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Concept of the portfolio ;

The intent of the project is to produce a 30 minute portfolio of music, with a variety of genres influencing the arrangement, but under an alt pop/ alt rock umbrella term.

All the music will be self arranged, self produced and mixed by myself ready for commercial mastering.

The desired main outcome, is to experiment with music and creative process, using cross genre influences, highlighting how different stylistic elements, from different sources can work together, and the difficulties I may or may not find with regards to the mix and approach.

Though I believe now that this form of cross genre has become of heightened popularity, and has featured more and more in charts over the past decade, artists that have done this previously, include popular acts such as the Gorillaz or Michael Jackson working with Eddie Van Halen on beat it.

Artists and genres that will have influence within the music be it open mindedness in approach, or the actual music itself will be noted within, as well as trends of this happening

Success and landscape of experimental music within modern commercial productions.

Exclusively, over even just two years I can think of a few experimental artists have reached a level of success be it financial or notoriety within the music industry.

An obvious example of success using multiple genres would be Billie Eilish , if financial gain is a measure of success, Billie Eilish net worth is \$8million.(without even mentioning critical acclaim)

Tyler the creator winning a grammy for best hip hop album in 2020.

The 1975 opening their headline 2019 reading set with a post rock track , then later going through tracks with more of a neo soul and pop feel, earlier in the year securing the no 1 all genre album on the Itunes chart with “Notes on a conditional form”.

Shutler (2020) notes “At the start of the year, Bring Me The Horizon released the brilliant, genre-bending album ‘Amo’. All pop-metal and forward motion, this was an album that saw the band continue their charge from Deathcore outsiders to arena rock heavyweights.”

A big consideration with these acts are also longevity acts that will have continued success rather than falling in the background, it could be considered that bring me the horizon would of only lasted and progressed so far as a “brutal deathcore band”.

I also think that people are more open minded these days towards any type of music, even be it what would at one point been extreme and now the boundaries that were being pushed by acts like death grips and Aphex twin in years previous are now coming to a head with acts within experimental, music like Sophie obtaining writing credits on a madonna track, theres a level where it has become the norm, but now its a case of balancing creativity and the accessibility of the music to keep current and successful.

Id also believe its worth noting Slowthai, Idles and Dave performing at the NME awards to show the diversity of bands on a British televised awards show.

Writing using multiple genre influences and other artists who do so, Noting similarities between genres and approach;

There is many arguments against the formulaic approach to writing pop music with certain song and chord structures, that work, due to the familiarisation of this to the listener, be it from metal to dance music tends to follow these structures, as it is what has developed with western music over time, and these developments effect even the most alternative of music and some would only consider alternative until it becomes popular then becoming “pop” music, I will try sometimes try implying this through music theory and reference points.

I will look at using rhythms and phrasing influences from metal and rock heavy use of accents, use of live drums and other standard rock instrumentation. Though in some of the cases cited will feature mainly electronic or sampled production a big part of the sound for the portfolio will mainly feature more rock leaning drum sound mix wise.

Though I wont be taking it to there level of extreme there were multiple pop goes punk albums within a series that made it so that acts within their own scene to then get to further success eg Issues' cover of baby by Justin Bieber.

Though I think it is a lil “gimmicky” to the point theres a series of albums and its focus maybe success over art to try and get notice and publicity, the logic behind it at a business standpoint is of sound concept.

Hip hop flow and delivery including the phrasing will be something I will look into, some similarities between modern hip hop and metal, and the personal journey of the artist more directly within the lyrics of the music compared, I will be going into accounts of artists from wide genres also using they're own personal thoughts within lyrics as some would say confessional lyricism.

SixNine having at the time of this writing this document, a top 10 single in the us Gooba, that some could say showcases the metal rhythms, I noted prior and aggressive almost screaming vocals .Takeshi tells XXL's Emmanuel (2017) "I grew up listening to Parkway Drive, A Day to Remember, heavy metal bands. I started rapping a couple years ago but I started taking it seriously this year”

Smile (2019) states “Post malone notably later in his carreer added influences of country and more band style tracks such as a country influence on I fall apart and later featuring ozzy osbourne on a track “Post Malone actually began his musical career as a guitarist in an unsigned metalcore band called Ashley’s Arrival. He later auditioned to join Crown the Empire, but one of his guitar strings snapped during the audition, rendering him unable to finish it and ultimately be unsuccessful.

Some might say that he bounced back pretty well though, performing with Aerosmith at last year’s VMA Awards and the Red Hot Chili Peppers at this year’s Grammy Awards.

A great example in the underground of the hip hop genre of using other genres influence would be Dan le sac vs Scroobius pip – stiff upper lip feat . Itch from the hip hop influenced punk band the king blues (which have also reached levels of success in the uk charts.)

Electronica instrumentation and the difference in arrangement to go off the standard pop structure (mainly on interludes) and some of the extreme instrumentation within for bridges and middle eights mainly.

Billie Eilish has always been quite vocal In her love of Tyler the creator. Tyler the creator is a hip hop artist that has also shown a variety of styles within his career and be it songs from the dark

electronic hip hop nature of Yonkers to the more Neo soul style of November, recently winning a grammy for his hip hop album the album Igor featuring multiple genre stylings.

Within the electronic scene there have also been many commercial releases that are more “easy listening”, notably Chet Faker crossing over electronic music with Neo soul and jazz influence, this also lead to a compilation of tracks with Flume

Young (2013)states: "They have found a muse in each other, and as long as they stick to intertwining their sounds rather than trying to do something completely unfamiliar, there is seemingly plenty to be reaped from it." Young added, "The suggestion of a full album from this partnership would certainly be a welcome one."

