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Abstract

The essay below reflects on the single release campaign produced from the four members of 'Orange Crush', following the assignment created by Tileyard Education. It provides detailed secondary research to support and influence choices for project artefacts; such as promotional video, artwork, social media assets, whilst discussing the importance of a reflective summary regarding this assignment. The use of advanced technology such as Zoom and WhatsApp played a significant part in the group's success, working together through a global pandemic, which is discussed. The essay also critically evaluates the group's work ethic and teamwork, reflecting upon mistakes that could have been avoided with more care and precision.

1. Reflection summary introduction

'Learning and reflection go "hand in hand", and it is difficult to imagine one without the other' (Bassot, B., 2016. pp7). A quote which aptly describes the importance of reflection summaries in the context of an assignment like this.

Critical reflection and review are essential steps in achieving maximum improvement and growth, both personal and professional. Bassot states that 'reflective practise encourages us to review our learning experiences' (Bassot, B., 2016. pp ix). In turn, this is highly appropriate for the Creative Music Management portfolio undertaken this term, with students discovering strengths and potential weaknesses, a process which will aid them when searching for relevant jobs in the industry.

2. The Project

2.1 - Initial ideas and development

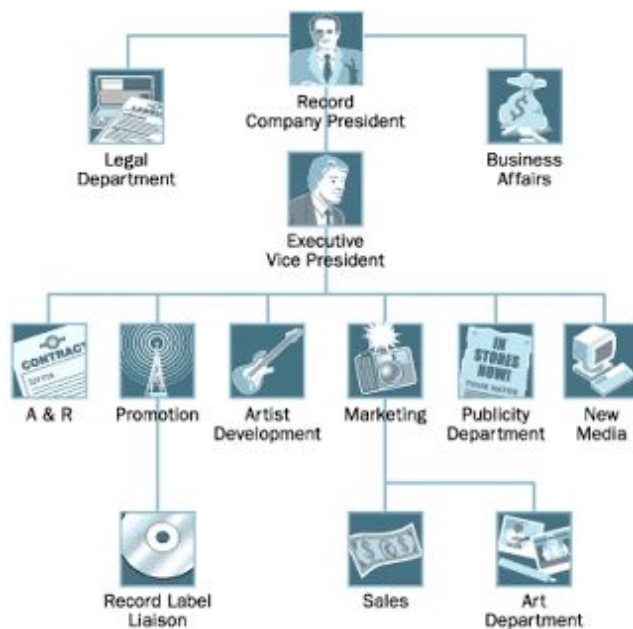
The process for the Creative Music Management module began with briefing the assignment to a group, in my case, 'Orange Crush', alongside Aston New, Alexandru Oprisanu, and Christian Gillett. Our aims and objectives for the project were to develop an original artist's campaign including; recording, planning for digital release and promoting the single. Critical assets for the assignment included the artwork, promotional video, budget and press kit, but most importantly - to create a remix of the original artist's song. Due to this, Orange Crush's first official meeting on the 11th November 2020, involved pitching a maximum of three artists and producers each for the remix.

My first involvement in the project was recruiting our producer, Toma Lazarov. Having worked with Toma several times over recent years, I believed his commitment to hard work would work well with our original artist, Jerome Thomas, recruited by Aston New. The song of choice 'Right There' classifies in the genres of Soul and R&B. The group's vision to partner with Toma's electronic-pop influenced production and enabled the inevitable creation of an R&B/Electronic

infusion which the group became very excited to work with. Furthermore, Jerome's significant and impressive 50,755 Spotify monthly listeners fueled Orange Crush to promote the single to the best of our ability, with a large audience to impress.

Whilst the nature of my involvement in the project varied, I tended to utilise the skills I felt most proficient in. Upon reflection, it would have perhaps been more beneficial for the group to attempt new tasks that were more challenging for each individual; a personal example would have been budgeting. It would have ensured the group completed the module with more insight and knowledge into other aspects of the industry that were perhaps foreign. Nonetheless, Aston New and I partnered together to complete the more creative and organisational tasks whilst Alexandru and Christian partnered for the budgeting, contracts and EPK. The personal tasks mentioned included the footage and editing for the promotional video, working on the A&R aspects, social media posts and the contribution towards the google drive folder for the team's organisation.

