

Rowan Hopkins

Reflective Commentary

'25 2 12'

Creation (ADAD7004_LON)

CPL0922_C2b_ReflectiveCommentary - Part 1

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Undertaking this project has been a transformative journey that has leveraged my personal and professional growth. In particular, my focus on project management has yielded significant progress and throughout this reflection, I will discuss the key areas of my project, including project organisation, risk management, recording and mixing techniques, problem-solving, interpersonal skills, musical development, and market research. By discussing these aspects, I aim to shed light on the challenges that I faced, the strategies I employed, and the lessons I have learned during the creation of my EP, 25 2 12.

One key area in which I have made notable progress is project management and the documentation process (*appendix 1*). Throughout, I implemented a streamlined folder management system, dedicating a folder to each song. Within each folder, I stored the project files, vocal project, ongoing bounces, mixes, and masters (*appendix 2*). This approach ensured easy access to all relevant components in a convenient, quick, and organised manner. It significantly accelerated my workflow, enhancing communication when sharing mixes with vocalists and serving as a comprehensive musical timeline for each song's development (*appendix 3*). Throughout this project, I have come to recognise the crucial importance of these project management and documentation processes, which I previously overlooked in past projects. I am more conscious of the risks associated with a project and the significance of conducting a SWOT analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Kenton, 2023). Reflecting on my project, I recognise several strengths that have contributed to its success. My musical talent and skills, such as production, guitar playing, and instrumental composition, have laid a strong foundation. Collaboration and interpersonal skills have allowed me to work effectively with vocalists and build diverse artist relationships. Understanding recording techniques and mixing skills has resulted in high-quality audio recordings and a cohesive sound. Active listening (Campbell, 2011) and seeking feedback have refined my work and interpersonal abilities. Effective project management and documentation have improved organisation and communication. However, I also acknowledge weaknesses that I aim to correct. Singing is an area that I recognise needs development, and I am committed to honing my vocal skills to enhance the quality of my performances. Through using techniques like 'sirening', I intend to increase my vocal range and control (Farmer, 2023). Additionally, song writing is another aspect where I seek improvement, as I aspire to become a more skilled and versatile songwriter. Opportunities lie in collaborations for enhanced reach, streaming platforms like Spotify, and networking with industry professionals. Threats include a saturated music market (Galster, 2015), financial constraints, and technological challenges impacting production. At the beginning of my project, I was already aware of the risk of facing a lack of interest in participation and having few featuring artists on the EP. I understood that this could potentially result in a final product that lacked diversity and engagement. To control these risks, I took proactive steps by reaching out to vocalists as early as possible in the process. I gauged their interest and clearly outlined my goals for the project. I made sure to communicate in a clear and concise manner, eliminating any ambiguity, with the aim of building and maintaining good working relationships with multiple artists. Looking back, the EP features four different vocalists, including myself, with Joss Coyle being featured on four out of eight tracks. While I am satisfied with the contributions made by these artists, I believe that the EP would have benefited from the inclusion of one or two more vocalists. This would have increased the variety and style of the EP, potentially

enhanced its reach, and allowed me to establish more musical relationships for future endeavours.

When recording in my home studio with Joss Coyle, I took necessary steps to prepare for vocal recording sessions. To save time and avoid re-recording live instruments to accommodate key changes, I had the songs recorded and structured in a basic format beforehand. This approach allowed for Joss to provide creative input and allowed for harmonic and key changes as needed. Moreover, I decided to conduct vocal recording sessions in a separate Logic project from the original one. This was done to alleviate the strain on my MacBook's CPU, which had been struggling throughout the entire process. Vocal recording sessions with Joss were scheduled for every Monday and Thursday throughout June and July, which greatly facilitated the planning process. Typically, on Mondays, I would record a demo vocal take with Joss. Afterwards, I would spend time mixing the vocals, tuning, and aligning the rhythms. On the same day, I would send the song to Joss, who would then have Monday evening to Thursday to learn the song and confidently sing it in a more natural manner on Thursday's session.

