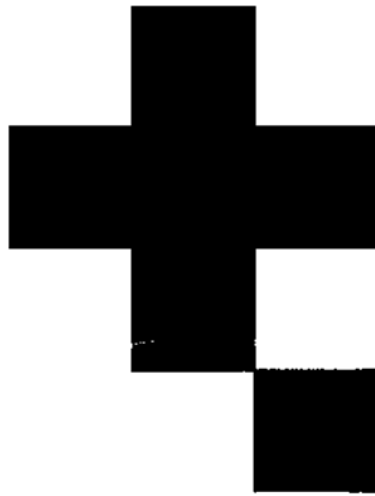


Akshay Parmar
1907846
Creation (ADAD7004_LON)
Element 2b
Ciarán Robinson

TILEYARD



EDUCATION

Reflective Commentary.

Introduction:

The purpose of this essay is to reflect and commentate on the creation of the EP '*Celestina*'. To provide a thorough reflection, this paper has been structured into three broad areas: the past, the present and the future. Within the '*Past*' section, there will be a detailed breakdown of what the initial plans and aims were for creating the EP as well as what was hoped to be achieved. In order to measure how well this EP did at successfully achieving these initial aims, a main SWOT analysis evaluating my skillset and the contextual factors affecting the working conditions will form the parameters from which to measure how critical one can be for either achieving or not achieving certain early aspirations made for this body of work and realistically, where one can envision this project going into the future. The '*Present*' part of this thesis focuses on the production phase of the EP and at its core, a cross-examination of the initial goals and how events actually transpired. The early aims will be divided into three sub-headings: hard technical skills, soft skills and commercial skills reflecting through a series of acute SWOT analyses on how each factor was accounted for and dealt with, either through adaptation or omission based on the main SWOT mentioned above. And finally, the '*Future*' portion of this paper is an evaluative section that looks at how this project is going to be used moving forward. Using a professional development plan (PDP) and the main SWOT as a parameter for this, the reader shall be able to see a realistic vision of this work moving forward based on all of these factors mentioned above.

The Past:

The general notion going into this project was to create a Reggaeton-inspired EP to promote up and coming Spanish artists who were within my networking reach. The main reason for doing this was the commercial perspective. Reggaeton's rise in Western Culture has been short and meteoric. In the last five years, cross-collaborations between North American and Spanish/Latin American A-Listers including Justin Bieber and Luis Fonsi, Drake and Bad Bunny, Beyoncé and J. Balvin, Rosalía and Travis Scott have taken on millions of streams across all digital platforms. The demand for Latin American-inspired rhythms and the overall style of music combined with my own keen interest in the genre were, at a quick glance, the initial sparks behind getting this project going.

Looking now in more detail at the individual aims prior to production, one of the first aims involved taking into account the Western market's increased demand for shorter and snappier songs. In 2019, the average track length of the Top 40 was 'three minutes and seven seconds' (Breuner, K., Moser, M. et al., 2020) making it thirty seconds shorter than the average recorded in 2018. Although this referred to music as a whole, it could be argued that Reggaeton's music is generally short and snappy, with infectious grooves and catchy choruses. Therefore, this finding could perhaps explain one of the ways in which its popularity has arisen. As a direct result of this, it became a point that one of the aims for this EP was to factor in the need to make songs that would not lose the listeners' attention for reasons such as: the song took too long to enter, the content in the verses made the song drag out or the melodies and drums stopped driving the music.

Another initial goal made before going into this project was for the whole EP to be produced at the lowest cost possible. It was highlighted in the proposal that Lil Nas X's '*Old Town Road*' (Hill, M., Reznor, T., et al., 2018), a song that lasted seventeen weeks at the top of the Billboard

Hot 100 was made on a thirty-dollar instrumental beat off of Beatstars.com (Ingham, T., Wang, A. et al., 2020). The producer of this record who goes by the name of YoungKio highlighted how he was a student at university and Lil Nas X was not a major artist (YouTube, 2020) when they made this song. Nonetheless, their collaboration saw the single go viral and take over most of 2019 with a remix following shortly after featuring Billy Ray Cyrus. YoungKio produced the song from samples off of YouTube and created the whole song on Fruity Loops (YouTube, 2020). Consequently, this evidence proved that the budget for the EP could be extremely low and yet still of very high quality with the right production, mixing and mastering skills. Looking at Fig. 2, it was clear that going into the project, my mixing and mastering skills were potential weaknesses. As an up and coming producer it was still expected that the budget would remain low, not only for financial reasons but also as a challenge to myself to conquer this potential threat and be able to overcome and build a competitive brand through patience and persistence in improving my craft.

