

The book cover is a masterpiece of ornate design. At the top center, a detailed illustration of a rocket ship with multiple stages and fins points upwards towards a five-pointed star. The rocket is set against a circular background filled with a starry sky and faint celestial lines. This central motif is framed by a wide, intricate border of golden-brown leaf and vine patterns. In the center of the cover, the title "The Path to the Rocket" is written in a large, elegant, blackletter-style font. Below the title is a large, circular, sunburst-like emblem with a central golden sphere and radiating lines. The entire cover is bound in dark, worn leather, with the spine on the left showing several raised bands decorated with golden-brown patterns. The edges of the cover are heavily worn, revealing the underlying board material. The overall aesthetic is one of historical elegance combined with early 20th-century technological themes.

The Path
to the Rocket

PART ONE

BY THE FIREPLACE



The
to the

PREFACE

Imagine an evening when it's dark and quiet outside the window.

You light the fireplace, and warm reflections dance along the walls.

You settle into an old rocking chair. A cat purrs on the old rug at your feet, and in your hands is a hot mug of herbal tea.

There's nowhere to hurry, and no one is selling anything.

There is only a book, and someone's story.

This is the story of an honest musician. Mine.

I come from Siberia, where winter isn't just a season — it's a character.



A SIBERIAN WINTER



There were winters in Siberia when my friend Alexey — the same friend who writes the lyrics for VitaSun's songs — and I could barely travel between his village and mine. When the temperature dropped to -45°C , sometimes even -48°C , the car would simply freeze solid in the street. There were times when I couldn't leave Alexey's village and get back to my own for weeks, because the cold was simply too severe.

On some days, even walking across the village to the little Siberian shop was an adventure. We would wrap plastic shopping bags around our feet and seal them tightly with tape, just to keep the snow from getting inside our boots. And sometimes we had to make our way through snowdrifts that rose almost to the height of a person.

But once we finally reached the shop, we never stayed out there for long. We would hurry back to our warm, cozy Siberian home, carrying a bottle of something hot to keep us company. Then we would return to our guitars, waiting patiently for us in the warmth, and begin playing music again.

Outside, Siberia could be -48°C .

Inside, there were two guitars, a bottle on the table, friendship, and music.



It was the same with music.

No one explained how to break into the industry. No one told me where to go.
There were songs, and there was stubbornness.

I knocked on one door, then another, then a third.

The Path to the Rocket

Some never opened at all. Others opened just wide enough to smile and take my money.

I was cheated. Not once, not twice.

I was promised radio play, pitching, playlists, “reliable channels” and “connections at the radio.”

I paid, sometimes two thousand dollars at a time — and for an independent musician, that isn’t a number. It’s months of life.

Then came the silence: emails that went unanswered, a blocked number, and you’re standing there with the phone in your hand, realizing that nobody owes you anything, because there is no contract — only your faith.

The hardest part wasn’t losing the money.

The hardest part was starting to doubt myself: what if the problem was my music?

No. The music was fine.

It’s just that alongside the honest people in this industry, there are always those who know how to make a beautiful promise.

TWENTY YEARS OF FEELING MY WAY

Almost twenty years went by like that.

Twenty years of groping in the dark, of mistakes that cost money and lessons that cost even more.

But this road had a good side, too: I learned to tell the difference.

By the tone of a letter, by the way someone answers an awkward question, by what they stay silent about.

You can't learn that from books. It only comes with experience.

THEN I MET ANDY

Now pour yourself some more hot tea.

Let me tell you how I found him.

At first, I didn't believe him.

When I first saw the HIP Video Promo website, with the words "25 years" next to names I'd known since my youth, something clicked inside me.

Too good to be true.

Especially for someone from Siberia, with no connections, no big budget, and no friends in America.

But we wrote to them anyway. And we got to work.

OUR HEARTS

Our first song was "Our Hearts."

The budget was tiny — less than two thousand dollars.

For the industry, that's almost nothing. For an independent musician from a faraway town, it's real money.

We paid it, and we waited.

