

# How To Rock

The Ultimate Guide To Making It BIG In The Music Business

Written by someone who's MADE IT!

**SAMPLE CHAPTERS**

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of

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B.A – Music and Sound Recording

for...

Ron and Lori Zabrocki, Jason Musshorn, Mike Hogan, Shawn Spencer Rosenthal, Justin Rogers, Stevie Caruso Jr., Chris Viarengo, Paul Jacovino, Dave Reid, Kyle Wald, Tim Conklin, and the legions of Shattersphere fans. Each of you have made my life worth living, I hope I have done the same for you.

and...

This book is dedicated to my cousin Sterling Morrison of The Velvet Underground (RIP 1942-1995). Life robbed us the chance to meet, but you were with me the whole time.

Here lies the formula for all great success...

**BE    ->    DO    ->    HAVE**

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# BE

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There have been many books written, guides published, and free advice given by many people on what to do in order to have what you want in the music business. This is the first guide to the music business ever written that completes the true formula for success by explaining not only what you have to *do*, but also who you have to *be* in order to have the things you want in this business. Success begins with a state of mind, continues with taking action, and ultimately bears great rewards for a job well done. You have chosen to enter one of the most competitive businesses in the world, where over 99% of all people who enter come out with empty pockets, broken spirits, and no recognition. The reasons for their failures are often not based what they did wrong, it's who they failed to become. If you want to know how to do something, there is no shortage of information in the world we live in today. Thanks to the Internet, it's not hard to find the answer to a question you might have about the music business. But giving and receiving "how to" information just isn't enough; it's what a person decides to do with that information that counts. Those decisions stem from deep-rooted psychological programming, levels of self-motivation, and work ethic.

So many people wonder why they don't have the things they want in life, or why things just don't seem to go "their way." They become unhappy with themselves and look around for someone or something

to blame for it. They do this because they follow the formula that unsuccessful people use...

### **The formula for most people**

Have -> Do -> Be

(Once I *have* this, I'll *do* that, and I'll *be* better.)

This formula might sound all too familiar because it's the formula that is followed by most people; and that's not a good thing considering most people never end up getting what they truly want out of life. So what's the secret? By simply *reversing* the thought pattern, the true formula for success presents itself...

### **The formula for success**

Be -> Do -> Have

(I'll *become* better in order to *do* the things that will let me *have* what I want.)

I can give you all of the advice in the world (and I will) on how to do the right things in order to advance your career, but if your mindset isn't in the right place then none of it will matter! Becoming stronger, wiser, and more conscious will aid you more in your journey than all of the free advice in the world. Why is it that two people can go to the same college, get the same education, and hold the same degree but still have different career outcomes? Why do many college graduates never get the job they've been dreaming of? Why are there people out there holding Masters degrees and even Doctorate degrees that simply don't have good careers? College, schools, and other educational institutions only cover the "do" part of the formula. There aren't many institutions out there that I'm aware of that teach the "be" part of the formula. Parents, teachers, and other role models have passed down this formula for years...

Once you *have* a degree, you'll be able to *do* a certain job and then you'll *be* happy and successful.

Has anybody realized that this mantra is not based on the right formula for success? Some of the most successful people in history have dropped out of college and brought home bad report cards for most of their educational lives. Bill Gates, the richest man in the world, was a college dropout along with Michael Dell, founder of Dell Computer. Why are these people more successful than their classmates who all graduated? Their *mindset* gave them the edge over everybody else.

This book covers the entire formula from beginning to end. Truly successful and happy people are few and far between in this world. I am one of them, and I hope that you will become one of them as well. I hope this book proves to be infinitely valuable for you. I congratulate you for furthering your education and wish you the best in all of your endeavors.