Moreover, it is important to note that in the general overview of what the initial aim was for this EP, it stated that it was ‘Reggaeton-inspired’. ‘Inspired’ in this context meant that there was some deliberate room being left for the potential to experiment sonically from the genre’s traditional styles. The song ‘Bad Guy’ (Eilish, B., O’Connell, F., 2019) by Billie Eilish is classified as a Pop song today yet only six years ago, it was more akin to a song like ‘Thinking Out Loud’ (Sheeran, E., Wadge, A., 2014) by Ed Sheeran. This research into how the market has evolved demonstrated that now more than ever the traditional genres and sounds associated with them were being challenged and pushed beyond their existing boundaries, which could possibly explain the increase in collaborations across different languages. It meant that for this project, it was critical for there to be some room in terms of production to allow Rojaz to be as original as possible within the genre in order to cater for any potential threats that could arise from artists being reluctant to feature on a straightforward Reggaeton structured instrumental given the experimental nature of music at the moment.

Fig. 2 also showed the opportunities that were available to me during my time at Tileyard and one key aspect of this was the ability to build a network of artists who could fit the project. Developing a solid relationship with artist Rojaz from Spain, her love for Latin music meant that she was a natural when it came to song writing on the tracks for this project. Having been acquainted with Rojaz for a while at this point, she was willing to reach out to her friends who were also artists that she thought could be on the EP. Thus, in the proposal, it was highlighted that this avenue could be made an aim for the project to showcase up and coming Spanish and Latin artists, to create more dynamic in the production and, to expand my spread of artist connections.

The final major aim was concerned with the commercial side of the project and this entailed how all parties wanted to promote the EP after completion. Numerous examples of how it could be pushed within the context of the main SWOT (Fig. 2) were given such as DistroKid, an online distributor to all digital streaming platforms (DSPs), uploading unlimited songs for only ‘\$19.99’ a year (DistroKid, 2020). There was also a discussion on the need to utilise Instagram and its ‘Stories’ option with both the producer and artist promoting the release on their respective social media pages. And more recently, the rise of the app TikTok saw Drake go viral with his single ‘Toosie Slide’ (Graham, A., Kobe, N., Yildirim, O., 2020) with one of the year’s catchiest dance moves. It was important before even beginning this project that all involved could see the potential for where this finished product could go and thus, this aim could be said to have been just as crucial as the creation itself.

The Present:

The purpose of this section is to reflect and comment on, through cross-examination, how well, from start to finish this project carried out the initial aims in relation to the events that actually transpired in the process of making '*Celestina*'. Using Fig. 2 (the main SWOT analysis) as the parameter to measure how successful this EP was at achieving its initial aims and to provide some structure and better understanding of each discussion point, the following reflection will focus on three broad areas: hard technical, soft and commercial skills.

Before analysing these three areas, it is important to provide context around the finished EP and how the artistic vision came into fruition. For artist Rojaz, the title of the project, '*Celestina*' comes from the early Renaissance period in Spain and its 'dialogue novel...*La Celestina*' (Encyclopedia Britannica. 2020). In the novel, Celestina is described as 'the bawd who serves as the go-between for the young lovers Calisto and Melibea' (Encyclopedia Britannica. 2020). From this, Rojaz states that in Spanish literature, Celestina is a woman who facilitates love but for this project, it could be better defined as a realistic take on cupid in female form. The reason for this slight variation in definition comes from the EP's lyrical content. Each song deals with the subject of self-love, or romantic love, but end mostly by going back to self-love and so maybe this time Celestina is guiding the girl in the EP narrative back to loving herself as opposed to finding an outside love. Although the songs can be seen as quite deep and emotional from a lyrical perspective, it was hoped that combining these ideas with more uplifting productions would soften the severity of a sad, or tough narrative and therefore serve to motivate listeners rather than allow them to take the words in more negatively. The production was designed to make the content of the songs feel less serious although the content is still high in depth and emotion. This was the balance that both parties hoped to achieve and the altered definition explains the album cover design; the choice of clouds as a reference to where cupids can be seen to reside (see Fig. 1).

