

Continued from previous page studio in Boston. It included travel expenses, and being able to work with these high-level producers and session players.”

The ad and company checked out, and Amini applied in November 2019 and was accepted. She began going through the process of crowdfunding, and was scheduled to make her first trip to Boston to record a promotional single and campaign video in mid-March 2020.

“Of course, we know what started happening,” Amini said, laughing now, though the trip was scrapped. “We went on a good several-week pause. ... The producer encouraged me and said, ‘I actually think we can still do this’ and ‘We have ways of recording remotely for the single.’”

“I was like, ‘No way, man. If I’m going to do all this work, I want to be in that studio, get to be part of the magic,’” Amini said.

#### REMOTE RECORDING EFFORTS PAY OFF

The compromise: record a demo version. Plaid Dog sent her a large box brimming with recording gear, mics, high-quality camera lens and more, and through the wonders

*“A lot of these songs came during a time when I was really just starting to come into my own authenticity, in a number of ways.”*

— Shireen Amini, musician

of technology, they managed to do the recording of the promo single and campaign video by way of Zoom.

The fundraising campaign got underway in May 2020, though Amini was conflicted about asking people for money at a time so many were suffering financial losses because of the pandemic. At the same time, any doubt was offset by being “so moved by how much generosity was coming through as well,” she said. “Plenty of people were aware that musicians were being hit hard by the pandemic.”

The campaign to fund the album hit its \$10,000 goal 20-some days in, then exceeded it by another \$1,800. Amini, meanwhile, worked busily to keep up her end.

“The studio had these very clear, like, daily tasks that I had to keep up with, like

a well-oiled formula to make sure that this would be successful,” she said. “It definitely pushed me more in the marketing sense more than I ever have (before).”

The process was not without some imperfections — one being the sheer number of people Plaid Dog attracts. “They’re backlogged. You’re kind of next in line. You get crowd-funded, but then you have to wait a long time before you can actually record.”

Part of the waiting and backlog, of course, were due to the pandemic, but it didn’t make the pauses any easier on Amini, who was eager to keep her momentum up. In October 2020, she was finally able to get on a plane to begin recording in Boston, where she found the city on a very tight lockdown.

“Their protocol was more intense than ours in Oregon, just because they had gotten hit harder,” Amini said. “I didn’t get to see the aliveness of the city as much, because the city was shut down. But I still had a blast.”

#### HEARTFELT SESSIONS

And she was there to work. She found an Air B and B near the studio.

“It was a 10-day immersion to record the

album,” Amini said. Working with the studio pros and session players was something she looked forward to, but of course Plaid Dog’s processes were also different due to the pandemic.

“Because of the protocols the studio had, I hardly got to interact with them in person,” Amini said.

“My first day, I had to be in a completely isolated room while the drummer and bassist and the engineer were in the control room and (isolation) booth. I was watching them over Zoom in the studio.”

Though she was “bummed at the time,” subsequent sessions with fewer musicians at any given time enabled her to be able to be able to see the musician.

“The session players were just so heartfelt but bad-ass and amazing,” she said. “That was seriously one of my favorite parts.”

Creating the album “has been overwhelming, but exciting,” Amini said. “Recording a music video and all this. ... I’m waiting for an outbreak, but in the meantime, I’m enjoying some degree, like the anticipation and all the beautiful things unfolding.”

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