

6 Strings In My Head, 88 Keys In My Hands

Taking an Awesome Song From Concept To Streaming

Richard Kasperowski | Sótano Épico





RICHARD KASPEROWSKI

Sótano Épico
sotanoepico.com
richard@sotanoepico.com

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MUSIC & TECHNOLOGY

I love music and technology



I'm great at music production



Nope, not at all

Hell yeah!



ORIGIN STORY

WEST SPRINGFIELD RECORD

Thursday, May 7, 1987



Members of Critical Mass, a local rock group, are, from left, Evan McCarthy, Rich Kasperowski, Mike Bednarczyk, Chris Graziano and Brian Walker.

'Critical Mass' performs at Mt. Holyoke

A group of West Springfield musicians, playing together since 1986 as the Critical Mass, performed May 2 at Mount Holyoke College's African Families Benefit concert.

Evan McCarthy, lead vocalist and rhythm guitarist, along with Rich Kasperowski, keyboards, Mike Bednarczyk, lead guitarist and rhythm guitar, Chris Graziano, bass guitar, and Brian Walker, drums, got to know each other at West Springfield High School. Kevin Leveille, one of the founding members is no longer

with Critical Mass.

They recorded a tape at a local studio which was well received. McCarthy reports, and played at area high schools and private functions.

In February they recorded at Embassy Studio, Amherst, producing their own songs with the assistance of Stephen, Todd and Marc Fantini of the band, Fantini.

"The songs from the tape have been played on local college radio stations including WMUA at UMass and WCCH at Holyoke Community College," says

McCarthy.

"The benefit concert will be a big thing for us," the musician, now a UMass freshman, said on the eve of the Mt. Holyoke concert. "We are glad we can participate in raising funds for such a cause and will enjoy sharing the stage with other talents as well as receiving the exposure."

Walker is a freshman at HCC, the others are seniors at the high school.

Their "progressive rock" group will also perform in a battle-of-the-bands in Feeding Hills, May 30 and their next goal is to put out an extended play record.

Personal Journey

The Concept





BACK IN BLACK

SOTANO EPIC D

Discography

- Grandma Dynamite (Apr 8, 2023)
- Welcome to the Jungle (May 25, 2023)
- Interstate Jungle Dynamite (EP - Oct 13, 2023)
- Back in Black (Feb 13, 2024)
- Crazy Train (Aug 13, 2024)
- Keys to the Kingdom (album - Sep 13, 2024)
- For Whom the Bell Tolls (Dec 13, 2024)
- Creep (May 13, 2025)



EXAMPLE: FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

THE PRODUCTION PROCESS - OVERVIEW

SÓTANO ÉPICO PRODUCTION WORKFLOW



Concept



Arrangement



Recording



Editing



Mixing



Mastering



Distribution



WEEKLY SOUNDCLOUD RELEASE

Latest In-Progress Edit

Continuous feedback loop: Publishing weekly updates for audience engagement

RELEASE TIMELINE



Week 1-2
Concept



Week 3-4
Recording



Week 5-6
Editing



Week 7-8
Release

Unique Challenges

- Translating Guitar-Driven Energy to Piano
- Preserving Iconic Solos Note-for-Note
- Creating Space for Vocals in Dense Arrangements

DEEP DIVE: CREATING "CREEP"

Arrangement Phase

- Translating Guitar Parts to Piano
- Original vs Sótano Épico arrangement
 - AC/DC: Back In Black (Plaza de Toros de las Ventas, July 1996) (start at 2:19)
 - SE: Back in Black — Sótano Épico
- Tools: OnSong, StaffPad, iPad 12.9"... my ears, creative dreaming, ...

17:47 Mon May 5

Songs

Creep

Creep

Stone Temple Pilots

Key of Em
54 BPM
4/4
4:00

Intro:

| C B7 | Em | | |

| C B7 | Em | | |

Verse 1:

| Em Forward yesterday | C B7 Makes me wanna stay |

| Em What they said was real Makes me wanna steal |

| Em Livin' under house | C B7 Guess I'm livin', I'm a mouse |

| Em All's I got is time | C B7 Got no meaning, just a rhyme |

| Em | | |

Pre-Chorus:

| G Am | Em Take time with a wounded hand 'Cause it likes to heal |

| G Am | Em Take time with a wounded hand 'Cause I like to steal |

| G Am | C D Take time with a wounded hand 'Cause it likes to heal I like to steal |

