

Evangelos Alexiou – 2007915 – Creation – Proposal

Introduction:

This first part of the final assignment of my master's degree aims to describe the research that I have conducted in order to gather enough information for the creation of this specific project. The main intention is to create a 10-track album in which I will showcase my sound as an artist and my abilities as a music producer. I will aim to collaborate with different artists to feature vocals in some of the songs that will be included on the album, however, if this seems to be not possible or time consuming then the album might as well stay as an instrumental and tell the story via the use of sounds solely. I prefer not to restrict myself to a specific genre before I start producing the main ideas, instead, I will let the process decide which genre the album will gravitate towards. However, there have been some major influences, with regards to the soundscape of the overall album as well as the story behind it, which I will explain in detail in the following paragraphs. The name of the album will be 'Nobody's Emotions' and it will be used as a debut album to kickstart my alias project 'Nobody's Sound' the creation of which I will be working on in parallel with this assignment.

Literature Review:

For the production of this particular project, I had to go through some of my favourite albums from artists that I highly value and have been a key influence in my relationship with music so far. Listing them all under one essay would be impossible so I had to limit my options to those two albums that I have been touched by the most in the past decade. These two albums are a) GAIA – Moons of Jupiter (Armada Music, 2019) and b) Eric Prydz – OPUS (Prydz, 2018) both of these albums have similarities and differences and there are certain elements that have equally inspired me for the project that I will be working on in the following two months. It is worth mentioning that both of the reference albums include more songs than I intend to produce for my album, and this is due to the time constraints of the deadline. I decided to create an album instead of an EP or individual single releases since I believe it is easier to tell a longer story and maintain a similar mood by creating a body of work such as an album in this case. As Murphy (2017) suggests, it is not a matter of whether an album is better than releasing an EP or singles and that each of them serves a different purpose. Hence, the purpose of this album will be to take the listener on a journey of emotions that each individual might experience at different points in their life and can hopefully relate to.

The soundscape of the album that I will produce is inspired and influenced by both of the reference albums but will not aim to imitate them, instead, I will try to combine the influences I have gained out of these two and come up with an original idea. For example, one production aspect that I would like to engage with is to avoid using snare fills or crashes or reversed noises for the transitions between different sections of each track. More specifically I decided to pay so much attention to that specific detail, due to the fact that I realised that I have been overusing all of the methods mentioned previously to transition smoothly between sections so far. It will be one of the challenges that I would like to set myself to in terms of stepping out of my comfort zone. That inspiration came from the album *Moons of Jupiter* in which as Armin Van Buuren quoted “This is the first electronic album that does not include a single snare-fill or a crash or a reverb kick or reverse noise, none” (Armada Music, 2019). This mentioned album, however, is instrumental and for this specific assignment I will aim to include vocals in my album, not for the entire duration, but ideally, half of the album will have vocals present and the rest will be instrumentals only. The exact sequence of each track, in terms of listing them, will depend on the production process and the final musical outcome. The reason why I have chosen to include vocals on this album is due to the realisation that happened to me after listening to the *OPUS* album (Prydz, 2018). Adding vocals to some of the already well-established instrumentals has helped elevate the storytelling of the entire album in my opinion.

In addition, after watching the interview with regards to the *Moons of Jupiter* album I decided to follow the approach of limiting myself to a certain number of synthesisers instead of trying to get hold of as many as I can. In the case of *GAIA*’s album, the artists decided to use only one soft synth for the entire production to avoid CPU overload while they were performing it live (Armada Music, 2019). In my case, the reason why I decided to limit myself to a certain number of soft synths was not in order to avoid overworking my laptop but for creative purposes and convenience of the workflow. The four main soft synths that will be used for the creation of the final project of this module will be ANA by Sonic Academy, Spire by Reveal Sounds, Thorn by Dmitry Sches, and Zebra 2 by u-he.

Research design and methods:

In order for this project to be as successful as possible, it will require some type of information and data gathering from a variety of sources. However, throughout the process of creating this album and carrying out all necessary steps before the distribution of it, my options will be limited in terms of the data that can be acquired. More specifically I decided to use qualitative research since according to Streefkerk (2021) this is the type of research that is usually expressed in words and it is being used for the understanding of experiences thoughts and concepts. The main method used will be interviews and I will aim to acquire as many interviews and feedback as possible from both Tileyard experts as well as from a record label that I am interested in, Armada Music. This will be either a written interview via email or a Zoom session that I will have to transcript. Quantitative research might be used after the official release of the album in order to collect demographic data and use that for a more efficient promotional targeting of upcoming singles releases or EP’s after this particular album.

