

Hello friends,

First off, I want to thank you for taking the time to read this document. I know for many people who have supported me and the VOCAMERICA project over the last 5 years, there have been some questions that have arisen over production and development. There have been questions that have come up from individuals which I have answered as they've been asked. But I never made a public statement regarding certain questions. Therefore, I would like to address some of the most pressing inquiries I've received in the hopes that it may clear some of the concerns, or at the very least, shed light into how things progressed.

Question 1: What happened to the \$21,000 you made through kickstarter and how was the money spent?

This is the question that I have received time and time again and have answered too many times to count. But I'm not at all bothered to answer it again, and also show how kickstarter processes fees, and how (in my cases) taxes came into play.

So, in case you were not aware, kickstarter takes a percentage of funds from every successfully funded project. Here is a direct link to their percentage page:

<https://www.kickstarter.com/help/fees>

In general, kickstarter takes about 5% of your total raised fund + additional 3% of payment processing, as well as some miscellaneous fees. This, on top of dropped pledges, or pledges that didn't process, meant that in total, I received \$18,272 of the money that was pledged.

After receiving this money, the very first thing I had to do was pay tax on it. You see, this money wasn't something magically untouchable by the IRS. Under Virginia state law, it was considered taxable income, and thus I had to pay to HAVE the money in the first place. It's a long and complicated process, but to break it down, I set aside \$3,000 to pay for taxes and any other fees that may occur.

Thus, at the end of the day, I was left with a little over \$15,000 to use towards the show.

So first, let me break down my biggest mistake, because believe me, mistakes WERE made, and I am more than willing to own up to them.

So what was my biggest mistake? The cost of merchandise for the backers/fulfillment of backer pledges.

I would say this was my biggest mistake, and the only excuse I can give is simple ignorance of how much things were going to cost. Also, there was tiny amounts of peer pressure, but that's not as important. As you may remember, my initial merchandise plans were fairly modest: Keychains of the main characters, A CD soundtrack, and a recorded DVD of the show.

The main mistake I made was deciding to try and EXPAND on these merchandise plans, because merchandise was exactly what ended up eating the majority of the money I had received. I kept promising the kickstarter backers more and more goods for their pledges without ever realizing how much things would cost.

If you will allow me, I'll show you a breakdown of what everything ended up costing. Any extra merch I got made was done a few weeks after the initial show (with one exception), and was paid for out of my own pocket:

Merchandise Costs

- 1.) T-shirts for backers – \$1,918.57
- 2.) Pudding Plushies for backers - \$1,080.00
- 3.) Acrylic charms for the keychains (and for the first 5 shows. This is the one exception, because they gave me a discount if I ordered certain amounts in bulk)- \$5,462.50
- 4.) VOCAMERICA Kickstarter CDs- \$985.61
- 5.) VOCAMERICA Concert DVD (this is the only one I'm having trouble finding my receipt for, so in the meantime, this is an estimate)- \$300

There were a few more merch expenditures (such as the chains themselves for the keychains which had to be purchased separately, various packaging, ect.) but these were the main purchases for merchandise.

Now, let's get to the equipment. The Equipment was always intended to be a modest purchase, as I wasn't expecting to make the amount I did. And, as I intended for VOCAMERICA to be as mobile as possible, I wanted to get a setup that could easily be packed up and flown anywhere in the world with as little difficulty as possible. This was the primary gear I purchased.

Equipment Costs

- 1.) Projector- \$519.88
- 2.) Carrying Case for Projector- \$40.49
- 3.) Rig- \$136.99
- 4.) Screen- \$60 (I bought this particular one from a friend at the time)
- 5.) Film camera for the DVD- \$1,299.00
- 6.) Field Recorder for interviews and concert recording- \$229.52

Again, there were a few other misc. purchases such as extension cords, HDMI cords, SD cards, and a few other small things but these were the main purchases.

And last, but certainly not least, we come to the payments for the animators, model makers, and film crew. This was a bit of a mixed bag when it came to how much everything cost. I got to work with some AMAZINGLY talented artists and animators for this project. It was such an amazing pleasure to work with each one, and I can't thank them enough for their help.

That being said, I let each artist set their own amounts for what they wanted to be paid. The payments, therefore, varied from person to person. There were also instances in which I paid for an animation or service and either I did not receive it, or (for various reasons), was not able to use the final work in the show. For the sake of their privacy, I will not say who asked for what, nor will I break down what I paid each animator, as I feel like that's a breach of their trust. Instead, I will simply break down what the totals were.