Chorus:

| Em D/F# G A | Em D/F# G A | I'm half the man I used to be (This I feel as the dawn, it fades to gray)

| Em D/F# G A | Em D/F# G A | Well, I'm half the man I used to be (This I feel as the dawn, it fades to gray)

| Em D/F# G A | Em D/F# G A | Well, I'm half the man I used to be (This I feel as the dawn, it fades to gray)

| Em D/F# G A | Em D/F# G A | Well I'm half the man I used to be Half the man I used to be

| Em | | |

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Metallica
Arranged by Richard Kasperowski

♩ = 118

Em¹³ F⁷m Em¹³ F⁷m



Piano

17:49 Mon May 5

1 2 3 4

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Metallica
Arranged by Richard Kasperowski

♩ = 118

Em¹³ F⁷m



Piano

Recording Setup

- Piano recording: Yamaha P-525 → MIDI → Komplete Audio 6 → MacBook Pro → Logic Pro → Piano Noire
- Vocals: Shure SM7B → Cloudlifter CL1 → Komplete Audio 2 → MacBook Pro → Logic Pro



Editing Process

- Piano MIDI editing
- Vocal takes selection and "stitching" process
- Melodyne for vocal improvements

> Region: Piano - take 2

> Track: Piano - joined

↑ Edit Functions View [Grid] [List] [Pencil] [Erase] [Link] [Snap]

46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62

Arrangement + Pre-Chorus 2 Chorus 2 Moan

Marker +

Signature + Cm

Piano - joined Piano - take 2 Piano - take 2

Piano Roll

Score

Smart Tempo

Edit Functions View [Pencil] [Erase] [Link] [Snap]

