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Group Project Portfolio :

A showcase outlining the digital release and promotion of a single and related remix.

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WORD COUNT: 2264

INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to showcase the selection, production and release of a single and a remix created for a recording artist in Q4 of 2020. The group working on this project included; Thando Zulu, Sharron, Karl and Rohan, all of whom are MA Music Business students at the time of writing. This portfolio details the meetings the group had to formulate strategies and make decisions to execute the brief both from a creative and a financial standpoint.

I believe the below shows the need for music managers, and artist managers in particular, to be creative in their approach to the business elements of the music industry. 2020 is a year in which the music industry suffered the impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic, where UK national lockdowns shifted the landscape of the music industry namely by hindering the live shows, tours and festivals. (Jones R, 2020) The restrictions imposed on the live music sector has led to many artists having to rely on streaming revenue to generate income and thus the digital release market has become saturated and new creative release strategies are the necessary medium for successful release campaigns. (Ingham T 2020) The project showcased below shows this process from the selection of the right artist to work with, the decisions involved in choosing the right song to release and the process of marketing the song upon release.

TEAM ROLES

The production and release of a single requires multiple areas to be considered and actioned. These areas include, songwriting, recording, production, mixing, mastering, distribution, marketing, financing, graphic design and photography.

To execute across these disciplines a team including Thando Zulu, Sharron, Karl Gordon and Rohan came together, the team roles are outlined below.

Sharron - Marketing and PR

Karl Gordon - Creative Direction

Thando Zulu - Business and Finance

Rohan - Marketing and PR

These roles were chosen based on the relative expertise and experience of each person on the team and the specific needs of the project. The project was executed between November 2020 - January 2021.

ASSETS CREATION

The group chose from the following artists;

1. JERUB, 22 year old, male singer/songwriter from Nottingham. Managed by Thando Zulu
2. Beatriz Fernandes, 21 year old, Portuguese female RnB artist. Managed by Sharon
3. Marina Hovian 22 year old, female Pop, RnB artist. Signed to Karl Gordons Label, W. LDN. SOUNDSYSTEM.
- 4.

The group decided to work with Marina Hovian after having considered factors including, release cycle, access to producers and distribution infrastructure.

Karl Gordon is a producer and recently launched an independent label the distributes through Ditto Music.

The decision to work with Marina Hovian enabled the project to move quickly in a positive direction as Karl being the owner of the Label could ensure that this release was prioritised, which is a key consideration when working with a Label.

The group then listened to the unreleased catalogue from Marina Hovian and the decision was made to work on the song titled "It Just Happened". The title of the song stands out as a song that could gain traction on platforms such as YouTube, Instagram and Tiktok which are populated with user generated content. The Team discussed the Marketing potential of the hashtag #justhappened. The quality of the vocal, subject matter and catchy melody made 'It Just Happened' a strong contender for the single for this project.

Link to Track: [Click Here](#)

Link to Remix: [Click Here](#)

