

# MA Commercial Music Producer

## CREATION

(ADAD7005\_LON)

*Element C1 – Written Proposal (2500 words)*

Word Count: 2500

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# Creation: Element C1 – Written Proposal (2500 words)

## RESEARCH

This project is focused on contemporary music production. Research, therefore, has been focused on DIY techniques for production and post-production. Marketing techniques have also vastly been investigated. However, marketing is not a fundamental part of this project, which focuses mainly on production and delivery of the final mastered original material. The works of (Chertkow and Feehan, 2009), (Owsinski, 2017), (Swindali, 2019) and (Goya, 2021) as well as (macProVideo.com, 2021) on contemporary music production were investigated to support this project.

## PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES

Production is all about arrangement and recording, which are dependent on songwriting/arrangement and recording techniques. Below there are some important things to have been taken into consideration to be used as assets for the completion of this project:

### Songwriting

Be aware of the components of hit songs such as titles, melodic motif in every section of the song (melodic phrases with a melody shape or pitch pattern following a rhythm and repeated in the section of the song alternated with listener resting space), contrast (phrase length and lower/higher pitch to distinguish verse, pre-chorus, chorus and bridge), rhythm and phrase placement (which beat the sentence begins), harmonies (voicing), the hooks, instrumental grooves, structure according to genre, style, relatable lyrics (sensory language) that support the song and obviously the story telling, message (say what you mean) and emotions being conveyed (Oliver, 2013), (Berklee Online, 2021).

### Arrangement

- When arranging for keys (or other rhythmic instrument such as guitar), avoid playing the melody in the presence of vocals. It will clash with the vocal techniques and embellishments attempted by the singer – the lead vocal(s) need space to shine and is the most important instrument in the band! Choose improvisations, chords mixed with leads instead. Guitar players must be aware of this too and avoid clashing solos with the singer's dynamics;
- The bass needs space to shine too. Avoid playing keys too low below F and C below middle C, which will interfere with the bass frequency domain, it does not sound good. Here rootless voicing techniques are called for and are very much appreciated;
- Be aware that no instrument is fighting for space in the same frequency or clashing in the same register cancelling the usefulness and shine of each other even more specially if they are competing with the vocals – big no, no! So, be aware of the profitable use of riffs & running and instrumental solos;

- Accurate bpm and dynamics will make or break the session as it can result in several issues in the mixing process. It is important to give it a thought and ensure that musicians are aware of these and well-rehearsed before the recording session starts (Piano Lesson With Warren, 2021).

### Recording

- Mic placement is fundamental in the recording process, from vocals to the drum set. There are many different mic placement techniques to be aware of on which the success of the recording session depends on.
- Volume is the second most important thing on the recording process. Headroom technique is important here. The signal should be between -6 and -12db depending on the instrument being recorded to secure a clean and robust sound capturing which will facilitate the mixing process.
- Anything recorded in the session must be properly labelled, converted into audio files (mid), and filed as stems in a secure external hardware or the cloud. Loss of important data caused by files being saved in wrong folder or saved with confusing/double file name are more common than anticipated if these steps are ignored, not to mention computer crash and hard disc damage, which can considerably slow down or even wrack the project altogether (Owsinski, 2017).

### MIXING TECHNIQUES

One of the crucial processes of contemporary music production is the mixing process. According to (macProVideo.com, 2021) certain concepts need to be clear right at the beginning of a mix, such as, having clear in mind how the target sound is like, where one wants to go with it sonically, then, in connection to that, emphasize the hooks (vocals, lead parts and/or instruments with hooky features), then pay special attention to characteristic instruments or specific techniques used in that particular genre of music.

Monitoring is fundamental in mixing. "A set of speakers which the mixing engineer is familiar with is the most important tool" in the process (macProVideo.com, 2021). Some examples could be Adams, Genelec 8050a, Yamaha NS10, which has pronounced upper mid-range (very common in most professional studios), Exigy 515, with great low end, high end, which complement the mix when contrasted with the Genelec 8050a's or similar. A Hi-Fi stereo can come quite handy to also monitor the mix as that it is in this type of system that the target audience will listen to the final mixing, having in mind that the mix needs to sound good in all formats (macProVideo.com, 2021).

Panning can create a much bigger mix with more space and depth if placement is done properly. Panning avoids sounds being cluttered and unclear too. It is considered appropriate

mixing technique to have kick, snare, bass guitar and vocals in the centre, guitars, backing vocals left and right to create a bigger image (macProVideo.com, 2021).

Frequency Stacking is a concept that takes into consideration sounds that sit in the same frequencies, for example the kick drum and the bass guitar fighting for the same low end in the mix. In frequency terms, the mix engineer needs to decide which instrument is going to be more dominant boosting the kick at 60Hz and the bass guitar a little bit higher at 82Hz so the two are “stacked” on each other as opposed to having both sounds fighting at 60Hz.