E2 48 3 4 133 Snap: Smart

Piano - take 2 on Track Piano - joined

48 3 49 3 50

Piano - take 2 Piano - take 2 Piano - take 2

Time Quantize (classic)
1/16 Note Q
Strength 100
Swing 50

Scale Quantize
Off Major (lo... Q

Articulation
-

Velocity 80

C4
C3
C2
C1

Automation/MIDI

⏻ Region →

Volume +0.0 dB

Setting

Setting

EQ

EQ

MIDI FX

∞

Kontakt 7

Neutron4 +

Level Mtr

Audio FX

Mastering

Sends

Stereo Out

Group

Read



0.0



0.0

Bnc

M

S

M

S

Piano - joined

Output



Voice - joined - with Melodyne

Untitled

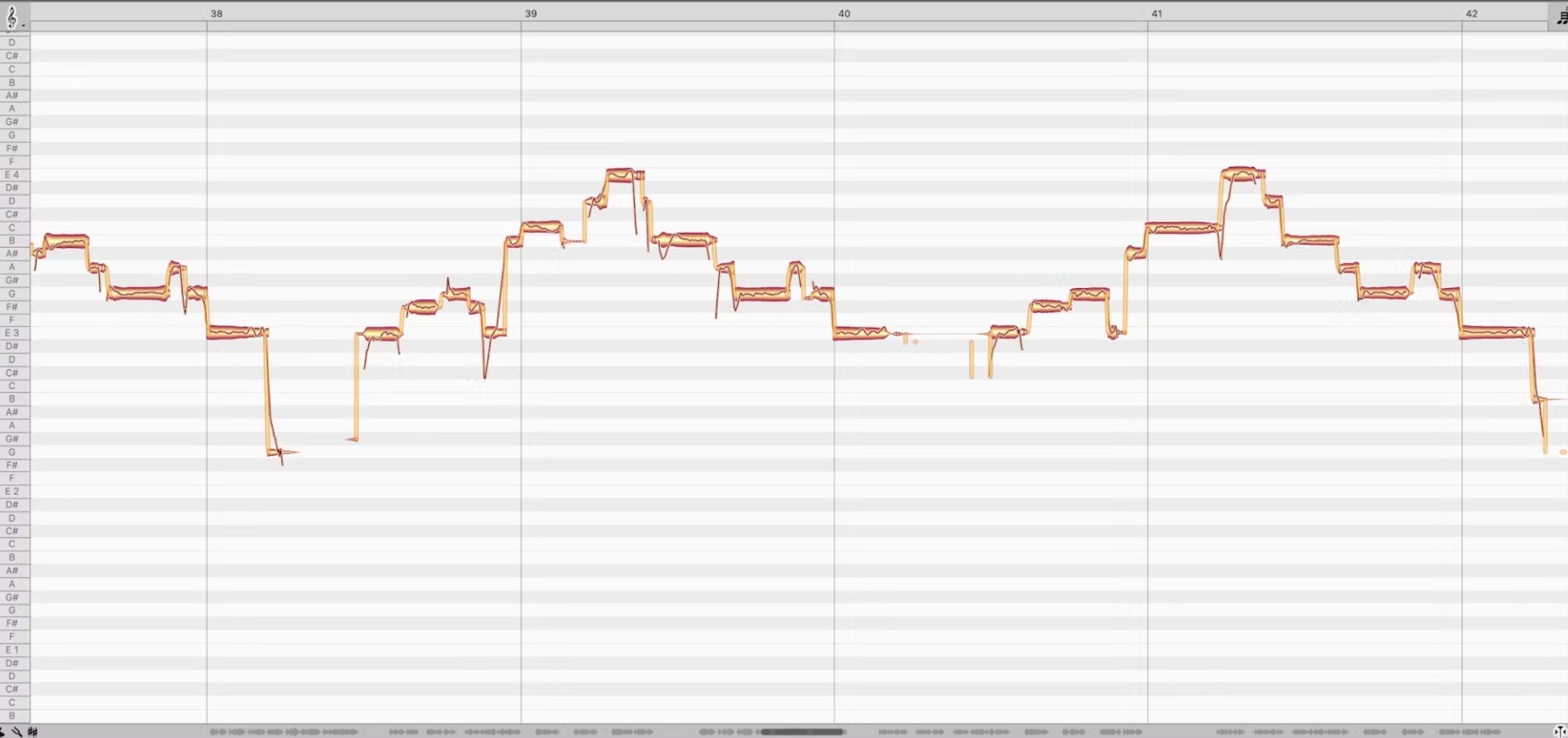
< > Compare Copy Paste Undo Redo

View: Editor

Settings Edit Algorithm Options Help

melodyne studio

Transfer E Minor 54



Mixing Highlights

- Key Plugins
 - Vocals: Izotope RX for de-reverb, de-click, de-ess
 - Piano: Neutron Unmask for dynamic EQ, side-chained to main vocal
- Creating space with EQ and vocal doubling
- Steven Slate VSX headphones and app for mix translation testing

