

Giulia Fontana

Student Number: 2007916

Module title: Creative Music Management

Assignment: Self reflective summary

Lecturer: Harry Leckstein

Self Reflective summary

This summary represents an individual investigation and analysis of the main tools, strategies and elements that I have used and employed in relation to the single campaign of "Relax" by Dami Dina. In particular, my own role and contribution in the group project will be analysed in relation to today's music industry standards, together with an overview on the main roles and technologies that surround the creation and promotion of popular music.

Today's music industry is populated by countless technologies and tools that renew themselves at the fastest speed. In this always-changing scenario it is necessary to learn how to navigate through these multitudes and use these tools in the most efficient way to continue to "adapt and redefine activities" (H.Davis, Managing Creativity) according to the industry's changes. The features that characterize the industry we are talking about are also not the easiest to interpret in this case, as they present- for obvious reasons- a chaotic nature which is tangled up to their "creative" essence. Music is essentially a creation that becomes a product, and the way in which this transformation occurs constitutes the core of the music business. Although we can agree on the fact that "creative companies have a less clearly defined hierarchical management structure" (H.Davis, Managing Creativity), an organisational approach is undoubtedly needed when music enters the field of business. It is therefore essential to understand the importance of every actor surrounding a music release and to build a structured team that can provide full coverage of each aspect. Following this, I strongly believe that a first necessary step for the success of a music release is a thought division of the roles among a team. Taking H.Davis division as a corresponding model, we find three different functions in a creative organisation: production, creativity, and control and coordination. Applying this model specifically to the music industry, production might be associated with the artist himself and everything that has to do with the creation of the product (the track), creativity would correspond to the creative direction of it (visually and sonically) and control and coordination could represent the management of its delivery. Obviously, these roles are rarely exercised without interaction and mutual influence among each other, so that a certain amount of both managerial and creative functions are present in each of these activities. Furthermore, It is not sufficient to introduce these functions without mentioning how they have been affected by the digital technologies tools associated with them, which nowadays have resulted in an essential part of their delivery. In the first place, the product itself-meaning more specifically the music-already constitutes a digital technology: music has become a digital product, together with the process of creating it. Starting from songwriting, to the production and recording, music is heavily linked to the digital world, dismissing more and more every day the analogue world. Not only are digital technologies impactful on the individual product, but also on the artist and, more precisely, on his popularity and appeal. In this sense, the digital technology which is most affecting is social media. With the rise of apps like Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, the attention has shifted from the nature of the product

to the traction it generates. It is in this context, that the second activity of this chain comes into play: the creativity. The message can be well-created and excellently delivered, but it has to be powerful and clear in the first place. Indeed, it is important that the artist, his music and his visuals form a cohesive reality that can immediately communicate the message which is trying to be conveyed. Without a well-defined work on the creative part of the project, a music artist would be missing a fundamental piece of the puzzle. The third and last activity from the list, that is control and coordination, constitutes the marketing, the promotion, the managing and the delivery of the product. This role is articulated in various ramifications that range from the PR, to the management agency, from the social media strategist to the marketing manager, or from the financial manager to the legal assistant. The most relevant and necessary actions are the managing of the artist and the marketing of the music. Both these roles rely on digital technologies, especially the marketing part that usually includes the work of a PR, who promotes the song through radio, music blogs, interviews and digital media such as videos, promotional pictures etc. For sure, what can not be ignored is the relevance of a social presence in building strong credibility around an artist, an aspect which concerns all the roles we explored before and that must be treated as an absolute priority when working on the creation and promotion of popular music.

Following this discourse, we decided as the first thing to divide our roles and set precise goals that each of us had to reach for a positive outcome. Our roles reflected the division I just highlighted, with Dami being the artist, Eva representing the marketing and managing part and me and Flo taking care of the creative direction. Although I had acquired some notions of music marketing from my personal experience with my label and management, I thought that the best solution for this project was to assign myself the role of creative director, meaning the creation and development of a more focused brand identity of the artist. I preferred to dedicate myself to the creative direction because from my own experience as a music artist during these years I learned the importance of having a clear vision of the product you are selling and of how you are perceived by your audience. I had also had personal experience learning to create media assets for my own project HAN such as artworks, banners, logos etc, so I felt comfortable about taking this role and delivering a good product.