Concept of the album:

The concept of this album will be based around human emotions, aiming to express these via the use of sounds or words in the case of using vocals in a number of songs throughout the duration of this project. Listing all human emotions in one album seemed overwhelming since there is a vast number of emotions according to different theories. In my case, I have chosen to use the emotions listed as Friendship, Love, Kindness, Empathy, Indignation, Anger, Shame, Envy, and Fear in Aristotle's Rhetoric according to (Leighton, 1996). In addition to these emotions and to make the album 10 tracks long I decided to add the emotion of Bliss as a positive message to the present unprecedented situation. In a similar approach to Moons of Jupiter in which the artists take the listener on a journey to the different moons surrounding the planet (Armada Music, 2019), I will aim to take the listener on a journey of emotions. The album will start with the more negative emotions and will evolve to the positive ones as it goes from the beginning to the end. The first half of the album will include a darker mood in terms of sounds, and it will get brighter towards the end.

Reasoning behind the concept:

As previously mentioned, the artist's project that I will launch will be Nobody's Sound and the reason behind the name is because I do not want this project to identify with me. Instead, I intend to present that project as part of myself instead of wholly as myself since I believe that who I am as a person reflects only partly through the expression of music. The name itself could suggest that the artist, which in that case is me, considers himself to be nobody. However, the message behind this project is that it aims to stay without a specific identity in terms of genre or sound. This viewpoint might seem problematic when seen from a business point of view, but this idea is what really inspires me as an artist, and it gives me the freedom to express myself in any way through that. The album, Nobody's Emotions will serve a similar purpose as well, in the sense that these emotions are experienced by most, if not, all of us, humans. By no means, the intention of this project will be to define fully these emotions, but it will be a representation as to how my personal experience with these emotions, feel like, or to be more precise, how they sound like.

Timeline and Scheduling:

The most important part of finalising an album is planning and scheduling the process which I will present in detail in the next paragraphs. I decided to break down each stage and list it in terms of urgency, which is a step that helped out in the organisation and breaking down the period of time that will be required for each stage. A rule that I decided to follow is to finish each stage before moving onto the next one, as (Murphy, 2017) suggests. The different stages taken into consideration are the Production, Mixing and Mastering, Artwork Design, Website and Social Media creation for Nobody's Sound, and finally the Digital Distribution of the album.

The exact amount of time that will be available to me after the submission of this proposal will be nine weeks. The first stage and one of the most vital ones is the music production of the album which will be carried out from week one to week five. On week six I will dedicate my time to the mixing of the produced tracks and the design of the artwork. Week seven will be focused on the creation of two major Social Media Profiles, Facebook and Instagram, and the design of the SoundCloud and YouTube page as well for this alias project. I decided to use these two platforms as they are those with which I am most familiar

with using at the moment, but I might consider expanding to TikTok and Twitter in the future as well. Week eight will be dedicated to the mastering of the album and finally the Distribution of it which may or may not happen before the submission deadline of this assignment.

This will be determined from when the Mastering process will be accomplished and how long in advance the album needs to be submitted to a distribution site for the release date to be confirmed. The budget for this final project is limited to covering the costs of licensing and publishing only, using the distribution site CD Baby. Due to that limitation, I decided to do the mastering process myself which could be argued that it is not the best practice since a mastering engineer will be able to critically listen to the track with no attachment to it and spot out some issues that might have been missed in the mixing process according to (Unlock Your Sound, 2019). This way and if I, later on, decide that I want to hire an engineer to master this project, I will be able to compare my mastered version with the professionally mastered work and spot out any major differences and advantages that hiring a mastering engineer might have.

Promotion Plan:

The creation of the promotional plan will be executed in parallel with the design of the artwork and the setting up of the social media profiles. It will include the consideration of creating a music video or music visuals to be used as means of promotion of the album on social media platforms. In addition to that, I will update my artist biography and create an EPK for a press release, finally, I will add a mailing list on the website in order to be able to promote upcoming releases or gigs via the use of email. These will all be included and explained in detail on the personal development plan for the reflective commentary.

Conclusion and Benchmarks of success:

In conclusion, the benchmarks of success for this project are both personal satisfaction with the overall quality of the album and professional competence in terms of the feedback received and the comparison with the sound of the referenced albums. It will be considered a success if in the first place I manage to achieve a final mastered album that will be ready for distribution by the 7th of May which is the deadline of the creation assignment. Finally, if by the end of this project I manage to have all social media platforms up and running and I am able to showcase my music there, then I will consider that I have succeeded. However, this does not mean that if I achieve only one of these targets the album will be a failure, but I will try to push myself outside of my comfort zone in order to achieve both of these targets before the final deadline. This album will be used as the beginning of my music career as an artist after finishing this degree and help me develop my career further.

Reference List

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