And the song landed.

It entered a competition in America as Best Animated Video. It got airplay on the radio. It appeared on playlists.

For a first song, that was very good.

Especially considering where I'm from. Siberia.

What business could I possibly have with America?

And now, when I look at the statistics, America is VitaSun's second-largest country by listens.

FIVE THOUSAND CAMPAIGNS

When I saw the full list of artists Andy had worked with over those twenty-five years, my eyes opened very wide.

I couldn't believe it.

Five thousand campaigns. Five thousand stories.

I'll share only a small part of the list — the names almost everyone knows:

- Johnny Cash — a country and rock 'n' roll legend, one of the most influential and best-selling musicians of the twentieth century.
- Pearl Jam — giants of the grunge movement, who sold tens of millions of albums and were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.
- Maroon 5 — one of the most commercially successful pop-rock bands of the twenty-first century.
- Sia — the Australian singer and hitmaker whose videos have billions of views.
- Thirty Seconds to Mars — the multi-platinum band of Jared Leto.
- Paramore — Grammy winners and one of the leading alternative bands of the 2000s and 2010s.
- Bryan Adams — the author of worldwide hits.
- Armin van Buuren — one of the best-known DJs in the world.
- The Chemical Brothers — big beat pioneers and multiple Grammy winners.
- Blur — Britpop icons, creators of the cult track "Song 2."
- Fatboy Slim — a legend of the British electronic scene.
- Bon Iver — Justin Vernon's project, a Grammy winner.
- Elvis Costello — an influential British musician and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame member.
- The B-52s — new wave classics.
- Death Cab for Cutie — one of the key American indie rock bands.
- Vanessa Carlton — the author of the international hit "A Thousand Miles."
- Snoop Dogg — a hip-hop legend and one of the most influential rappers of all time.
- Big Thief — one of the most critically acclaimed indie bands of recent years.

And that's only part of it.

The remaining thousands are independent artists almost nobody knows, but whom Andy and his team helped in exactly the same way as the big names.

WHY I BELIEVED HIM

That's exactly why I believed him.

Not because he promised miracles.

But because there was a real story behind him — long, hard and honest.

Andy Gesner of HIP Video Promo is a man with enormous experience in the industry, who also started out as an ordinary musician and also saw all of this from the inside.

We got to talking and quickly realized that we see the industry through the same eyes and get angry about the same things.

Each of us walked our own road for years, and now those roads have met.

We decided that being outraged wasn't enough.

It was time to do something real: to help independent musicians honestly, without grand promises and without "guaranteed miracles."

WHY THIS BOOK EXISTS

This book is the first step.

It holds ten rules that I learned the hard way.

They aren't written to scare you. They're written so that, before you send money to a stranger, you know which questions to ask.

Yes, we have our own services, and you'll find them on our website.

But check us by the same rules as everyone else.

If we're honest, we'll pass any test.

Now pour yourself more tea, straighten your blanket and turn the page.

The background is a dark, atmospheric illustration of a room. At the top, a clock face is visible, flanked by two sets of lit candles in ornate holders. Below the clock is a large, arched fireplace with a fire burning inside. In the foreground, on the left, is a book with a highly detailed, ornate cover. The cover features a circular emblem with a rocket ship and the title 'The Path to the Rocket' in a stylized, gothic font. To the right of the book is a small, lit candle in a holder. In the bottom right corner, there is a large, ornate metal mug filled with a dark liquid, with steam rising from it. A small, round object, possibly a compass or a small clock, lies on the surface next to the mug.

PART TWO

BEFORE YOU LAUNCH THE ROCKET

— ♦ —

*The Path
to the Rocket*

Throw another log on the fire.

Now, about what music stories usually leave out.

When people say “release a song,” it sounds so simple: record it, upload it, done.

But getting a music project to trend around the world is closer to building an airplane or launching a rocket.

It isn’t one part but many, and they all have to come together: the song, the image, the team, the video, the audience, the timing and the money.

If one part fails, the rocket stays on the ground.

