echo Grant (due September 19)
- ☐ Join NSAI
- ☐ Reach out to book a show at the Twilight Room on tour

- ☐ Find band members with multiple talents (can sing and play bass, can play a real drum kit and electronic drum kit, etc.)
- ☐ Reach out to Portland connections to make more
 - John Knowles (singer-songwriter)
 - Eliot Defrancesco (former drummer)
 - Steve Piucci (friend of Pendarvis Farm)
 - Topaz Farm and outdoor music venue (former employer)
 - Mike Sturgill (family friend at Britt Festival)
 - Bird Bennett (former classmate and working musician)
 - Elle Stephenson (potential band member)

III. *Evaluation of the manager (Gyllian Mullen)*

Strengths and weaknesses of the manager

Strengths

- Knowledge as a student at MTSU studying music business
- Access to Center for Popular Music
- Organized and a logistical planner
- Connections in New York, Nashville and the Pacific Northwest
- Access to dozens of professors from New York to Nashville and two alumni networks
- Previous internship experiences at recording studios, music podcasts and artist management consultant firms
- Hands-on experiences from internships with Indie Connect Inc. and the Musonomics Podcast in targeted music marketing
- Living at home to save money

Weaknesses

- As a full-time music business student, there is a lack of time and mental energy to dedicate to managing artistic pursuits outside of school.
- Creative ego getting in the way of business opportunities (artist brain outweighing the business brain)
- Is more of a “big idea” persona than a day-to-day work persona

Opportunities and threats

Opportunities

- Personal connection to Steve Earle’s manager
- Connections with Portland videographers for a potential music video
- The Ureca Grant for honors thesis project: student funding for research projects from \$500 to up to \$3,500 that could fund the 24’ summer Pacific Northwest tour

- The Echo Grant:

“Well, our music culture in greater Portland is massive. It’s far bigger than people know. CD Baby confirmed that more than 11,000 unique bands distributed, recorded music and released it through their platform alone, in the few years prior to COVID. And we did an economic impact study. It’s a \$4.1 billion industry, and yet it hasn’t been acknowledged as such. And the changes in the music industry have really left musicians behind, and it’s harder and harder for them to sustain themselves in a city that has boomed in part because of their

amazing creations. But it's become increasingly unaffordable and they can't sell their recorded music anymore in the same way. So that it really leaves them in a gap because they're seen as too commercial to get cultural grants and too creative to get business grants. So we really identified the need for a different approach. And we created the Echo Fund (<https://www.musicoregon.org/echo-fund>)”

- Music Portland Events:

A non-profit started in Portland Oregon: “Our mission is to make Portland a better place to be a music professional. We do this by uniting, defending, and amplifying the voices of the people who make up Portland’s independent music industry.”

Threats

- If the self-management period of Aslin goes well, it could lead to signing with a legitimate management company in the Pacific Northwest or on the West Coast. In this event, Aslin’s self management duties will then be transferred over to new management and the period of self management would cease until either Aslin retires or chooses to resume managing herself.

Conflicts of interest

- Time and attention: the time and attention of being a full time artist greatly lessens the ability to also adequately manage oneself
- Creative control: as artists have their own creative egos, self managing is difficult and requires hard set boundaries. Keeping these roles separate (artist and manager) and setting goals ensures artists’ realistic about their creative pursuits and how to achieve their goals.

IV. Establishment of goals and timelines

Major goals for the artist (and sample strategies and tactics to achieve them)

Major goal: for 1 year (2024)

1. Record and release *Inflight*
2. Book a DIY tour of *Inflight*

Supporting goals:

1. Record *Inflight* in Nashville studio
2. Distribute, pitch and release *Inflight*
3. Market *Inflight* regionally to Pacific Northwest publications and radio
4. Reach out to 8 venues in 5 different cities/markets in the Pacific Northwest
5. Physically tour the album

Timeline for each goal

1. Record *Inflight*

- ☐ Create tracklist
- ☐ Record “wings”
- ☐ Record “winter’s come and gone”
- ☐ Record “keep me from blowing away”
- ☐ Record “inflight” (title track)

- ☐ Find cover art for *Inflight*
- ☐ Collect all relevant metadata
- ☐ Create lyric sheets for all songs
- ☐ Record BTS content for promotion
- ☐ Register copyrights for original songs