# CHAPTER 1

## ***WHY THIS BOOK DOESN'T TALK ABOUT MUSIC***

You'll find that there is very little discussion in this book about the actual music your band makes. My book *Music Theory For The Modern Rockin' Metalhead* covers that subject in depth and I suggest you read that book before you read this one. *Music Theory For The Modern Rockin' Metalhead* is a book dedicated entirely to writing better songs and expanding your knowledge of the science of music, while this book is dedicated to getting those songs the attention they deserve, and to share with you the techniques I used to get my songs more attention than the average band. This book focuses on all of the other aspects of the music business that will play a factor in determining the length, growth, and excellence of your career. Contrary to the general belief of the average musician, the actual music your band makes counts for only a small portion in this business. There are many other aspects of the music business that will play a role in deciding your fate; your ability to simply write good songs is just one aspect.

A large number of both independent and professional artists of all genres have assistance from professional songwriters when they compose their music. Professional songwriters will sometimes compose entire songs for an artist, and even record the entire album. If someone like Britney Spears can't write a hit song herself, then why is she one of the best selling artists in modern times? Why do the top selling artists in most genres of music spend money on image consultants? Why do companies that have nothing to do with music (such as Coke, Pepsi, and ProActive) endorse and sponsor musicians? There is more to this business than meets the eye, and more to this business than most musicians ever realize. The bands that "make it" in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are not necessarily the best musicians. The bands

that are making it now are the best *thinkers*. The modern day musician has an entrepreneurial mindset that is focused on building his band as a business. The modern day musician takes marketing and image just as seriously as music and composition. The old dogs don't think the new tricks don't work, so the old dogs end up losing their audiences; and there is no shortage of old dogs that are playing in the new yard.

## **THANK YOU TECHNOLOGY**

Technology is rapidly changing the world we live in today. 20 years ago I would have been writing this book on pieces of paper, flipping through a dictionary to check my spelling, and then typing up my final draft on a typewriter. Fortunately I am able to type this on a computer that automatically corrects most of my horrible misspellings, makes editing a breeze, and cuts the time it took for this project by 80% or more. I am able to work faster and more efficiently than another author using old methods. A few decades ago, musicians were primarily responsible for writing good songs and putting on a great show. Tasks such as booking, promoting, management, accounting, distribution, and more were outsourced to other people in the early stages of their career in order for the band to focus on their primary responsibility. Money was abundant in the music business because music piracy was still in its infant stages, and there was a clear-cut system of how to turn a profit. The advancements in technology have led to the downsizing of music professionals. Individuals and corporations are now expected to take on a huge variety of tasks all at once. A new age has begun and only those who can adapt to the changing environment will survive. Today's musician must be a good performer, businessman, promoter, booker, marketer, and more all in one sleek looking package.

## **A NEW AGE HAS BEGUN**

The MP3 has revolutionized the business, and it's going to be up to you how to utilize new technology to your advantage; stopping it or



ignoring its presence is not an option. The average person on broadband Internet can download over 100 albums in a 24-hour period, and they don't have to pay a cent to the artists that created them. The boundaries of copyright, publishing rights, and controlled distribution are slowly disappearing. The Industrial Age of music is over, and the Information Age has begun. In the Industrial Age, you had no choice but to pay for a copy of the music you wanted in the form of a cassette or CD because the record labels controlled the reproduction. In the Information Age, a child can download an album and burn it to a CD in a matter of minutes. The advancements in technology now enable children to accomplish the same tasks that teams of employees were assigned to not too long ago.

The Information Age is unlike any other era in history: It's *invisible*. It cannot be seen, it's not tangible, and it's changing faster than most people can keep up with. Trillions of data bits full of information are flying around the world at any given moment. The new becomes old faster than ever before because we are communicating at the speed of light. Today's musician must use a combination of technology and intelligence to pave new routes to success. The musicians of today must meet the ever-changing wish lists of today's listener. Many truly talented bands with great songs are simply lost in the mix because of the failure on their part to adapt to the changing environment. Those who are smart, cunning, and seeking new ways to utilize the latest technology are the ones that are winning. It's no longer a contest to be the best musician; it's a battle of wit, intelligence, work ethic, motivation, and business savvy.