I think that Alex Young's note of intertwining sounds rather than trying to do something completely unfamiliar is a key thought, you want to have the impact of using a variety of genres to stand out but there is a level before I believe you can completely alienate the music from the audience.

Many artists also reference the influence of film scores and instrumentation e.g. the Streets with his computer and blues album being noted as having influence from films such as Blade Runner. Mike Skinner notes on computers and blues with Lawson (2011) “imagined that it would be some kind of JG Ballard meets Blade Runner dystopian sci fi future”

Bands and visual entertainment has gone hand in hand for quite some time with bands writing songs to contribute towards the film's soundtrack, elevating their career in being an additional form of publicity and I'm sure also being a lucrative money earner with the possibility of advances and later royalties from viewings of the film dependant on the deal.

Recording process and mixing

With the global situation at the time of writing the proposal being what it is, preproduction and the use of reamping will be of the most importance having the material ready for the drums to be recorded, then later rearranging what I write to then fit the drums, using guitar dis and bass dis recorded at home , then later at the Alicia light studio and reamp with the wide choice of amps. Maybe then start implementing analogue synths within this time, though may having to accept the softsynth route but modded on analogue hardware. A lot of vocal tracking at home will be done with an Aston Stealth with UAD hardware and software, with a walk in cupboard filled with duvets and sheets to deaden the space and make an impromptu diy vocal booth, hopefully with some use in the final mix though recording at a commercial facility with a more “posh” mic will be done, considering a U87 though alternatives could be a SM7B or a Neuman handheld, maybe a mix.

One of the biggest issues with regards to mixing the tracks I think will be the amount of low frequencies within, due to the use of bass synths, guitars and rock style drums. I think to tackle this I'll imply more some would think extreme high pass filter settings will have to be used sometimes even to take the fundamental note out but leaving the harmonics in to keep the energy but not muddy the mix.

Throughout the recordings of the material I plan on not tracking the majority with auto tune later relying on Melodyne as I think that will give me the most natural sounding recordings, and its generally my preferred workflow for myself.

During the process of recording I'm going to try to be more brave and decisive with my productions and try implementing analogue style eq boosts and compression “on the way in” as to try and make for a more raw but commercial sound, trying to get as much right as I can in the tracking to make the most of the time as I can, hopefully leading to an easier mix in the mixing stage, this can also come down to mic choice, for example using ribbon mics for overheads where I can get away with

some more rather broad and extreme eq boosts especially in the high mid- treble frequencies.

Something I will also consider within the recording process is to use the right preamp for the instrument I think would suit with its colouring ,and try limiting my choice of plugins trying to stick to mainly fabfilter, uad and plugin alliance plugins , trying to avoid “option paralysis” using digitally modeled plugins for the sake of changing the sound without the colour and the analogue plugins for the sake of colour.

Closing thoughts, considerations and conclusions moving forward ;

I think the mindset going into this project is not to pigeon hole, though I am trying to create something that is not constrained to genre, a thought I have is that its just music, regardless of the pigeon holing that may have been more prevalent previously amongst the popular music landscape solely, to be able to describe new styles of bands, for example the transition from punk to new romantics, sky arts documentary Trailblazers: New Romantics(2016) noting that the new romantics just considered themselves people who liked punk music but didn't want to be stuck within that group and having a love of art and electronica from Berlin.

George Daniel notes with the rolling stones Doyle (2016) (“People really relate to it, this emo-ish kind of thing,” says drummer George Daniel. “It’s the new emo. If you take the word, emo at face value, where it came from emotional music, not the pop-punk crossover nonsense. It just was a pigeonhole for emotional rock music that came out at a certain time. What it means is that it was over the top and a lot of it was super ridiculous. It addressed stuff like depression and talking about relationships.”

I think this point highlights that a modern genre tag just defined by the subject matter is infract pointless. though some may argue the blues is defined by its lyrical content and folk but in the cases where I look to venture, I don't believe it applies especially with how far music has developed.

Foundry 13(2019) notes “Over time, we have discovered that if we enter this music industry with an experimental and diverse mindset, we may have more of an allowance to change and alter our music as we progress with time.

This is quite similar to the fantastic artist Billie Eilish, as she began her career with the beautiful "Ocean Eyes" in which is a soft ballad song pouring with emotions. Now, in 2019, Billie is viewed to be linked with the world of trap due to her beats and heavy 808 and bass sounds within her songs,

and the majority of her fans are ok with this... So what makes Billie have the allowance to change her style?"

I think there are multiple trains of thoughts for this an example, could be previously noted Bring me the horizon, changing from a deathcore and metal core feel to then become a alternative pop/rock band, with every change in the genre over time it can deter the following from the start, now this is a band that over time have grown up obviously with their musical influences changing with their age and their music developing alongside, it can always make it easier if you can draw from a wide variety of influence as its expected for you not to be doing whats expected with every release

I also think that the point with the subgenre game is that people need the exclusivity and this can be to hinderance, as well as benefit some could see it only being the cool kids at the back. Others a breath of fresh air and something which stands out due to the parallel differences and similarities , heavy, off beat, different yet still danceable and times to sing along.

A big advantage to this whole process I foresee is the ability to highlight music as an art form and it being considered artistic expression over trying to get a "banger" more an attempt of a cult classic, but then has it come to a point that genres are pointless? Grimes noting within a interview with Bose (2011) "Because genres are sort of disappearing, people just use bands as reference points. And if I were to describe my sound, I'd just say it's "modern?...."

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