

A&R

REGISTRY / VOLUME XXVIII / ISSUE V

Guillermo Subauste:

Pro tips for music
livestreaming

SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE

**An Oasis in the Desert:
Saltmine Studio Oasis**

**How Net Promoter
Scores can help grow
an artist's following**

Monetizing Music

Economic Diversity

The Role of A&R



Virtual + Remote Resource Guide

INTERVIEWS

Livestreaming

- ▶ [Emma McGann](#) on the art of making “personable music content”
- ▶ [Cherie Hu](#) on the state of livestreaming

COMMUNICATION ESSENTIALS

Given the uncertainty of business operations, bandwidth and cyber security we recommend exploring all of the following options and building redundancy into your communications.

WhatsApp

- ▶ Free; 4 simultaneous video/audio calls
- ▶ Group chats can share messages, photos, and videos with up to 256 people at once

Zoom

- ▶ Massive surge in use has created privacy and security issues
- ▶ Free; unlimited 1-to-1; host up to 100 participants (40 minutes max for groups)
- ▶ Pro, Business and Enterprise versions with ability to reach up to 1000

Google Hangouts (Google Hangouts Meet for G Suite users) & Google Duo

- ▶ G Suite users get advanced Google Meet capabilities free in response to pandemic
- ▶ Duo offer video calls for up to 8 people

Skype

- ▶ Skype for Business and Microsoft Teams also available

House Party

- ▶ Recent issues with security and hacking
- ▶ Trending social app with video chat for mobile and desktop

Slack

- ▶ Collaborative work platform

FaceTime

- ▶ iOS only

Free Conference Call

- ▶ Free/Pay what you can

SOCIAL LIVE BROADCASTING

Instagram Live

- ▶ Chris Martin, Charlie Puth, and DJ Nice had recent popular music livestreams

Facebook Live & Facebook Watch

- ▶ Currently being used less by larger pop artists than artists from other genres

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SALTMINE STUDIO OASIS, LOCATED JUST OUTSIDE PHOENIX

An oasis in the desert

by Peter Petro / Music Business Watch

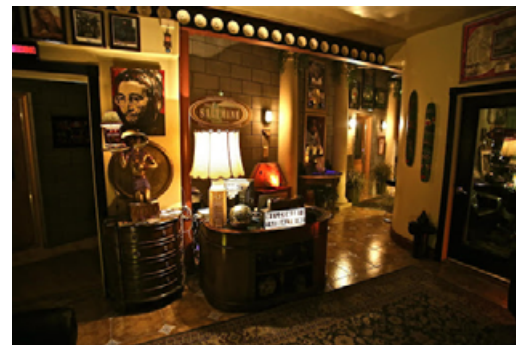
Located just outside Phoenix, the Saltmine Studio Oasis is one of the only studios in the country operating near capacity. Owner Don Salter shared how he's maintaining a safe haven that's attracting artists from coast to coast to start creating again.

The new normal

Five minutes on the phone with Don Salter and you quickly realize he's not a passive person. He never picks up on the first ring — but it's equally rare that he doesn't pick up at all. You usually hear his staff in the background busily keeping the largest recording facility in Arizona humming. After 5pm he likes the TV on, too. “My wife Maria wisely reminds me not to multi-task,” he says with a smile, “but that's just how I work. I'm always on the phone, texting, typing and emailing at the same time — probably while gesturing to my staff. Which is good. I get a lot done that way.”

Even before the pandemic, the owner/manager of the 33-year old Saltmine Studio Oasis wore dozens of hats daily and gives the sense he loves that part of the job. The week we're speaking he seems more inspired than ever. He's researching fluorescent light tubes to build makeshift antiviral UVC lamps that will keep his staff and clients safe from the virus that's all but shut down every commercial studio in the country.

The lamps present an additional challenge: like the versions used in hospitals, the bulbs emit radiation and need to be installed to avoid



THE LOBBY AT THE OASIS WELCOMES ARTISTS TO A ONE-OF-A-KIND MUSICAL EXPERIENCE



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Make your L.A. LOCKDOWN an AZ LOCKOUT... Arizona's Saltmine Studio Oasis is OPEN!