In two instances, vocalists Caitlin and Gabrielle preferred to record at home due to transportation and work commitments. For these cases, I sent them fully recorded and structured songs, allowing them to add their lyrics and vocal melodies without my direct input. This gave them complete creative freedom. Since I had worked with these artists in a professional setting before, particularly as a guitarist for them, I was aware of the keys where they felt most comfortable singing. This meant that no changes had to be made to the original demo tracks.

To accommodate potential time pressures for specific vocalists, I had planned to create a high-quality instrumental track without vocals by recording more guitar-focused melodies. This nearly became necessary when Gabrielle sent her vocal stems less than a week prior to the submission deadline. As a result, I had recorded guitar melodies in place of her verses and choruses. Fortunately, I received her stems in time, and they sounded fantastic, allowing me some additional time to mix them into my project.

Financially, I recognised the risk of having limited resources, which could potentially result in a poorer quality of mastered music. Initially, I considered reaching out to quality assured professionals within my close network to overcome this challenge. However, due to financial constraints, I couldn't afford their discounted mastering fees. This led me to discover LANDR, where I invested £39.99 for a month of unlimited masters.

Within the LANDR platform, I had several options for mastering, including Balanced, Open, and Warm. These options referred to the overall equalisation of the tracks, with Open emphasising the high end, Warm focusing on the lower end, and Balanced finding a middle ground. Reflecting on this, I found that these options were somewhat vague. Since I had unlimited masters available, I tried all three combinations on each track (*appendix 4a and 4b*). However, it was challenging to discern significant differences between the options. To further tailor the mastered songs, I used the master revision function, which allowed me to adjust more advanced parameters (*appendix 5a, 5b and 5c*).

In hindsight, I realised that based on my previous experiences, I prefer working with human mastering engineers rather than relying solely on artificial intelligence. I had a positive experience with Abbey Road Online Mastering, but at £100 per master (Abbey Road Studios, 2023), it was completely unfeasible for me as it would have cost £800 for the entire EP.

Therefore, I aimed to keep costs low by handling as much as I could on my own, using the tools available within the limitations of my budget. Ensuring financial sustainability is essential for future releases and my overall music projects. Because I intend to release my music on Spotify, I wanted to comply with their loudness guidelines. Due to loudness normalisation, Spotify doesn't always play the track back at the level it's mastered, and I aimed for a high-quality sounding mix and master between -11LUFS and -9.2 LUFS, an integrated LUFS measurement using FabFilter's Pro-L. I kept the loudness within Spotify's suggested loudness ranges, to make sure that during the transcoding process, no extra distortion will be added to my tracks (Spotify, 2023).

To minimise the risks associated with technological failures, I implemented several measures throughout my project. Firstly, I used an online cloud-based storage folder to back up all my work (Google, 2023). This ensured that even in the event of a technological failure, I wouldn't lose any valuable data. Additionally, after each vocal session, I bounced the recorded raw vocal stems and saved them both on a hard drive and in the cloud. I also created a bounced WAV version of each session as a reference, which would come in handy in case of any computer failures (*appendix 6*). These precautions allowed me to access earlier versions of mixes and provided me with more options, as I could refer back to older versions if needed.

To further safeguard against technological failures, I adopted the practice of recording each vocal session in a new Logic Project (*appendix 2*). This approach helped maintain a clean and accurate recording process by using the Low Latency Mode (Apple, 2023), which ensured minimal latency and software lag. Moreover, I conducted all tuning and editing within the dedicated vocal session project for each song. By doing so, I ensured that my computer could handle the plugins used without any issues. Notably, certain plugins, such as the ones from Plugin Alliance, occasionally caused crashes in Logic. To mitigate this, I limited their usage and discovered that by implementing bus processing (Stewart, 2021), plugins like the Magnum-K (*appendix 7*), where I used the Airband, (Mäag Audio, 2023) didn't cause Logic to crash, except when multiple copies were placed on individual tracks. These precautions and adaptations significantly reduced the likelihood of technological failures impacting my project. They allowed for a smoother recording and editing process, ensuring the integrity and security of my work.