My work on the creative direction first started with collecting material from the artist such as promotional pictures and bio, music and style influences, personal vision and goals. I tried to get as much content as I could from Dami and to ask him about his preferences and will: this was necessary in order to put a better focus on his brand identity and build some tools that I could deliver through practical media assets. The first and more immediate step was to choose a **colour scheme** for the artist's brand, which was then used for the single's artwork and the related iconography. Following the artist's vision and guidance, we chose a colour combination of dark purple and bright yellow, a palette that recalls the NBA Lakers team's colours which is referred to in the song lyrics, where the player Pau Gasol is mentioned:

"If I fail, I'm never going home yeh

Tryna get 2 rings, Pau Gasol yh "

These colours also well represent the bold identity of the artist (purple) while encapsulating the bright mood of the song (yellow), that communicates genuineness and faith in your own capabilities. As stated in the press release of the song, the track wants to cast out traditional notions of success associated with material possessions and encourage a more genuine approach to music-making.

A series of possible artworks were created, and at the end the final one resulted in a minimal but bold single cover consisting in a yellow centred title on a purple background, with a fake price tag on the front ironically referring to the urge of artists to sell their product, sacrificing their true self. For the remix version, the colours were maintained but placed invertedly: the dark purple was used for the title and artist name, while the yellow for the background.



Original artwork



Remix artwork

This colour scheme was used again to create more **visual content** to post on social media on the release's day. In particular, I created two artworks in the format of an Instagram Story, one referred to the original song and one related to the Nate Fox remix. Both these artworks were finalized to promote the song on the artist's social media on the release day by sharing it on his channels. The media assets also had the function of informing the audience about the digital platforms that would have hosted the song. For this reason, a series of icons representing the main digital platforms (Spotify, Apple Music, Tidal and Amazon Music) were featured at the bottom of each Instagram Story.



Original track Instagram Story



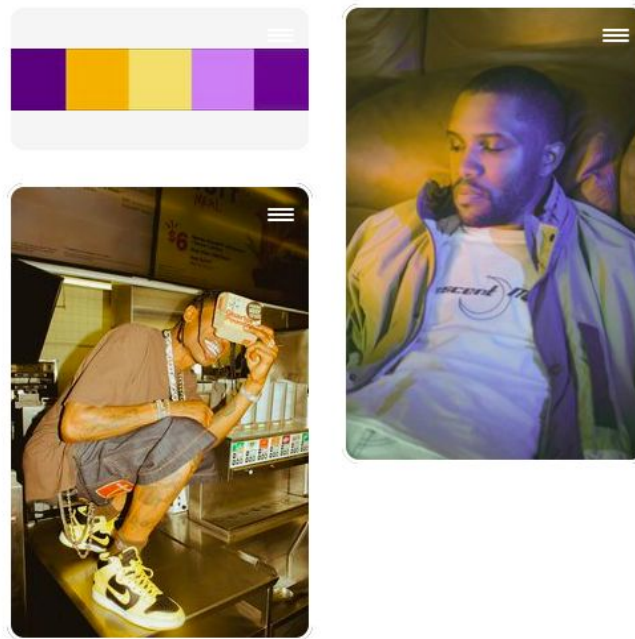
NF Rework Instagram Story

To complete the media assets, Flo created a lyric video following the colour scheme we agreed on. We confronted each other to make sure that the product was coherent with the mood I created before. We maintained the same font of the artwork and Flo integrated some sketches that recalled the mood of the track, such as a palm tree or a stylized sun.

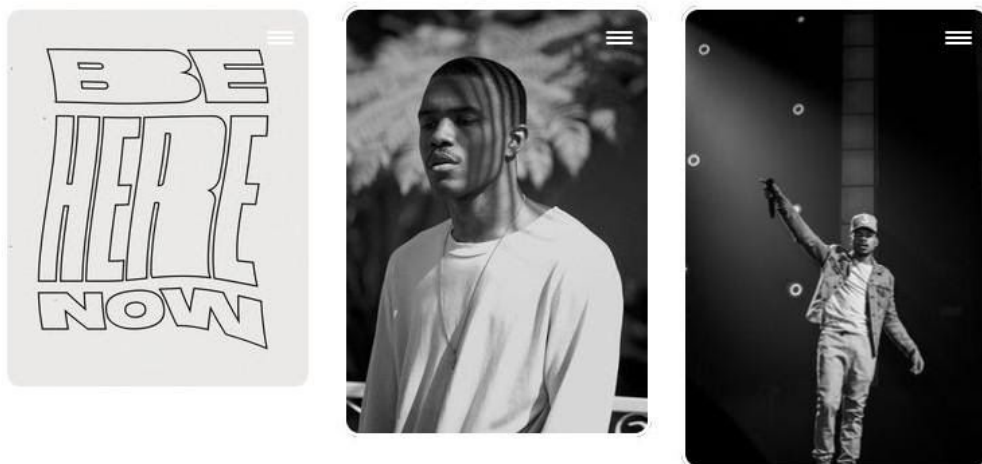
I then proceeded to create a **logo** for Dami, keeping in mind the adjectives he used when describing his music and style: honest, uplifting, intense and genuine. I kept the same font I used for the artwork, which was clear and simple and it imparted Dami's spirit. I added a sketched yellow line in the middle to symbolize the genuine and spontaneous vibe in Dami's music and the positive message of being yourself and follow your own path that Dami's music aims to convey. For the main colour, I chose black as the logo is an element that would likely be used for more than a release, so it needs to be neutral and adaptable to different colour schemes.