Region: Voice - t...erged_2.1 Edit Functions View Snap: Smart Drag: No Overlap

Track: Voice - j... Voice - joined - with Melodyne

47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62

Chorus 2 Chorus 2 Moan

RX 11 Repair Assistant

Manual Compare Editor

CLEAN UP

De-noise De-reverb

De-hum De-click

TONE

Tilt Scoop

Tone Lo-cut Hi-cut

DE-ESS

Shaping Threshold Fast Slow

DE-CLIP

Threshold 0 -32 -64

Output Gain 0.0 Limiter

Bypass

Neutron

Manual Compare Copy Paste Undo Redo

Side Chain: None View: Editor

Clean Vocal

RMS Peak True Learn

Punch Modern Vintage

Ratio 4.0:1

Attack 10.0 Release 40.0

Makeup 0.0 Mix

Int Band 1

Threshold Knee: 10

Gain

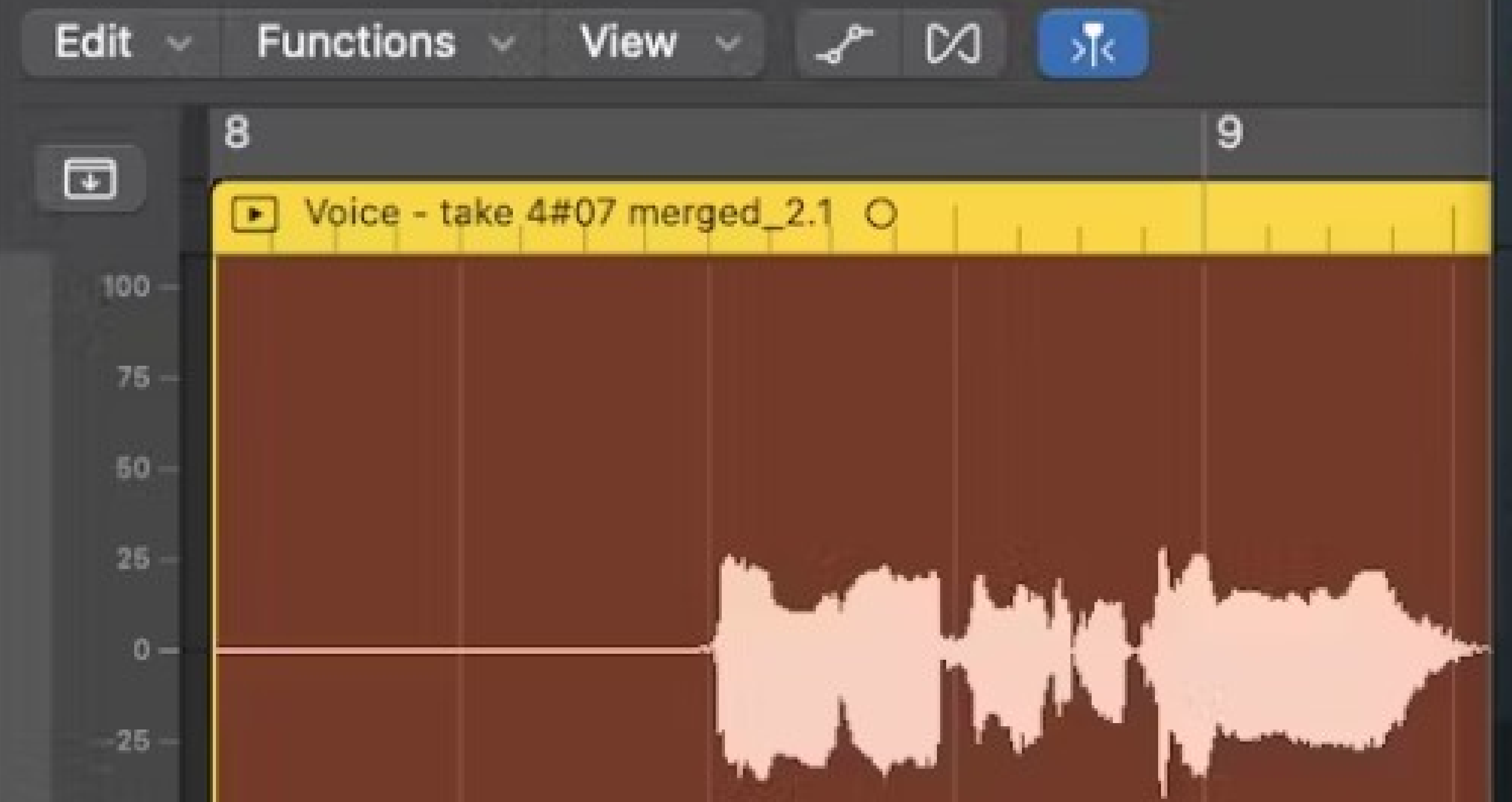
Bypass

Pan Width

Mix

- PIANO MAN
- Bus 6
- Melodyne
- Noise Gate
- RX 11 Brea
- RX 11 Repa
- Channel EQ
- Neutron 4
- Compressor
- Ensemble
- ChromaVerb
- Limiter
- Level Mtr