With the assignment effectively asking the group to adopt a record label's roles, it is interesting to point out that Orange Crush did not assign a CEO. Looking at this image below, it demonstrates the traditional job roles in an indie record label (Kornfeld, L., 2013):



As shown in the job chain, a traditional indie record label holds the Record Company President at the top, with A&R, Marketing, Promotion, Artist Development, Publicity Department and New Media, all below. Orange Crush felt it was important not to vote a CEO figure into the group project, keeping all team members equal. Upon reflection this choice was, in my opinion, part of the reason for Orange Crushes' success; with mutual respect for all members and no means of hierarchy or leaders - all members were on the same level of authority. It allowed more comfortable communication between all members, with no specific leader giving instructions to tasks per week.

An important strength the team possessed was time management and organisation. Beginning with scheduled zoom calls every week and working on the group chat from Thursday 5th November; Orange Crush ensured any problems or elements of the assignment brief that were perhaps confusing or should be questioned, were checked and answered. Doing so enabled the group to keep on top of all given tasks and complete in due time. 'Being well organised is vital for success in many areas of our lives, and good time management is an important skill that everyone needs for study and professional effectiveness' (Bassot, B., 2016. pp 10), supports the importance of Orange Crush's organisation.

Zoom was a vital part of Orange Crush's success; the global pandemic made working on a creative and collaborative task initially challenging to start with, having only met group members face-to-face several times due to COVID-19. However, the online communication service enabled the Orange Crush to stay in contact throughout the project, helping the group to bond as a team - an essential part of our success. Eric Yuan started Zoom in 2011, and Roberto Garcia started facetime in 2010 (Tibken, S., 2014). Both are arguably the most globally popular services for online communication; however, fifteen years ago, these services did not exist. During a global pandemic, a project such as this would have been nearly impossible to succeed in with little to no communication available, demonstrating the development in technology over the years and how it has aided Orange Crush's work. I will discuss other demonstrations of the group's utilisation of advanced technology further in the essay.

2.2 - Organisation Leadership

Regarding the organisational side of the project, Aston and I took lead on this particular aspect. The group's primary communication source was through Whatsapp, allowing all group members to be informed of any updates to the portfolio most quickly and efficiently possible. An image of the group's initial introduction, on the 5th November 2020, for the group chat can be seen below:



In the beginning weeks, Orange Crush also decided to use the website 'monday.com', where the groups' tasks, status and dates could all be seen clearly in a calendar. An example of this is shown below (New, A. and Skea, C., 2020):

Behind The Scenes	Subite...	Person	Status	Date
Aston & Caitlin to Discuss	2		Working on it	Nov 20
Instagram				
video cotent				
+ Add				

Artwork & Iconography	Subite...	Person	Status	Date
Artwork				Jan 4, 2021
Madu made the logo for the group			Done	Nov 12
Madu & Jerome to connect for artwork ideas				Jan 4, 2021
+ Add				

EPK	Subite...	Person	Status	Date
Collecting photos - promo and live				
Write Press Release				
Write Biography				
Social Media Links				
Press clippings				
mp3's of track + remix				

Marketing Strategy/Timeline/Promotion	Subite...	Person	Status	Date
Create a timeline w/deadlines				
Decide on distributor and upload to DSP				
PR Company quote for single campaign				
+ Add				

A&R Session	Subite...	Person	Status	Date
Consult and confirm Artist/Producer & Songwriter	1		Done	Nov 12
Discuss remix ideas	1		Done	Nov 13
Meet & Greet for Jerome & Toma	2		Done	Nov 19
+ Add				

Budget Sheet	Subite...	Person	Status	Date
Create and compile a budgeting sheet	1		Working on it	Jan 4, 2021
Contract for Toma			Working on it	Jan 4, 2021
+ Add				