**DAMI
DINA**

My work as a creative director continued with the assembly of a **mood board** aimed at addressing the right visual identity for Dami, helping him and the team shaping his aesthetic. In order to assemble this, I based my work on Dami's sound, his influences (Childish Gambino, Frank Ocean, Chance the Rapper), his promo pictures and the colour scheme we decided before. The mood board is useful in the process of building a brand identity because it helps shape the imaginary world of the artist, creating a foundation for social media posts, artworks or future brand collaborations. The moodboard should input the artist's personality both in a visual and in a musical sense, representing his unique vision. I based my search on the color palette of dark purple and bright yellow that was chosen for Dami's brand, trying to find analogue portraits and compositions that could match and expand this aesthetic and reflect Dami's vision. The complete mood board is available here: <https://www.pinterest.it/helloitsgiulia/dami/>



Moodboard section 1 (above) and 2 (below)



The mood board also features black and white portraits of his main influences, inspirational quotes that reflect his attitude towards music and possible outfit choices.

The mood board also functioned as an indicator for possible **brand collaborations and partnerships**, something that could come later on Dami's career but that it was important to set since the beginning to follow a coherent direction in his aesthetic choices. Speaking with Dami and following the aesthetic we created, I searched for streetwear brands that could come off as sporty and playful but at the same time as bold and unique. I also wanted to make sure that I was looking for independent, local and emerging brands that would have accepted a collaboration with more probability and that would give away a genuine vibe. After a search on reddit and fashion blogs, I found two suitable brands: Forty Clothing (<https://www.fortyclothing.com/>) and For Mass Consumption (<https://www.depop.com/formassconsumption/>). Both London based and independent, they reflect Dami's approach to life: chill, humorous and positive. The brands could be involved, for example, when a live session for the single is being recorded, offering to the brand a return in exposure to secure the collaboration. Brand partnerships are important because they communicate to fans that the artist is taking a serious approach to his outside appearance and they give a sense of authority and recognition to the artists.

Finally, to make my creative work relevant also to the marketing strategy and the promotional side, I then assembled Dami's **EPK** (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Qubnehv1jHWWzqKwubdx1vr6R6WnNEB/view?usp=sharing>) following industry standards. The EPK features his professional photoshoot, his bio and his contacts. With Dami being still an emerging artist with no live shows history or press releases quotes to insert, the work was indeed reduced to draw attention to his future plans of release and his personality as an artist, together with reporting some highlights from his past release, among which a feature of the song "I'm all yours" on a music Youtube channel (Rnbass) with over 100k subscribers. Finally, I suggested to Eva some music blogs that could host a premiere of the single and help Dami to gain exposure. I tried to search for websites that could match the artist's style and had previously hosted similar genre artists, but I did not limit myself to the hip hop and rap scene as Dami's music could be positioned in a more vast genre. I visited PR agencies websites to check which music websites were more suitable for music premieres and cross-checked this with my personal experience as an artist. My final choices were Fader, EARMILK, Wonderland Magazine and DUMMY Mag. All these websites follow a precise aesthetic that could help Dami communicate to the right audience and make the right impression on the music industry workers, positioning himself next to quality artists. These suggestions would be then passed on to the PR agency together with the EPK and the material we collected from Dami.

(2255 words)

Bibliography, resources:

H.Davis, R.Scase, 2000, "Managing Creativity, The dynamics of Work and Organization", Open University Press, Buckingham, Philadelphia

Dami Dina Moodboard: <https://www.pinterest.it/helloitsgiulia/dami/>

Dami Dina EPK:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Qubnehy1jHWWzqKwubdx1vr6R6WnNEB/view?usp=sharing>