## **CHANGING YOUR MINDSET**

In my time as a professional musician, I've seen far too many good bands full of good musicians fail because they have failed to adapt the right mindset. Far too many people are still under the impression that their only job is to write and play music. These people are similar to the people trying to enter today's current job market

without having any computer skills. They are still stuck in the Industrial Age, and no matter how good their skills *were*, they aren't up to today's standards. Those that wish to succeed today need to be able to compete with the musicians of tomorrow. Thanks to modern technology, people are succeeding younger, faster, and even with less money.

When I was first starting out in the music business, I had many assumptions about how to make it to the top. My Disneyland fantasies were quickly annihilated by the harsh realities of the music biz. I made a lot of mistakes along the way, but I learned how to adapt to the ever-changing world of music. I replaced the old assumptions with the new requirements; I looked forward to where the business was going instead of looking where it had been. I have learned so much about this business over almost a decade, and many of my lessons were learned the hard way. I spent a lot of time, money, headaches, heartaches, and energy trying to understand the nature of the beast. I sacrificed a lot during my journey including girlfriends, friends, college parties, my retirement account, my life savings, and much more. The glory of the music business doesn't come free of charge; there are prices to pay financially, emotionally, physically, and mentally. Your strength as a human being will be put to the test in ways you never thought possible, and they will come without warning. There are prices to pay for wrong answers and bad decisions. I wrote this book to minimize those prices for you and to help you pass some of the tests you will inevitably endure. Think of this book as your all around discount for the many lessons you could have learned the hard way.

Although I chose to make all of those sacrifices, my experiences in the music business are priceless to me. It all started with a dream and the guts to follow it. Many people have the dream, but lack the guts. I congratulate you for investing in your dreams and your future by taking the time to read this book. Your willingness to invest in your education already puts you in the top 20% of all aspiring rock stars out there. I'm convinced that everyone can make their dreams come

true if they just take the necessary actions to do so, be willing to work hard, and keep an open mind.

This book will teach you the self-discipline, work habits, and motivation required for this business; as well as provide plenty of how-to information based on my own personal experiences. Navigating the music business is not an easy task, but it becomes far less difficult if you have the right guidance. Some of the hardest battles you will fight will be with yourself. I've overcome many battles with my own mind regarding self-doubt, self-esteem, self-discipline, and even self-destruction. Every musician in the world has thought about throwing in the towel before they ever make it to the level they desire; and most of them actually do just that. Very few of them have enough fuel to keep going through the hardest of times. I am extremely proud of myself and my band mates for accomplishing all that we have. Nobody would have thought that a few guys from a small town in Connecticut would make a lasting imprint in music history. The odds were stacked against us, there were significant doubts from our friends and families, and disasters struck us that could have ended our careers very early if we had let them. Through all of this we managed to become quite successful, and the object of envy in the eyes of the many bands who tried to compete with us.

## **BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHECIES**

The path you are traveling on will most likely be the hardest one of your life. Chances are, you will encounter the same naysayers that I did. The names and faces change, but their negative attitude towards your attempt to do something great will never change. Many of my private music instructors told me at a young age that I wouldn't cut it as a professional musician, but I ended up graduating at the top of my class when receiving my B.A. in Music and Sound Recording. My music teacher in high school told me that I shouldn't sing because I sounded terrible, but I ended up winning awards for singing because I refused to stop improving. I failed English in high school because

my teacher thought I couldn't write, but my writing is now published worldwide.

The people that have forecasted these prophecies for me are still in the same places they were many years ago. They haven't changed, they haven't contributed anything major to society, and there's a good chance they give similar forecasts to the next generation of aspiring youth. Be very careful whose advice you listen to, and whose voice you let ring in your head for the years to come. You will get many different responses from people when you tell them your non-traditional career choice. Some people are very supportive, some are not, and most have mixed feelings. Here are some of the things I've heard on more than one occasion...