- Bus 4
- Bus 1
- Stereo Out
- Group
- Read



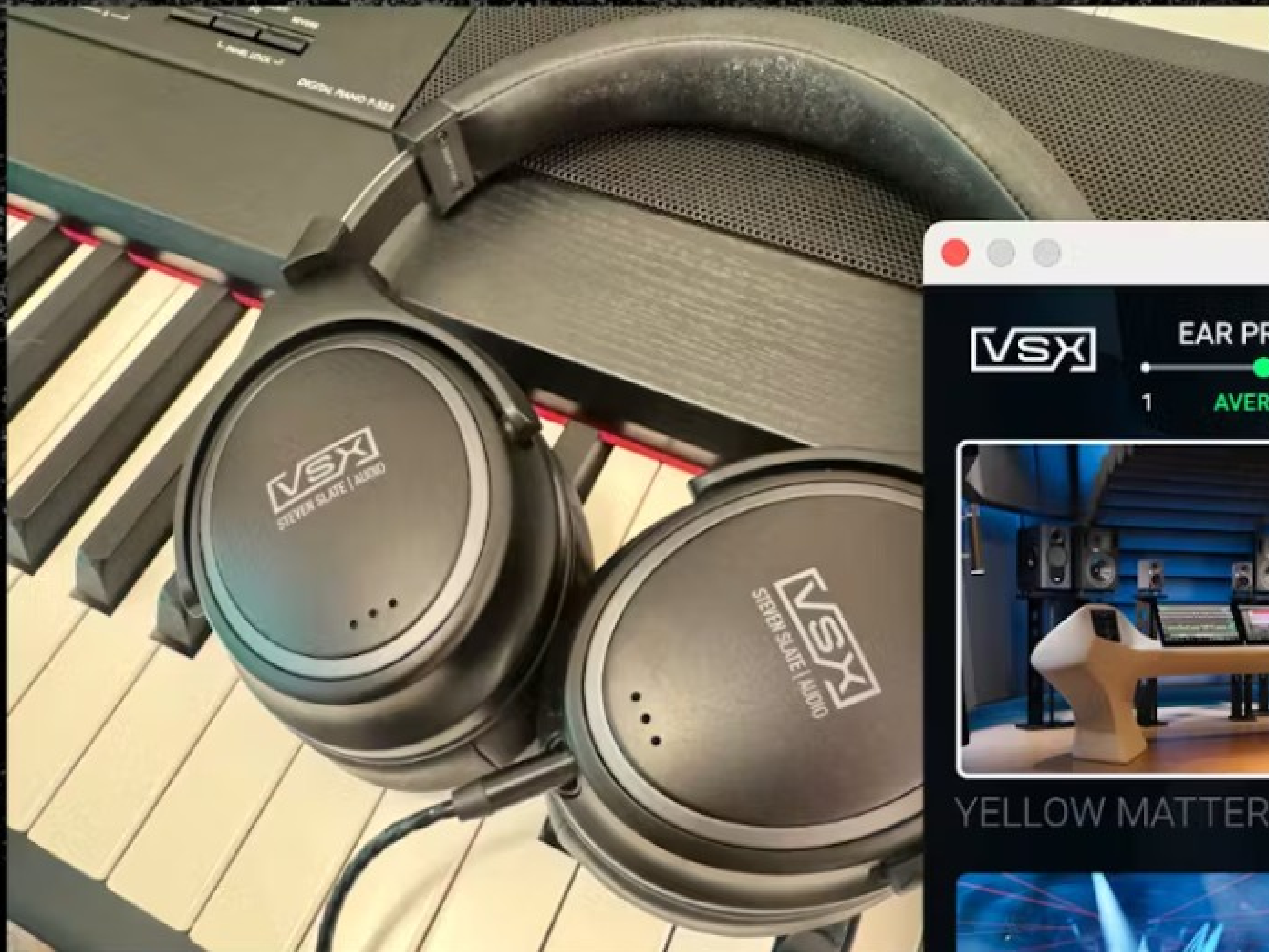
-4.7 dB

Neutron 4 Compressor

The screenshot displays a digital audio workstation (DAW) interface, likely Ableton Live, with a piano track selected. The track is named "Piano - joined" and is part of a region labeled "Piano - take 2". The piano roll shows a sequence of notes, with a yellow marker indicating the current playback position. The piano roll is divided into measures, with the first measure containing a single note and the second measure containing a sequence of notes.

The Neutron 4 Unmask plugin is open, showing a frequency spectrum plot. The plot displays the frequency response of the audio signal, with a peak around 150 Hz. The plugin interface includes various controls, including a "Manual" button, a "Compare" button, and a "Copy" button. The "Manual" button is currently selected, and the "Compare" button is disabled. The "Copy" button is also disabled. The "Manual" button is a blue circle with a white power symbol. The "Compare" button is a blue circle with a white double arrow. The "Copy" button is a blue circle with a white document icon. The "Manual" button is currently selected, and the "Compare" button is disabled. The "Copy" button is also disabled.

The frequency spectrum plot shows a peak around 150 Hz, which is the fundamental frequency of the piano. The plot is divided into frequency bands, with the first band being the most prominent. The plot also shows a series of smaller peaks at higher frequencies, which are the harmonics of the piano. The plot is a line graph with a dark background and a light-colored line. The x-axis represents frequency in Hz, and the y-axis represents amplitude in dB. The x-axis has labels at 60, 100, 150 Hz, 300, 600, 1k, 2.0 kHz, 3k, 6k, 10k, and Hz. The y-axis has labels at -100, -80, -60, -40, -20, 0, 18, 12, 6, 0, -6, -12, -18, and dB. The plot shows a peak around 150 Hz, which is the fundamental frequency of the piano. The plot is divided into frequency bands, with the first band being the most prominent. The plot also shows a series of smaller peaks at higher frequencies, which are the harmonics of the piano. The plot is a line graph with a dark background and a light-colored line.



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EAR PROFILE

1 2

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A B

B

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EXPANSIONS

BACK TO HOME





YELLOW MATTER STUDIOS



STEVEN'S MIX ROOM



NRG



MIKE DEAN'S STUDIO



CLUB INDEY



ARCHON



ZUMA STUDIOS



SONOMA STUDIO

1 2 3 4 5

FAVE 5

2SPC

YELLOW MATTER

EQ

L LM M LH H

LEVEL MATCH BYPASS

DEPTH

SPEAKER VERSION 4.0

OUT LEVEL

BYPASS

-18dB +12dB

LOW FULL

NEAR-FIELD

MID-FIELD

FAR-FIELD

-18dB +12dB

L R

-Inf -18 -12 -6 -3 0 dB

FINISHING
TOUCHES

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- Mastering: emastered.com for final polish
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Creep