Hard Technical Skills:

In this essay, hard technical skills refer to the physical production elements that went into the project. One of the first aims was to ensure that the songs were short and snappy. As Fig. 2 illustrates, one of the core strengths going into this project was the speed and skill at which music could be produced and therefore, the ability to create a vibe and energy for a song almost instantaneously. In addition, having a rough idea of what to produce sonically, before even starting a particular song helped harvest a whole host of instrumentals that had the ending beat pack filled with vibes that went from potential hits to more relaxed, chilled out records that would serve to fill out the remainder of the EP. As a result, dynamic was immediately being pumped into the project and it was hoped that the songs would indeed catch the listener's attention. For example, the average BPM (beats per minute) of the whole EP was 90.6 which made the energy relatively fast. Not only fast, but this average indicated that the movement of the songs were not lost. To reinforce this notion, J. Balvin and Bad Bunny's joint EP '*Oasis*' (Osorio, J., Martinez, B., et al., 2019) was 86 BPM on average and being in the same genre, this could be argued to have been a fair comparison. Thus, looking at the EP's production and overview as it shall be consumed, the pace and energy can be said to not have been lost.

Another technical aspect of this project's creation involved being able to produce, mix and master the whole song on a very low budget. The initial plan was to produce the EP 'in-the-box', or in other words, in a digital audio workstation (DAW). Fortunately, the whole EP was

produced on a laptop with Rojaz using Tileyard Studios to record her vocals. Although a potential weakness (Fig. 2), the EP was then mixed and mastered by me. First however, the ability to affordably produce the instrumentals through making use of sample packs that had been sent to me over the years by other producers and in combination with Splice, big fees were instantly reduced. Charging approximately £6 a month, the royalty-free samples (Splice, 2020) available on Splice allow up and coming producers to compete by manipulating pre-mixed and mastered samples. This played a key role in '*Celestina*' and was a major factor in being able to remain 'in-the-box' because of one's lack of music theory and ability to afford commercial synthesizers like Omnisphere 2 that costed \$499 (Spectrasonics, 2020). As Fig. 3 highlights, there were no major threats to this way of conducting the physical productions except for whether the mixing and mastering skills were going to be at the level they needed to be by the time such processes were called for. By watching YouTube videos, especially a series by Musician on a Mission (YouTube, 2020) on mixing, an efficient and effective workflow that was easily applicable to each song in this project as well as overall for the productive workflow was easily introduced. Therefore, although weaknesses, the mixing and mastering was overcome and using the tools at my disposal, '*Celestina*' was produced to a highly polished final EP standard.

As mentioned in the 'Past' section above, this was always a Reggaeton-inspired EP and it could be argued that the experimentation undertaken in this project was fairly varied from the traditional 96-110 tempo associated with records like "MIA" (Martinez, B., Graham, A., Vargas, E. S., et al., 2018) and "Gasolina" (Ayala, R., Ávila, E., 2003). For example, "Contigo" recorded in at 65 BPM, thus giving the song more of a Bachata feel with some of the percussion such as the Guiras assisting the light and fluffy melodies. On the other end of the spectrum was "Volumen Alto" which came in at 105 BPM. Aside from the varying tempos and aside from "Santo" and "Contigo", every other song was recorded in a different key and different instruments played the leads such as the guitar, keys and synths. Many of the drum samples used came from UK sample packs and so much of the British sound that being from London was always around meant that its prominent supporting role for the softer melodies could be seen as no surprise. In addition to the instrumental variations, it is important to highlight Rojaz' lyricism. She made it clear that she would not objectify women in any way, shape or form as has tended to be the norm in the genre for many years. Thus, by discussing the issues on self-love and tackling themes such as how bad a man can treat a woman in "Lo Que Quiere" she has pushed the conventions and it seems fitting in the progressive era that the world is currently in. Like so, it could be argued that the lyrical content is a major factor of experimentation because it is not a proven formula in the market and as a result, putting this into the project from a more personal perspective was agreed by both artist and producer. The likes of Billie Eilish gave Rojaz motivation to follow this path and offer more of what she felt the world needed. Moreover, there was a bonus track in "Sweet Irony" that Rojas sung in English, showcasing her versatility and once again her taking more risk within the genre. All of this could be said to have challenged and pushed the norms way beyond the initial aim's estimate on this.