### INTENDED PROJECT

Our project entices the writing, production, post-production including mastering, of an EP of six to eight original songs entitled “Colours.” The themes are social justice, diversity, equality, acceptance, love, heartbreak, forgiveness and self-knowledge. Marketing will be carried out but is not on the scope of this project and will be carried out separately.

To achieve the outcomes of this project, a group of songwriters will be invited to collaborate with Afrige Media Productions, sharing the royalties accordingly. In the production phase, Afrige will collaborate with other musicians such as drum player, bass player and opportunity for synthesizer players are to be considered. In Post-production, Afrige Media Productions will collaborate with other producers and in this way harness production skills and expertise to the highest standards of the industry.

### BACKGROUND and FOUNDATION for the PROJECT

Afrige, the main artist, is a singer-songwriter, major in vocals and stage performance, with a great passion for music production. Music is mingled with every aspect of his life and is a channel for his presence and expression in the world. Since early years at university Afrige has had a desire of publishing original material not only lyrically inspiring but also music production-wise, in other words, Afrige aims to produce industry standard original material generated from collaboration with other professionals and their edgy expertise. Collaboration is not one of the artist’s greatest assets, reason why this project is innovative, challenging and quite promising in his career as a recording artist.

Although this is an academic assignment, we have big aspirations for this project as to produce a professional, competitive and industry standards worth original material to deliver Afrige’s vision and message to the target audience.

### BENCHMARKS FOR SUCCESS

The success of the project will be the production and post-production including mastering of the final original material produced to the industry standards. The EP will be released and

marketed. However, peer review and feedback from professionals in the industry will make up the most important evidence of success.

Below there are some individual aspects to be purposefully surveyed as to achieving the industry requirements and standards:

- Songwriting
  - Is the storytelling conveying an emotional connection with the target audience? How?
  - Is the song structure built according to the genre and style? How or why not?
  - Has the songwriting process taken into consideration the elements of hit songs (melodic motif, contrast, phrase placement, hooks, dynamics, lyrics, etc)?
  - What is the style of the song? Does it match the genre? How or why not?
  - Are all songs in the album/EP consistent regarding genre and style? Is there enough/balanced variety in the songs within the genre and style or do they all sound like the same?
  - Are the titles of the songs selling the songs?)
- Vocals
  - Are healthy vocal techniques according to genre and overall style being used?
  - Has signal balance/headroom technique been employed during the recording process or do vocals sound over produced to eliminate recording errors?
  - Are the vocals pitch corrected to commercial music release standards?
- Production
  - Is the arrangement following genre and style guidelines?
  - Have instruments relevant to the genre and style been used? How?
  - Is there enough instrumentation present in the arrangement?
  - Have recording techniques been properly employed?
- Mixing
  - Are the instruments well balanced? Have panning, reverb and delay used profitably to increase space within the mix?
  - Has clarity been achieved in the mix as to allow the listener to necessarily to hear but to feel what each instrument is doing?
  - Does it feel good to hear how the instruments and vocals interact? Why or why not?
- Mastering
  - Have the songs been mastered in a way that they all sound as havin the same loudness? Does it feel good volume-wise?

#### CASE STUDIES and APPROACH to PROJECT

Songwriting wise, Afrige is inspired by soul touching, justice and order, problem solving, forgiveness and heartbreak narratives although protest, especially related to Lgbtq+ and religion themes are often seen in his work. Influences such as Raye, Freya Ridings, Sia, Gracie Abrams, Tones and I, Lady Gaga and even Madonna are some of Afrige's inspirations story

telling wise. Afrige is very much drawn to vocal technique as well and it shows on his top line writing and impacting melodies. Metallic vocal qualities are often present or expected as tools to achieve the powerful and high notes characteristic in Afrige's melody lines. Afrige undertook research on "The Transition Between M1 and M2 as a Vocal Technique Singers use to transit from Mechanism one to Mechanism 2 in the Vocal Tract" and this is seen throughout his vocal technique approach.

Charlie Puth is one of the greatest influences production-wise to Afrige. The processes and skills he uses are very much in line with the highest standards in the industry. Afrige is a R&B Pop and Electronic Music artist, so other great influences such as Sigala's and David Guetta's styles and techniques can be expected in his production.

All the mentioned influences and research above as well as Afrige's own background and musicianship are employed to approach the current Project lyric, music theory and production wise.

#### ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES used in the INDUSTRY

There are, obviously, other ways to achieve the outcomes of this project. The quickest way would be paying musicians and studio hours to get production done and assigning one or more highly paid producers to take care of the post-production process. This, however, would incur in a very expensive enterprise, which is not in the scope of our budget.