To mitigate the risk of songs sounding too similar and potentially creating a boring and lifeless EP, I took deliberate measures throughout the production process. Recognising the importance of diversity and contrast, I focused on creating tracks with distinct tempos, time signatures, and sonic elements. By incorporating these varied elements, I aimed to inject excitement and engagement into each song (Ewer, 2013) (MasterClass, 2021).

In addition to the musical elements, I paid careful attention to the song structures. I consciously avoided repetitive patterns and instead crafted arrangements that offered a range of surprises and dynamics. This involved incorporating creative stop sections, stabs, and other approaches to keep the listener engaged.

While striving for contrasting elements, I also aimed to maintain a cohesive sonic identity throughout the EP. By employing similar sonic instruments across the tracks, I ensured that the EP would have a consistent and recognisable 'sound' (Leviatan, 2021). This approach allowed the individual songs to shine while contributing to the overall cohesion and identity of the project. It was a meticulous process that demanded a conscious effort and attention

to detail, but it was necessary to ensure that the EP avoided monotony and captured the listener's interest. The result is a collection of songs that showcase diversity while maintaining a cohesive sonic thread, creating an engaging and dynamic listening experience. I gave myself several days away from my music, coming with fresh ears which allowed me to have a new perspective on my work, resulting in small but important changes (Gander, 2017).

Breathing techniques, such as the 7/11 style (Human Givens Institute, 2012), proved invaluable in helping me navigate high-stress situations throughout the project. I encountered challenges like computer crashes, late deliveries, and numerous other stress-inducing moments. Implementing the 7/11 breathing technique allowed me to effectively manage stress (Student Minds, 2021) and approach problems with a calm demeanour. I extensively researched and experimented with this technique, and it significantly reduced my stress levels throughout the project, enabling me to approach work in a more composed and objective manner.

Within the realm of music production, maintaining a consistent workflow within Logic Pro has been instrumental in my development. One of the strategies I adopted is consistent colour-coding of tracks (*appendix 8*) to quickly label and identify instruments and sub-groups. This visual organisation has enabled me to navigate my projects more efficiently. Additionally, I have implemented a range of keyboard shortcuts that expedite routine tasks during my work. For instance, using shortcuts like Ctrl+R for repeating sections and Ctrl+T to trim sections has saved me valuable time. Furthermore, I have customised shortcuts to ensure the fade tool appears at the corner of each audio file, allowing me to shape the audio endings precisely according to my artistic vision. These shortcuts have become invaluable tools, enabling me to create desired effects such as fading out or slowing down audio for a unique, warped sound. I have also set up shortcuts for quick access to plugins, assigning 1, 2, and 3 to open the first, second, and third plugin within the effects slot of a track. Moreover, I have used automation shortcuts by designating a 'double dot' to set automation points swiftly. This facilitates the addition of real-time responses, such as panning and volume adjustments, to my mixes.

By implementing these strategies and shortcuts, I have established a structured and consistent workflow that optimises my productivity and efficiency in music production. It has allowed me to focus more on creative aspects while streamlining routine tasks, resulting in a smoother and more productive working experience.

Throughout the sessions and interactions with vocalists, I made a conscious effort to apply active listening (Gerzon, n.d.) techniques in the context of vocal recording sessions, where sensitive topics are often expressed through lyrics, this skill became even more crucial. It demonstrated that I valued and appreciated the perspectives of the vocalists, even if I needed to offer an alternative point of view. Active listening is a valuable skill in various contexts including the professional setting. Its significance is particularly prominent in the music world, where emotions often take centre stage in lyrical content. During a session with Joss, for example, she found herself in an emotional state and began to cry. I handled this situation by offering comfort and reassurance, acknowledging that her challenges were not uncommon in musical journeys. As someone who tends to be more closed off, this experience provided valuable lessons in dealing with such moments and reinforced the belief that practicing active listening can greatly benefit the communication.

Peer feedback holds immense value in the music industry as it provides constructive criticism and fresh perspectives on musical creations. The feedback I received from both musicians and non-musicians was well-rounded and thorough. My musician friends offered insights on the mix of the songs and the harmonic content, leveraging their technical expertise. On the other hand, my non-musician friends provided valuable comparisons to established artists and evaluated the overall quality of the music from a listener's perspective. This diverse range of feedback enriched my understanding of the project and helped me refine my work. By actively engaging with artist relationships and embracing peer feedback, I have not only honed my problem-solving and interpersonal skills but also fostered a collaborative and growth-oriented approach to my music.

