

Programme Notes

God As a Woman

Sarah Passmore covered God as a Women by Ariana Grande, a pop song that sat in the charts not too long ago. Sarah is an artist based in South Wales who is mostly a pop singer.

To mix this track I used a number of reference tracks from other artists as well as listen to some of Sarah's other tracks to get a feel for her voice and sound. Being an acoustic pop cover, it was imperative that I spend some time listening to other acoustic, raw performances and recordings to help me discover what elements of the track I should be focusing on, and what techniques I should be using.

It quickly became clear that the vocals carried this track. I focused on making them sound bold but "breathy" with careful consideration when it came to equalization and compression. I didn't want to enhance the deepness of her voice but open up her dynamic range to make it sound fuller. Her vocals already carried an incredible amount of character and her vocal range really came across, so I was careful not to alter them too much as the feel of the track was raw and stripped back, it didn't need to sound perfect.

I began by tidying up the track and mixing the levels. I kept this one simple as I felt it really carried itself as a performance. I enjoyed this one the most. I used automation in various places to even out the volume and to pull everything together. I used compression on individual tracks, and then bounced it all down to a final mix where I spent some time using additional direction monitors, equalisation and compression. I followed the advice given throughout the lectures in regards to where the ratio and threshold settings should be, but found my feet towards the end of the mix and played around with these until I was happy. I wanted it to sound tight, focusing on bringing the drum and bass together as best as I could.

After some research I realised that the guitar holds a valuable place alongside the vocals when it comes to an acoustic mix. The two of them could really be on their own, the other elements are there to support them! I learnt to try to mix the whole track together as one instead of isolating each part.

"A common mistake is to solo an instrument when you're making changes to it's sound. Going back to thinking about the role of your acoustic guitar, this approach can hinder your mixing." *Sundown Sessions (2019) Mixing Acoustic Guitar (13 Tricks The Pros Use)*

Another Politician

This track is by State of Decay. It is much heavier than the previous one, and was more difficult for me to mix as I am not used to working with this genre. I did some research into how to mix heavier tracks.

A problem I ran into was the mix being too loud. The drums and bass and guitars were all fighting for the same place in the mix, and the vocals were heavy too, so I had to do a lot of moving around within the dynamic space to find a place for everything. I used reverb on the vocals and delay, I wanted them to stand out whilst still being clear enough to understand. I used panning to widen the space around them.

I used plenty of buses within this mix to give me more control over the sound I was manipulating. The drums were compressed and equalized individually, and then I sent them to their own collective channel where I continued to use compression to shape them.

I began by tidying the mix, adding fades and cutting out any unnecessary feedback. I made the decision to cut the bass intro at the beginning. This way there is a greater impact when the track starts.

I took some advice from Musician on a Mission; they post tips for mixing different vocals within different genres. For example; "Hardcore/Metal: Heavy compression (several rounds of 6-10dB gain reduction can be warranted) for an aggressive tone. Less low end, more body and high mids." Rob Mayzes, *HOW TO MIX VOCALS: THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE [15 STEPS]*

Maintain The Funk - Beatrix

This track is funky, completely different from the other two. The rhythm and beat carry the whole song and are really important to hip-hop. The use of audio samples stems from the beginning of this genre. Without hip-hop pop music would not be what it is today, even the biggest pop songs usually contain various samples within them.

This track has various vocals, which is different from the previous tracks and is also an important trait of the whole song and genre. Mixing these vocals meant that I had to approach each one differently, but make sure they still sounded like they belong in the mix and with each other. The volume and range were different for each section, so I had to use compression differently for them all.

I used a delay on all vocals as I really liked the effect this had on the track overall. The words being echoed in slight delay fitted really well with the genre and gave them some life! It reminded me a lot of old school 90s hip-hop and I was pleased with how this sounded.

I decided to double up on the first set of vocals, panning them each left and right to try and give them some more volume and presence within the track and within the dynamic range. I also used compression to try and cancel out their feedback as this particular section seemed to carry a fuzz.

I bounced down all of the mixes and created new projects where I was able to then further mix and complete my portfolio. This additional phase meant that I could solidify the mixes.

References

- Sundown (2019) *Mixing Acoustic Guitar (13 Tricks The Pros Use)*
<https://sundownsessionsstudio.com/mixing-acoustic-guitar/>
- Rob Mayes, Rob Mayzes, *HOW TO MIX VOCALS: THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE [15 STEPS]*,
[HTTPS://WWW.MUSICIANONAMMISSION.COM/MIXING-VOCALS-HOW-TO-MIX-VOCALS/](https://www.musicianonamission.com/mixing-vocals-how-to-mix-vocals/)