Another approach, not rarely undertaken, would be a totally independent project production. That can be very solitary to start with and may be handled too subjectively and therefore lack important elements or features relevant to contemporary songwriting and music production. This approach also may be left at risk of extra mind inputs from other musicians and professionals in the industry.

The approach we have chosen is very ambitious and challenging. It encompasses the collaboration with as many artists and professionals as possible without going over a very tight budget for essential and unavoidable expenses only. Management and most of the processes will take place within Afrige Media Production and this will cut costs. Collaboration online and use of external venues such as Pirate studios for rehearsals and Tyleyard Studios for live recordings will be necessary. The small budget for the project will cover session musicians and rehearsal studio time.

#### PROJECT TIMELINE

Time is important for this project as there is a deadline for the delivery a portfolio with the final material mixed and mastered to the industry standards. To better organise the steps, procedures and dates regarding the project, we will use a Time Chart and a Project Calendar and match the events with a Budget Chart to ensure that the project can be carried out without major disruption.

Mid-August, rehearsals will start followed by the recording of song parts that may be already rehearsed and ready for recording:

Submission /  
Delivery

| 2021 AUGUST                                                                            |                                                                                        |                                                                                        |                                                                                      |                                                                                      |                                                                                      |                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SUN                                                                                    | MON                                                                                    | TUE                                                                                    | WED                                                                                  | THU                                                                                  | FRI                                                                                  | SAT                                                                                    |
| 1     | 2     | 3     | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   |
| 8     | 9     | 10    | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  |
| 15    | 16    | 17    | 18  | 19  | 20  | 21  |
| 22    | 23    | 24    | 25  | 26  | 27  | 28  |
| 29  | 30  | 31  |                                                                                      |                                                                                      |                                                                                      |                                                                                        |

**90 DAYS: From 01/Aug - 29Oct 2021 (AUGUST)**

[illegible]

## 1. TIME CHART

### EP RECORDING PROJECT

90 DAYS: From 01/Aug - 29Oct 2021 (AUGUST)

| TASKS                 | Day 11.08                | Day 12.08 | Day 13.08 | Day 14.08 | Day 15.08                | Day 16.08 | Day 17.08 | Day 18.08 | Day 19.08 | Day 20.08 |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Songwriting           |                          |           |           |           |                          |           |           |           |           |           |
| Songwriting COLLABS   |                          |           |           |           |                          |           |           |           |           |           |
| Songwriting CAMP      |                          |           |           |           |                          |           |           |           |           |           |
| PHOTO Shootings       |                          |           |           |           |                          |           |           |           |           |           |
| Short VIDEOS Archive  | Songwriting SHORT VIDEOS |           |           |           |                          |           |           |           |           |           |
| Studio REHEARSALS     |                          |           |           |           | STUDIO REHEARSALS Starts |           |           |           |           |           |
| Studio RECORDING      |                          |           |           |           |                          |           |           |           |           |           |
| Mixing & Mastering    |                          |           |           |           |                          |           |           |           |           |           |
| Checklist             |                          |           |           |           |                          |           |           |           |           |           |
| Delivery / Submission |                          |           |           |           |                          |           |           |           |           |           |

## 1. TIME CHART

### EP RECORDING PROJECT

90 DAYS: From 01/Aug - 29Oct 2021 (AUGUST)

| TASKS                 | Day 21.08               | Day 22.08 | Day 23.08 | Day 24.08 | Day 25.08 | Day 26.08 | Day 27.08 | Day 28.08 | Day 29.08 | Day 30.08 | Day 31.08          |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|
| Songwriting           |                         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | END of SONGWRITING |
| Songwriting COLLABS   |                         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                    |
| Songwriting CAMP      |                         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                    |
| PHOTO Shootings       |                         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                    |
| Short VIDEOS Archive  |                         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                    |
| Studio REHEARSALS     |                         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                    |
| Studio RECORDING      | STUDIO RECORDING Starts |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                    |
| Mixing & Mastering    |                         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                    |
| Checklist             |                         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                    |
| Delivery / Submission |                         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                    |

In September, rehearsals and studio recording will continue to take place and the Mixing and Mastering (post-production) of songs already recorded will start around September 15<sup>th</sup>. These procedures and approach to the schedule will ensure that we stay on track and in time. All rehearsals must be finished by September 20<sup>th</sup> and all recordings completed by September 30<sup>th</sup>. During the process, like in August, pictures will continue to be taken and short videos made on the appointed dates as shown on the calendar.