**“LA’s got nothing
on this place, gear
or anything”**

**- Tom Kenny -
Editor Mix Magazine**



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YouTube Live

- ▶ YouTube's new Live streaming feature for Chrome browsers is available now
- ▶ Additional how to and tips
- ▶ Active artists include Diplo and Ben Gibbard

LinkedIn Live

- ▶ Much less saturated than other platforms

Tidal

- ▶ Free daily livestreams (no membership required) at www.TIDAL.com/AtHome

LIVESTREAMING

Stageit

- ▶ Raised artist cut of sales from 67% (average) to 80% in response to the pandemic including tips
- ▶ Variable ticket price (including "pay what you can"); 10 cents minimum entrance
- ▶ Their extensive data suggests limiting tickets can boost engagement and monetization
- ▶ Founder Evan Lowenstein has run Stageit for 10 years and pioneered the model
- ▶ Angel investors include Sean Parker, Jimmy Buffett, Strauss Zelnick, Van Toffler

"On Stageit, artists perform 30-minute interactive experiences. Shows are never archived and artists have the ability to limit the number of viewers that can attend. Stageit is a platform built for artists by artists with many features that 'understand' the nuances at play in regards to the interactions between artists and fans. There are no free shows on Stageit; we're not an ad-driven platform.

Stageit is also unique in that it offers both a ticketing system as well as tip jar. The reason for having both is because many artists opt to use a Stageit feature called Pay What You Can which enables the fan to try out a show for as little as 10 cents. The tipping system then gives the fan the opportunity to contribute more money after gaining entry. On average, a fan spends over \$14 per show — with nearly 60% coming from the tip jar.

The most important thing an artist needs to know in regards to a Stageit show is that they need to have good upload speed. And they need to take it seriously. This isn't just an experience where you hit the 'go live' button. People are buying tickets and are prepared to spend good money. The quality of the production is way less important than the quality of the experience. In fact, I often encourage artists to consider using one camera or at least make sure to look into the camera (if there is more than one) that's something you can't do at a real show — look all of your fans directly in the face. It heightens the level of intimacy and creates more perceived value.

In terms of what an artist can expect to earn, most artists make more money from a Stageit show than they do from a physical show, in some instances significantly more.

Finally, we are humbly aware that the Covid-19 crisis has compelled artists around the globe to try Stageit as a source of financial support. However, we did not pivot to capture this moment and we are not looking to solve a short term problem. We have been

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being turned on accidentally. As we speak, he is texting me a barrage of photos of things as they're built in real time — bulbs inside vertical self-standing fixtures, lamp installations on the wall, just below the ceiling and high enough to be safe. Salter is like a musical mix between Nicola Tesla and MacGyver, with an unmistakable sense of destiny and urgency to provide one of the few spaces to record professionally right now.

Breathing Easy

"I studied and researched the UVC lamps for disinfecting rooms and there are a lot of ways to install them — including putting them in HVAC ducting," Salter explains. "I was ready to order some but couldn't find them on backorder anywhere. They also wouldn't sanitize as well as portable lamps in each room since it's closer to the surfaces. I determined that portable lamps are a far better option than HVAC lamps inside the return air duct and supply duct."

"The tubes we ordered are the medically accepted virus-killing fluorescent ones, not the little wands you see on Facebook," he continues. "They're more substantial and work with a fluorescent ballast. We got [Aamisco](#) T8 germicidal fluorescent lamp tubes, [GE](#) brand housing and ballasts from [Grainger](#). The timer for the lamps is locked inside an acrylic case in a separate room, mounted high up so a step stool is required. You need a key to open the

"The tubes we ordered are the medically accepted virus-killing fluorescent ones, not the little wands you see on Facebook."

case. We have these tubes inside control rooms in A, B and D. "This is what the hospitals use to disinfect their equipment."

"We had HVAC filters already but I wanted something more effective to disinfect the atmosphere as much as possible. We've had stand-alone Sun Pure systems with UVC fluorescent bulbs and two-stage filtering system for 15 years, largely for odor control. The HVAC system was custom designed as a serpentine round hoop air circulation system so air wouldn't whistle entering the room. Air drops into the room and escapes quietly, which allows every studio to have its own air conditioning. That provides even more control over the air quality."