During this process, I have learnt that personal well-being is an important component to the success of a creative process (Sheth, 2022). I have taken it upon myself to make small changes to my lifestyle to support the production of my EP, including regular gym attendance and abstinence from alcohol (Hall, 2023). These two small adjustments to my lifestyle have meant that I have formed a routine that I can maintain, which has many positive mental and physical benefits (Steinberg, et al., 1997). Maintaining a routine during this project has allowed me to feel in control of the outcomes and I feel that I have had enough time to complete each element of the creative process, producing a series of songs that I can be proud of.

When it comes to recording techniques, I employed double tracking for guitars, using the Quad Cortex (Neural, 2023). For vocals, I used an Aston Origin microphone, incorporating a pop shield and reflection filter unit to enhance recording quality and minimise unwanted artifacts such as plosives and sibilance (Martinovich, 2022). While I took measures to mitigate issues like sibilance (Fox, 2023), I encountered instances where certain lyrics had pronounced 's' sounds, particularly evident in Caitlin's 'Losing You' where a pop shield or reflection filter was not used during her vocal recording. Recognising that getting the desired sounds during recording significantly aids the overall mix, I believe that applying proper recording techniques can minimise the need for excessive processing (SAGE AUDIO, 2023).

During a mixing masterclass with Paul Stacey, I learned a technique to create a wider vocal sound. By sending the vocal track to a bus with Soundtoys' delay plugin, 'Little Primal Tap,' with specific settings such as a delay time of 12-20, a mix at 50%, and a bus send volume at 0dB, I applied this technique to most lead vocal tracks to enhance their stereo width and presence (*appendix 9*) (Stacey, P 2023).

Inspired by audio engineer Ricky Damian's lecture, I organised my projects using bus routing (*appendix 10*) to gain more control over the processing components. By sending harmonic and melodic elements, drums, bass, and vocals to separate buses and then routing them to a bus before reaching the stereo output, I created a consistent pathway for processing all recorded sounds. This approach allowed me to create space within the mix for vocals by applying equalisation on the music bus. I also used this method to control the drums collectively and ensure they worked harmoniously with the bass bus, often employing sidechain compression to manage the impact of punchier bass notes.

Employing Nate Williams' saturation chaining method (*appendix 11*), I sent instruments to multiple buses with different saturation and distortion plugins at low volumes to achieve a hardware-like sound (Williams, N 2022). This technique worked particularly well with vocals and guitars, providing a more realistic valve sound to the tracks. Drawing inspiration from

SSL-style plugins that allow for randomisation of channels and low-level distortion, I applied varying amounts of saturation to each instrument, resulting in a wider range of saturation characteristics. Parallel compression (Kody, 2022) was another technique I used to introduce controlled levels of distortion and enhance the sound of drums, aiming to emulate the characteristics of hardware processing. While recording everything using high-quality hardware preamps like Neve or API would have been ideal (Horea, 2020), financial constraints and limited access to studio time prompted me to research and replicate the warmth and valve sounds through software-based techniques.

In my exploration of mixing techniques (Owsinski, 2014), I researched how to sidechain a gate on the stereo output to affect the entire mix. Through automation, I bypassed the FabFilter Pro-G (*appendix 12*) to create a ducking effect where the volume noticeably reduces when the kick drum is played. This effect, influenced by the artist Mac Miller, where it can be heard in his track 'Blue World', where a gate affects an entire vocal sample, resulting in a bouncing effect. I extended this concept in my track 'HELLO', implementing it over a larger section to achieve the desired impact.

Further research led me to discover different approaches to mixing drums, including mixing from the perspective of a drummer or from the perspective of the audience (DRUM!, 2023). When it came to tom drums (*appendix 13*), I chose a realistic panning method that corresponded to the changing pitch of the toms based on their panned position. This approach aimed to replicate the placement of a drum kit, creating a representation of how it would be set up. In the future, I aspire to record live drums, where a professional drummer can make informed decisions regarding fills, velocities, and the overall sound, rather than relying solely on sample emulation.

