

Play/Record Mini-Bible

Welcome to Play/Record Studios, one of the finest recording studios in America. Equipped with cutting edge technology and run by a maverick, it is 'the' place to record your next hit. Or it was. Back in 1972. In 2014 Play/Record is on the downward spiral, with the sorry state of its finances matched only by its general lack of cleanliness, structural integrity, and adequate bathroom facilities. In short, it needs a genuine miracle to turn it around.

In the absence of any such miracle, cue Matt and Charlie. Season 1 recounts the rocky road to (not quite) recovery for Play/Record Studios. Charlie quickly realises the extent of the task they have set themselves in attempting to resurrect the old studio whilst Matt remains in blissful state of denial about most of their problems. They quickly find themselves in conflict with the Police, the bank, each other, the Almighty, and a particularly stubborn spider that's taken up residence in the vocal booth. Matt attempts to get the band back together (he really should know better), and he struggles to fully come to terms with Molly leaving him and taking her Lycra clad body with her. Charlie fails to get anyone to take her list of studio upgrades seriously and despairs at Matt's insistence that all old equipment is good equipment (even if it does sometimes shock you and get too hot to touch).

Matt and Charlie are helped and hindered in equal parts by Dee who's clearly having trouble letting go of the studio and Art who's developed something of a crush for Charlie. Matt's favourite band WOL make an appearance, as do some of Charlie's fellow engineering graduates supplemented by a roster of local musical talent.

At season's close Matt and Charlie are thrilled to be interviewed for cult recording magazine Tape Op. Can they keep it together for the duration of the interview? Will the studio grant them one trouble free day? Could this be the turning point for the studios fortunes? In truth, it seems highly unlikely.

Characters

MATT SPARKS, (30) once the guitarist in power trio 'Herbie' (whose royalty cheques still keep him from starving on a monthly basis), Matt has been the assistant engineer, handyman, cleaner, and occasional first aider at Play/Record Studios for the last 7 years. He drifted into the role after the band split and hasn't had the energy or inclination to do anything else. His comfortable somewhat aimless existence is upset by the studio crisis, forcing him to examine his life goals, a process he doesn't necessarily enjoy. Deciding to buy the studio and risking everything he has in the process might seem like lunacy, but Matt is thoroughly invested in Play/Record and unwilling to let it go just yet. In truth, this is the first big decision he's ever made in his life and he's desperate not to screw it up. Series regular.

CHARLIE ANDERSON, (26) is a recent graduate (with Hons!) in sound engineering looking for her first job. She's known Matt for years and secretly idolised him when he was in Herbie. Charlie has the utmost confidence in her ability to be a successful sound engineer and producer, but she has fallen foul of her over-confidence in the past and is still in the process of learning a little humility. She takes the opportunity to buy into the studio in the hope she can skip a few rungs up the career ladder but she's underestimated just how much work the studio will demand from her and how much Matt will resist some of her plans for the place. Series regular.

DANIEL 'DEE' BLANCHFIELD, (65) is an elder statesman of rock whose career has spanned the globe and some 50 years. One of the hottest session guitarists in 60's London he spent his down time in various studios learning from the best. Moving to the US in the early 70's he bought an abandoned grain store and built Play/Record Studios. During the good years (72-92) he recorded and mixed 100's of hits. Sadly, his engineering talents far outshone his management skills and whilst other studios moved with the times, Dee ploughed the same furrow he ever had, unwittingly setting himself on a collision course with financial ruin. Recurring.

ART POULTER, (LATE 40's), is the owner of Dust & Tones, the 2nd largest online broker of vintage studio equipment in America (a fact that burns his ass on a daily basis). Art is the man to go to if you need something soldered or sold. But don't let his patchy interpersonal skills and questionable facial hair fool you, he's a pretty ruthless operator. Recurring.

MOLLY JONES, (34) is a yoga instructor, elementary school teacher, and Matt's very recent ex-girlfriend. She met him when he accidentally double-booked a Battle of the Bands with her yoga class. She was initially fascinated by him and is pretty sure she might have been in love with him, but his flakiness eventually wore her down and she decided to call it a day. Possible recurring.

PLAY/RECORD STUDIOS, (est. 1972) a true character and the setting The studio (originally a grain store) was bought by Dee in 1971 and converted into a state of the art recording complex. It is split into 4 distinct spaces. The large live room, the control room (with a view into the live room), the lounge, and Matt's mezzanine apartment (located above the control room and lounge). Once, the go to recording destination for the rock glitterati in the 70's and 80's, the studio has faded over the last decade to the point where people are genuinely surprised to find that it still exists. Play/Record is a nostalgia capsule, a museum piece and, in all honesty, a bit of a dump. But a charming one at that. for much of the series. It is situated about 15 minutes from Boulder, on a small hillock in the middle of a flood plain.

Episode Ideas

THE LADY FROM THE BANK

Matt and Charlie get a surprise visit from their bank managers to follow up their loan application. Whilst Charlie attempts to explain their new business plan (to the erstwhile 'Lady from the bank' or LFTB'), Matt gives the other manager a quick tour of the facility before the arrival of WOL, a local 5 piece sludge metal band, booked in for a few days recording. All goes well until WOL's drummer decides to take a comfort break and heads for the ladies (formally the 'shitter') only to find the LFTB in the middle of her own comfort break. In the ensuing commotion the other bank manager takes the vacant drum stool and joins WOL for a quick rendition of 'A Song for the Dead' by Queen's of the Stone Age. Afterwards, and much enthused by the experience, he ensures the stunned studio owners that he'll sort out their loan for them.

REUNION

To re-introduce the studio to the world Matt decides to get the band back together for some recording. For the first time in 7 years the band strap on their instruments with Charlie

managing the session. Within minutes the already uncomfortable atmosphere dissolves into a slanging match between former best friends Matt and Herbie's lead singer Simon (who also happens to be Charlie's big brother). Matt abandons the studio and drives off. He quickly realises that he has effectively stormed out of his own home so he decides to hunt down Molly with the spurious intent of returning her favourite yoga mat. After crashing every yoga class in the greater Boulder area he eventually finds her and promptly breaks down in a heap of self-indulgent misery. Molly is genuinely happy to see him and resurrects his confidence (from a carefully judged platonic distance). He returns to the studio in a daze to find his old band in full flow, now featuring Charlie on guitar. He slides into the chair behind the mixing desk, flexes his fingers, and gets on with the job.

FLOOD

Following a rainstorm the small river near the studio bursts its banks flooding a few acres around the studio. Stranded in the studio Matt takes the opportunity to tick off another chore on Charlie's list and sets about clearing out his new apartment (replete as it is with 30 years of studio detritus). During the process he uncovers (amongst other things) some old master tapes from sessions gone by, photo albums, ledgers, assorted broken studio gear and a forgotten case of 75 (Dee's own brand of Jacuzzi-still moonshine). Matt abandons all thoughts of cleaning, pops on one of the tapes and settles down with a bottle of 75 and the photo albums. He soon drifts into a drunken reverie, spiralling back in time to the studio's heyday; meeting some of the legends in the photos and witnessing some of the lunacy Dee has recounted to him. He is awoken from his visions by Charlie who, in full on flood emergency mode, has stolen a dinghy and some waders and set out for the studio to check on her investment. And, only as a slight afterthought, to check on Matt as well.