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Finding a record label

You've written some songs, and you got good feedback when you played them on social network or streaming platforms. Now you want to take the next step: finding a record label.

How will having a record label help you?

The team at the record label will have a wealth of experience you can draw on. It is therefore essential to have good vibe between you. It's all about the human touch.

The label's image and reputation in the market will also help you to get noticed by finding your artistic niche.

A record label will also help you to increase your presence in the market, through the distribution networks with which it collaborates, nationally or internationally.

It's an aesthetic and strategic decision

You should therefore look for a label that matches your style and ambition. In particular, you should ask yourself if the format is suitable for your music: physical (vinyl, CD), or digital (streaming, downloads), or both. It's all about strategy, planning, and the goals you set yourself, and your choice of the various labels will depend on these factors. A local approach, without necessarily aiming for significant commercial rewards, will steer you more towards micro-labels or independent labels. If you're aiming for fame and the potential for significant financial rewards, this will be more easily accomplished with one of the large independent companies or major record labels. Once you've found the right partner, you can plan the stages of your development together.

Research by osmosis

The simplest thing to do is to look at the labels that are closest to you in terms of style and outlook. Just by being involved in the music scene you relate to will often steer you towards the right label. Sometimes, all you need to do is go to concerts in your local area and to get to know the organisers and other artists involved.

As far as music's concerned, get involved with the cultural scene and music organisers. This is still the best way to make good contacts - "get out and get yourself known!" So get out there!

If you don't, you may find yourself involved with a record label you only know of through seeing it on the internet, but whose style is totally unsuitable for you. These days, SoundCloud, BeatPort, YouTube and social networks are some of the best ways for musicians get discovered. Also, there's nothing stopping you from contacting a record label via the internet and sending in samples of your work.

You can also send demos or songs to well-established, independent or major record labels, if you think your music has potential. But be aware that these companies are bombarded with material and it can take a very long time to get a response, if ever. The first thing these labels will look at is your online and social network profiles - the number of views, likes and followers you have - which are as important for them as the quality of your music. If you're just starting out, it's best to seek out the label that most closely reflect your style and can support you during the early stages of your development. In any case, the first step in your development, in the great majority of cases, will be down to you. Don't forget this important piece of advice: if you want to be seen, you must be visible. Who knows - a record label may even make the first move if they see you in a competition or at

a few concerts.

Should you start your own label?

The last few years have seen an increasing number of artists starting their own labels, following the logic 'if nobody will do it for us, we'll do it ourselves!' This approach is very tempting, but is also fraught with uncertainty. Most successful artists that attempt it have already proven themselves with established labels.

One of the motivations for creating your own label, apart from the artistic freedom it gives you, is the higher return on investment; in particular, a higher percentage of money from sales and royalties, with no partner or middleman taking a cut. But make no mistake: even if you can earn more money from sales and royalties by operating alone, you'll achieve even more sales and earn more from royalties if you use the services of an experienced, competent team, especially one that has more time than you to invest in promoting your music. Supporting and developing an artist's music and running a record label is very time-consuming and requires a methodical and organised approach. Don't forget that when you're weighing up the pros and cons of choosing a label.

How do you find a label?

- You'll find a list of record labels on IRMA website
- Consult the specialist press and reference sites to find suitable labels and contact them directly or via social networks: Resident Advisor
- Look up the contact details of collectives [sur la mention en bleu, faire un lien vers la page 'Collectives') and festivals [sur la mention en bleu, faire un lien vers la page 'festivals'): these are places where you can make a lot of useful contacts.

Finding a record label
An interview with the inFiné label

Name: Alexandre Cazac & Yannick Matray

Occupation: Producer and Publisher

Company: inFiné

Booking Dif

Artists: Rone, Vanessa Wagner, Murcof, Clara Moto, Gordon, Arandel, Cubenx, Danton Eeprom and more

Date established: 12/28/2005

Number of employees: 1 employee + 3 service providers + 1 intern

- **How does an electronic music label handle declining sales?**

It's very complicated. The model has been evolving for 15 years. For InFine, the label is a showcase allowing the development of each album as an ecosystem, bringing together production, audiovisual aspects, concerts, publications and so on. We are equally committed to artists as we are to producers and publishers. We also attach a great deal of importance to international growth.

- **Can a label still develop a young artist's career sustainable?**

We have been managing to do it for 10 years with our artists, due to subsidies in particular. If we take Bachar Mar-Khalifé as an example, we have supported him since he released his first album, which went rather unnoticed. The second attracted some attention, then the third was duly recognised. It is a commitment, a daily struggle. We pride ourselves on succeeding in retaining almost all our artists, on having made their projects available to the largest audiences. It's a real skill that can be compared to literary publishing.

- **What does a producer contribute?**

A publisher's contribution is not recognised as it should be. People talk about a lot about pipelines, Netflix, Spotify and Deezer, but all this only works because we produce content. Would Rone have abandoned his cinema studies if we hadn't encourage him to pursue music? It takes vision, incentive. We pride ourselves on having stimulated projects by Aufgang, Bashar Mar-Khalifé, Pedro Soler & Gaspard Claus and even the comeback of Bernard Szajner. We currently work with many generations of artists, from 22 to 76 years of age, from different countries and figures. With our "Workshop InFiné" festival, we have hosted artists and audiences from other labels.

In the 50s, France opened its doors to African American jazzmen. Today we have lost this hosting ability, which is essential. Ambitious cultural policies should be launched, with the ability to stimulate the creation of partnerships with historical monuments, national scenes. We have the tools to successfully foster these ambitions.

- **What are the challenges for tomorrow?**

Daft Punk has changed many things: more and more minor French artists are going abroad. The international aspect is a real challenge since electronic music is the genre most exported. One needs to find relevant partners. Thanks to Idol, our digital distributor, and to the Warp label, with which we have signed agreements, we can tailor our operations specifically for each different country. Innovation is crucial. We should be part of the French Tech, associate music with the latest technology and benefit from the influence of French start-ups.

With our new DIF structure, we offer engineering in cultural branding, it's a way forward for the future.

An interview with the inFiné label