2. Distribute, pitch and release *Inflight*

- ☐ Upload album to all prior chosen streaming platforms/outlets 1 month in advance of release date to Distrokid
- ☐ Submit “wings” to Spotify playlists
- ☐ Submit “winter’s come and gone” to Spotify playlists
- ☐ Submit “keep me from blowing away” to Spotify playlists
- ☐ Upload lyrics for all songs
- ☐ Upload full album to Bandcamp with lyrics

3. Regionally promote *Inflight* to the Pacific Northwest

- ☐ Attend Music Portland events
- ☐ Attend open mic nights weekly
- ☐ Research publicity in the Pacific Northwest region
- ☐ Reach out to 5 Pacific Northwest publications
- ☐ Reach out to 5 Pacific Northwest influencers/playlists
- ☐ Create tour poster and place around town
- ☐ Apply marketing plan (see below)

4. Physically tour the album

- ☐ Research 7-12 venues in 5-7 markets/Pacific Northwest cities
- ☐ Create an EPK to send to venues
- ☐ Book a 7-12 show tour
- ☐ Place tour posters around markets (or send via email)
- ☐ Post full tour lineup to social media
- ☐ Design stage plot
- ☐ Finalize setlist
- ☐ Rehearse final run of show
- ☐ Find/hire a roadie
- ☐ Create a tour budget
- ☐ Pack the van
- ☐ Create ultimate list of contacts and dates
- ☐ Don’t forget the merchandise booth!
- ☐ Keep track each night of total daily expenses and gig payments

V. *Development of a Marketing Plan*

The majority of Aslin's followers interact with her music through two platforms: Instagram and Spotify. While Aslin's music can be found on Apple Music, Deezer and Tik Tok as well, Spotify accounts for almost all of Aslin's 23,921 total streams over all platforms. As of April 2024, \$87.31 Aslin has made \$87.31 in streaming revenue paid out from streaming services and social media sites for using her music on their platform. \$75.67 of this money was paid out by Spotify only. The below data was collected from Aslin's Spotify for Artists profile – an online music data platform indie artists use to track how their music is performing.

Active, previously active and programmed audiences:

On the Spotify for Artists platform, an artist's listeners are categorized as either members of their "active audience," "previously active audience," or "programmed audience." Active listeners have intentionally streamed an artist's music within the past 28 days from what Spotify considers "active sources," encompassing their artist profile, album and release pages or from listeners' own personal library or playlists. According to Spotify for Artists' explanation, listeners in this audience make up 33% of a total audience but about 60% of streams and 80% of merch sales on Spotify, on average. For Aslin specifically, her active audience accounts for 39% of her total streams.

Previously active audiences are listeners that used to be in the active audience, but haven't intentionally streamed Aslin's music in over 28 days. These listeners likely weren't fully invested in previous projects and releases leading them to stop streaming Aslin's music all together. This audience presents a great opportunity to convert passive listeners into active listeners, especially if there's a way to showcase the ways in which this new release is different from previous Aslin catalog. Since they have already taken the action to stream Aslin's music once, recapturing their attention is vital considering her change in genre from indie rock to folk and country, which may appeal to her previously active audience. These listeners only make up 0.8% of Aslin's share of streams making it the area for most growth in her listenership so far.

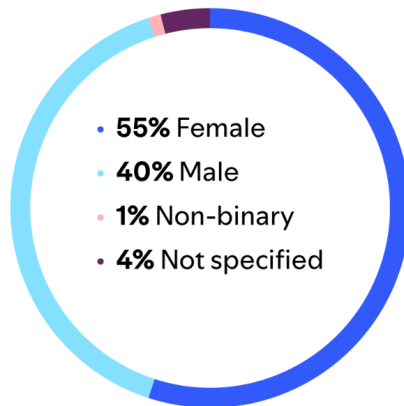
An artist's programmed audience is the most passive audience. These are listeners who only streamed Aslin's music from programmed sources like editorial playlists, Discover Weekly, Radio, Autoplay, or playlists by other listeners at least once in the last 2 years. While these playlists aren't as directly correlated to Aslin, they do yield the highest gateway to discovery. Aslin's programmed audience makes up 61% of Aslin's source of streams and accounts for 77% of her total audience, making it the largest sector of her audience. This is likely due to a playlist containing Aslin's full discography ("Female Indie Rock") which has 839 followers.