Staff Payments

- 1.) Animation costs in total (including facial animations, motion traces, canceled yet paid for animations, and special effect animations) - \$4,200
- 2.) Model Costs in total - \$2,260.00
- 3.) Filmography Costs in total - \$1,563.66

Again, I want to thank the amazing crew I had. And allow me to take a moment to especially thank the gentleman who taught me everything I now know for the shows, and who I couldn't have managed without. I won't say his name for the sake of his privacy, but he was integral to the project. And though he is no longer with the project, I hold him in the utmost highest regard.

So, where does that leave us with costs? Totaling everything up, the entire cost of the first show and the fulfillment of the kickstarter pledges was : **\$20,053.22**

As I previously stated, there were NUMEROUS misc fees. This doesn't even include the cost of shipping out all the rewards from the kickstarter pledges (I decided not to factor that into the merch costs). So, needless to say, I can guarantee to you all that the money WAS spent on both the promised kickstarter items and the show itself.

Alright, so we know what happened to the money and where it went. But there are 2 more questions I'd like to address. Let's get to them now.

Question 2: Why has it taken so long to get Prima, Tonio, Big-AI, and Sonika made?

All the extra kickstarted VOCALOIDs were paid for with the money I received from the kickstarter itself. However, something happened in between the first 2 years of shows. I'm not going to go too far into the details, as it is a private matter that was discussed between the parties in question and myself, but there were some disputes related to the models I paid for (though not between myself and the model maker). This eventually led to my primary model maker breaking away from the MMD community. Though he did promise to fulfill his obligations to finish the models, the process was slowed and eventually stopped entirely.

This is where another mistake of mine came in. You see, I am not a very stern or persistent person. If someone tells me that they're going to do a job for me, I trust them to then finish that job. And when stresses begin to amass, I essentially lose the heart to persist in encouraging that person to complete their tasks. This is a character flaw of mine, and there's really no other way around it. I was too afraid to continue asking a person I considered to be a friend to work on

something he was losing passion in. This is especially difficult for me, because I had already paid for the work, and didn't know how to proceed.

That is what has essentially led to today. I have now paid for the remaining models a SECOND time out of my own pocket, and they WILL be made, even though if by a different (though very amazing) artist. I can only apologize for my own lack of due diligence in this matter. But I promise you, the final models WILL be made, and the people who pledged for them WILL receive them.

As a slight addendum, as you can imagine, this is the primary reason as well for why the VOCAMERICA song writing contest winners' compositions have not been added to the show yet. This is something that WILL be amended.

And last, but not least, the final question.

Question 3: How much longer do you plan to do VOCAMERICA?

I admit, this is a question I don't get as often as the others, but it's one I very much want to address now. I have had 5 amazing years of touring with VOCAMERICA (pandemic hiatus notwithstanding). I have gotten to travel to Europe 3 times, go across the US, and spread a love of vocal synths with some outstanding conventions.

But I'll be fully transparent: I am tired. I am tired both in mind and spirit. For every amazing thing that has happened with VOCAMERICA, there has been equally as many horrible barriers. I have had my reputation rubbed through the mud, I have been slandered and threatened, I have been cheated and taken advantage of. I conceived of this project when I was 26. I was 27 when the first show took place. And now, at 32 years old, I keep asking myself "Is this enough? Can I stop now? Do I want to stop? Am I losing my spark?"

And so, ladies and gentleman, and everyone in between, I will say this: I would love to continue doing hologram shows. It still brings me joy to see the faces light up and hear the cheers for the Western 'Loids. But I think I am getting ready to hang up my hat and pass on the work to the

next generation. Already I've been able to give advice to others seeking to do their own hologram shows for their UTAUS, mascots, and other such fun hologram characters.

Therefore, let me ask this of you: Give me one more year. Let me try to make an amazing 5th anniversary show of as much new material as I can muster. Let me share these characters with you, if only one last time. After that, we'll see what the future holds. We'll see if it's time for "Momma Aki" to just go back to being the music producing "EmpathP" she used to be. Until then, I thank you for all you've given me. And I look forward to what the end of this year will bring.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Pictures of various receipts, not including payments to animators or shipping receipts as those contain personal information and I don't want to accidentally doxx anyone. Also, please note that the projector and other equipment was bought in advance with credit cards, with the kickstarter funds reimbursing the investment later:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1bpFA16n4hY5tU8AWKpsw_TdUeCHw8GLE