"You can't really expect to do that for a living."

"You should get a real job."

"You probably won't make it."

"You can't bank on doing that."

"What's your backup plan?"

"You can't be serious."

"There's a one in a million chance you'll make it."

"When are you going to look for a real job?"

I found that the only people that say things of this nature are the people who don't have the guts to do it themselves. They are often the ones who cling to their job security, afraid to try anything out of the ordinary, and are usually bitter towards people who act on their desire to become something more. A good number of these people are actually failed musicians. They tried it years ago and it just didn't

work out, and now they take their frustration of their failure out on you. These people love to watch others fail because it validates their thought of “If I can’t do it, nobody can.” Avoid these people like that plague, and never let their words mean anything more than ramblings from an old fool. Let them stay at the job they hate, let them live a life without recognition, but don’t give them the pleasure of making their prophecies come true.

## THE REAL QUESTIONS

It’s scary starting out in any business, and the music business is no exception. It’s even more difficult when you don’t know anyone in the business, don’t know where to start, don’t know who to talk to, or how you would even talk to them given the chance. I’d lie awake at night a cycle the same questions through my inquiring mind...

“Who do I have to impress to get somewhere?”

“How do I impress them?”

“What would I say to someone important?”

“How can I get on the *fast track* in this business?”

“How can I get some inside connections?”

“How did the famous bands make it?”

“What I am doing wrong?”

“Is it really possible to make it these days?”

“How can I compete against all of the other bands out there?”

“Will my band really get noticed instead of the millions of other bands out there?”

“What do they know that I don’t?”

“Will I end up failing?”

“What if this amounts to nothing?”

“What are the big secrets to this business?”

I could go on forever about the endless questions I had starting out. For many musicians, not having the answers to these questions will lead to fear; and it’s that fear of the unknown that paralyzes so many people. I wrote this book to answer as many of those burning questions as possible and settle your fears of the unknown to the best of my ability. As you read through this book, I ask you to keep an open mind about the solutions I will provide for you. Although I wish I had access to a guide like this years ago, I’m not sure if my mind was ready to handle some of the truths. Thankfully I met many people along the way who were willing to teach me some hard lessons and had the patience to let it sink into my thick skull. Some of the things I write about in this book will cause a bit of controversy within your mind, I just ask that you take my words for what they are and not as gospel. There is no end-all, be-all solution to making it big in the music business. If making it big in the music business was as straightforward as making a sandwich, writing a 350 page book on the subject probably wouldn’t be necessary. I’m here to offer you my experiences and share things with you that worked for *me*. You might disagree or criticize some of the ideas, statements, and suggestions I make, and that’s perfectly fine. All I ask is that you keep an open mind and be willing to look at things in a different light. People usually aren’t too quick to change and they often find it very difficult; and that’s precisely why most people never make it in this business.

I had two things when I started my professional music career: A dream and a \$99 keyboard from Radio Shack. Most successful musicians I have met in my life started out broke, bankrupt, or very close to it. We can all afford to start with nothing but a dream. This book will show you ideas of how to get money to fund your project and why you don't have to turn to a giant record label to do so. I didn't have any financial equity at 19 years old, but I had mental equity, friendship equity, and network equity. By utilizing and leveraging the equity I did have, the financial equity began to fall into place.

## **WELCOME TO REALITY**

I was a completely different person many years ago when I first started out. My childhood imagery of what the rockstar life was like ended up being the almost exact opposite in reality. The path I ended up following was much different than what was painted in my mind as a teenager. I thought I was walking into a party, when in reality I was walking into one of the most competitive businesses in the world. Although I was ill prepared, I worked very hard, overcame many obstacles, and quickly adapted to change. Many of my views have been changed on the subjects of money, business, music, and life all together. So keep an open mind, be ready and willing to change, and prepare yourself for success. This book doesn't talk about music, this book talks about *you*, who you have to be, the mindset you need to have, the company you keep, and what aspects of your life and business need to be rethought and redrawn.