Demographic segment

Spotify for Artists allows artists to access demographic information such as age, location, and gender to be gathered from the most recent 28 days of streaming data. Aslin's demographic breakdown is as follows:

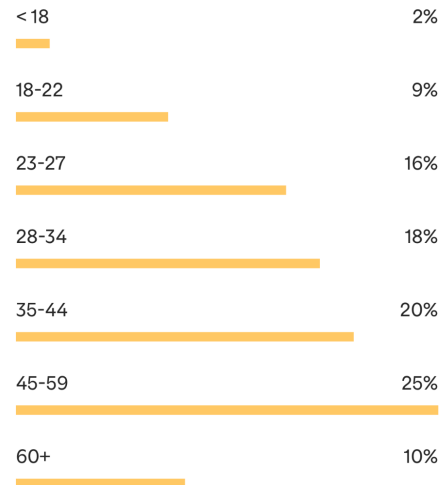
Their gender

LAST 28 DAYS



Their age

LAST 28 DAYS



Top countries

LAST 28 DAYS

LISTENERS

1	United States	172
2	United Kingdom	32
3	Australia	23
4	Canada	20
5	France	18
6	Brazil	16
7	Philippines	15
8	Netherlands	8
9	Germany	7
10	Spain	7

Top cities

LAST 28 DAYS

LISTENERS

1	Portland United States	13
2	Melbourne Australia	8
3	Nashville United States	8
4	New York United States	6
5	Knoxville United States	6
6	Seattle United States	6
7	Murfreesboro United States	5
8	Paris France	4
9	Sydney Australia	4

1. General Info

Live Music Marketing: Tours have the inherent ability to introduce emerging artists to new fans, whether they are playing a bar, coffeehouse or large music festival. These opportunities for live connection between fans and large scale artists like Taylor Swift are becoming harder to afford with rising ticket prices. However, by hosting smaller, local shows as an independent singer-songwriter, audiences are offered an intimate alternative when great promotion is used to get the word out about the event. This is where posters and geographic, physical marketing is important. I will make a promotional poster and tape them up in various hot spots and places I visit around the Portland area frequently. The idea being that places where I hang out and enjoy is likely where my potential audience will also be located. The *Inflight* tour aims to market Aslin to new audiences in the Pacific Northwest in addition to marketing myself for potential future gigs to intimate, indie music focused venues.

Recorded Music Marketing: The *Inflight* tour will serve as natural marketing for the record. In the era of streaming, artists release albums often as a way to promote a new tour where they can make sales through merchandise and tickets sold. Leverage the upward trend in music consumption, particularly in streaming and physical album sales. \$500 will be targeted towards 2 ads for *Inflight* (\$250 each) on Spotify's audio ads for listeners utilizing the free subscription based model. Given Aslin's strong streaming numbers on Spotify, a focus on increasing her presence on that streaming platform while continuing to build out her own personal website as a way to monetarily capture her "active fans" with purchases of her merchandise. Spotify is a digital marketing platform for merchandise sending extremely supportive "active fans" to Aslin's personal website to purchase merchandise, physical copies of music or digital downloads. Recorded music marketing will take place after the release of *Inflight*, meaning no promotional material besides publicity will be done for *Inflight* prior to the release on August 23rd. Once *Inflight* is released, from August 23rd to September 23rd, there will be two Spotify ads that will promote the album release to listeners of Spotify's free, ad-sponsored tier.

Marketing for *Inflight* EP includes: targeted Spotify ads, *Inflight* tour 24'

2. Target Market Insights

***Inflight* Tour Market:** For Aslin's tour, I focused on targeting audiences in the Pacific Northwest, specifically Portland, Seattle, and surrounding areas, which not only align with her personal connection to the region but also resonate with her mellow, acoustic folk sound. These cities have strong indie and folk music scenes, making them ideal for reaching an audience that appreciates live, intimate performances from emerging artists. I also considered venues where similar, local artists like Olive Klug and Haley Heynderickx have performed, ensuring that the spaces cater to fans of the genre. Additionally, I prioritized reaching audiences between the ages of 20-40, who are more likely to attend live indie shows and engage with new music in the folk and alternative genres. By focusing on both physical proximity to her base and cultural alignment with her musical style, I was able to craft a tour plan that effectively targets a receptive and enthusiastic audience.

