QUICK GUIDE TO PRODUCER'S LINGO

UNDERSTANDING STUDIO TERMINOLOGY

PRODUCE like a BOSS

AIR
This refers to the frequencies above 12kHz . Also known as 'breathy', hi end, and shimmer.

BOOMY
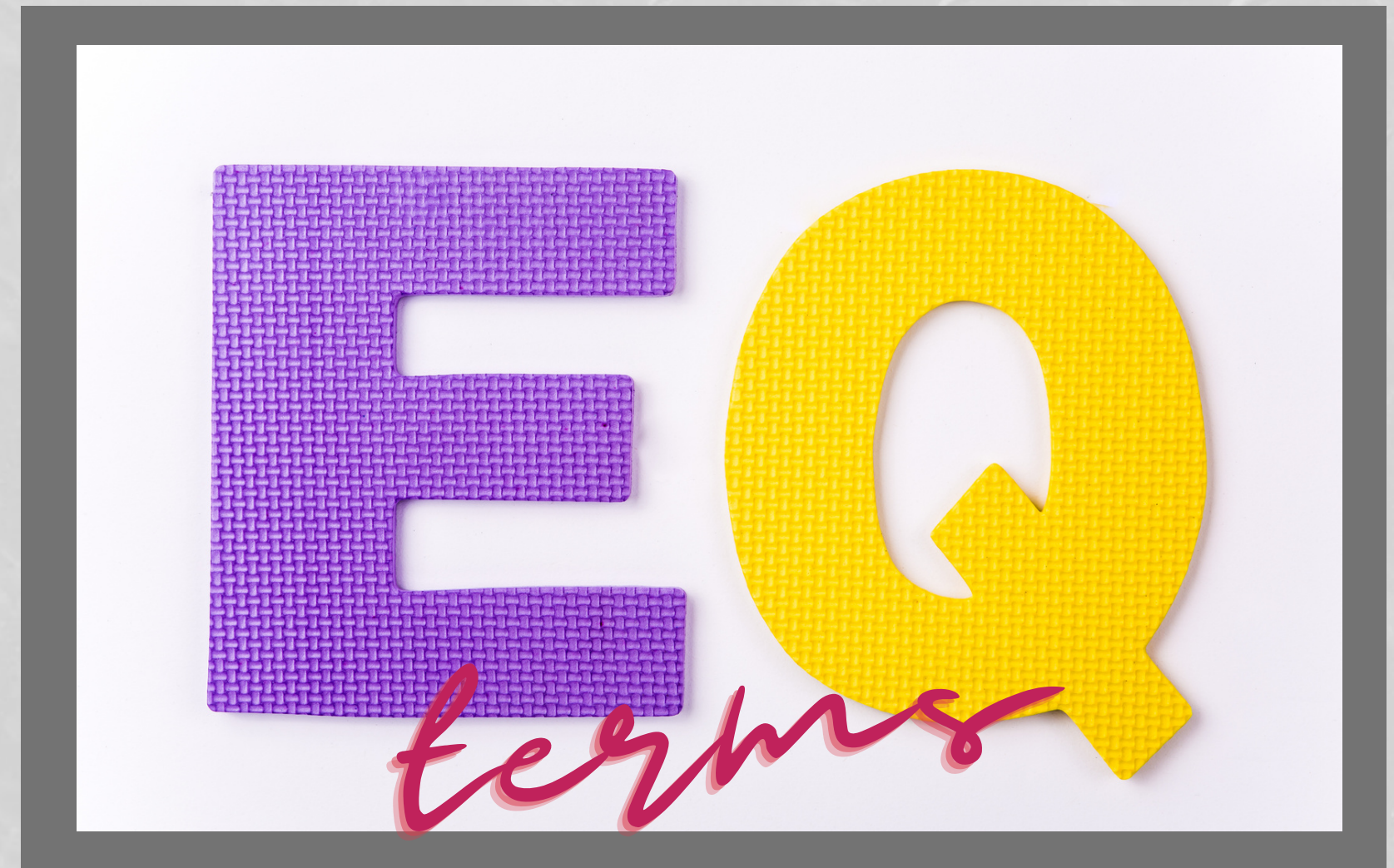Too much low frequency! Cut some of the lows on your EQ. Try starting at 130 Hz.

BRIGHT
LOTS of high end. Also known as crisp.

