

The EKEA group's task was to create a single with an accompanying remix. Then we needed to A & R the track.

First, we needed to create our group. At the time, four of us regularly attended our lectures and decided to create a group. Elle had made a channel on Beebop, including all our peers on the course. I then put a post in the channel, on the 9th of February (*figure 1*), about creating our groups to give a chance to peers we still needed to see in lectures. I had left it until the following Monday from my original post to see if anyone wanted to join and create some groups, but no reply (*figure 2*) came from any new peers. I did what I could to include further course members at the time.

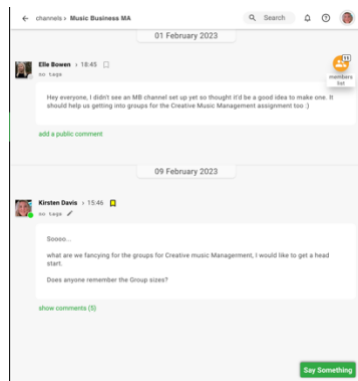


Figure 2 - Music Business Channel



Figure 1 - Music Business Channel

Additionally, I could have reached out via email to the group email to include some I have yet to meet personally. The Course Leader emailed everyone to ensure everyone had groups, which gave me the idea. If we have another group assignment, I will act on this. Not only will it help further my connections, but I would like those who cannot attend the lectures to feel more included.

After confirming our group, Anja created a WhatsApp group. That was our primary communication; we also used Zoom and Google Meets. Unfortunately, with the course being online, we don't have the chance to meet up in person regularly, especially with Anja being in Austria. Luckily, she was only an hour ahead, so I am thankful she could still join in on our calls.

WhatsApp was the best option for communication. First, it's a valuable tool for free messaging internationally, which came in helpful with Anja. Second, it is easy to use with a file-sharing ability. I have only used WhatsApp professionally, so I continue to choose it, particularly in group work. One role of WhatsApp we should have utilised was the video call. It can be inconvenient to share and follow links for other video chatting applications, and it can sometimes require sign-in, which can waste time when switching.

Despite the above, Zoom and Google Meets can screen share. Screen sharing was necessary for our meetings, mainly when we worked on the mood board. One problem we encountered was that Zoom has a time limit when using the free version. For this reason, Elle recommended Google Meets. Unfortunately, we discovered the same problem here.

Emma ended up paying for the subscription so we could continue to work without further links and going back and forth.

Furthermore, we used Google Docs to keep our project together. The advantage of Google Docs is that we can all add our work and have access. Paired with Zoom and Google Meets to screen share, we could access and update documents in real time.

Microsoft Teams may have been a better choice for us to use. It has the same facilities as Zoom and Google Meet and the same time limit. Through the university, we can access Office 365 for free, access to Microsoft Teams. Emma could have saved her money. Microsoft Teams like Zoom and Google Meets have a chat window, file sharing and desktop and Mobile applications. In future, to keep working professionally, I recommend using Microsoft Teams. Microsoft Teams also can have shared files and folders in groups. We could have eliminated the use of multiple applications.

We created a notes document on Google Docs to track what we did in our group meetings. The notes document also had the list of needed assets and who would make each. I decided I was going to work on the iconography and artwork. This subject was out of my comfort zone. I have made some videos and artwork for previous modules during my undergraduate course, but I could be more proficient in design. I also added research into merchandise and looked at potentially doing a mini-release tour.

Our group worked well together. There was no overlap or compromise when deciding on tasks, which was relatively easy. We all got along and wanted to get on with our work. We met on Zoom to discuss the job and decide what artist to use. There was a coursemate on the Songwriting Masters who was very vocal and outgoing in our mixed lectures. We liked their attitude, and Emma had seen their Instagram, so we pursued the artist, who initially agreed to work with us. We asked for some tracks that we could work from. Unfortunately, the artist took time to get back to us. Time was starting to get ahead of our group, so we sent the artist a message, apologising that we would go down a different route. We understood that as we had many assignments, our coursemate was likely also busy with theirs. Luckily, everyone in the group had already investigated another artist as a backup plan. So, when it came to picking another, we all had options.