The project has provided insights into the song writing process, guiding me in creating compelling and engaging compositions. Furthermore, I have learned to use jazz harmony tastefully, incorporating it into contemporary music in a way that enhances the overall musical experience without overpowering the listener. Through extensive music theory research, I have a well-rounded knowledge of functioning harmony which I've applied in varying degrees to each of my songs.

For example:

ALIEN:

Key: F# minor

Time signature: 6/8

The chorus features the following chords:

| Bm7 | C#7 | F#m9 | F#m9 | Bm7 | C#7 | F#m9 | F#7 |

The chord progression uses secondary dominant chords (Brown, 1972) to create tension and release when they finally resolve back to the 'one chord' (Taylor, 2012). The progression is in a constant loop of resolving dominant chords meaning it feels complete and becomes familiar after only one repeat. Secondary dominant chords are used throughout my final project to help the smooth transition between keys and to encourage the use of strong harmonic notes. This progression also demonstrates the use of minor to major where the F#m9 becomes the F#7, a form of parallel minor/major modulation (Levine, 1995).

FIGURE IT OUT

Key: G major (with a G minor introduction)

Time signature: 6/8

The introduction of the song starts in a minor key and once the vocals start, it modulates to a major key, stating a very obvious change. This abrupt change has an immediate emotional affect as the song seems to have a positive, happy boost.

The chorus chords go as follows:

| Gmaj7 | Gmaj7 | B7 | B7 | Emaj7 | Emaj7 | Am7 | Cdim7 |

This progression contains more non diatonic than diatonic chords and the first few chords takes inspiration from Steve Gorrell's 'Georgia on My Mind', with a I to III7 movement (Levine, 1995). The B7 is a secondary dominant and is the five chord of Emaj7. The Emaj7 chord functions as another five-chord leading to the Am7. The Cdim7 acts as the five chord for Gmaj7 (Levine, 1995). This means that, similarly to ALIEN, this track has a chorus pattern that is constantly resolving by itself, creating a satisfactory loop. The guitar solo follows closely where I have used a very obvious Ornithology quote to begin the solo (*appendix 14*). The remainder of the solo sticks close to the chord tones within the chorus pattern, using enclosures and note targeting to hit 'correct' notes which highlight the harmony (Fordham, 2015).

HONEY:

Key: Db major / Bb minor

Time signature: 4/4

This track I think is the most harmonically rich and varied.

The introduction consists of:

| Db major | Em6 | Ebm7 | B7 |

In my composition, I have carefully voiced these chords in close proximity to each other, intentionally reducing their movement and drawing attention to the consistent melodic note that remains static throughout the first three chords. However, as the progression evolves, I introduce a transition to either B7 or Cb7, ensuring the enharmonic correctness of the progression (Brown, 1972). This shift also brings a melodic change, as the initial static Db note transforms into an Eb. My creative inspiration for this approach stems from the captivating composition, 'One Note Samba' (Levine, 1995). The B7 (or Cb7) is taken from the backdoor ii-V-I progression (progression).

The chorus chords are:

Gbmaj7 F7	Bbm7 Bbm7	
Gbmaj7 F7	Ab/Bb Abdim/Bb	
Gbmaj7 F7	Bbm7 Abm7 Db7	
Gbmaj7 F7b13	Bbm9 Bbm9	

This chorus doesn't start on a root chord which makes it evident it is a new section. The chords flow well together as they cause tension and release back into their home chords. The use of a ii-V-I is implemented to get back to the Gbmaj7 and a F7b13 causes tension to reveal the chorus has ended and creates a sense of release when the Bbm9 is held. The bridge section follows a strictly diatonic chord pattern as I wanted to take a break from any type of dissonance as the song breaks into an airy section with bird song. I think through moments of release, tension can shine through, and it can be much more palatable than a constant stream of modulation and outside chord tones (Fordham, 2015), appealing to a non-jazz audience. I intend this to inspire listeners to engage in the learning of jazz and the harmonic theories surrounding the concepts used within my songs.