Welcome to *Reality*...

# CHAPTER 31

## *WRITING A GOOD BIO*

Think of your band bio as your résumé. You are applying to be a group of rockstars, and just like any other job, you'll need credentials. What is your previous experience? Have you earned any recognition? What makes you different from the others? A well-written biography is essential for advancing in many areas of the music business. Your bio should appeal to both music fans and professionals alike. It should contain things like...

- Awards, accomplishments, and any formal recognition you might have received.
- A section that showcases your band's uniqueness and individuality. Basically, why your band is an important part of the music community.
- A brief history of the band explaining how or why it was formed and the members involved.
- A closing statement of your band's goals for the future and your future outlook.
- A section that describes the sonic quality of your music and what it brings to the business.

Be professional as possible when composing your biography. Compare your biography with national acts, and see how it stands up. You probably won't have the list of awards that they have but you *can* have the same professional writing quality that they do. If you do not feel that any of the members of your band have the writing skills to compose a truly professional biography, find someone who does. Chances are, someone in your band knows *somebody* that can write well. I even offer a writing service for bands on my website



<http://www.kylemorrisonlovely.com>. Good representation of your band is absolutely critical in this business.

Let's compare two different biographies of the same band...

## Winterale

Accomplishments thus far and future plans...

- They have a Classic Rock sound.
- Just released a 4-song demo CD.
- Their local newspaper did a short article on them.
- They are planning on playing local shows this summer.
- They plan on recording a full-length album later in the year.
- One of the member's father's has a small recording studio and produces the band

### **Biography 1**

We are a 4-piece rock band from Mansfield, MA. We've got a demo CD out for sale, please help support us and buy it until we can afford to record a real CD because we are broke. We had trouble finding members that actually would show up to practice and want to play shows, but we've got it together now and are ready to take it to the top. We are bringing back old school rock and put to shame national bands that aren't. Keep your eyes out for us; we'll be coming to a city near you this summer.

### **Biography 2**

Attempting to bring a classic sound to a modern scene isn't an easy task. Few bands have managed to do it, and even fewer have managed to do it well. The Boston based *Winterale* has not only managed to capture the classic sound and bring it new life, they do it quite well. The quartet has

released their debut self titled EP and are in the process of scheduling a Northeast summer tour in support of their effort. The band is set to release a full-length album later this year with producer Mike Soundboard. Soundboard states that the band is “the next big movement out of Boston.” *Winterale* continues to push forward at a staggering rate, and leaves no doubt to a bright future. Lead guitarist Bud Corona comments on the band’s steadily growing progress: “We are here to make a statement and break new grounds. I’m thrilled to be a part of this truly amazing project.” Get the latest news, updates, and tour dates from the band’s official website [Winterale.com](http://Winterale.com).

“...the city’s next rising stars.” *Mansfield Weekly June, 2008*

You might think that Biography 1 is a complete exaggeration, but I’ve seen this more times than I can remember! I have demonstrated how you can take the same band, with same accomplishments, and paint two completely different pictures. If your biography sounds like a casual conversation between you and a friend, your band will probably never make it past that level. There are many, many people out there waiting to be sold on the next big band. If you can’t *sell* yourself as that, you can never *be* that. Now take a look at the reasons why Bio 1 falls short and Bio 2 seals the deal...

**1. Do not write in first person.** Your bio should not be written in the first person using such words as “I” and “We.” Write the biography in the *third person*, as if someone else is reporting the story. This gives the impression that your band is newsworthy, and that the time has been taken to write up something much better than the average basement band.

**2. Don’t air your dirty laundry.** A whopping 3 lines have been taken up by simply explaining their troubles finding musicians. Don’t alert your audience to trouble within the band and don’t make it a known fact that the band had to

cycle through various musicians in order to get a steady lineup. Statements like these let people know that the band is not stable, and immediately drops the confidence level the fans will have in your project. I might start to wonder why they had a hard time finding musicians to play with them? Maybe the band sucks and they had to find the right suckers to play with them? Who knows! Don't let people question your band in terms of stability and potential growth.