"Historically when you recorded in Phoenix you would have to crank the AC, get everyone in position, hit record and then stop the air conditioner to track, otherwise it would pick up the compressor noise. Unless you've got a hypersensitive mic like an ELAM or C12 close to the air source, you won't hear the AC in here. We have



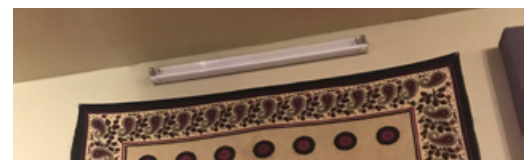
MEDICALLY ACCEPTED VIRUS-KILLING T8 GERMICIDAL FLUORESCENT LAMP TUBES



PORTABLE LAMPS



THE TIMER FOR THE LAMPS IS LOCKED INSIDE AN ACRYLIC CASE IN A SEPARATE ROOM, MOUNTED HIGH UP SO A STEP STOOL IS REQUIRED



BULB INSTALLATIONS JUST BELOW THE CEILING AND HIGH ENOUGH TO BE SAFE

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supporting artists for over 10 years and have every intention of being here for artists for many years to come.”

— Evan Lowenstein, Founder, Stageit

— Stephen White, CEO stephen@stageit.com

— Tanner Wyer, VP of Business Development tanner@stageit.com

Hovercast

- ▶ SaaS Production Toolset for creating virtual events and interactive live streams
- ▶ Manages interactive elements (i.e. audience polls) and moderates real time fan responses
- ▶ Created by music video directing team Fourclops (Foster the People, Portugal. The Man, Lil Jon)
- ▶ Just powered 'It Gets Better' project virtual pride event with Spice Girl Melanie C and others

“We handled Bernie Sanders’ livestream that featured Public Enemy, The Strokes and Neil Young. We also launched Donald Glover’s album 3.15.20 as a midnight livestream/virtual listening party that disappeared the following day at noon. We built their website and powered the stream.

Hovercast can be thought of as an Adobe product that helps you create interactive graphics similar to what you see on ESPN or CNN. You can pull audience responses from Twitch, Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, Mixer and Periscope and moderate or curate what’s being said. It works well for interactive Q&As, polls or responding to audience sentiments (like cheers and responses).

It’s very safe for brands. You control which real-time responses appear to viewers and what shows up on a teleprompter view so onscreen talent can see what’s coming up next and pick a question. For additional brand safety, an initial moderator can approve things and someone higher up can choose what appears onscreen to talent.

For Bernie’s rallies we displayed comments around what he was talking about, so if he mentioned unions we just posted comments about unions. When people donated, their name appeared with gamification features like a meter going up as the goal was reached. We displayed who donated the most, which creates a kind of bidding war. Bernie’s director of video sees things from D.C. and can use Hovercast to manage the streams remotely.

Since offering a free short-term license for independent artists we had hundreds of inquiries. Musicians large and small were asking how they can use this to generate income. Mostly they’re asking for a custom website with a tip or donation jar and interactive graphics. We’ve also built Stripe integration that works the way Bernie’s rallies did. Or we can set up a gated website with tickets. That’s not as interesting as the “tip jar model” to me but it’s possible.

We want to give artists their own livestream sites that raise money and also honor their fans. It creates a feedback loop between artist, on-screen talent and fans; when you prompt the audience to do something and they do it that really boosts engagement.

Our tools help you react and reward your audience by putting their contributions on screen. As a band you can prompt the audi-

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STUDIO A. “WE’VE BEEN REFERRED TO AS THE ‘LA STUDIO IN PHOENIX’

50 tons of air conditioning on the property that operates 98% of the time.”

Facing the music

Lamps and ducts aren’t the only thing Don customized to make Saltmine safer and more productive. Every Saltmine staffer and client now wears soft, black face shields with the Egyptian-themed Saltmine logo on the front.

“Our T-shirts are popular so I had our manufacturer make custom face shields from soft, high grade, American Apparel-style shirt material,” recounts Salter. “It’s tightly woven 100% cotton that breathes well and follows what the CDC recommends. Whoever used them can rewash them with antibacterial soap, use them again

“If it looks cool and is breathable, as opposed to something stuffy and difficult to breathe through, they’ll use it more often and it’s more effective.

instead of throwing them away and you don’t look like you just stepped out of a hospital. We ordered 500 and were out immediately. We just had a crew recording violins, trumpet, drums and guitars and everyone had them on.”