Something else we were good at was communicating. If any of us needed help, we knew we could message in WhatsApp. I was apprehensive at one point and asked for a meeting to discuss some of the topics needing improvement in my project. Everyone was super helpful and found time in their day, later on, to meet up so we could all validate what needed doing. The only problem I found with the group work was that when we arranged meetings, some of the participants, me included, would be late or not turn up due to work commitments. Although no fault to anyone, it made it hard to make concrete decisions that fit the assignment. It would be best to arrange meetings outside work constraints in the future. We would then get full use of our time.

When coming to work on the single and remix artwork, I used Microsoft Word. I have used Word in the past when creating these sorts of assets. I have much experience using the Picture/Shape format when adding images to my written work. Microsoft Word has many

design options; I used transparency and colour tools for the single artwork to shade the entire picture differently. In my case, I used different shades of grey to imitate echoes, like the song's name. I increased the transparency percentage with each layer of the image.

One issue I faced was using Maia's images to create the artwork. The Microsoft Word tool 'Remove Background' had trouble completely making the background transparent. The tool found it hard to work around Maia's hair (*Figure 4*) and outline her silhouette correctly. Looking at the artwork I have created, you can see the jagged edges around Maia (*Figure 3*), which makes for a less professional look and something you would expect of a draft.



Figure 3 - Single Artwork Cover



Figure 4 - Draft Single Cover

The better choice would have been to use Canva. It helps create professional assets and has plenty of templates to choose from. Like much creative software, it has a free option and a pro subscription version. Canva Pro would be the only way to activate the "remove background" tool, which is one of the reasons that led to my decision to use Word. Canva Pro created another hurdle; I needed to subscribe to add my downloaded fonts. We, as a team, had picked our font for the artwork and social media assets, so I wanted to use it when creating my assets. However, Word also needed help with the font. I could use the font we wanted for the track 'Make Believe', but Maia's chosen font is 'Mermaid'. Once I had downloaded 'Mermaid', Word could not process the font for an unknown reason despite my efforts. A few days later, however, the font suddenly appeared as available. By this point, I had created the assets. In hindsight, I should have looked to download it as soon as we settled on the font.

A program that would have been perfect would have been Photoshop. However, due to the subscription price, this was the first time I had used Photoshop before, and I was unaware I had access. After researching, first I can see that Adobe have Adobe Express, like Canva but with Photoshop benefits. And like Canva, it has a free version and a premium version. Upon looking and signing in with my University email, I found I had access to the premium features. It was a surprise. In future projects, it would benefit me to brainstorm prospective programs and check my access to them to ensure the best outcome. Despite that, I am still happy with the product I created. The artwork looks the way I had intended, and with my little knowledge of Photoshop, I couldn't have guaranteed a significantly more professional finish.

I created the video assets using Final Cut Pro. It was part of the educational bundle I bought from Apple during my undergraduate course. It is also a video-making tool that I was more familiar with—although I still had required refreshers online to remember how to perform certain functions. We wanted to use a handwritten font, and I wanted a video/reel as if the font was writing itself. Final Cut Pro did have a plug-in for a title that could do that. The downside is that I needed to use the font I wanted, and the plug-in couldn't facilitate that. I find YouTube an exceptionally beneficial tool for learning to overcome such issues. Thankfully, I came across a tutorial video (*Figure 5*) which taught me exactly what I needed. It took me a long time to complete the short clip I made(*Figure 6*) because I wanted it to look like handwriting. The effect could have been created on Adobe After Effects (which I used briefly before purchasing Final Cut Pro) or Adobe's free version Premier Rush with the same premise as Adobe Express. Again Adobe's 'Premier Rush' would have been a better interface-friendly program had I done my research. I'm confident in my ability to use these programs, and I am proud of the work I created.



