

REFLECTIVE ESSAY.



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OVERALL INVOLVEMENT

BREAKDOWN OF ROLES

At the outset of this project, we initially chose to break down the roles into 3 distinct groups. We covered the project by separating the work into Production, Financials & Promotional Schedule. While there was a lot of crossover of roles and leaning into each other to fill the gaps in knowledge, the overall breakdown of these roles are:

Purple Rain Ltd

- Karl
 - o Production
 - o Remix
 - o Executive Producer/Oversight Role
- Sharon
 - o Bio & EPK
 - o Graphics/Artwork
 - o Branding
- Thando
 - o Pitching playlists
 - o Finance & Budgets
 - o Branding & Marketing
- Rohan
 - o Promotional schedule
 - o EPK & Bio
 - o Asset management and Promotional setup.

BREAKDOWN OF MEETING MINUTES.

Purple Rain Ltd started and formed on the idea of working with one one Thando's artist BEKA as a real-world scenario or even a hypothetical single release launch. We didn't know Karl initially and when we started, we have Zoom video footage and meeting notes from the 7th Dec session together discussing rough ideas of roles, areas of focus, timeline management, communication. Most of this was made redundant once we finally got together and were introduced to our fourth partner on the collaboration. Karl.

On the 14th December we finally got together and met with Karl for the first time. We discussed how Karl setup his label at the end of 2018 with a Rapper called Scoob. West London Sound System was the result of that collaboration. As luck would have it, Karl came in with a ready-made project, having previously worked on Marina Hovian singles. At this meeting we discussed which single we should focus on for Marina's next release. We collectively decided the strongest choice was 'It Just Happened'. This was ideal as not just a project hypothetical, but a real-world scenario and single release plan. At this point we discussed artwork, branding and imagery for Marina and suggested a meeting for next week together with the artist to gauge her thoughts before the film shoot. We laid out rough roles at this stage and viewed and listened to any assets that we already had together. It was pencilled in for a 15th January 2021 Launch date for the single release, coinciding with one week after university deadline. We added Marina into a separate promotions group to allow for more interaction at this point.

Our next meeting together was on the 18th December where we had a solo meeting together with Purple Rain then another one with the artist Marina and her promotion team as part of West London Sound System. At the start of this meeting, we clearly defined our roles, and areas of focus as shown above. Karl made a concerted effort to researching promo campaigns and looking into blogs, press and playlisting and PR contacts in the industry, so we could compile all assets into a main page. In discussing marketing and promo tools Thando mentions Spotify Canvas and Pitch and Apple Pitch. Sharon and I worked out the idea of branding and function at this stage, with another meeting set on the 22nd to formalise the bio and EPK for completion. It was suggested we look into Spotify Marquee at this point, but

Thando briefly point, that while have Spotify market your songs and directly take payment out of splits/royalties, this service still wouldn't be available to artists in the UK by the time of launch, so this idea was shelved. The setting up of YouTube and Vevo was bounced around to consolidate all socials and have a clear, targeted promotional campaign.

The next meeting, I attended was with Sharon on the 22nd December, where we broke down all branding, marketing and imaging ideas for Marina. It was pitched that her music seemed to give us vibes of "nostalgia and panging longing for some past unmet fulfilment." (Sharon, 2020) and for this reason we chose to stylise a new logo/brand for her in an 80's homage font. We took examples from Dua Lipa and the 80's retrowave pattern. We also loved and leaned into Marina's joy for purples, pinks and neon's which she used as a colour palette for her video clip. Because of this decision, the photo shoot was simplified to the video shoot day, and we used the same neon-pink colour scheme to visually represent her image.

At this point Sharon and I built up her Bio with Sharon preparing a list of questions to ask Marina to gauge better her values and to paint a better picture in her new EPK. I suggest we incorporate a viral hashtag "#ItJustHappened" campaign, with Marina detailing awkward relationship moments as icebreakers on socials to promote and gain momentum in the build-up to the single release. It is at this point on and off where Karl takes control over Zoom calls, and although they may be recorded, they were never uploaded into our group shared folder with a minute of meeting notes, so while work was completed from this point forward, not much is known due to a poor paper trail, and bad miscommunication on my part. The fault is entirely my own as I should have been more proactive and collate meeting minutes myself.

BREAKDOWN OF ASSETS CREATED

All assets collated are showcased and broken down in the Portfolio. For this project, we had a great single lined up. So we focused on crafting these additional resources and assets for Marina to manage.

- Single: It was chosen at the outset that "It Just Happened" best suited the direction for her next single and a branding and image relaunch.

- Remix #1: Karl focused on developing different versions of the single and pitched a few ideas to us throughout. Two were chosen.
- Remix #2: The 2nd of two remixes to be created for this project.
- Custom Artwork: custom artwork and branding to reflect the change in image and continued direction for Marina.
- Commissioned Logo: A thorough rebranding and reimagining of Marina Hovian as a 'product' with logo assets created for long term use.
- Video Clip: An entire video clip was produced out of the limited budget and time scale, to coincide with the release date.
- A full Adobe Spark flash website release EPK (Electronic Press Kit) and Bio was drawn up highlighting Marina's achievements so far, and the focus for her 2021 relaunch.
- Feature.FM statistics and analytics that we definite as assets. These will enable Marina more precise measurement of demographics and audience scale and size in the future.
- Trailer Assets/GIFS: along with the video clip, trailers and GIFS were created as assets to compile for Marinas' overall Promotional Plan & Strategy.

THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

This release has really allowed for a wide audience thanks to the huge impact of digital technology. 2020 has been a turbulent year, to say the least with lockdowns and the Covid-19 pandemic, and as such communication has been a key issue.