As Fig. 2 shows, and as touched upon earlier, the largest threat to this project being finished to a commercially viable level was my lack of mixing and mastering knowhow. While I had been learning how to undertake these important parts of the music production chain, it did prove to be one of the most challenging aspects of getting this EP finished. For instance, when first attempting to mix, it was all based off of the knowledge I had acquired in the nine years of production (see Fig. 4). However, for most of that duration, my skills lay in the music itself rather than the fine tuning of sounds. Thus, the initial attempts proved frustrating and at times

disheartening. Nevertheless, through using YouTube, which one could see as a weakness as Fig. 4 points out, I patiently and persistently worked hard at learning the skills needed to get the EP competing at a commercial level. The coronavirus pandemic meant that going to a studio to get the production mixed was impossible given a high-risk family member. Therefore, not being able to fully utilise the mixing expertise at Tileyard meant that this was the only workaround available in the current circumstances. Fig. 4 also demonstrated that outside mixing contacts may have been able to help but their fees were too high so watching the Musicians on a Mission (YouTube, 2020) videos were vital to getting the end product to a high level as well as satisfying the low-cost budget.

Although not an initial aim, something that became a significant part of this whole process was taking care of one's mental health. The project took a tremendous amount of time and effort to put together and going for regular walks in the evening as well as exercising daily before approaching the project helped me to work well throughout. Without doing these important daily activities, it was extremely easy to fall into minor recluses and become frustrated, especially during the mixing phase. So, this aspect became just as key to success of the EP as was the work itself because it allowed me to set new goals and keep focused on what was needed to be done to progress the project into what it would eventually lead to. Thus, it could be said that looking after my mental health formed the foundation of this EP.

Soft Skills:

The initial aim was to showcase multiple up and coming Spanish and Latin artists. Early on, I reached out to Rojaz and quickly had other artists like Luadsant from Spain on board. We had created a group chat and sent a beat pack to both with the pair of them actively selecting instrumentals they liked and disliked. All seemed well until the coronavirus lockdown hit. Prior to lockdown, both artists had been based in London but Luadsant went back to Spain before closures began. Rojaz remained in London and was keen as ever to work. As for the former, communication broke down and her interest waned (see "Threats" section in Fig. 5). To combat this, I quickly contacted Rojaz and let her know that this was going to be an EP featuring only her and that the project was now going to focus on showcasing her style rather than a group of talent. Trying to arrange Zoom calls with Luadsant and Rojaz together was proving difficult and so part of this process was to think and act fast to the constantly evolving circumstances we all found ourselves in. The virus had been a constant battle in the process and it could be argued that given these extraordinary times, the result of '*Celestina*' has been of high quality and at every hurdle it tried to achieve the initial aim in the best way possible during an uncertain scenario like this.

Another soft skill that arose from the current pandemic was the utilisation of video calling studio sessions. For instance, Zoom calls became a worldwide sensation as a direct result of the global lockdown with family members trying to stay in touch with loved ones. Equally however, Zoom also was useful for professional situations like getting this project done. Not being able to come into Tileyard because of a high-risk family member, using Audiomover's Listento (Audiomovers.com, 2020) plug-in through Logic Pro X to be able to make the songs with Rojaz over webcam became essential. Listento removed the latency experienced with internet calling as it sent a link to a stereo output of my laptop. This was vital in allowing frequent discussions between the artist and myself which, to some degree, removed the isolated feelings developed by the virus' outbreak. More importantly, it enabled clear communication and synchronisation for our productions and therefore, not only did it help in terms of recreating the studio space in the best possible way, but for the soft skills, or communication between

producer and artist to get through all the recordings together. As Fig. 5 demonstrated, having known Rojaz prior to creating the concept for '*Celestina*', her workflow was best when the producer would direct her during recording in order to get the best vocal. Although not the same as the studio vibe, we were still able to record to a high level and make the Zoom calls work effectively as demonstrated by the end result. Nonetheless, this was not an ideal way to work but it could be argued that given the exceptional obstacles, the soft skills shown were on full display for all to see how well the workaround was.