Through researching artists and albums that I would say fall within a similar target audience to mine due to genre, I made some choices to include specific components in my EP. Through identifying these popular trends and ideas within these types of albums, and analysing the success of these EPs, I have been able to digest an overview of the marketing strategies of successful musicians working within an area that I aspire to be at. Tom Misch's album 'Geography' boasts a total of 539,952,563 streams on Spotify. Collaborative songs play a significant role, accounting for 54.19% of the album's total streams (*appendix 15*). Connor Albert's album 'Collage 2' shows that his most successful songs are collaborations, representing a significant portion (79.65%) of the album's total streams. Live performance recordings however, achieved the least number of streams (*appendix 16*). Daniel Caesar's album 'Freudian' has been highly successful, reaching a total of 2,479,614,386 streams. Collaborative tracks in this album make up a substantial portion, accounting for 78.54% of the album's total streams. The most successful song on the album features H.E.R and has surpassed 1 billion streams (*appendix 17*). In summary, collaborations seem to have a significant impact on the streaming success of these albums. They not only contribute a significant share of the streams but also tend to be among the most successful songs in each album. Additionally, two out three albums feature an instrumental track, adding variety to their respective releases. And lastly, live performances on albums have demonstrated good results. These findings significantly influenced my decision to create a collaborative EP, featuring at least one instrumental and no live performance recordings.

All three artists feature in many Spotify and user made playlists, contributing to the overall successes of the songs and albums. Further playlisting successes can be seen for the likes of Daniel Caesar who features on the specific artists playlists that he has collaborated with, further suggesting the importance of collaboration with regards to reach on Spotify (Spotify, 2023).

Regarding my intentions to release music in the future, it is worth noting that "By pitching your release to Spotify curators via Spotify For Artists more than 7 days before the release

date, your track will automatically land on your subscribers' Release Radar playlist. If you do this less than 7 days before, Spotify does not guarantee it" (Band Builder Academy, 2022). This method of networking can increase the chances of future playlisting and can begin the initial stages of a working relationship with Spotify. It's said that an artists shouldn't "overlook your branding - that means the artwork, photos - it all has to impress a Spotify curator" (Todd McCarty, 2022). I think this area of my project is lacking and through the right investment and delegation of time, a well-developed image can be developed to increase the likelihood of success through Spotify (*appendix 18*). "Spotify is the most popular streaming platform in the world, with 350 million users and 150 million subscribers" (Garrett, 2022). With the most reach within the music streaming world, Spotify seems to be the best platform to use to promote my music. However, due to the saturation of the music market, I believe it's important to distribute my music across all platforms to increase the chance of reach and success. I have tried promoting music outside of Spotify, using social media platforms like TikTok to gauge interest in my music, using the slowed and reverbed (CLASH MUSIC, 2021) approach on my song 'HELLO', it achieved 800+ views in a short space of time, a reasonable reach considering my small following of 25 followers (*appendix 19*).

During market research, I was alerted to the legislation surrounding sample use. I used a sample in my introductory song 'INTRO', from a 1962 Australian news report about aliens. To obtain the proper license for this sample may prove to be very difficult or impossible, deeming the song not fit for commercial release due to copyright infringement (Challis, 2009). Although for a university assignment where there are no commercial considerations, I believe this to be an acceptable use of the sample. However, as of when I decide to release this music, I will re-record this part myself to negate any possible copyright infringement. Further legal research I have conducted is for understanding the royalty distribution (Royalty Exchange, 2021). I have set up an account with PRS, where I can register my works, and can give credit to the performers on my songs. I have agreed with the vocalists that we will split the proceeds 50-50 as without their contribution to the music, I feel that their contribution has been crucial in achieving my outcomes of producing an EP.

Moving forward, I intend to continue developing this project by exploring opportunities to showcase and promote the portfolio of tracks I have created. This includes seeking avenues for public performances, further collaborations with other musicians, and submitting the tracks to relevant music platforms and streaming services. I also aim to engage with industry professionals, seeking their feedback and guidance on refining the project further. To showcase and promote my tracks, I have developed a comprehensive plan that includes several key strategies. First, I will leverage the power of streaming platforms like Spotify by submitting my music to their curators through Spotify for Artists, ensuring placement in relevant playlists and increasing my reach to potential listeners. Additionally, I will actively engage with my audience through social media platforms, sharing behind-the-scenes content, live performances, and updates on upcoming releases. Collaborations with other artists and featuring on their projects will also provide opportunities for exposure and cross-promotion (Hines, 2023).