**3. Include all of your accomplishments.** Apparently someone in the band didn't feel like the article in the local newspaper was worth mentioning. Ever hear the expression "Any publicity is good publicity?" Notice in Bio 2 how the article was portrayed. Even though most people have never heard of the Mansfield Weekly, they can plainly see that somebody cared enough about the band to publish an article. Press is press; if someone did something to publicly recognize your band, make it known! The exception to this rule is when you have an over abundance of press. When you start having more articles written about your band than you know what to do with, pick the top 5 most known publications to display in your bio. I seldom run across this problem when working with bands, so don't worry about that right now.

**4. Watch your mouth!** If you could remember one point I've made thus far, make it this one: Be careful with the words you choose to represent yourself with. Check out a quick comparison of words that local bands use, and national bands use...

LOCAL	NATIONAL
"playing shows"	"touring"
"demo CD"	"Debut EP"
"We"	"They" or "The Band"

Words are the most powerful tools you have when marketing your band. Choose your words wisely, and avoid sounding “local.” If you market the band like a national act, people will accept it as such. If you market the band as a local band, people will accept it as such.

**5. Avoid passive, negative, and helpless statements.**

Saying things like “please support us because we can’t afford something” does very little to instill confidence in your potential audience. People are immediately given the impression that the band has had no successes and will probably never have any success. Success breeds success! People want to get behind a winning team, and don’t want to be associated with a losing team. It’s embarrassing! If you don’t have the money right now to record a full-length album, don’t make it a public affair. There is no Sympathy Fairy that will magically be willing to deliver you a load of cash because they feel sorry for you. Portray your band as strong, goal oriented, hard working, and bound for future success. People are more likely to follow a winning team than a losing one.

**6. Advertise!** Let people know where the primary source of information regarding your band is located. The last sentence of your biography should contain the link to the source. Put it there, even when publishing the bio on your official site. This lets your fans know that they are at the right place when looking for accurate information regarding your band.

**7. Put your band on the map.** Not very many people have heard of Mansfield, MA, but I’d bet that most people know where Boston is. Big bands come from big cities. Pick the closest major metro area to you and state that your band is based in that area. Mansfield, MA is a city that lies outside of Boston, don’t localize yourself by placing yourself in local cities around major metro areas. A bigger city has more

people to attract than a small one. When people look up bands in the metro area around them, your name will pop up. Once again, *nationalize* instead of localize.

**8. Interview yourself.** In the last phrase of Bio 2, the lead guitarist makes a brief statement about his excitement relating to the band. His enthusiasm about the project will in turn create enthusiasm for potential fans of the project. Also, the interview format sounds like a third party had sat the band down for an interview. Make your band sound as important as you want it to be.

Your biography should closely resemble that of Biography 2. The more you market your band like a national band, the more people will buy into it. Marketing your band as a local band today will ensure that you will stay that way tomorrow. Take a moment to research the bands that are in the position you want to be in. Does it sound like their bio was professionally written? Chances are that it is, and they chose to do that for a reason. A solid biography will become the backbone of your press kit, and it's absolutely essential for advancing in this business.

Imagine yourself as a record label executive that reads hundreds of biographies each day. Read your current bio aloud and ask yourself how much it would impress the executives you are trying to reach. Does your bio sound "local" or "national?" Does the bio imply future success or does it bring attention to past failures? Does your band sound important or unimportant? Does the bio excite you or is it boring? Be willing to invest time and possibly money into creating the most professional bio possible. This matter shouldn't be taken lightly or overlooked all together.