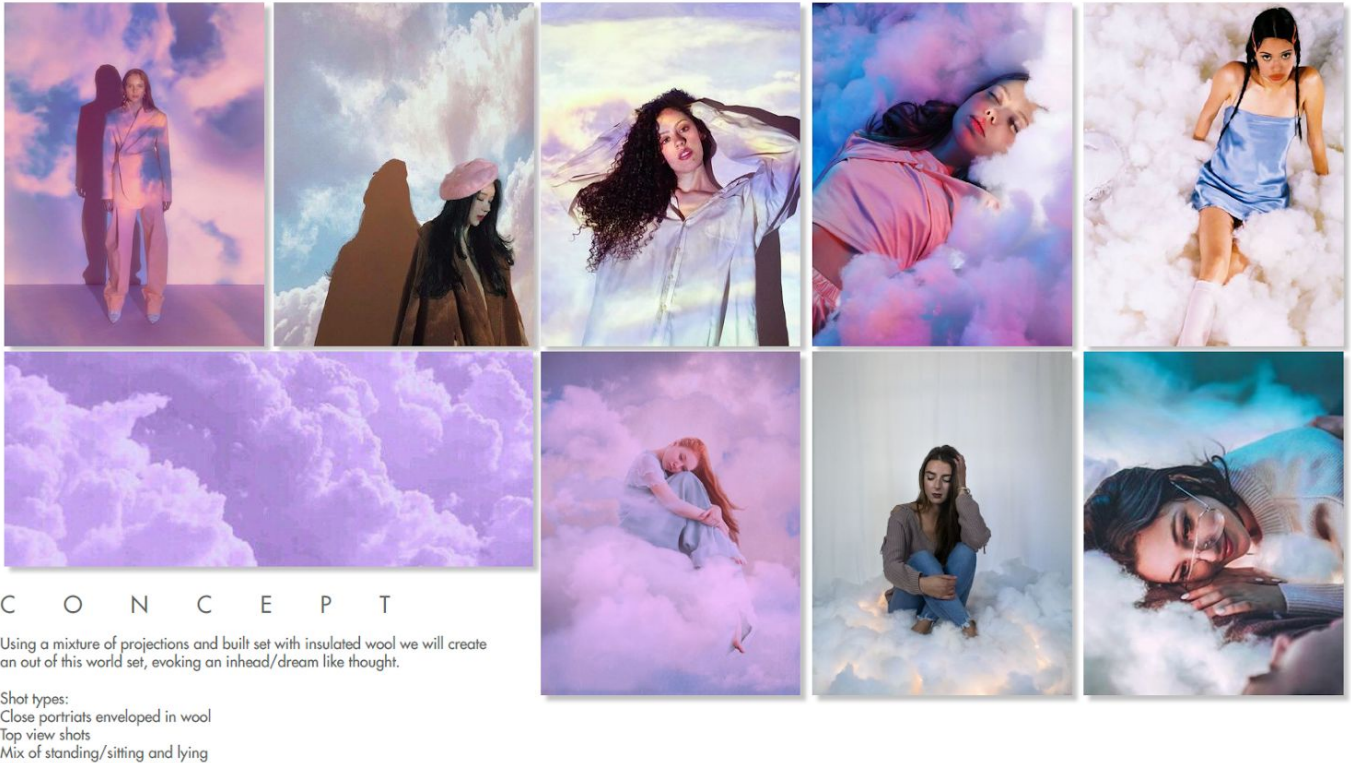
To help build opportunity for social media engagement the group decided to ask a Male rapper to do an alternative version that would be a 'male response to the song'.

The inspiration for this was taken from the two part hit records from Eamon and Frankee in 2003 and 2004 respectively, both songs reached No.1 in the UK singles Charts at Peak Position.

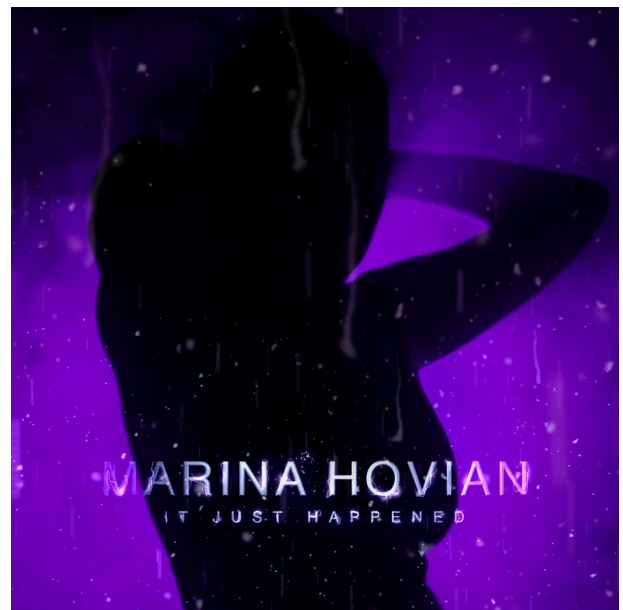
Once the music had been decided on the visual content was the next asset to be produced. The majority of the budget was spent on the creation of a music video from which stills were used for both Artwork and promotion shots. The benefit of allocating budget to music video creation is that aforementioned stills can be taken and used for artwork, and additionally short clips can be used for engaging promotional content on social media and added visual content on digital streaming platforms namely, Spotify.