“In the first phase of the pandemic our initial defense was to create an added barrier with a bandanna,” he recalls. “I got as many as I could from Walmart for staff and clients and researched what else was available. I couldn’t get N95 masks — they were in short supply and were discouraged, since the healthcare industry needed them and didn’t have enough.”

Don tried to avoid getting masks that were

uncomfortable —and therefore tempt people to take them off or fiddle with them, which could contaminate their faces. “People don’t mind wearing these every day. It’s important that artists and clients like the way they look and like wearing them. If it looks cool and is breathable, as opposed to something stuffy and difficult to



EVERY SALTMINER STAFFER AND CLIENT NOW WEARS SOFT, BLACK FACE SHIELDS WITH THE EGYPTIAN-THEMED SALTMINER LOGO ON THE FRONT

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ence; as a fan you see your name on screen, get a shout-out and see your own ideas come to life. Bands can ask the audience which song they want next and adjust to make the show interactive. I'm hoping we can soon provide those sites for free indefinitely, supported by a small percentage of the money raised.

A teleprompter view can be used so that if someone is sitting at a piano they have a computer or TV screen hooked up to Hovercast and all they have to do is look up. Whoever is handling the feed (onsite or not) posts the next question or poll and the artist can say, "Hey, 45% of the audience wants me to play this song so let's do it!" We can make it hands-free for artists while someone else guides the audience experience for them.

While this is an agency-level tool, Hovercast is still very easy to use. Corporate clients like Audi pay \$15,000 a month to use it but we're making it free for independent artists temporarily right now. I also want to build something serving midtier clients like labels. I have to figure out pricing based on the number of broadcasts and features that would be used. Traditionally we provide custom development but we just couldn't do that for midtier projects.

Interactive livestreaming has broad implications and huge possibilities for the future of music. Imagine fans type smoke emojis that drive up a meter and when it's full a smoke machine goes off on stage. Or a tip jar that, after reaching a certain level, triggers a surprise guest emerging from backstage. We haven't seen those cause-and-effect relationships in music before but we can now bring the audience into the show in much more meaningful ways."

— *Eli Stonberg, Founder & CEO*
eli@hovercast.com

Key

- ▶ Extensive experience partnering global brands with talent and media production
- ▶ Web-based platform (no app download) provides a single shareable URL and frictionless payments
- ▶ Provides deep data sets on fans that to optimize sponsor integration
- ▶ Variable ticket prices starting at \$2.99 with 75/25 revenue split with talent

"We see talent as the brand and want to give control to talent — control of data, emails, monetization, everything. By data, I mean detailed data beyond just the age, gender, zip, and date/time of post you get from social media platforms. Do your fans drink Starbucks or Dunkin Donuts? Do they drive a Tesla or Ford Focus? What TV shows and music do they like? Once talent understands their real audience it helps with everything from content strategy to securing endorsements and brand deals.

We also wanted to remove friction in the fan experience. We use micropayments since that's the millennial currency you see in Fortnite and everything else. Many more artups use crypto or blockchain instead because margins for micropayments are so thin. Because we're a web-to-web platform with no servers it's extremely efficient. We launch an event in real time and rip it down in real time when it's done so we're not paying for

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breathe through, they'll use it more often and it's more effective.

"It muffles your voice, so obviously people in the iso booth aren't required to wear it. We're not mandating or enforcing people to wear them. But we encourage it. I believe everyone needs to be the arbiter of their own health and free agency."

Besides the new physical setup, the Saltmine has an entirely new protocol for day-to-day operations. "Very often in the hip-hop world you'll get 10-15 people crammed into a studio. We simply don't allow that now. It's generally three to four people maximum with an engineer. We're limiting use of our production room to one or two people max. We're the largest studio in the state so fortunately our rooms are pretty substantial."