## **WORKS BY KYLE MORRISON LOVELY**

**How To Rock: The Ultimate Guide To Making It BIG In The Music Business**

<http://www.howtorock.net>

**Music Theory For The Modern Rockin' Metalhead: Write Better Songs, Right Now!**

<http://www.shattersphere.net>

*Coming Soon...*

**The Musician's Guide To Investing: What The Professionals Invest In That The Amateurs Do Not!**

<http://www.kylemorrisonlovely.com>

**Music Theory For The Modern' Rockin' Metalhead II: Write Even Better Songs, Right Now!**

<http://www.kylemorrisonlovely.com>

# Music Theory

For The Modern Rockin' Metalhead



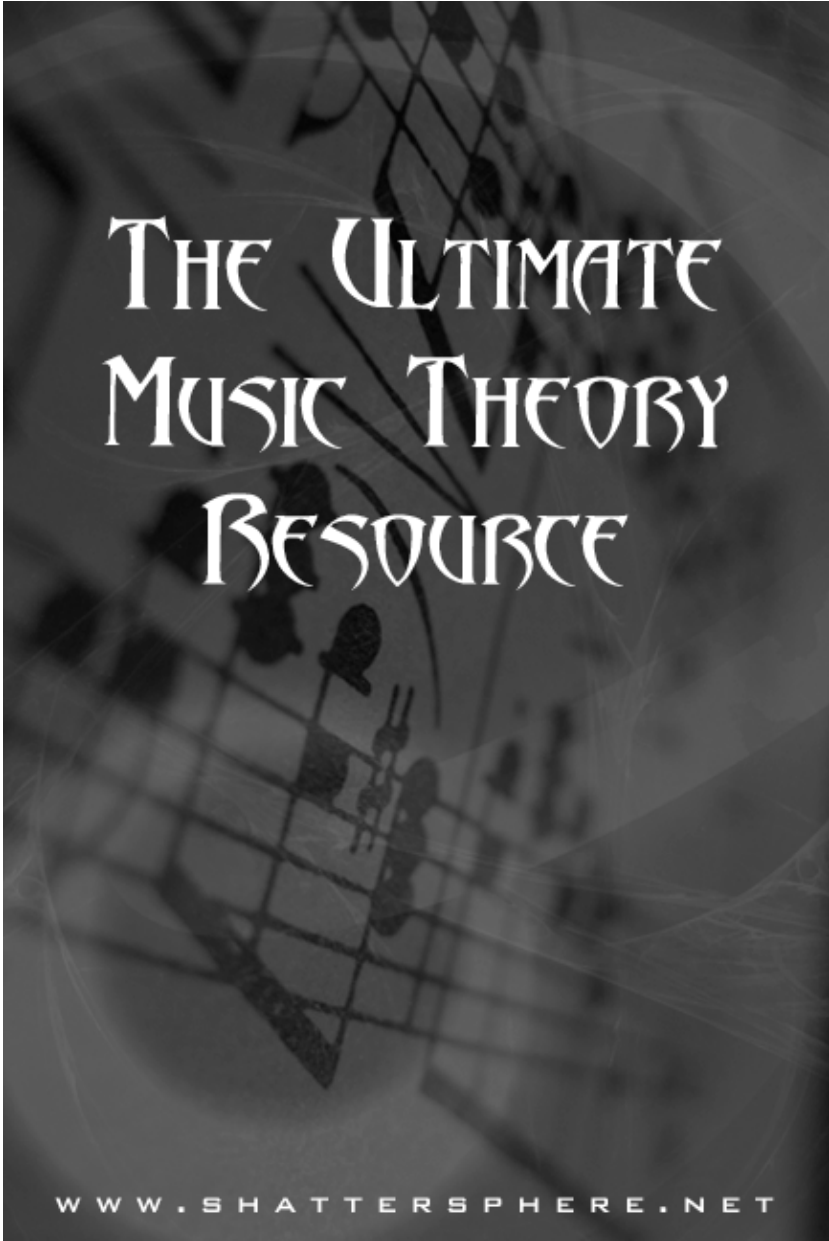
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