

Creative Music Management – Reflective Summary

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Contents:

- A. My Involvement in the Group Portfolio and Associated Media Assets
- B. Reflections on the Impact of all types of Digital Technologies with Reference to the Creation and Promotion of Original Popular Music and Team Development on Creative Industry Projects
- C. Bibliography

A. My Involvement in the Group Portfolio and Associated Media Assets

Creating a single for an artist with other assets and working in a team can be overwhelming but the end result can be fulfilling. I have experience with creating music and music videos, however, I have always worked alone and made mistakes along the way. Doing this project, I have learned some valuable lessons by acknowledging my strengths and weaknesses and putting them both to the test. I have never worked on a project like this before especially with the creative minds like the ones in my group. We came across some difficult situations, adapted them and moved forward in order to achieve the end result and have a smooth release.

When starting the project, it was in a difficult time for most of us in the group as we had to focus on writing three other assignments. But once they were done that's when the group could finally start. Karl had joined and came forward with an artist that was part of his co-owned label, W.LDN.SoundSystem, called Marina Hovian. A group chat and google drive folder was made by myself and the roles were then split. Karl was the Creative Director, who was in charge of organising meetings and making sure everyone knew what they needed to do. I also kept on top of this in the first couple weeks of the project because it seemed like it was just Karl and I that kept communication. As it was his artist from his own label, he was also in charge of getting the single, remix and video organised whilst the rest of us gave him ideas. Thando to start with was given the role of Finance and Budgeting and finding ways to balance the cost as we knew we were going over the budget that was given to us of £500. Rohan and I were given PR and Marketing, which meant we were supposed to work on all the promotion and marketing side of the project together. But this didn't go to plan.

Once the other deadlines were over by a couple of weeks and we had the single, remix and video completed, Karl and I both realised that not much else was being done so we called a meeting to try and bring the group back together. The only person that didn't show was Rohan. In spite of this we tried to move past it and focus on other parts of the project in hopes of Rohan showing up. A group chat was made with Marina, her manager and the rest of us to make it easier to communicate with her and get her opinion. We tried to make branding and marketing decisions with Marina but with a missing group member we found it difficult and didn't look professional. If this was in the real world it would have an effect on your career, 'If you keep getting your back scratched and don't return the favour, that support will eventually dry up' (Herstand, 2017). This wasn't the only time Rohan disappeared either. After a week of Rohan's first disappearance, we had another meeting about making sure we all have constant communication, so everything goes to plan, what is more, we reach the deadlines set for the group. Over the Christmas period Rohan and I had to work on the electronic press kit (EPK) together but after rescheduling our meeting a couple times because he was unreliable and didn't respond, we finally got one meeting. After that I decided it was best I take over and do the rest of the EPK on my own and asking the rest of the group for advice. I then continued to work on getting the logo completed to Marina's brief and making sure the price was given to Thando to add to the budget.

If I learned anything from this project it would be that constant communication is needed in order to achieve great results as well as being organised and having a timeline to follow, 'if you stay on top of a defined timeline, it's not difficult to pull off a record release' (King, 2009. P.g. 189). It is hard when a member of your group is undependable and doesn't show up with results so the rest of us have to pick up his work. This is why Thando then helped out with marketing in the end. I have become more confident in myself knowing that even if I had no knowledge of how an EPK worked before, I know that I can educate myself in time, moreover, I'm not afraid to ask for help. This is the first time I did a project like this and because I worked with others that haven't either, it was comforting to know I wasn't alone. For those that have done something similar, they didn't mind helping. I learnt that it is better to ask for help and sort a problem early rather than wait till the last minute and let the group down.

The choices I made in this project weren't always agreed upon. For example, the look of the electronic press kit (EPK) when first drafted. Nevertheless, they were improved. When someone in the group had doubts, we made sure to have a meeting in order to explain or help with any difficulties. The choice to move on with or without Rohan was made collectively because we couldn't afford to wait for him to come back with possibly nothing completed. He let the group down, but we managed to finish by working closer together and checking off the final parts of the project.

I personally really enjoyed doing this project and seeing the final products. What needed to be reminded multiple times was that this wasn't just a project for our masters, it was a real release, and I'm very excited to see how it turns out. But more importantly, see if our project worked and if the release is successful. If I were to change anything it would be to ask to do more. I felt like I didn't do enough, however, after talking with the group everyone seemed to be pleased with everything. If possible, I would have only wanted to work with Karl and Thando from the beginning, to avoid being let down constantly during the process. But it is a learning curve and helped us change our thinking in order to still reach our deadlines and have everything ready. I learnt how to be organised, but also how to communicate with artists/clients. If this is the direction I want to go in with the music industry then it was good to practice and always make sure I'm being professional and polite. This way future artists or clients, are more likely to work with me in the industry as I would have established a good working relationship.

B. Reflections on the Impact of all types of Digital Technologies with Reference to the Creation and Promotion of Original Popular Music and Team Development on Creative Industry Projects

Technology has completely changed the way the world works over the years. From the first ever hair dryer in 1888, by Alexandre-Ferdinand Godefroy (Gross, 2013), the first recording device called a 'phonograph' by Thomas Edison in 1877 (Beardsley and Leech-Wilkinson, 2009) to streaming songs directly from your smartphone or even your car (Welch, 2019). But how has digital technology had an impact on original popular music and creative

industry projects? This question will be answered in this essay with references to various articles, books and websites.