Link to additional visual content to be used for promo and on DSPs: [Click Here](#)

Treatment for Video outlining the concept of the opening scenes. Image 1



The Artwork focussed on Marina's face and image to create recognition as Marina Hovian is a relatively new artist. The options that were considered for the artwork can be seen below.



Options for Artwork for the Single Release - Image on the left was chosen as it increases artist recognition in comparison to the silhouette imagery on the right.

In order to build an artist identity and increase brand awareness the group explored different logos that could be used for Marina Hovian across all social media platforms and on all digital assets.

A junior graphic design was enlisted to create options for potential logos that were not able to be incorporated into this project due to the timelines of the video delivery not matching that of the logo.



Options for ongoing, Marina Hovian logo - Image on the right shows options for different variations within the same style. The image on the left shows the final logo chosen by the artist.

The correct labeling of assets that are distributed digitally is extremely important. Within the music industry the additional information that accompanies a song is known as metadata. The incorrect labelling of songs can lead to a loss of revenue for artists and songwriters. Therefore along with the creation of assets, it was important for the group to record the correct data to ensure that there is a central place for the correct metadata information to be drawn from. (Pastukhov, D 2019)

See information pertaining to the single 'It Just Happened' below.

<u>Name:</u> It Just Happened	<u>Artist(s):</u> MARINA HOVIAN
<u>Format (single/ep/album):</u> Single	<u>Length:</u> 3:37 <u>Release Date:</u> Jan 29th
<u>Label:</u> W.LDN. SOUNDSYSTEM via DITTO	<u>Master Ownership:</u> W.LDN.SOUNDSYSTEM
<u>Publishing Splits:</u> 70% Josh Thompson 30% Marina Hovian	
<u>Producer(s):</u> Josh 'JT' Thompson	<u>Songwriter(s):</u> Marina Hovian & Josh 'JT' Thompson
<u>Recording Engineer:</u> Josh Thompson, Karl Gordon	<u>Recording Country:</u> UK
<u>Mixing:</u> Karl 'KGee' Gordon	<u>Mastering:</u> Karl 'KGee' Gordon
<u>Artwork:</u> Kuki London+	<u>BPM:</u> 160bm <u>Key:</u> C Major
<u>Lyrical Themes:</u> Relationships, love, sex, heartbreak, cheating	
<u>Genre #1:</u> Pop	<u>Genre #2:</u> RnB/Reggae
<u>ISRC:</u> TBC	<u>UPC:</u> TBC

MARKETING AND RELEASE STRATEGY

Arguable fundamental marketing strategy for this single and those for other artists at a similar stage as Marina Hovian, is to engage multiple audiences on various platforms. The primary way of understanding a single release for an independent artist is to employ both direct to consumer (D2C) and business to business (B2B) marketing techniques.

The consumers in this case are, current fans and followers of Marina and potential fans and followers. The business to business approach can be used to describe the artist and management marketing themselves to other music businesses including radio stations, labels, publishers and other music industry companies.

The five P's of marketing can be used to understand the considerations required to effectively engage the aforementioned audiences.

The product is the music and the artist, the price and place are set by the distribution companies and are limited due to the oligopoly within the digital streaming platform industry. The promotion and people are the variables that one can utilize in different ways depending on the target audience.