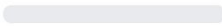
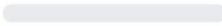
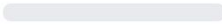
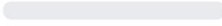
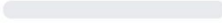
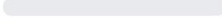
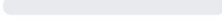
As the images demonstrate, it enabled the team to work individually on assignments set, without daily calls on zoom to clarify specific tasks. It also allowed more descriptive insight to

particular ideas for certain aspects of the portfolio, for example, the promotional video - specific questions that could be asked in the interviews with Toma and Jerome. However, four weeks after using 'Monday.com' the website asked the group to pay a monthly or yearly subscription, due to the free trial the group was using. Upon reflection, the group should have read the initial email carefully from 'Monday.com' where it informed the group about the free month trial. Due to the group's ambitious attitude to get started on the project, we overlooked an important part of information as Orange Crush decided to move to Google Drive instead. This cost the group time and effort, which could have been avoided with careful reading, and is something I will personally learn from in future projects. However, the mistake was amended, and luckily due to the group's team working skills, all information was moved to Google Drive folders a few days after.

The group's ability to use a cloud storage provider such as Google Drive is another example of how technological advancement has aided Orange Crush's success. 'In the mid-1990s, AT&T launched the first all web-based storage service for personal and business communication', demonstrating how relatively new cloud-based storage is to businesses. This advancement has aided Orange Crush's project significantly; the ability to store promotional video footage for all members to view, for example, without the need to download and use personal storage space, as well as being more time-efficient.

The image below shows the folders on Google Drive:

Shared with me >

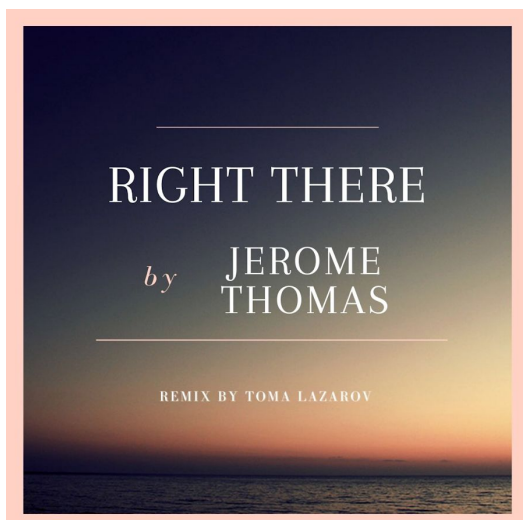
Name ↓	Owner	Last modified	File size
 Team Logo		Nov 28, 2020	—
 Song Artwork		Nov 28, 2020	—
 Press/PR/EPK		Nov 29, 2020	—
 Contacts		Nov 29, 2020	—
 Behind The Scenes		Nov 28, 2020	—
 Orange Crush - Project Timeline 		Nov 30, 2020	—
 Budgeting Sheet 		Dec 14, 2020	70 KB

2.3 - Artwork

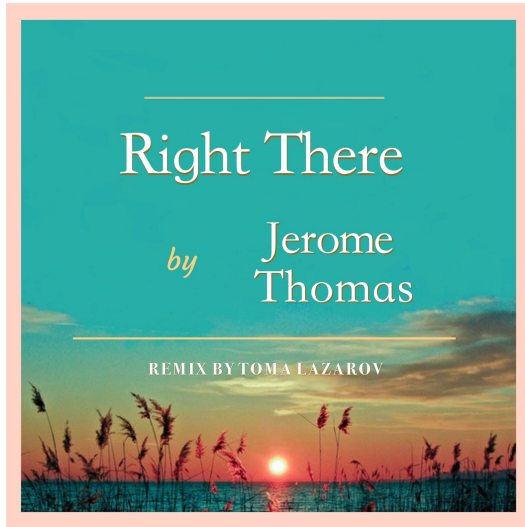
All Orange Crush members contributed ideas towards creating the artwork, pitching different colours and themes on the Whatsapp group from the first week. However, the group's lead artwork designer was Alexandru.