Figure 6 - Final Cut Pro Handwritten Effect Link

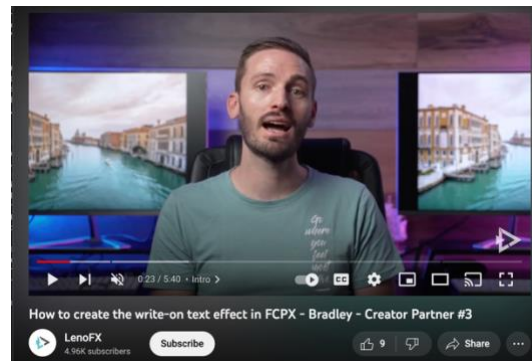


Figure 5 - Final Cut Pro Tutorial

If I were to do this in the budget, my videos would be a draft for a professional. I did look up the likes of 'Fiver'. My existing knowledge of Fiver was that the premise was to pay £5 to a stranger online for a service - although I had not personally used it before. As such, I was unsure what I had expected when looking at different animation artists whose prices were relatively high. Many professionals were putting a fair price on their services. There were several different levels of skill, ranging from £12-£70 in some cases. The price was something that did lead me to create the content. If presented with a set budget to produce the work, I might have commissioned some content of different variations of cost, skill, and speciality to observe the content we would get from a brief we would have provided.

Further research into venues in Graz would have eliminated the problem. We could have ventured to Vienna for a bigger show and increased the audience. I looked at Van hire (*Figures 8 & 10*) as it would transport equipment, Maia, and a Sound engineer. Some similar prices, but an age restriction required a twenty-five-year-old to drive and a van license.



Another problem I encountered was finding a backline. I worked on the assumption that no venue had any equipment and that Maia only had the instruments she would play. Finding providers proved troubling. I found some backline providers with no prices included (Figure 11), making it hard to budget the tour. Or the companies were outside Austria (Figure 12). A little more research was needed. If I were to look to plan a tour in another country, I would more than likely work with someone who lives there. To better understand what I'm looking for and for advice on what they would think was best. I wrongly assumed I could organise the event with little prior understanding. I have since learned this is certainly not the case, and extensive preparation work is needed – a lesson I will take to my next project.

Package	Equipment	Day Price
SET A: Basic	Same Standard Stereo System, 4x12" Bass, 2x12" Top, 2x12" Sub, 2x12" Mid, 2x12" High, 2x12" Low, 2x12" Super, 2x12" Ultra, 2x12" Mega, 2x12" Giga, 2x12" Terra, 2x12" Nova, 2x12" Zenith, 2x12" Apex, 2x12" Summit, 2x12" Pinnacle, 2x12" Zenith, 2x12" Apex, 2x12" Summit, 2x12" Pinnacle	100,00
SET B: Festival	Same Standard Stereo System, 4x12" Bass, 2x12" Top, 2x12" Sub, 2x12" Mid, 2x12" High, 2x12" Low, 2x12" Super, 2x12" Ultra, 2x12" Mega, 2x12" Giga, 2x12" Terra, 2x12" Nova, 2x12" Zenith, 2x12" Apex, 2x12" Summit, 2x12" Pinnacle	150,00
SET C: Pro	Same Standard Stereo System, 4x12" Bass, 2x12" Top, 2x12" Sub, 2x12" Mid, 2x12" High, 2x12" Low, 2x12" Super, 2x12" Ultra, 2x12" Mega, 2x12" Giga, 2x12" Terra, 2x12" Nova, 2x12" Zenith, 2x12" Apex, 2x12" Summit, 2x12" Pinnacle	200,00

Figure 12 - Netherlands Backline Provider

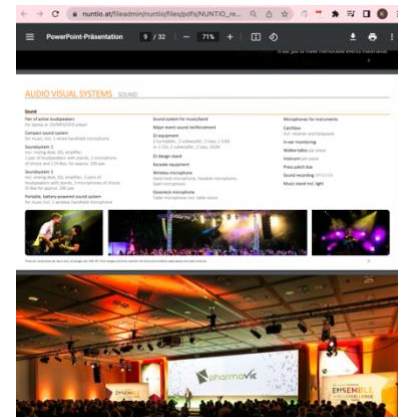


Figure 11 - Backline Company No prices

In conclusion, using online communication software was integral to the work our group intended to commit. I have learnt about the advantages of online document sharing and using Microsoft Teams. Which, in this case, is a program that would benefit a group project in the future. If looking at creative software, I need to research what can create the best outcome and what I can access. It was great to work with the group that I did, and it will be great to transfer my skills to the next project.