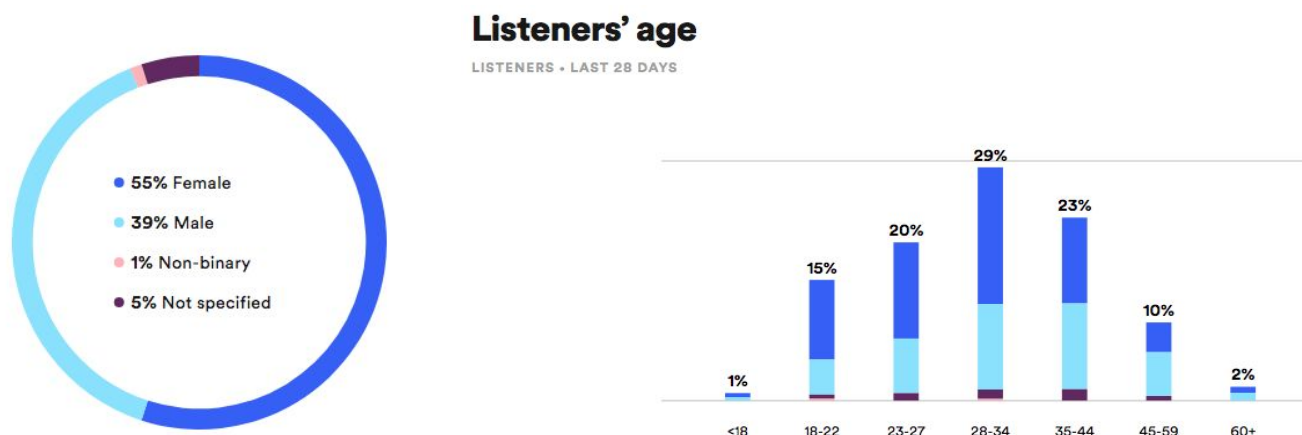
To ensure that existing fans and followers engage with the music it is important to engage this consumer base ahead of release. To be able to engage existing fans the group researched where the majority of Marina Hovians audience are using spotify analytics within the Spotify for Artists application.

Top Countries where consumers listen to Marina Hovian - taken from Spotify for Artist.

Top countries

LISTENERS • LAST 28 DAYS

LAST 28 DAYS		LISTENERS
1	Brazil	5.6k
2	United States	4.4k
3	Italy	207
4	Germany	184
5	Canada	150
6	Russian Federation	115
7	United Kingdom	109
8	Portugal	78
9	France	78
10	Spain	58



Gender demographics (on the left) and Average age for listeners (on the right) - taken from Spotify for Artists.

The group then cross-referenced that information with the instagram audience and created a social media campaign schedule to ensure that existing fans were informed and engaged with the release.

The call to action for the social media campaign is divided into 3 main pushes namely; presave, listen, share. In the first instance the aim is to encourage the current fan base to pre-save the song on various platforms but predominantly on Spotify which owns the lion share of the digital streaming platform market share (Musically 2020).

Section of Social Media Schedule for Marina Hovian Release - Adapted from Ditto Music Resources for Labels

MARINA HOVIAN 'JUST HAPPENED' SOCIAL MEDIA SCHEDULE CALENDAR

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
				ARTWORK UNVEIL Post the artwork Let everyone know when the single is dropping! Use a smart link in bio for presave.		PRESS SHOT Post a simple press shot. Give the audience some content to interact with outside of the music
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
POST A TEASER SNIPPET Post a snippet of the remix on your story, reminding everyone to pre-save with the link in bio.	AMA Post a selfie on your story, telling your fans you'll be doing an 'Ask Me Anything' tonight on your story. Once you've posted the Ask Me Anything, reply to every question with a		GO IG LIVE Go live with your fans, hosting a listening party of songs you have released or are working on. Fans will love it!	HAPPY RELEASE DAY Post a snippet of the new single letting everyone know it is out now via Spotify/Apple Music etc. Make sure you guide people to the smart link in bio, so that people	CHECK YOUR MESSAGES Check your messages to see if anyone has shared your music in their feed/stories. Be sure to post anything onto your own story, the fans will love to see	

The pre-save metric is an early sign that consumers want the product in questions and may be one of the factors in securing playlist placement which increases the likelihood of engagement on the stream platform.

The addition to playlists is a primary way to ensure that existing fans and new potential fans hear the music and thus engage with the product. Algorithmic playlists, Editorial playlists and 3-third party playlists are different ways to reach new and existing listeners on digital streaming platforms. To increase the chances of editorial playlist support on various DSPs, it is important to upload the song to the DSPs to give enough time for playlist editors to listen to the music ahead of the release date. This was factored in when the group chose a release date of January 22nd for 'It Just Happened'.