To establish myself as a recognised producer and guitarist, I will focus on building a strong online presence by consistently releasing high-quality music and engaging with my audience. I will actively seek out opportunities for collaborations with established artists in

the genres of Neo-soul, R&B, and popular music, showcasing my production and guitar skills on their projects. Networking with industry professionals, attending music industry events, and actively seeking feedback and guidance will further enhance my reputation and visibility in the industry (Allen, 2022). Additionally, I will continue my education and professional development in music production and guitar playing, staying updated with the latest techniques and advancements in the field.

Ultimately, my goal is to leave a lasting impact on the music industry and contribute to the evolution of contemporary music in a meaningful way.

In conclusion, this project has substantially contributed to my personal and professional growth and has informed the way in which I intend to undertake similar projects in the future. Throughout the creation of my EP, I have focused on a wide variety of key areas simultaneously and through critically reflecting on these aspects, I have gained valuable insights into the challenges I faced, the strategies I employed, and the lessons I have learned.

One significant area of progress for me has been project management, where I have felt that I have been in control of the entire process. I also have identified my strengths and weaknesses as a musician and producer and have found constructive ways of progressing through these moments of self-discovery. Collaboration taught me to engage in active listening and made me more comfortable when seeking feedback. I have acknowledged my weaknesses in areas such as singing and song writing, which I aim to develop in the future, to continue my growth as a musician.

I am excited about my future opportunities through collaborations, uploading works to streaming platforms like Spotify, and networking with industry professionals. However, I maintain a realistic perspective and appreciate how the saturated music market, financial constraints, and technological challenges have and will continue to pose threats to this project and future project's successes.

In terms of recording and mixing techniques, I employed various strategies to ensure high-quality audio recordings and cohesive mixes. From double tracking guitars to using specific vocal recording techniques, I aimed to capture the desired sound and minimise the need for excessive processing. I employed a range of production techniques to create depth, warmth, and a balanced sound. This process has revealed to me the need for technological upgrades and the investment in hardware recording equipment.

Musically, I focused on developing compelling compositions by tastefully incorporating jazz harmony into contemporary music. By exploring functioning harmony and using a range of jazz inspired techniques I created engaging and harmonically rich songs. Through extensive research and analysis of successful albums and artists, I gained valuable insights into market trends and marketing strategies, informing my decisions for a working approach.

Throughout the project, I also honed my problem-solving and interpersonal skills.

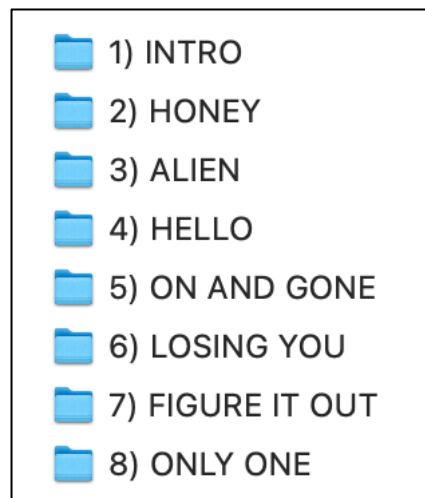
Techniques like 7/11 breathing helped me manage stress and approach challenges with composure. Consistent workflow practices combined with an improved personal well-being and routine positively impacted my creative process.

Looking ahead, I plan to continue developing this project by seeking opportunities to showcase and promote my tracks. This includes leveraging streaming platforms, engaging with my audience through social media, collaborating with other musicians, and actively seeking feedback from industry professionals. Building a strong online presence,

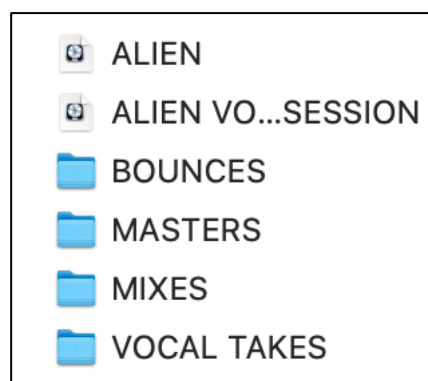
networking, and staying updated with industry advancements will contribute to my reputation and visibility in the music industry.

