

Foundation Assignment Element 2: Essay

An Insight into the Production Process: Defining Characteristics of Three Analysed Genre's & their Incorporation into Own Work

In this essay, my aim is to analyse in detail three different genres and one track for each genre. I will then argue about how the chosen tracks and the tracks produced by me relate to the genre.

UK Drill

“The drums are fast, the bass is sliding everywhere, the kicks hit hard, the melody is always dark. You can’t really avoid it”, as Chris Rich Beats sums up when referring to UK Drill when interviewed by Colin Gannon (2020).

UK Drill does not own its roots only to its American cousin (Gannon, 2020). UK interpretation of drill is “the lovechild of Chicago drill and homegrown genres: garage, grime, and road rap” (Gannon, 2020).

When it comes to the English shade of Drill, the kick is punchier than the one used normally in trap or other rap sub-genre (Gannon, 2020). As Ghosty, a UK Drill producer, sustains “In Chicago drill, the drums were hitting, but in terms of the kicks and the snares, they were nowhere near as punchy as in UK drill now” (2020).

Deluded by Tion Wayne

“Deluded” by Tion Wayne featuring Mist is a track that includes most of UK Drill techniques, if not all of them. With a tempo of 140 BPM (beats per minute), in the key of Eb minor, this piece of music starts with a mean piano melody that has been reversed. This technique gives the piano a sound that is almost unrecognisable, creating a sort of tension because of the way every note fades in. After that 8 bars loop, both melodic and percussive elements come into the scene. With the introduction of deep 808s that slide between notes on different octaves, the level is being lifted to keep up with the rhythm already given by the crisp closed hi hats. These, with a bouncy pattern that has bongos and open hi hats to fill the gaps, spice up the beat giving the rhythmic feel to the listener, who eventually starts to enjoy the song. Other elements that come into the scene are the reverbed gunshot sound effect and the violin.

The reverbed gunshot is a sound that recalls the gangster life: violence, drugs, sex and street life; it gives a sense of annunciation and sets the tone for the rapper to come and express himself. “An essential UK drill beat will quake and slither in equal measure, laying a blackened canvass for rappers to get their bravado bars off about attacking arch-enemies” (Gannon, 2020).

The violin contributes to the chorus by enhancing the main melody that is present throughout the song with crescendo tremolo strokes that come in on the first, third and fourth bar every four bars. To make them less boring and to not take too much space in the mid/high ends, this instrument is being panned from the left to the right.

When the verse comes in, the most attended element of the beat comes in as well: the kick. A hard and punchy one that embraces and gives accent to 808 slides giving that missing lift that the song needed to be complete.

When it comes to the arrangement, the song is not that trivial. Instead of having a chorus, then verse, then chorus again, it has a two verse (each one of 16 bars) after the first chorus, followed by the chorus and a

mix verse where the two rappers are alternating their rhymes every four bars. This way of interaction gives dynamics and keeps the ear of the listener curious, making them wonder on who is next and how the other rapper will complement what the previous one just said.

Effects used

During the verses, various tape stops make their appearance to outline what the rapper is saying or to mark that there is a variation on the way.

In the mixed verse, two type of filter are being used: a lowpass filter (a filter that cuts off the high frequencies) at the third and fourth bar, and a highpass filter (a filter that cuts off the low frequencies) on the last two bars of the verse.

The first filter is being used to anticipate a tape stop that cues in the verse of Tion while the second one is being used to introduce another tape stop that ushers in the final chorus.

On the voice of Mist, a reversed reverb effect is being applied. This approach used gives more character to his voice.

Outro

The song ends with an outro lead by a chopped vocal that has a perfect dose of delays, reverbs and pitch effect that makes it seat on the beat in an exceptional way. This gives the listener a break without having to renounce on the energy of the whole song.

Revolution freestyle - Kyem

The tempo selected for this production is 140 BPM and the key is F.

The production starts with a reversed melody that has been played with a sound that reminds of a music box. The reason behind the reverse is to make the melody more interesting, to create suspense and finally to give a dark tone for the song.

On the last bar of the intro, the melody is interrupted so that the listener is now forced to anticipate what is coming next. And that is where a gun cock sound is followed by the sound of the gunshot that makes its appearance with the rest of the elements, such as Kick, snare, hi hats, 808s and other percussive elements.

The kick is as hard and punchy as possible, because in a genre where drums are fundamental, a kick that is weak or that is not loud and strong enough to sustain the whole beat is ineffective.

The snare plays a simple pattern which is basic but essential to keep the bounce of the song going.

However, this does not apply to the hi hats. In order to make things more interesting, they are almost all over the place, with an unpredictable pattern that bridges the kick and the snare.

The 808s are the glue of the beat. With a grungy, almost distorted sound, their slides are hitting most of the frequencies of the entire spectrum without exaggerating, making space for the voice of the rapper to express himself.

After sixteen bars, the kick vanishes and the 808 gets replaced by a saw bass for 8 bars. This choice is made so that the listener can digest what has been going on in the verses and can be prepared for the chorus.

In the chorus the only element that makes a new entry is a vocal chop that has been placed there to create dynamics and uplift the song but not in a disturbing way.

Lastly, detail that was done in this production was to pitch down the main melody after the intro, so that the frequencies would not clash.

This genre has never been in my top five but getting knowledge and experimenting with it changed my view on it.

Rhythm and Blues

Talk – Khalid

This song is in the key of C major and its tempo is 136 bpm.

The track starts with a fade in of a reverbed poly synth, very crisp, with a small dose of distortion. Towards the start of the first chorus, it gets wider and wider. Still in the intro, we hear another synth layered on top of the first one. This one gives, due to its plucky oriented sound, thickness to the texture that was already there and has a balanced tone that is perfect for it to be the synth that will be present throughout the song and be the basement on which the other instruments will lay on.

In regard to the percussive components of the song, the lead is taken by a solid, slightly dark, clap.

A study pattern of the hi hats, is what Disclosure uses to give a hint of how the bounce of the song will be. And it is at the chorus that the kick and the bass take their places and complete the beat so that the song starts to make sense to the listener.

The instrumental throughout the song is fairly uniform, simple and nice.

The effects used in this production are quite common but effective. Before entering into the chorus the beat drops with a tape stop effects. This gives the listener a feeling of landing back on earth after being in the sky for a long journey.

Also other effects used are the low pass filter that is placed upon the reverbed synth when the songs from the verse goes back to the chorus and a band pass filter, on the other verse that gives a sort of breeze to the listener because it takes him on a journey of frequency in a matter of seconds.

Bibliography

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