To gain further insight into the importance of artwork, I read several articles from the digital distribution and label services company, 'Horus Music', demonstrating how artwork 'painted a picture that reflected the song you were listening to' (Horus Music., 2017). Furthermore stating: 'no matter what type of music you create, people will create a first impression of how the music might sound by taking a look at the artwork.. it plays an even bigger part when it comes to selling your music online and promoting it' (Horus Music., 2017). Due to this research, the group decided the artwork was one of the most critical aspects to focus on initially, which led to several drafts before the final to achieve the most appropriate one - the changes to artwork have been explained in more detail in the portfolio. Below are the original and final images of artwork:

Original idea created on the 28th November 2020:



Final artwork created on the 15th December 2020:

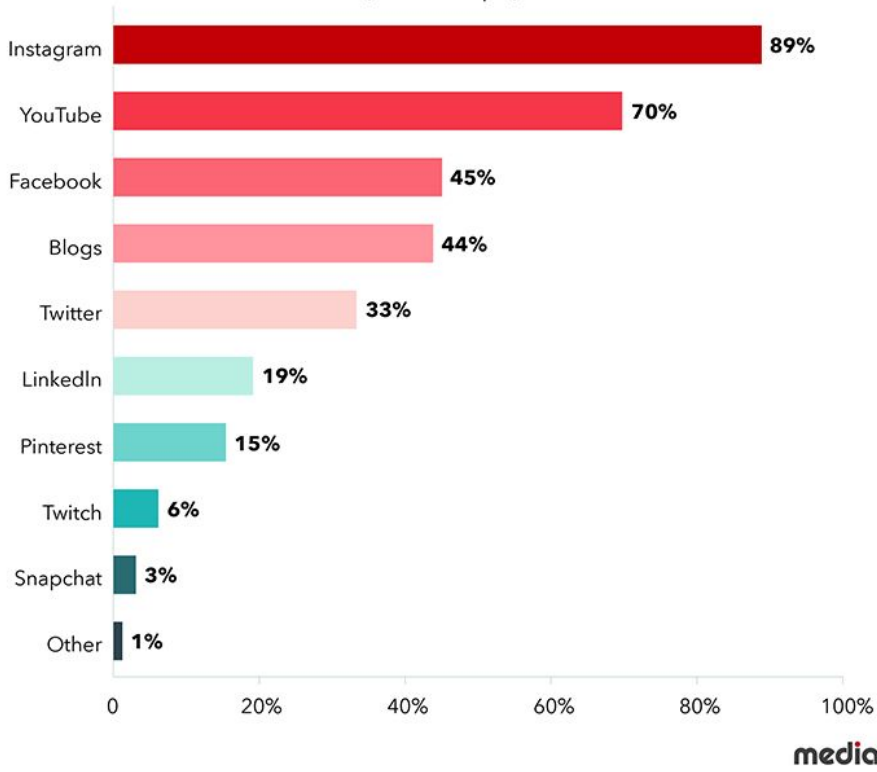


2.4 - Social Media Assets

Jerome Thomas has a significant Instagram following of 4,971. Due to this, the group felt it appropriate to research how effective Instagram was regarding promotion, to discover whether Jerome's other social media platforms would be more beneficial. The image below demonstrates Instagram's significant importance for influencers over other social media platforms (Chen, J., 2020):

WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS ARE MOST IMPORTANT FOR INFLUENCER MARKETING?

(Select multiple)



'Surveyed Marketers' image displays how 89% view Instagram as the 'most important social media channel for influencer marketing' (Chen, J., 2020). Using this information, Orange Crush felt it compulsory to prioritise Instagram over other social media platforms, to promote and market 'Right There' most effectively. Considering this information, the group decided to create and design many different Instagram post drafts and examples. My contribution to social media posts has been analysed in more detail in the portfolio.