"The hip-hop community refers to 'spitting' vocals but we wanted to make sure there's no actual spitting happening. At the same time we assume it will. So between clients we remove the pop filter, drench it with an antibacterial, wipe it off, let it dry and replace it. If the next artist touches it, sings or raps through it they can feel secure that it's not a source of any contaminant."

"The biggest thing is the hyper vigilance around cleaning the iso rooms, surfaces and all places that have human contact. That and the masks are the primary barrier. We disinfect the studios between sessions, wiping them down with disinfectant on all surfaces. We have aloe vera alcohol-based hand sanitizer in great supply at the front desk and in the rooms. That's our last element of defense."

"Wearing face masks also provides an element of psychological as well as physical separation. I know this: When I wear mine, I'm not going to be touching my face. I pull it up a little to drink a can of Diet Coke and slip it down. I don't even have to touch it where it touches my lips. So it's good for behavioral modification, which is half

"I immediately texted my staff when things started, saying that no one would be required to do anything they didn't feel comfortable with. I wasn't going to think negatively if they chose for whatever reason to not work during this period..."

the battle. That means I'm also more apt to do other things that relate to keeping myself contaminant-free, like using hand sanitizer when I head to the front desk."

The Saltmine Studio Oasis
Posted by Don Salter
March 24 at 5:42 PM · 🌐

It was our pleasure to help with this urgent 211 message for our great Governor Ducey and the people of Arizona. Thanks for sharing this! Thanks to Thomas Bond of Crisis Response Network for allowing us to do our part 🙏🏻🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸

2-1-1 Arizona
March 24 at 4:58 PM · 🌐

We'd like to thank our friends at **The Saltmine Studio Oasis** in Mesa for their generous assistance in recording the voice scripts for the COVID-19 Hotline CRN launched in collaboration with Governor Doug Ducey, the Arizona Dept. of Economic Security and the Arizona Dept. of Health Services. Reach the Hotline by dialing 2-1-1 or visit 211arizona.org/covid-19

Dial 2-1-1
for information about COVID-19
in Arizona

Transparent Conversations

A final critical aspect to managing the new normal internally at Saltmine has been high-quality, transparent communications with staff. Don explains: "I immediately texted my staff when things started, saying that no one would be required to do anything they didn't feel comfortable with. I wasn't going to think negatively if they chose for whatever reason to not work during this period. We'd let them come back whenever they wanted to service their clients again."

"At the same time I was happy that the healthiest ones, the ones that felt the strongest and most willing, wanted to keep working. I had one-on-one communication with each person to sense how they felt about the option of working. Of course there's risk in all things. But I wanted people that wanted to work to work. All of our engineers are independent contractors and it's not as easy for them to get unemployment or government assistance. This is a choice that everyone has to make on their own."

"Three of my engineers didn't want to come in. Four of my engineers did. One quit. One is still at home in quarantine and doesn't want to leave the house because he's afraid he or his girlfriend could catch something. The last thing I would want him to do is come in and do anything he's not comfortable with. He has a weak heart and a partner with immunocompromised status so of course I didn't want him to come in and haven't asked him to come in."

"I don't want anyone to do anything that they're not feeling in their own heart and mind is the right thing to do. Another engineer felt the same way because he's around his father

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servers all the time. Those efficiencies mean we can charge as low as \$2.99 to fans and still give 75% back to the talent.

Key creates a micro pay-per-view moment in a fan's pocket. Fans don't need to download an app or buy tokens. They click a link that opens a browser and after a quick visit to Apple Pay or Google Pay they're in. It has the same DNA as an app — email notifications, calendar etc — but it's an easier user experience. You can broadcast from any device and view it on any device. The price is dynamic and it's frictionless.

We have a background bringing in brands and there are many opportunities like waiting rooms or a sponsored overlay. March Madness, Ultra and all the other festivals that were cancelled were sponsored by brands who are now looking to place money somewhere else. Burger King, Anheuser Busch, T-Mobile, MasterCard, Michelob Ultra, Gatorade, McDonalds — they've all told me that if there's a good content strategy they can build on they don't care as much about the size of the artist.

Brand deals mean free revenue for the artist and it gets them past just selling tickets. They can be set up any way you like. The artist can pull down the paywall entirely or ticket sales could go to charity. Perhaps most importantly, talent isn't feeling like they're having to sell to the fans. Imagine announcing a show where a global brand is donating \$10,000 or matching ticket purchases. Everyone involved feels like they're a part of something important.