DARK
LACKING hi frequency.

HARSH
Prominent hi frequencies, but not in a good way! This means the frequencies are too pronounced, and unpleasant to the ears.

EQ-allows you to adjust the volume of specific frequencies. "Boost up the lows...turn down the highs..." etc.

For example, you may not need to turn the vocal up using volume, but rather boost the mid high frequencies to increase its presence.

Human hearing is **extremely** sensitive to high mid frequencies. Even a slight boost here can cause a major change in timbre. This is where vocals are
most prominent.

AUTOMATE

Tells your DAW to perform tasks over time. For example, you want the guitars much lower in the verses than in the chorus, so you automate the volume to increase when the chorus hits. This can be done by 'drawing' in automation, or manually in real time.

ADSR

ADSR (sometimes called the Envelope) – Stands for Attack, Decay, Sustain and Release – refers to the volume of a sound over time. Can be applied to the volume, filter, pitch or more. Can make things sound plucky, soft, or ambient etc.

WHAT DO YOU MEME?

Producer/Engineer

What My Friends Think I Do | What My Mom Thinks I Do | What Bands Think I Do

What My Accountant Thinks I Do | What I Think I Do | What I Really Do

BOUNCE

To render to one audio file. For example, we are making a song in the studio with multiple tracks (drums, bass, guitars, vocals). Before we can listen in the car I'll need to "bounce" the session (render all audio files to one file)to get a WAV or MP3 we can then hear without being in the DAW.

COMPRESSION

To lessen the dynamic range between the loudest and quietest parts of an audio signal. In short, make the quiet parts louder, and the loud parts quieter to even out the performance.

DAW

Short for Digital Audio Workstation. This is the software you're creating on where you can record, edit and mix. i.e. Logic, Pro Tools, Ableton, Cubase

DRY / WET

FX NOT applied or applied. A dry vocal won't have any reverb on it. A wet vocal would.

TO "FLY"

To copy paste. For example, "I'm going to fly these chorus vocals over" = "I'm going to copy paste one chorus to another."

MASTERING

This is the final step in production. Rather than mixing, which is treating (EQing, balancing, compressing) each individual track, you treat the entire stereo mix as a whole.

For example, if you boost the low on a 'kick' only the lows of that kick are adjusted. If you boost the low end in mastering, it will pull up everything that's living in that frequency. Same goes for compression, etc.

MIDI

Musical Instrument Digital Interface- Unlike your typical 'keyboard' which has sounds built into it, MIDI tells your computer when to play a sound, and at what pitch. This allows you to play virtual instruments by using the midi to trigger the sounds/samples that are in your computer.

OVERDUBS

Adding additional music parts to an already existing multitrack.

For example, you may have tracked the band playing live, with everybody in booths, but now you're going to do a few vocal and synth 'overdubs'

MUDDY
Lack of definition in a sound. Usually this is caused by too much low mid energy.

PUNCHY
Good attack and presence!