Commercial Skills:

The final initial aim was concerned with the commercial aspect of the project and how the EP, once completed would be promoted. Before going into this, it must be stated that this part is, at this stage, hypothetical. However, one of the main aims early on was to have multiple artists on the project and although as earlier mentioned it was well worked around, this is still a facet of this EP that as the producer, I would like to adhere to. Nevertheless, because of the current pandemic it made the task very challenging to execute without being able to meet up and build up a more concrete relationship with artists like Luadsant for instance. Looking at Fig. 2 in terms of promoting the EP, DistroKid is something that would definitely be utilised given its \$19.99 annual fee to upload an unlimited number of songs. The Instagram promotion and TikTok apps would also be affordable and achievable. But as for release, Rojaz herself has spoken of releasing some of the songs as singles under her brand and given this commercial aspect is hypothetical, both myself and Rojaz have been actively discussing the single releases and would both be willing to do this if the songs were re-mixed and mastered and maybe got some of the vocals re-recorded in a properly acoustically treated studio as the available writing rooms were not fully sound-proofed.

As part of the promotional campaign and a feature of this release that was discovered during the production process was the notion of releasing a "For The Fans" selection of stripped-back instrumentals of just the lead and simpler drum pattern of each song so that listeners and fans could create their own cover versions of the songs that they would then be able to post directly onto their social media pages through TikTok and Instagram. The reason for this addition is because of the era in 2020 being primed on heavy interactional marketing between artist and consumer. A primary example in the current market of such interaction is the hit single 'Head & Heart' (Corry, J., Emenike, U., Dare, D., et al., 2020) and in particular a TikTok-inspired video MNEK uploaded to his Instagram page (Instagram.com, 2020) that has amassed over 40,000 views and over 10,000 likes. In terms of speed it is also a very smart way of reaching a global audience and getting the most exposure while the song is popular.

The Future:

Looking at the professional development plan (Fig. 6), to become a renowned producer worldwide the quality of the work needs to be at the very least competing with what is out in the top 40 today and so this project for me is still at a draft stage given this context. At this point, there are two ways that the work created here could go. The first would be to find time to record all artists in, maybe even re-recording some of the songs written with Rojaz with the other artists just to secure the initial aim of showcasing multiple up and coming artists. Rojaz would get song writing credits on all songs if the lyrics remain the same but the variety of artists was a key part of this project's goal. If this cannot be possible to achieve then maybe releasing the ones Rojaz would want to release on a single basis could go ahead. In both scenarios, the music, in my opinion, would need to outsource the mixing and mastering to

develop consistency and quality throughout the releases on top of the high-quality state that they are already in.

There are many reasons why releasing this EP with multiple artists would be more beneficial than with one artist. Firstly, from a production perspective, the instrumentals are fairly similar and so different vocals would increase the dynamics of the project to an even greater level. Therefore, the likelihood of listener attention drifting would perhaps be less. Commercially, in line with my PDP aspirations, having multiple artists on the EP with my name in the credits would broaden the amount of markets my name would be getting into and thus, the potential of new business opportunities arising would in theory, be better. This leads well onto networking and being able to use the EP as a springboard to feature in more major projects. On the other hand, as explained earlier, it has been difficult at times to bring all artists together especially when the lockdown has meant being in the same country was almost impossible. Yet, with the Zoom technology and more time given for artists to manage all their schedules it could be argued that this is still realistic. As for listener attention waning, it is all hypothetical and Rojaz alone may do better commercially than multiple artists but based on the initial aims then this is still something I feel is important to follow.

If the ability to get multiple artists together becomes very unlikely, then securing single releases with Rojaz would be good exposure to start being heard. Thus, this serves as an insurance policy but releasing '*Celestina*' as it is, in my opinion, would not be a smart move given the PDP ambitions coupled with the main SWOT's (Fig. 2) contextual circumstances which meant certain production elements like outsourcing mixing were off-limits because of the fee, pandemic and high-risk family member. Nonetheless, this is a high-level production that needs the final touches to take it to the commercially viable level.

Conclusion:

Looking back on this EP, there were many great learning curves and obstacles that I overcame and am very proud of. Aside from the coronavirus, which threw many curveballs into the equation, the high-quality finish achieved with '*Celestina*' exceeded my expectations. With the limited mixing and mastering knowledge I had going into this project and not being able to get all the artists I hoped to have on board, the experience built a great deal of character by demonstrating to myself the level that is needed to perform at the very top level. The initial aims were not unrealistic even with the virus in place, and I tried my best to work around this unprecedented situation using Zoom calls on a daily basis; but, in the same breath, this is why it was only fair to conclude that the EP was not ready for release in its current state when considering my professional development plan and the main SWOT analysis. With some more time to get the production, mix and master done to the commercially viable level stated above and with more investment into the promotional campaign, this EP could do very well both as single releases under Rojaz or as an EP because of its unique lyrical content that I feel is the embodiment of the whole project and unique selling point (USP).