By Sótano Épico Album Unreleased

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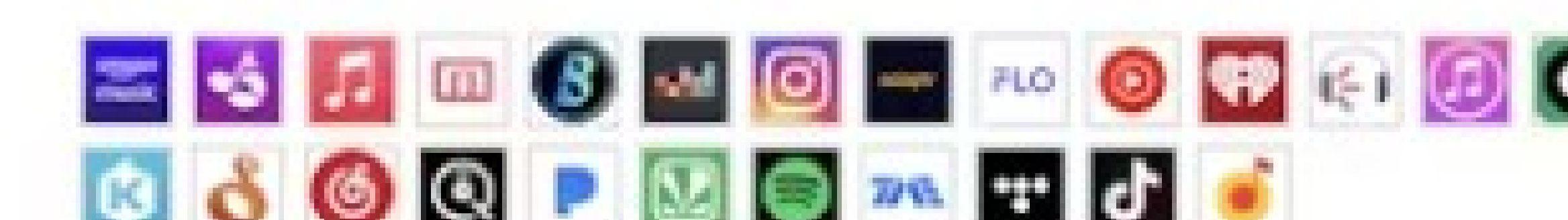
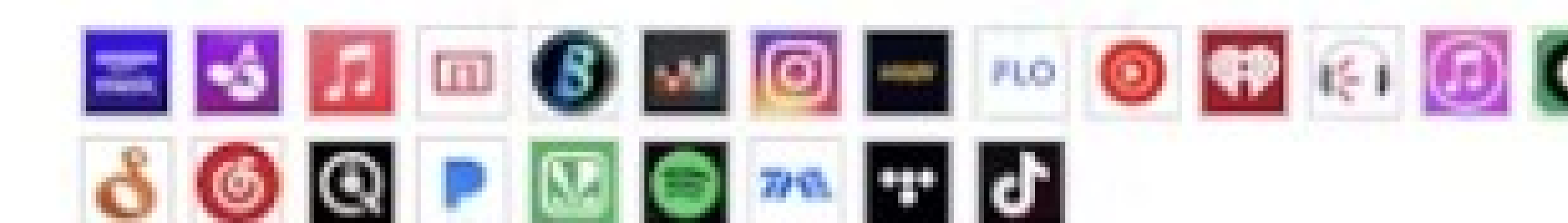
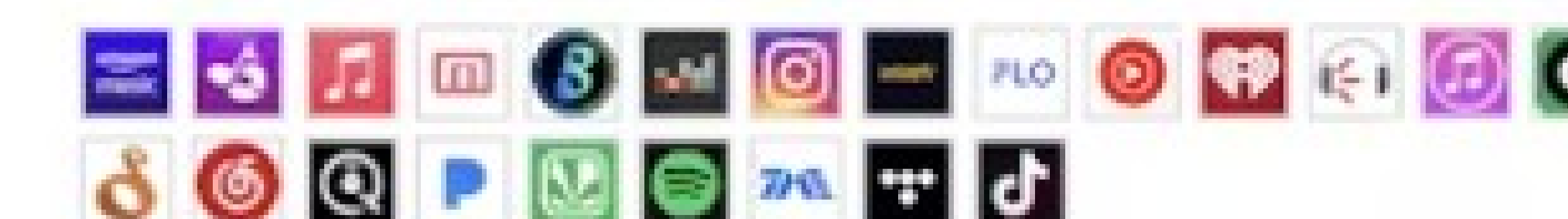
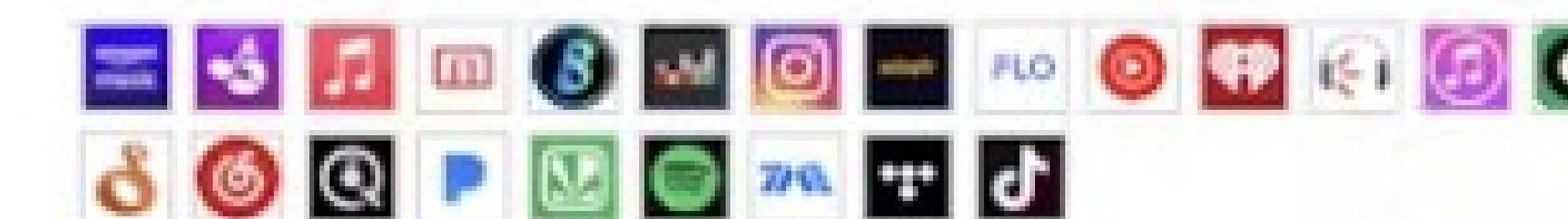
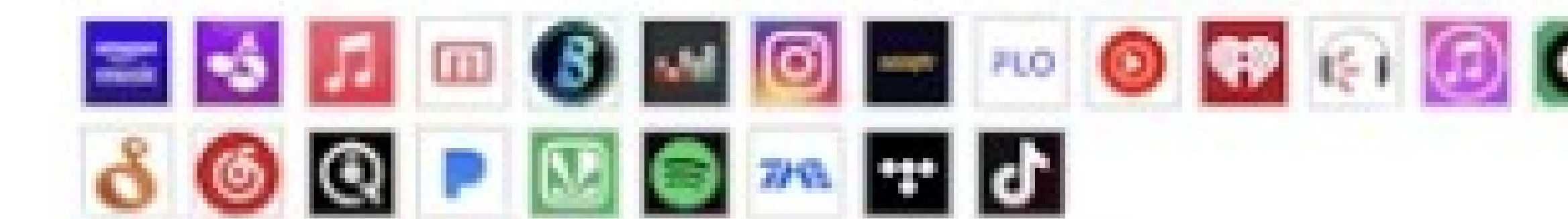