It is important to note how Instagram has revolutionised the promotion side of the music industry. Before social media, 'record labels typically promoted their products using large budgets spent on heavy advertising, encouraging radio airplay, and television spots' (Margiotta, M., 2012). Currently, with '116 million' Instagram users recorded in the USA as of October 2020 (Chen, J., 2020), many artists can promote their music simply through a post,

reaching fans globally for free and in seconds. It demonstrates how the promotion side of the industry has changed so drastically through the development of social media; the 'interaction between artists and fans contributes to a sense of community.. and customer engagement is enhanced' (Margiotta, M., 2012) is a promotional asset that artists before social media lost out on.

2.5 - A&R

The A&R participation for this project suited my capabilities most; due to my music and creativity background and being a musical artist. As 'it is desirable to have experience in music in order to understand the artistic process and the business of music' in the field of A&R (Stein, T., 2018.), I felt it appropriate that I would take part of the lead in this department for the project. The role of an A&R rep varies in the music industry; however, most 'tend to work independently, partnering with artists, bands, and smaller labels to identify and sign talent, develop and refine their music, and market directly to their fans' (Stein, T., 2018). Recruiting the group's producer is an example of my work as an A&R rep for Orange Crush.

In the initial development, Toma pitched the remix to the group on the 11th December 2020. There was a divide in the group concerning a section in the first verse, where Toma had delayed Jerome's vocals slightly intending to enforce the jazz style. Whilst Alexandru and I agreed this fitted perfectly with the overall remix, Aston and Christian didn't agree as they felt it sounded out of time. The group had to come to a reasonable decision through mature discussion of all perspectives and as a result, the group agreed it was safer to move the vocals back to the original. This is an example of the groups A&R rep ability, giving creative feedback for the remix and working through differences of opinion to reach the most beneficial outcome for the group

2.6 - Promotional Video

Due to the global pandemic COVID-19, specific ideas and elements of the promotional video had to change due to safety complications and laws. In the first meeting, Aston and I agreed on a similar concept which we felt would work well alongside the remix and engage many of

Jerome Thomas' and Toma Lazarov's audiences on social media platforms. A point of reference was the YouTube channel 'Deconstructed' (Genius., 2017) and the series 'Song Exploder' on Netflix (Hirway, H and Neville, M., 2020). Both are series which interview the producers of successful songs (for example 'The Weekend' by SZA - cited above from Deconstructed) breaking down exactly how they created the song before it was sent to the artist. In the initial zoom meetings with Aston, it was decided to structure Toma's section of the promotional video similarly to the Deconstructed series - specifically at 1.26 - 2.33 of this particular episode.

The image below is a screenshot of the cited clip, where producer 'THANKGOD CODY' screen records his computer screen to show the Logic session of 'The Weekend', explaining step by step how he created the song (Genius., 2017).



As an artist and part producer myself, I know from experience how interesting and informative these videos are to watch for producers, demonstrating how successful producers use different instruments, EQ and samples to achieve their works. Aston and I wanted to achieve a similar style, as we felt it would attract more attention from Toma's fans and therefore help the remix to reach its maximum audience.

However, due to COVID-19 Aston and I were unable to visit Toma to achieve this. Furthermore, Toma did not have the full technical skills to do so himself, and in my professional opinion, the

video lost a level of professionalism that Aston and I intended for it to achieve. Instead of the Deconstructed style, I worked with Toma's simple video explaining his creative process for the track, instead of demonstrating as hoped - this can be seen in the promotional video at part 4.11 - 5.14. Overall, the video fulfilled its purpose. However, it would have been preferable to include a more detailed and professional outlook for 'Right There's production. Another inspiration for the promotional video was Demi Lovato's documentary 'Simply Complicated', explained in more detail in my portfolio.

Alongside the interviews with both Jerome and Toma, the video features a collage of pre-recorded photos and recordings (from both artist and producer) and images of those who inspire them as creators. Initially, the group intended to incorporate London and Guildford content - where the artist and producer are based. It was agreed to film specific areas and scenes which would capture the essence of where both musicians live and create, giving fans a look into their lives. However, due to COVID-19, this became impossible to achieve, which meant the group could only use pre-recording clips and videos. If the group were to re-film the video once restrictions are released, I believe it would result in the stronger connection between fans and artist and producer, which is a personal aim as an Orange Crush member.