Facebook, Instagram, Twitch, TikTok and Twitter are awesome for getting scale and of course they're looking to drive monthly active users to raise their own brand. Free content is an amazing strategy to get traffic when there's a budget to do so. But I'm concerned it isn't sustainable. What's the model when the dust settles and artists aren't volunteering to provide a free show for people stuck at home? What about artists who haven't collected all that revenue during their career or aren't supported by sponsors? How do those artists monetize their art now that tours are canceled?

Once artists can tour again, imagine a global phone carrier sponsoring the livestream of a Top 10 artist. Not everybody can afford the \$100 ticket or travel to the show personally but we can provide an incredible micro moment backstage or from the tour bus. For \$2.99 you can be there virtually and maybe one viewer is chosen to come backstage for a real show. There are so many ways a brand can collaborate to create snackable moments that go far beyond livestreaming a concert. Soon enough artists will be back on tour and we have a tool to amplify their audience and complement the live show with other things"

— Evan Wayne, CEO evan@mykeylive.com

— Brian Duckler, Head, and Talent Growth & Partnership duckler@mykeylive.com
847.363.7775

YouNow

- ▶ Hosts present to viewers who can participate on native chat stream with up to 3 onscreen guests
- ▶ Free, 24/7 access; no ads, no tickets

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and didn't want to be asymptomatic and end up somehow giving it to his dad. I haven't asked them to come in to do sessions. We are

“We are trying our best to be good, responsible human beings sharing a challenging human experience together.”

trying our best to be good, responsible human beings sharing a challenging human experience together.”

The unique state of Arizona

Reflecting on the strange mixed blessing of being one of the few studios that's officially open, Don recalls how everything started in mid-March, when the Crisis Response Network on behalf of Arizona Governor Doug Ducey's office contacted him to record outgoing voice prompts. “An old band friend of mine works for the Crisis Response Network and had the charge of getting a recording done in English and Spanish. I told him absolutely, count me in. We got them in the same day since it was an urgent need.”

“We knew things were getting real when we saw that those recordings were needed. We did maintain some closure during March because we were concerned about it ourselves. We were trying to figure out how big this animal really was.”

Arizona was one of the earliest states to lift lockdown restrictions and Don feels the population density in Arizona was a major factor. “California is much more dense than Arizona and New York City is much more dense than California. So population density is on our side.”

Don is noticeably pleased with Governor Ducey's leadership guiding Arizona through the crisis. “We have an excellent governor. He's been critically viewed by Conservatives as overly sensitive to the politics and worst-case-scenario concerns of the pandemic. But I think he's been very circumspect and respectful of the medical community and wants to be on the right side of this question. He's also a former business owner and has a great deal of respect for the need of businesses to operate. So he's kind of the perfect governor for us. He makes everybody just a little bit mad because he's trying to walk a narrow path between free market, small business, conservative ideals and respecting the dangers and fears people have.

When did Salter decide to officially re-open Saltmine? “It was important that I got a word from the governor's office that we were permitted to operate, as in the ‘other media services’ that were considered essential. A week or two after we did the session for the CRN there were announcements that all essential businesses were permitted to operate. I looked on the list and saw that radio stations, TV stations and ‘oth-

er media services’ were designated as essential. I called the governor's office and a representative told me they thought we qualified. I also contacted two attorneys who both saw it the same way.”

“After I felt I had the law and the governor's office on my side, I had to get my team to believe in this. That came by employing safety measures and establishing what our basic requirements were: smaller sessions, limiting the number of people in the rooms, sanitizing and wearing masks. It's worked marvelously and we've been busy. We've been making a lot of people very happy and fortunately not getting any negative press. People have been excited and happy to see us open, which makes us happy. Vibe is always the main reason people come back.”

“A number of label artists and producers from California are coming in now that they know we're open. I can't mention names but it's a wide swath from hip-hop and rock, signed and unsigned. Some have come in for the first time. Some have flown in from the east coast.”

Not much has changed in the type of work Saltmine does, except that since touring stopped

“Outside the VO for the CRN there's been no difference in the type of sessions we do...”