SIBILANCE
"S" sounds. Often centered between 5kHz to 8kHz, This can easily become harsh and unpleasant, especially as you add compression to the vocal. Reach for an EQ or desser to take out unwanted frequencies.
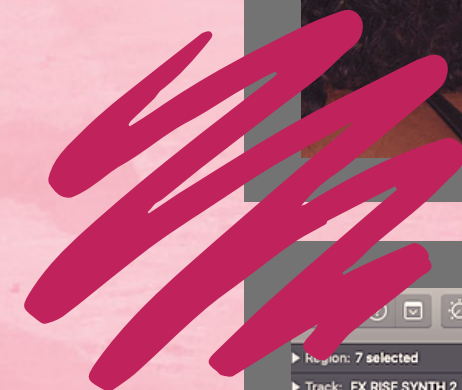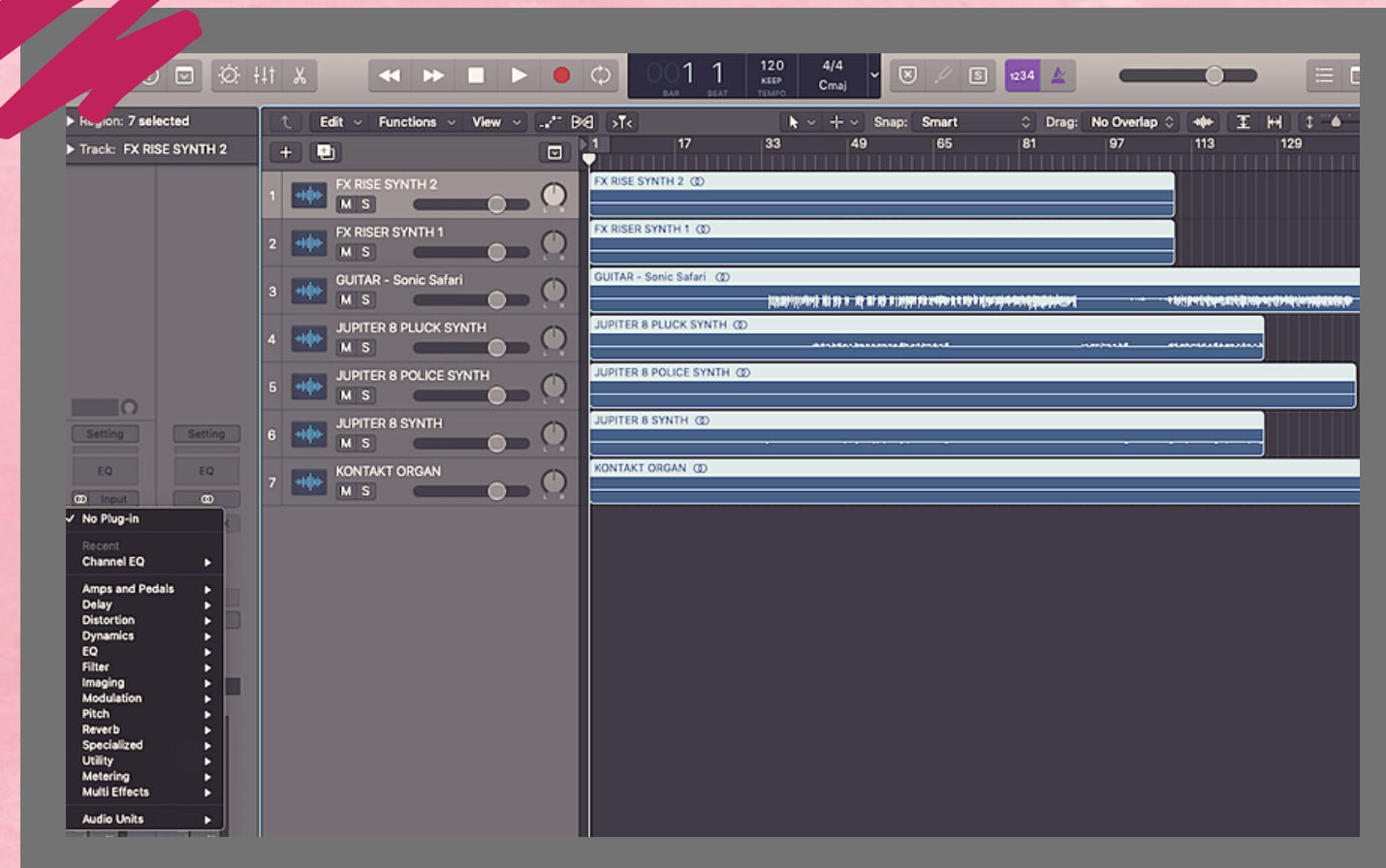
SMOOTH
Opposite of punchy

PLOSIVES

Consonant sounds T, G, K, D and B.   If the singer is too close to the mic, and/or not using a pop screen, this will make an unpleasant popping "puhhh" sound in the audio file.

PLUGINS

Pieces of software that add extra functionality to your DAW.
- generators (virtual instruments)
- effects (reverb, delay, etc)

PRE PRODUCTION

The work done BEFORE full-scale production begins.

This is where the artists refines their musical ideas, and creates a 'rough draft'.

This is like warming up before the big game.

QUANTIZE

This allows you to automatically make imperfect timing perfectly in time. The computer will 'snap' performances into a grid.

**Warning: Quantizing performances 'perfectly' isn't always the answer. This is great for electronic drums, but not necessarily for piano, guitar, etc. This is where 'by hand' editing comes into place, rather than letting the computer think for you. And of course, it all starts with the source, make sure you capture the BEST performance FIRST.