Recorded Music Market: For Aslin's Spotify recorded music ad campaign, I strategically selected a target market that aligns with both Aslin's music style and her

growth potential for the *Inflight* release cycle. The primary focus was on cities with vibrant indie music scenes such as Portland, Seattle, and Nashville, where listeners are already engaged with similar artists like Phoebe Bridgers and Soccer Mommy. Demographically, I targeted all genders and ages in my audience selected for my Spotify ad as I have been seeing growth across all genders and ages. I targeted listeners with an interest in indie folk, mellow acoustic, and alternative genres, as these age groups tend to be the most active on streaming platforms and are more likely to engage with new, independent artists. I also considered geographic regions where Aslin has performed live or plans to tour, ensuring the ads complement her existing presence and potential fan base expansion. By focusing on these key markets and demographics, I aimed to maximize the ad's reach and relevance, driving more streams and follower growth over the month-long run of the campaign.

3. Strategic Initiatives

- a. **Streaming Platform Optimization:** Utilize Spotify for Artists to its fullest by regularly updating Aslin's profile, submitting tracks to Spotify's editorial team for playlist consideration, and using Spotify Ad Studio to target specific listener segments.
- b. **Collaborations and Playlists:** Collaborate with artists who have a similar audience to tap into their listener base. Curate or get featured in playlists that align with new folk and country genres.
- c. **Merchandising:** Merchandise is a great way for fans to support artists. Now that streaming has made the individuals budgets for music much larger, a great way to capture superfans and maintain strong fan connections is through merchandise. There are 150 "Aslin" tote bags and 100 stickers that are currently being sold at each live performance.

4. Tactical Plans

Email List Give Away: Deploy monthly campaigns aimed at specific listener segments to boost engagement and streaming numbers. This involves themed releases, Spotify playlist promotions, or social media challenges.

Fan Communication: Develop an email newsletter to keep fans updated on new releases, tours, and merchandise. During the tour, the merch personnel will pass around cards to be filled out with demographic prompts. At the end of the show, there will be a giveaway and the winner will win an Aslin tote bag. Not only will this increase engagement, but it will also give me necessary data on who my market is and who I am playing to each night without having to guess and can use that data in the future.

Analytics and Adjustments: Regularly review Spotify for Artists and social media analytics to adjust strategies based on what content and which channels are performing best a month after first single, a month after second single and two weeks before the album drops.

5. Measurement and Success Metrics

I will determine the success of this album release and touring cycle through a handful of metrics:

- Growth in active listeners on Spotify.
- Growth in followers on Spotify
- Growth in first month of release streaming numbers
- Increase in social media engagement metrics.
- Recouping initial *Inflight* recording costs through streaming, live performance fees and tips on tour as well as merchandise sales.
- Increased presence in Spotify playlists and collaborations.
- Increased vocal interest in collaboration in the Pacific Northwest specifically

VI. *The business framework*

Form of the business

I will be acting as a sole proprietor in my business as Aslin. In the future I potentially see myself registering as an LLC if I become successful enough that 50% of my revenue is made off of my music performing as Aslin.

Personnel requirements

For the next year, I will need one roadie/merch salesperson to watch and sell my merchandise as I play my sets. This person will also be aiding in taking live photos and videos if required. For a typical tour, this person would be paid a percentage of sales each night negotiated before the tour starts or would be paid by the hour. However, for money saving purposes and full transparency, for this tour I will be having a volunteer acting as my merch handler and roadie making the cost for Personnel services for the year free, with the intention of eventually paying my roadie personnel in the next two years.

Insurance

Each venue, other than the GarlicFest, will each have insurance protecting the venue for unforeseen disasters or complications relating to the venue. The kind of insurance I will need to tour would be auto insurance for my car, which I already pay without Aslin performances.

Other

BMI, other union memberships

VII. *The financial plan*

Budget for career plan

Songwriting costs -

Copyright registration for 3 songs: **\$45**

Electronic filing: Single author, same claimant, one work, not for hire \$45
(Copyright.gov/about/fees)

Recording costs -

Gas to Nashville recording studio: **\$100**

Producer Rate: \$125 a song = **\$500** for 4 songs (*Inflight*)

Marketing costs -

2 Spotify targeted ads: \$250

Total: **\$500**

Touring costs -

Gas (\$4.5 per Gallon): 490 miles in a Honda CRV = 18.85 gallons = **\$84.83**

Production costs: \$0 (self sustained production as a singer-songwriter)

Camp sites: \$0 (stayed at home each night)

Car rental: \$0 (using day to day vehicle and travel trailer)

Personnel: \$0 (using family and volunteers)

Insurance: **\$35** (for GarlicFest performance)

Internet costs -

Distrokid yearly fee: **\$23**

Yearly website domain cost: **\$20**

Squarespace yearly: **\$168**

Total cost for career plan: **1,475.83**