A secondary marketing audience for emerging artists is the music industry, where the artist's aim is to persuade the companies that they have the ability to earn revenue in the future for these organisations. To achieve this, artists must take a multi-platform approach to their release campaign. An ideal scenario would have the music played on radio, mentioned in music industry blogs, in prime playlist placements on DSP and gain traction on social media such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok and Twitch. To gain coverage on blogs and radio artists must introduce themselves and the song prior to the music being available to the general public, to do this one uses an Electronic Press Kit (EPK). An epk outlines the necessary and interesting information about the artist and gives an insight into the song that is being promoted. In this way artists must market to businesses that specialise in marketing to other music businesses.

With this in mind the group collated a list of press targets that had previously supported Karl Gordon's work and therefore had an existing rapport.

An epk was produced that can be view in full at this link: [Click Here](#)

BUDGET AND FINANCE

The budget allocated from Tileyard Education on this project was £500 which revealed the need for a creative approach in handling the finances for this release. The group decided to spend the budget on promotional content as there was access to work in-kind by way of production and mixing and mastering costs. The cost for the music video created a budget deficit and will require additional streams of income to decrease.

Streaming income is the first guaranteed source of revenue from the distribution of music on digital streaming platforms. Though it is worth noting that for emerging artists, the revenue from streaming is extremely difficult due to the conversion of £ per stream being relatively low. To receive £100 to go towards offsetting the deficit the song would need approximately 30K streams on spotify. (Royaltycalc.com)

To boost the potential for streaming, Spotify have recently introduced 'shows with music' and marquee which are both ways to use the platform to market your songs and generate more streaming royalties. (artists.spotify.com)

A relatively new addition to facebook, instagram and spotify is the ability to make donations directly from the platform. Some artists have been using these functions as a means of crowdfunding for future projects or to close the shortfall from existing campaigns.

Merch Sales is another avenue through which the group plans to generate income. This potential area of revenue requires more research and investigation but has the scope to help decrease the shortfall.

Name	Expected Expenditure	Actual Expenditure	Remaining Amount	Expected Income	Expected Loss	Actual Income	Income Shortfall	Actual Loss
Master	£0.00	£0.00	-£100.00	£100.00	-£100.00	£0.00	-£100.00	£0.00
Photoshoots	£500.00	£0.00	£500.00	£0.00	£500.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Graphic Design	£50.00	£20.00	£30.00	£0.00	£50.00	£0.00	£0.00	£20.00
Promo Video Shoots	£1,000.00	£1,625.00	-£625.00	£0.00	£1,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,625.00
Press	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Digital Ads	£50.00	£0.00	£50.00	£0.00	£50.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Merch	£100.00	£0.00	-£200.00	£300.00	-£200.00	£0.00	-£300.00	£0.00
Submit Hub	£30.00	£0.00	£30.00	£0.00	£30.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Misc	£20.00	£0.00	-£830.00	£850.00	-£830.00	£0.00	-£850.00	£0.00
Starting Pot	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£500.00	-£500.00	£500.00	£0.00	-£500.00
	£1,750.00	£1,645.00	-£1,145.00	£1,750.00	£0.00	£500.00		£1,145.00

It	Date	Amount Spent	Budget	Description	Authorised	Carried out by
1		£500.00	Promo Video Shoo	Deposit for Music Video: Kuki London	Karl	TeeJay
2		£500.00	Promo Video Shoo	Final payment for Music Video: Kuki London	Karl	Marina
3		£150	Promo Video Shoo	Make Up : Sophie Mabel-Stephens	Karl	Marina
4		£250	Promo Video Shoo	Hair	Karl	Marina
5		£75	Promo Video Shoo	Expenses:Travel, Food	Karl	TeeJay
6		£150.00	Promo Video Shoo	Wardrobe	Karl	Marina
7		£20.00	Graphic Design	Logo Creation	Karl	Sharon
8						
9						

9

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Available at : <https://soundcharts.com/blog/music-metadata>

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APPENDIX

Link to full working budget :

[Marina Hovian Budget.xlsx](#)

Link to full Marketing plan

[MARINA HOVIAN_ReleaseMarketingPlan.pdf](#)

Link to questionnaire used to write EPK

[Marina Bio Questions.docx.pdf](#)

Link to Music Video

[Marina Just Happened Final Mastered .mp4](#)