Saltmine lost its steady stream of touring acts that would come in to record while in Phoenix. “The biggest disappointment is that we usually get a lot of touring artists who come through Phoenix for a few days and come here to get a record done. With touring shut down that business stopped completely..”

Beyond that, though, sessions are largely the same. “Outside the VO for the CRN there's been no difference in the type of sessions we do,” Don says. “It's been a combination of tracking, editing, auto-tuning, mixing and mastering. We haven't done any remote work. Nobody seems to be interested in phoning in sessions through ISDN or Source-Connect. Everyone wants to be in the room or send us tracks that we mix and send back. No one has done livestreaming, either. We've been approached and indicated a willingness and there's been discussions, but it hasn't happened as yet.”

A Musical Oasis

Surprisingly, while travel from tours is on hold and airline flights have bottomed out, much of Saltmine's business continues to come from outside Phoenix. “Arizona is more of a novelty to an east coaster than to a west coaster,” Salter explains. “Outside clients come mostly from New York City, secondarily from Atlanta and then from across the country. They find us through their network or online. They want to come out where it's inexpensive and warm and have what

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▶ Hosts can monetize in real time in ways that are connective, emotive, easy and fun

▶ Diverse community of content creators including gamers, musicians, DIYers and teachers

▶ Example: Emma McGann

“The top artists on YouNow would tell you that the most important thing for an artist performing live online is to express their personality, be genuine and engage with their audience. By engage I mean looking at the live chat and responding to the people who are so excited to meet, learn from and learn about the artists they follow. It means bringing their fans live on stage to speak with them so they can ask questions about their music, suggest new lyrics for an upcoming song or react to a new song the artist is playing. It becomes a room of friends very quickly.

YouNow artists like Emma McGann have become very comfortable at not only asking for monetary support from the audience but also making it fun. They make it fun by pausing from the music to shout out their supporters. They hold contests where the winner gets a free album or merch. They have leaderboards behind them of their most supportive fans that updates every few minutes. They'll track those who are supporting the most and give them shout outs in the song in real time.

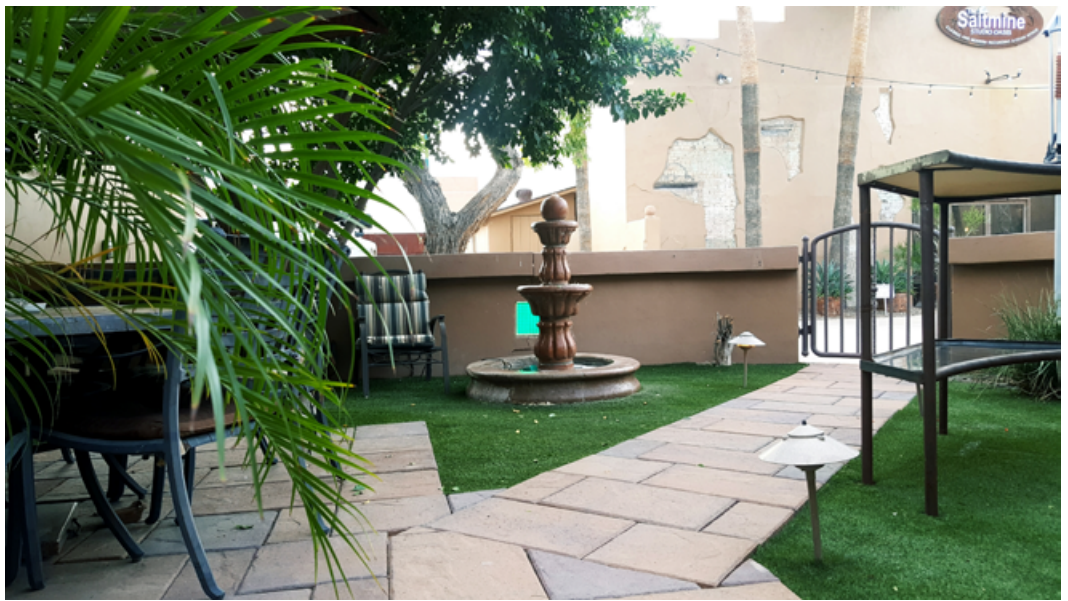
As a viewer it feels like you are building something unique with that artist. The artists who are able to create that kind of atmosphere live are the ones that are most successful, both in terms of building an audience and in terms of earning a living. It's not much different from artists who are great at engaging with fans in real life. Certain artists are great at sharing their personality, being charismatic, inviting fans onstage or asking for song recommendations. The people who have the personality to bring fans closer to them are the ones who will take off in this format.