It’s especially hard when you come from a small town.

When you have no connections in the industry, no wealthy parents, no one who could dial the right number.

All you have is talent and stubbornness.

Talent alone can sometimes make you shine: you get on television, on some show, and for a few weeks people talk about you.

But most often, it’s a single flash.

It shines brightly, but it doesn’t light the road ahead.

RULE NO. 1

GET ON STAGE

So the musician’s first rule is simple: if you have a chance to get on stage, take it.

Invited to a competition, a festival, a tiny concert in a hall for forty people? Better to go than not to go.

There are real people there, experience, video for your archive, and a chance that the right person will notice you.

The only things to check: who the organizer is, what exactly you'll get, and how much they're asking from you.

A real competition doesn't charge artists money to be heard.

If they ask for an "entry fee," stop and think again.

RULE NO. 2

TALK TO YOUR AUDIENCE

These days, social media isn't an add-on to music; it's part of it.

People want to see who stands behind the song, and to hear your voice not only in your tracks.

RULE NO. 3

COUNT YOUR MONEY

Now the third rule, unpleasant but honest: money.

According to Luminate, around a hundred and fifty thousand new tracks are uploaded to streaming services every day. Every single day.

And a significant share of them isn't live music at all, but tracks generated by artificial intelligence.

According to Deezer, that's more than ninety thousand tracks a day — over half of all uploads on their platform.

And the Suno generator, according to press reports, creates about seven million tracks a day — that's Spotify's entire catalog in two weeks.

Not all of them make it to streaming, but the scale speaks for itself.

Your song is one of them.

However good it is, on its own it won't break through this noise if nobody knows it exists.

To get beyond your circle of friends and acquaintances, you almost always need a budget — or, without one, an enormous amount of time and patience.

That's exactly why people who sell hope appear around musicians: they know you'll invest your money, because you badly need to be heard.

The rest of this book is about that.

So take care of what seems boring: your source of income.

A job, a small business, any work that brings in money independently of music and lets you invest in your songs without risking your rent and your food.

This is not a betrayal of music.

It's fuel for the rocket.

I know that not every musician becomes a businessperson, and there's nothing shameful in that.

Then find a partner who knows how to count money, or decide in advance how much you can spend and what you want in return — and don't cross that line for any promise.



The Path to the Rocket

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

As an author, my main project is VitaSun. There is also an electronic project, Fluidium. Right now, I'm somewhere in the middle of my path. That's how it feels. Even small promo campaigns show it: I'm simply gathering opportunities to launch my own rocket one day. Unfortunately, without fuel that is almost impossible these days — especially if you're an independent musician. And that's what I am.

So I'm not upset that, for now, I have tens of thousands of views and listens. I simply do my thing, because my heart responds to what I do. I don't do it for the sake of something else. I do it because it's who I am. When I was born, I didn't choose anything. Besides, my mother is a piano teacher. As a child, I was always amazed at how awesome she was, pounding away on the keys.

But now I have a lot of experience, so I decided to share it with you. There is so little information about what goes on behind the scenes of show business. Nobody ever comes and tells you. But here, by the fireplace, in this cozy little house, I can tell you my story.

Big numbers are often just a matter of pressing one button — a button called a good promo campaign, in the right hands, the hands of people who have done it many times. Of course, it helps if your song really is a rocket. Nobody is saying you can promote just any mediocrity. No. Almost anything can probably be promoted. But will it stay in people's minds, or fly out of them like fast food?

I once read in a magazine that if you have a couple of thousand devoted fans, you can live comfortably and do what you love. You don't need millions for that. So above all, if you truly do it from the heart, I think you'll find your listener — the one who will support you and wait for your new releases.

The Path
to the Rocket

HALFWAY THERE

ROCKET

Still ahead.

Southeast Asia

START
Siberia

The path isn't finished yet. But I'm no longer at the start.
My rocket will carry me there.
But I know for certain that I'm on my way
and that I can help fellow creators
and makers like me.



Vita
MGI Label

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The Path to the Rocket