ZOOM ON US

Zoom allowed us to reach each other and communicate ideas, thoughts and plans for the album release when we organised meetings. It was an instrumental technology, and the free

version allows up to 40minutes of recording, which greatly aided in keeping record of meetings, and minutes for posterity.

DITTO TO DISTRIBUTION

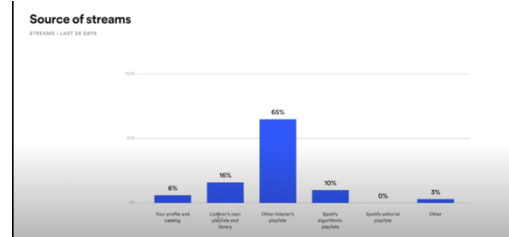
Ditto Music is one of the world's leading music distribution & record label services companies, supporting over 200,000 artists and labels worldwide. With 20 offices across 6 continents, Ditto has worked with major artists globally including Stormzy, Ed Sheeran, Dave, Sam Smith and many more (Ditto Music, 2020). By working with Ditto Music, Marina gets a cheaper service with useful pre-release features and analytics. Ditto directly connects with Spotify for Artists which allows for a direct sharing of royalty collation and future data management (Music Worldwide, 2021).

SMART LINKS & ANALYTICS: FEATURE.FM

At one of the meetings, it was suggested by Thando & me to look into a marketing and promotional tool that we overall felt would give value to Marinas' release plan. Feature.FM is a website and service that builds analytical tools, advertising and marketing material for the music industry, and that makes it easy to get music out to the right people, at the right time (Feature.FM, 2020). Utilising some of their tools like Pre-Save and Smart Links meant we were able to create dynamic and attractive landing pages to drive customer to and through 'Marina's socials' and that allowed for more direct fan engagement, data collection and valuable behavioural insights and analytics. By allowing fans to save music ahead of the release date in Spotify or Apple Music and allowing direct access in a preferred music service, this service was ideally for our promotional strategy.

SPOTIFY FOR ARTIST 'SPOTLIGHT'

Spotify for Artists is a power promotional, branding and analytic tool that will greatly impact the single launch. The ability to pitch to Spotify curators and get editorials and playlisted organically ahead of schedule is a wonderful boost to any marketing plan. By using Marina's current profile and seeing where she gets her streams, listeners and followers per day information at a glance and also to show the source of listener and where the streams are coming from is a huge boost to her campaign. Information like this directly affects the ability to see what ads or promotional spends are driving audience and listeners, and importantly where organic listeners are, so we can exploit and target more demographic specific or playlist specific expenses. By also scheduling all branding and logo changes to coincide with the release date in the Profile section, Spotify really allows for complete control, thanks to its direct integration with Ditto Music.



CREATIVE VIDEOGRAPHERS/DIRECTORS/PRODUCERS

While digital solutions have empowered Marina and her team into the future, the best assets we found on this project was the collation of the best creative people to surround her with. Hiring young, fresh, local talent like Kuki Films based out of Dalston really solidified the process and made working to a schedule all the more rewarding a cost effective. Marina got in contact with Kuki via Instagram and set up a zoom call with manager Teejay to discuss the collaboration. Upon speaking together, a mood board was created on Pinterest to give the team an idea of the look and colours we were aiming for. Once everybody was happy and on the same page the Kuki creative team worked on the video treatment which was then sent to Marina and management within a few days. Marina loved the video treatment and agreed to move forward. A full breakdown of creative process for the video clip is included in the portfolio.

OVERALL CONTRIBUTION AND SUMMARY OF PROJECT

If I were to romanticise this reflective essay and take some liberties; I would summarise the journey of this project as three desperate, challenging, exciting, exhausting parts: -

GREAT IDEA, GREAT ENERGY

The start of the project was met with great enthusiasm and we all contributed to the selection and direction of song choice. After listening to Marinas' debut single "One More Time", a reggae infused UK pop banger, it was collectively decided that "It Just Happened" should be the next choice to continue in the same vein. I was actively participating in the brainstorming of all things promotional and marketing and exerting my influence in early meetings with as much information as I could impart to add value to what would be a real release. I helped Sharon with the EPK and Bio, building on what Karl created with his Label and his team.

LOSS OF LIFE (RIP LAPTOP)

We come to the period of pain and discomfort that all three-part tales meander through. Through a series of misfortunes and malfeasance, my trusted workhorse and business backbone of a laptop was stolen. While I frantically figured out if I was insured (does it count as travel insurance, if you're no longer travelling and live here?) and if other business partners could cover clients and mix projects, I had come to the realisation that I may not have a backup on my external drives. After getting a new laptop and rebuilding 10,000 words of essays for other lectures and deadlines, and sorting through the wreckage of session file rebuild, Purple Rain met for a zoom on the 22nd to discuss the xmas break and roles leading forward in the project and from that time onwards. From this point forward I was flat out catching up on overdue projects, and new tracking projects for bands/artists over the holiday period.

THE URGENCY NOT TO FAIL

All stories have a happy ending (maybe?) and with hindsight I came to a realisation how important a phone and (less so) laptop were to the overall success or failure of any project. While most early communication was accomplished with WhatsApp not having a phone made this a huge pain point, during an already painful lockdown period. Although this has been an entirely difficult and challenging year and project, I feel there are a lot of takeaways about perseverance and the will to 'finish what you started' no matter what will ring true with me long after this degree is completed. This drive and focus in the days and hours leading up to the deadline to hand this in has shown me that no matter what comes up, I have the ability and passion to complete the work. I will endeavour to do better in the future, and make it up to my poor project partners who had to deal with my incompetence and lack of communication during our time together.

Word Count: 2254

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