Learning how to ask for things during a livestream, and what to do around that ask, comes with experience, which is something any new livestreaming artist should understand. It's not going to happen overnight. Secondly, and maybe more importantly, you have to be comfortable asking. I understand how uncomfortable it is for artists to ask for money. It's uncomfortable for everybody, it's not unique to musicians. We have gamers, chefs, tutors, DIYers and a substantial LGBT community. Many of these categories of creators make a living on YouNow and it's not initially comfortable for anybody to ask for money.

But it is also very much okay. It's very much expected on a platform like YouNow. And for musicians performing live online it is natural and reasonable to ask your fans to support the concept that you're creating, the living that you're trying to make, your ability to buy a new guitar, your ability to travel to their city to give a live concert, your ability to continue to grow as an artist. So while the comfort level may take a little bit of time to build, it is a skill in and of itself and it's a valuable one to concentrate on, reiterate and revise as an artist to build your base of support.

There are absolutely ways to do it so you don't feel like the Orphan Oliver begging for a

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ONSITE 2B/2B AIRBNB BUNGALOW THAT'S 50 FEET FROM THE FRONT DOOR OF OUR STUDIO WITH PALM TREES, THREE MEXICAN FOUNTAINS AND AN OUTDOOR STAGE

I call a 'record-cation'. People are trying to stay safe and keep costs down and we've been able to help them do that.”

What's prompting them to make the trek when many are avoiding travel altogether? “Our reputation is firmly established among the people who have known us for 30 years. That's number one. We've now done about 25,000 sessions.”

“The second attraction is our gear and instruments — we're like your favorite instrument rental company and recording studio in one, for the price of just the studio. We've been referred to as the 'LA Studio in Phoenix'. We've got 200 microphones, endless guitars amps, keyboards, guitars, a Yamaha C7 grand piano, Hammond C3 organ with rotating Leslie speaker and a DW drum kit. We have a Neve tracking studio with a cathedral drum room, an SSL mixing console that belonged to Ben Grosse and another that belonged to David Foster.”

The Saltmine also has a private residence for added convenience and safety in the current climate. “We have an onsite 2B/2B Airbnb bungalow that's 50 feet from the front door of our studio with palm trees, three Mexican fountains and an outdoor stage. Given the circumstances, we're fortunate we have a lot of space here — 16,000 square foot gated, secure compound on MacDonald Street. In total it's four bedrooms, eight bathrooms, four kitchens, two lounges, an outside stage and an office.”

Salter feels that now is an essential moment for music because of how emotionally charged it is. “This is a unique time in our world history where videos are being shot in our rooms and photos are being taken. Many people want that mask on to memorialize this time in their lives. Making music under pandemic circumstances makes it something of a document you can look back on years from now.”

“I think it's going to continue to be busy,” he predicts. “As people see we're providing our normal full service facility 15 minutes from an international airport and an hour from LAX, I

“When you think about the poetry of rap and pop music being timely and reflective of the human experience, of the pangs and hopes of the moment, the passions that need to be vented, it just seems appropriate the more spontaneously we can capture that, the better it will be.”

expect to see more lockouts soon, which is our sweet spot. We've had a long list of artists over the years including the hottest current artists — Gunna, Yo Gotti, Swae Lee, Asking Alexandria — and some of the best independent artists out there.”

“Our goal is to have safe and eager crews of talented people who are here to make an important record. When you think about the poetry of rap and pop music being timely and reflective of the human experience, of the pangs and hopes of the moment, the passions that need to be vented, it just seems appropriate the more spontaneously we can capture that, the better it will be.”

Don Salter can be reached at (480) 220-4007 and <https://thesaltmine.com/> ■

Peter Petro peter@peterpetro.com