Bibliography:

Audiomovers.com. 2020. *Audiomovers*. [online] Available at: <<https://audiomovers.com/wp/>> [Accessed 26 July 2020].

Ayala, R., Ávila, E., 2003, 'Gasolina', on *Barrio Fino*, Album, El Cartel & UMG, Puerto Rico & USA.

Breuner, K., Moser, M., Majewski, G., Nguyen, D., Robley, C., Hazard, B. and Sobhraj, J., 2020. *Music Trends 2020: Where Is The Industry Headed? | DIY Musician Blog*. [online] CD Baby. Available at: <<https://diymusician.cdbaby.com/musician-tips/music-trends-2020/>> [Accessed 20 July 2020].

Corry, J., Emenike, U., Dare, D., et al., 2020, 'Head & Heart', Single, Asylum, USA.

DistroKid. 2020. *How Is DistroKid Better Than TuneCore?*. [online] Available at: <<https://distrokid.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360013535154-How-Is-DistroKid-Better-Than-TuneCore->> [Accessed 21 July 2020].

Eilish, B., O'Connell, F., 2019, 'Bad Guy', on *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?*, Album, Interscope, USA.

Encyclopedia Britannica. 2020. *La Celestina: Novel By Rojas*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/La-Celestina>> [Accessed 24 July 2020].

Graham, A., Kobe, N., Yildirim, O., 2020, 'Toosie Slide', on *Dark Lane Demo Tapes*, Album, Republic & OVO, USA & Canada.

Hill, M., Reznor, T., Ross, A., Roukema, K., 2018, 'Old Town Road', on *7*, EP, Columbia, USA.

Ingham, T., Wang, A. and Millman, E., 2020. Where The Music Business Is Going In 2020. [online] Rolling Stone. Available at: <<https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/music-business-stories-to-watch-2020-928849/>> [Accessed 20 July 2020].

Instagram.com. 2020. *MNEK*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.instagram.com/p/CC87qEEFqQv/>> [Accessed 27 July 2020].

Martinez, B., Graham, A., Vargas, E. S., et al., 2018, 'MIA', on *X 100pre*, Album, Rimas, OVO & Warner Bros., USA & Canada.

Osorio, J., Martinez, B., et al., 2019, *Oasis*, Album, Universal Latin, USA.

Sheeran, E., Wadge, A., 2014, 'Thinking Out Loud', on *X*, Album, Asylum & Atlantic, USA.

Spectrasonics. 2020. *Omnisphere 2 - Full Product (Non-Refundable) : Spectrasonics Techshop*. [online] Available at: <https://www.spectrasonics.net/sales/techshop/?main_page=product_info&products_id=45> [Accessed 24 July 2020].

Splice. 2020. [online] Available at: <<https://splice.com>> [Accessed 24 July 2020].

YouTube. 2020. *Mixing In Logic Pro X (Everything You Need To Know)*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vry9ZDGr56E&t=1952s>> [Accessed 24 July 2020].

YouTube. 2020. *The Making Of Lil Nas X's "Old Town Road" With Youngkio | Deconstructed*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sq6zmzE8y3U>> [Accessed 20 July 2020].

Appendix:

Fig. 1: Artwork

Front:



Back:

- 
1. Lo Que Quiere
 2. Contigo
 3. Tempo
 4. Si Me Mira
 5. Altar
 6. Volumen Alto
 7. Santo
 8. Sweet Irony

Fig. 2: Main SWOT

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
- Able to create commercial vibes through production and mixing at a very fast and captivating rate. - Excellent networking skills both verbally and digitally. - Little to no production cost to produce records from start to finish.	- Not a mastering engineer. - Do not have a major social media presence/following. - There is not much work for others to see that has been produced and released by me. Need to be more 'out there' for listeners to engage and see if they like my productions.
Opportunities:	Threats:
- The network of artists open to me through one solid artist connection. The other artists have greater presence on multiple platforms.	- Coronavirus and its impact on networking. Typically, the network process would be to reach out and then meet in person but the pandemic has prevented such connections being made at present. - Distant working so unable to generate studio vibes. - No promotion team or strategy to reach a large swathe of potential fans.