In 1979, TASCAM (Teac Audio Systems Corporation America) helped bring the recording studio home by inventing 'the Portastudio, [which is] a four-track recorder that used standard audiotapes' (Schonbrun, 2011). From then on it caused a 'revolution' to the recording industry, and hard disks became popular because of how much data they could store, which were then used to keep digital audio files. Today computers now have recording software like Logic and Pro-Tools. These music recording software are mainly used for big recording studios but can be bought for personal computers that then create a home studio. This is where original music can be made by artists or producers without the use of a label to help or an expensive recording studio to book. For example, Chance the Rapper has achieved 'fame and success in an unorthodox way' (Biography, 2017). His whole career has been without the help of any labels as he would much rather continue to be independent whilst 'exploring the limits of a label-less career'. He has collaborated with multiple artists and musicians like Kanye West, lil Wayne and Nico Segal (aka Donnie Trumpet), but then releases the music as a free download. This is because he heavily relies on touring and merchandise revenue so that he can do 'whatever he wants musically' (Biography, 2017). Home Studios cut costs greatly and help musicians focus most of their money on the promotion and distribution of their music instead. It has also helped today because of the pandemic; it is much easier to create music at home rather than a recording studio as most of them are closed. Artists have now taken to home studios to complete their deadlines on writing songs and finishing albums.

As recording studios became popular back in the early years, a law was put in place to cover copyright owners when it came to copying CDs and sites such as Napster. 'The Audio Home Recording Act of 1992 (AHRA) was the first piece of major legislation affecting digital music' (Gordon, 2015. P.g. 91). This act helped compensate artists or copyright owners who have lost sales due to people copying their music without consent. However, the AHRA doesn't apply to the new generations of technology such as 'MP3 players, iPads [and] iPhones' (Gordon, 2015 P.g. 91). Nevertheless, in 1988 the UK had the 'Copyright Designs and Patents Act' (Harrison, 2014. P.g. 75). This Act has helped artists win lawsuits against those who try to use or make a profit off of their own work. Traditionally music was bought physically as vinyl and CDs, but now with the internet 'the music industry's digital revenues have mushroomed to \$4.2 billion at the end of 2009, up from \$20 million in 2003' (King, 2009. P.g. 33). At the end of 2019 the 'total revenues climbed to \$20.2 billion', clearly showing a spike in interest for streaming and buying music online (Smirke, 2020). This is how downloading, and streaming music has significantly changed the industry as artists are now dependent on those numbers because of Covid-19 not allowing live performances. Metadata has helped with this by keeping track of a song once released to gain any data by seeing how many streams the song has, and where the song has been played. It 'basically refers to any information that travels with your digital music that is not the music itself' (King, 2009. P.g. 37). The most important piece of metadata is the ISRC code (International Standard Recording Code). Once the music is distributed through iTunes or Spotify, for example, it is used to keep trace of the original owner and give them the royalties earned from each stream and download. This has helped when creating a marketing plan because teams behind an artist, or the artist themselves, can see where their target audience is based. Digital technology has definitely had a big impact to the promotion aspect of releasing music, 'online advertising is

one of the most popular and fastest growing forms of advertising today' (King, 2009. P.g. 120). Banner ads are one example. The artwork used on the banner advertisement takes up a small piece of a web site page with a link to a third-party web site for more information. The relevant information used on advertisement would be a headline, description or press quotes and call to action. Call to action is what you would like the reader to do after reading the advertisement, for example, asking them to pre-save a song or to stream a song because it has been released. This is similar to an electronic press kit (EPK). The EPK 'provides a central location with all of your assets – like image and music files [and a] bio' (TuneCore, 2021). The EPK is quite important because it can be given to radio stations, articles to promote up-and-coming albums or singles, and even labels, so it needs to be presentable.

One of the major digital technologies of this era that has helped with team development has been video conferences. Zoom is just one of the many video conferences that has been used in the past couple of years and it 'has enjoyed an astounding 876% growth in number of customers' (Dooley, 2020). Now more than ever it has become vital for everyone to use video conferences for meetings. Not just between companies and employees but for producers to work with musicians, labels to work with artists, and for teams to work together in order to connect their ideas for a project. With tools such as recording the meeting and sharing a screen, it has been easy for teams to come together. Zoom also allows everyone to connect in a stress-free way, or 'frictionless', so that anyone can join a meeting from a different place, different time zone and not miss anything (Dooley, 2020).

To conclude, as technology advances, the world will adapt and change with it. There has also been talks of artificial intelligence composing music. Many say this will help the 'creative process' for many producers and musicians (Deahl, 2018). For example, David Bowie helped invent an app that reordered words from a literary source to create lyrics. 'Sony used a software called Flow Machines to create a melody in the style of The Beatles' (Deahl, 2018). All of this would not have thought to be possible a couple of decades ago. But it has improved the music industry and will continue to do so over the next few years. It is great to see that more doors are opening for musicians to create and release music from their own homes with the use of home studios and have their rights covered. But also signing up to royalty collection societies, without paying a label or a publisher, and getting paid for the work they release directly.

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