## 2. CALENDAR

SEP/ 2021



## Songwriting



## Photo Shoot



## Short Videos



## Band Rehearsals



## Recording



Mixing /

Submission /  
Delivery

# 2021 SEPTEMBER

| SUN                                                                                  | MON                                                                                  | TUE                                                                                  | WED                                                                                  | THU                                                                                  | FRI                                                                                   | SAT                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                      |                                                                                      |                                                                                      | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   |
| 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  |
| 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  |
| 19  | 20  | 21  | 22  | 23  | 24  | 25  |
| 26  | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30  |                                                                                       |                                                                                        |

## 2. TIME CHART

EP RECORDING PROJECT

**90 DAYS: From 01/Aug - 29Oct 2021 (SEPTEMBER)**

[illegible]

## 2. TIME CHART

EP RECORDING PROJECT

**90 DAYS: From 01/Aug - 29Oct 2021 (SEPTEMBER)**

[illegible]

## 2. TIME CHART

### EP RECORDING PROJECT

90 DAYS: From 01/Aug - 29Oct 2021 (SEPTEMBER)

| TASKS                 | Day 21.09 | Day 22.09 | Day 23.09 | Day 24.09 | Day 25.09 | Day 26.09 | Day 27.09 | Day 28.09 | Day 29.09 | Day 30.09               |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Songwriting           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                         |
| Songwriting COLLABS   |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                         |
| Songwriting CAMP      |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                         |
| PHOTO Shootings       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                         |
| Short VIDEOS Archive  |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                         |
| Studio REHEARSALS     |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                         |
| Studio RECORDING      |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | END of STUDIO RECORDING |
| Mixing & Mastering    |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                         |
| Checklist             |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                         |
| Delivery / Submission |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                         |

In October the focus will be on post-production. Great attention to arrangement and details must be given. Once the arrangement is revised and satisfactory, collaboration will take place with other producers in the Mixing phase. Here, feedback from other producers and professionals are important. When the Mix achieves professional standard, the original material will be Mastered. Collaboration with other producers and feedback from industry professionals will ensure that the final material meets the required industry standards.

All Mixing and Mastering processes must be completed by September 27th. On September 28<sup>th</sup>, a checklist will be made to ensure there is nothing missing or not completed and, if possible, we will start the submission process as audio files may take longer to be submitted online. The final material due date is September 29<sup>th</sup>, before 12:00pm.

## 3. CALENDAR

OCT / 2021



Songwriting



Photo Shoot



Short Videos



Band Rehearsals



Recording



Mixing / Mastering



Submission / Delivery

## 2021 OCTOBER

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|     |     |     |     |     | 1   | 2   |
| 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   |
| 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  |
| 17  | 18  | 19  | 20  | 21  | 22  | 23  |
| 24  | 25  | 26  | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30  |
| 31  |     |     |     |     |     |     |

EP RECORDING PROJECT

**90 DAYS: From 01/Aug - 29Oct 2021 (OCTOBER)**

[illegible]

EP RECORDING PROJECT

90 DAYS: From 01/Aug - 29Oct 2021 (OCTOBER)

[illegible]

### 3. TIME CHART

#### EP RECORDING PROJECT

90 DAYS: From 01/Aug - 29Oct 2021 (OCTOBER)

| TASKS                 | Day 21.09 | Day 22.09 | Day 23.09 | Day 24.09 | Day 25.09 | Day 26.09 | Day 27.09 | Day 28.09                 | Day 29.09      | Day 30.09 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| Songwriting           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                           |                |           |
| Songwriting COLLABS   |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                           |                |           |
| Songwriting CAMP      |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                           |                |           |
| PHOTO Shootings       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                           |                |           |
| Short VIDEOS Archive  |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                           |                |           |
|                       |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                           |                |           |
| Studio RECORDING      |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                           |                |           |
| Mixing & Mastering    |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | END of Mixing & Mastering |                |           |
| Checklist             |           |           |           |           |           |           |           | Prepare to SUBMISSION     |                |           |
| Delivery / Submission |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |                           | SUBMISSION DAY |           |

### BUDGET

|    | ITEM                                              | UNIT | COST        | BUDGET     |
|----|---------------------------------------------------|------|-------------|------------|
| 1. | Session musician – Drum Player                    | 02   | 200         | 650        |
| 2. | Session musician – Bass Player                    | 02   | 200         | 450        |
| 3. | Rehearsal – Studio sessions                       | 10   | 232         | 250        |
| 4. | Recording – Studio hours (Tileyard studios)       | 16   | 0           | 18         |
| 5. | Production & Management (Self-produced / managed) | -    | 0           |            |
|    |                                                   |      |             |            |
|    | <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>                                |      | <b>£632</b> | <b>£18</b> |

### PROJECT PROPOSAL:

SONGWRITING,  
RECORDING, PRODUCTION AND  
DELIVERY OF AN EP

**COLOURS**

by  
AFRIGE



## REFERENCE LIST

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