Fig. 3: In-The-Box Production

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
- Fast producer. - Can sonically achieve same level as commercial hits today.	- Not officially a mix or mastering engineer so skills are limited in this department. - Cannot afford all the VSTs that commercial level producers use regularly.
Opportunities:	Threats:
- Tileyard engineers. - My own practice in mix and mastering.	- No clear threats other than mixing and mastering.

Fig. 4: Mixing & Mastering

Strengths: - 9 years of production experience. - Solid understanding of Logic Pro X.	Weaknesses: - Not truly understanding what each Audio FX could do to enhance my productions. - No treated studio to mix in. - Reliant upon YouTube for mixing information and no in-person expertise because of the travel limitations caused by the coronavirus pandemic.
Opportunities: - Outside contacts.	Threats: - Outside contact's fees. - Quality of my mixes may not be at the level needed to compete.

Fig. 5: Networking & Organising the Artist Roster

Strengths: - Knew Rojaz prior to even creating the idea of a Reggaeton-inspired EP. - Well-spoken individual who can bring new members on board quickly. - Quick organisation skills.	Weaknesses: - Only knew Rojaz and so was very reliant upon her for getting other Spanish and Latin American artists on board. - My social media brand is not strong enough to garner attention or have artists replying to posts regarding the project.
Opportunities: - Outside artists through Rojaz.	Threats: - Outside artists may not conform or pull through with their vocal takes. - Lack of trust.

Fig. 6: Professional Development Plan (PDP)

Professional Development Plan	2020/21
--------------------------------------	----------------

Vision and Goals:

My Vision
To be a household producer artist in music within 2-3 years.
Short/Medium Term Goals (next 6/12 months)
Network with management labels and music managers to see how they can help me advance my fanbase and overall reach. Keep creating productions that showcase my skills in the field I envision going into. Networking with artists who can assist or compliment my career aspirations and seek professional marketing help (which I would hope to organise through a potential manager). Learning how to DJ is something I would like to learn although it isn't something at the top of my priorities right now but still important for future live shows.
Long-Term Goals (2-3 years)
To work with some of the finest in the field right now and in the future; being able to shine a light on these talents through my productions and making the UK sound more appealing worldwide. Tour the country if not the world. Have at least a debut album out within this time frame.

SWOT - Personal Analysis:

Strengths	Development Areas
I know my lane and my sound is unique. I have a clear goal of what I want to do in the music industry.	My networking skills could be improved. Naturally, I am a very self-sufficient individual and therefore have a DIY mentality to my music but do realise that this skill is essential for success no matter my technical proficiency. Being more confident about my work. Again, my personality is such that I lack self-belief when someone says my work is good. I always think "No! You can't be right." There is nothing wrong with being humble but I feel that it prevents me from being able to network effectively.
Opportunities	Threats
Attend networking events and keep trying to push myself out of my comfort zone talking to different people and getting used to talking about my work and having belief in it to promote it.	If I don't regularly reflect on my development then I can forget and become sad that things are not going how I planned but in reality it is. So, for me it would be great to not get lost in my thoughts. I overthink too much.

What do I need to learn?	What do I have to do?	What support and resources will I need?	How will I measure success? - What does good look like?	Target date for review?
Improve my networking skills	Reach out to people in the industry who I think can help get my music on radio and placements that suit my lane.	Perhaps applying for internship roles or shadow roles at music management companies would help me to become more aware and knowledgeable about navigating the industry. Building other artist's careers working for other music companies that manage artists to see first what it is like for someone else aspiring to be a producer artist.	Being in the UK top 40 consistently. Making people happy through my music.	2-3 years.
Become more business-smart	Be specific about who I send my work to i.e. DJs on BBC1Xtra for example.	Initially, it will be me doing most if not all of this work. Trying to get my name out there. Then, managers may help in this department of marketing me and my music.	Being invited onto radio shows for interviews. Live shows maybe tours or opening for big acts across the UK. Making new music with current big artists and future up & coming musicians.	1-2 years.
DJ-ing	Buy some DJ equipment and keep practicing everyday alongside my production work.	YouTube video tutorials and listening to other DJs I like and how they make their mixes sound unique and commercial.	Being able to DJ my own songs at live shows without errors in my sets.	1-2 years.