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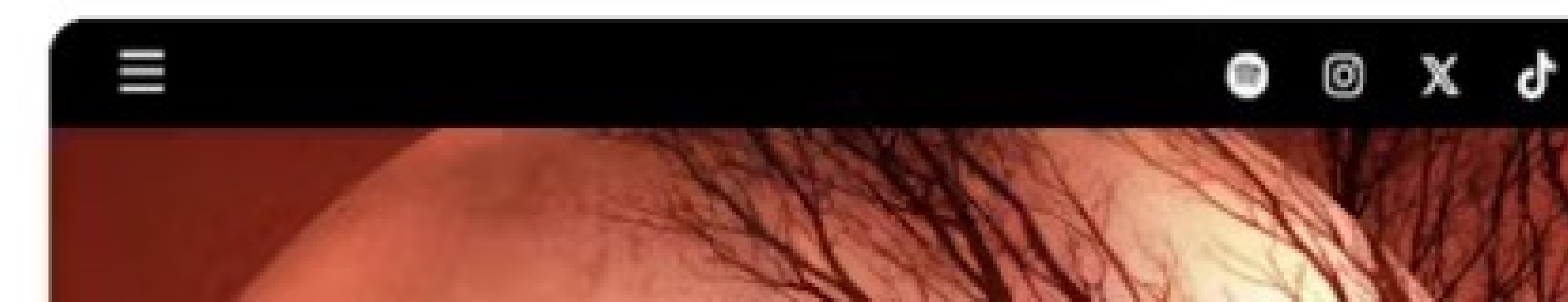
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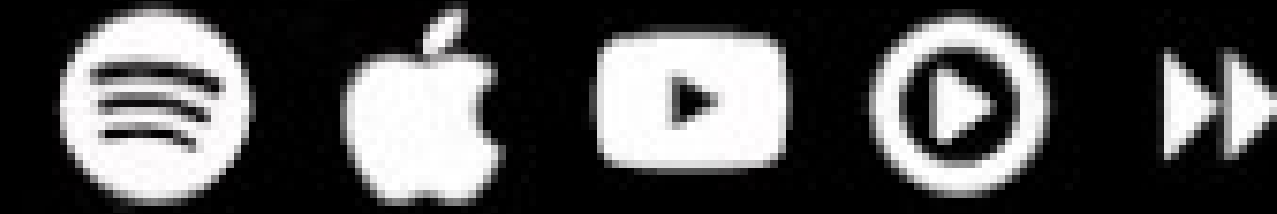
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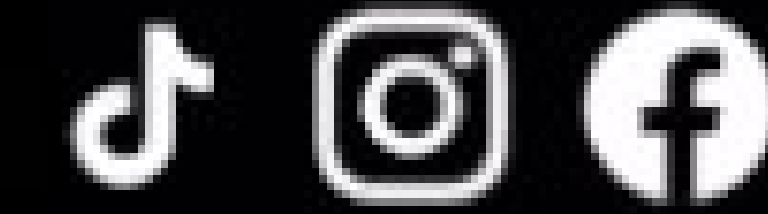