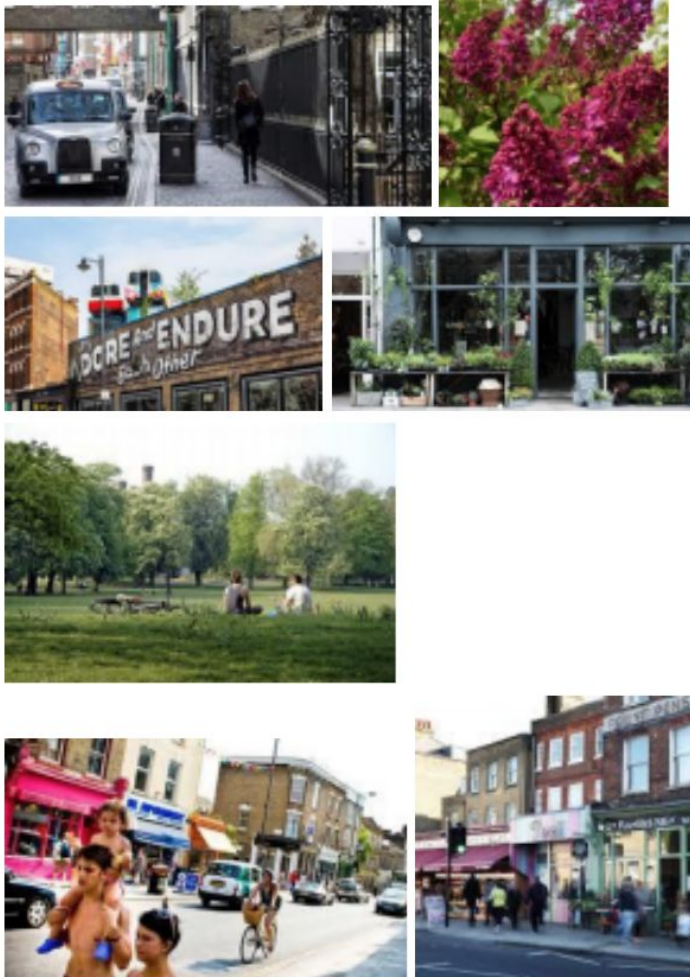
The initial script for the video written by Aston and I, can be seen in the image below:

Treatment

On-Screen: The words 'Jerome Thomas ft Toma - Right There' is Typed, big bold font

Intro playing: Song begins

We move to the **Scenery OF LONDON**. Highbury, Stoke Newington, Clissold Park, People, (Any Toma locations?) Bright, Loving, Warm, Gold, Greens, Spring, Early Summer Vibes



We then fade into a London road. The camera (**walking along the street**) meets Jerome captures some things that inspire or draw his attention outside.

We then have a moment where Jerome acknowledges the camera smiles covers the screen

Camera gets covered

Goes to Toma- we have a moment of him in full producer mode or even playing some instruments, puts headphones on etc. (in time with the music)

He walks towards his computer does go into producer mode he also catches the camera looks away turns of the computer. (Effect of when you turn off the TV)

3. Conclusion

To conclude, the group Orange Crush demonstrated strong team working, resilience and organisational skills in many aspects of the project. Although faced with a global pandemic, all team members managed to work hard to collect all content necessary to make the release as successful as possible.

Wright describes the reflective practice as 'the development of insight and practices through critical attention to practical values, theories, principles, assumptions, and the relationship between theory and practice that inform everyday actions' (Wright, J., 2018. pp29). This quote reflects Orange Crush's attitude and work ethic since the 5th November 2020; always keeping strong communication between all members to achieve and complete all tasks for the project. Upon personal reflection, I believe the team created an impressive and detailed promotional campaign for the remix 'Right There' by Jerome Thomas and Toma Lazarov, giving personal confidence to do so professionally in the future.

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