THE SELF-RECORDING BAND ACADEMY

MODULE 1 – LESSON 3.3:
THE ARRANGEMENT – LEAD PARTS, VOCALS, PADS, SYNTH LAYERS & CLOSING THOUGHTS

ARRANGEMENT – LEAD PARTS

‣ What is the actual lead melody in each part? Vocal, guitar, synth, nothing at all?

‣ It is meant to carry emotions, so how does it make you feel?

‣ Should the lead be upfront or should it sit in the mix between all the other elements?

‣ What about the stereo image? Is the lead dead center? Are there enough elements to fill out left and right? Need to double the rhythm part, so the mix doesn't get smaller, when the lead kicks in? Should the lead be stereo/doubled?

‣ Is there a vocal on top of the lead instrument? How do you make sure they can coexist without getting in each other's way?

‣ The lead part usually is the most important thing, so it's often a good idea to make space for it in all the other elements, instead of compromising the lead sound.

‣ Be careful with the low end and top end! Clarity is very important, so „mud and rumble" are to be avoided. But it shouldn't sound harsh and annoying!

‣ Is there a way to enhance it? Harmonies, octaves below/above, supporting bass line, tasteful drum fills to enhance parts of it. Any cool, unique effects you could try? Be bold! It's your record, you can do whatever you want!

ARRANGEMENT – VOCALS

▸ Vocal layering (doubles, octaves, harmonies)

▸ Gang vocals or choir

▸ Width/depth

▸ Creative Vocal FX
(rhythmic delay,
long reverb tails,
pitch shifting, distortion,
reamping, pedals)

ARRANGEMENT – PADS & SYNTH LAYERS

▸ Frequency range (high/mid/low/full range)

▸ What's the purpose? Rhythm? Melody? Bass? Width/pad?

▸ Can open up a part, can add width, can beef up thin sounds, can create atmosphere and vibe, can make a bass line audible, can help you „feel" the bass more

▸ Can be subtle and blend well with a track or obvious and be an element on its own

▸ Be careful, because this stuff can really make an arrangement sound muddy and cluttered if you overdo it

ARRANGEMENT – CLOSING THOUGHTS

‣ Is the foundation big enough but not muddy? How tight and defined or big and round do you want the low end to be? More sub or more „knock" and „punch"?

‣ Do the groove and rhythm work? Everybody playing the right pattern? Is there a micro timing element (hi hats) and does it clash with anything, like strumming guitars?

‣ Is there an unintentional hole in the frequency spectrum? Do you have bass, lower midrange foundation, midrange articulation, upper midrange definition and clarity, high end brilliance and sheen?

‣ Are there chords, a bass line,
background melody
(or melodic rhythm elements),
harmonies, lead melody and pads?

‣ Which element does what? Do you even
need everything? Is it too cluttered?

‣ Are the vocal layers helping the message?
Are the important vocal parts big enough,
or close enough, or intelligible enough?