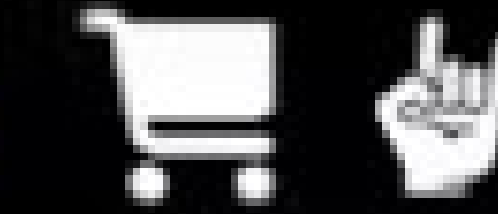
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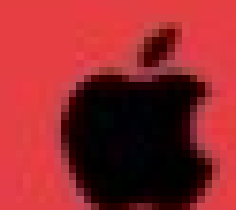
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Our Latest Release: For Whom the Bell Tolls



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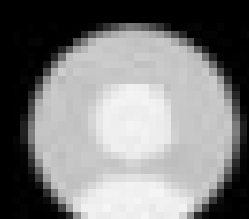
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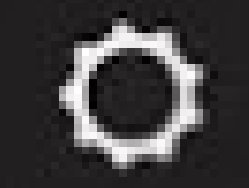
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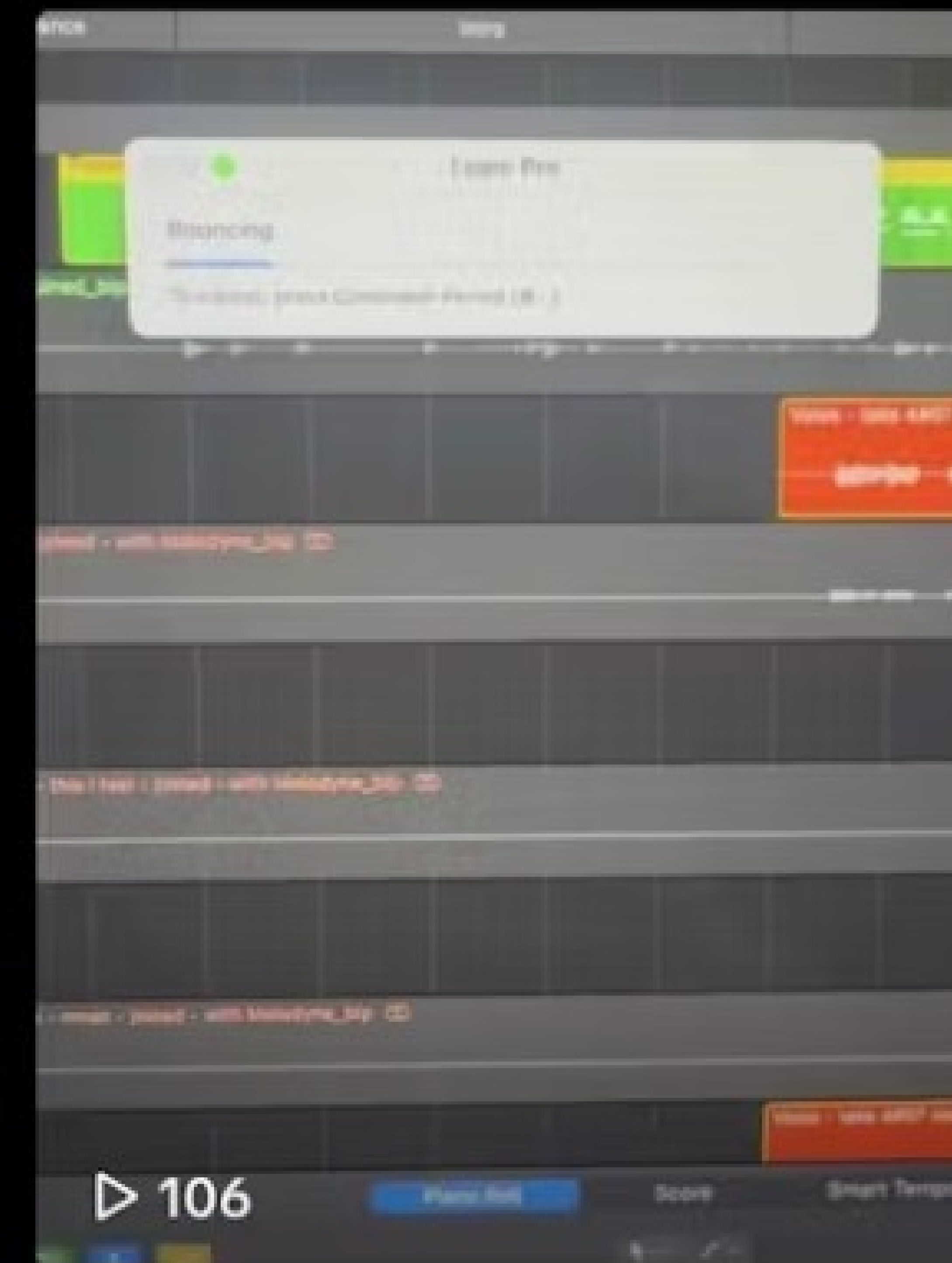
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LESSONS LEARNED & TIPS

Key Insights

- Piano Architecture Maps to Band Roles
- Sound Masking Requires Technical Solutions
- Metal Standards Have Universal Emotional Appeal

Time-Saving Workflow Tips

- Reusable Production Checklist
- Template-Based Approach
- Weekly Interval Publishing

Quality vs. Perfectionism Balance

- Weekly SoundCloud release schedule
- Final releases every Tuesday the 13th (singles) and Friday the 13th (albums/EPs)

FEEDBACK



RICHARD KASPEROWSKI

Sótano Épico

sotanoepico.com

richard@sotanoepico.com

You Rock!

- New single - Creep - Tuesday the 13th of May
- Listen to all the music at sotanoepico.com
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