Undertaking this project has been a valuable experience that has not only contributed to my personal and professional growth but has also laid the groundwork for future life. By reflecting on the challenges faced and the lessons I learned, I have gained a deeper understanding of what it takes to successfully complete a project. I am now confident in my ability to continue producing music and making a meaningful impact in the music industry.

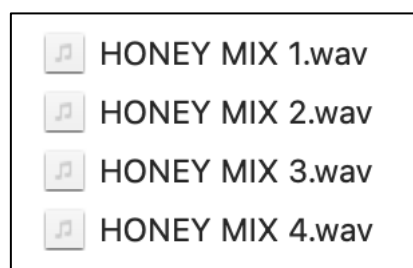
Appendix



Appendix 1 – Folder management



*Appendix 2 – **ALIEN** folder management, evidence of additional Logic Pro session for recording vocals*



*Appendix 3 – **HONEY** mix evolution, demonstrating the mixing process and the revisions made throughout the project*

-  LANDR-ALIEN-Balanced-Medium.wav
-  LANDR-FIGURE IT OUT-Balanced-Medium.wav
-  LANDR-HELLO-Open-Medium.wav
-  LANDR-HONEY-Balanced-Medium.wav
-  LANDR-INTRO-Balanced-Medium.wav
-  LANDR-LOSING YOU-Balanced-Medium.wav
-  LANDR-ON AND GONE-Balanced-Medium.wav
-  LANDR-ONLY ONE-Balanced-Medium.wav

Appendix 4a – LANDR master variation 1

-  LANDR-ALIEN-Warm-Low.wav
-  LANDR-FIGURE IT OUT-Warm-Low.wav
-  LANDR-HELLO-Balanced-Low.wav
-  LANDR-HONEY-Balanced-Low.wav
-  LANDR-INTRO-Balanced-Low.wav
-  LANDR-LOSING YOU-Balanced-Low.wav
-  LANDR-ON AND GONE-Balanced-Low.wav
-  LANDR-ONLY ONE-Open-Low.wav

Appendix 4b – LANDR master variations 1

Master revision ×

Tweak or refine your sound for the perfect final master.

How is the Loudness? ⓘ

☐ Too quiet ☒ Good ☐ Too loud

Do you want to enable the Distortion filter? ⓘ

No ☒ Yes

How is the EQ intensity? ⓘ

☐ Too low ☒ Good ☐ Too high

Adjust the EQ ⓘ

The lows are:

☒ Good ☐ Boomy ☐ Thin

Appendix 5a – LANDR master revision options

The mids are:

☒ Good ☐ Muddy ☐ Weak

The highs are:

☒ Good ☐ Harsh ☐ Dull

The vocals are:

☒ Good ☐ Nasal ☐ Muted

Adjust the Sibilance control ⓘ

How much additional sibilance control do you want to apply?

☒ None ☐ Light ☐ Heavy

Where would you like to control the sibilance?

☐ High voices ☐ Low voices ☒ Full

Appendix 5b – LANDR master revision options continued

Adjust the Stereo field ⓘ

Expand width:
No ☐ **Yes**

Focus center:
No ☐ **Yes**



2:52

Revise master

Appendix 5c – LANDR master options continued

BOUNCES ⓘ >

 HONEY ⓘ

 MASTERS ⓘ >

 MIXES ⓘ >

 VOCAL RECORDING ⓘ >

 HONEY S...ON 1.mp3 ⓘ

 HONEY S...N 2.mp3 ⓘ

 HONEY S...ON 3.wav ⓘ

 HONEY S...N 4.mp3 ⓘ

 LIKE HONEY.mp3 ⓘ

 NO VOX...ONEY.mp3 ⓘ

 QUCIK T...NEY.mp3 ⓘ

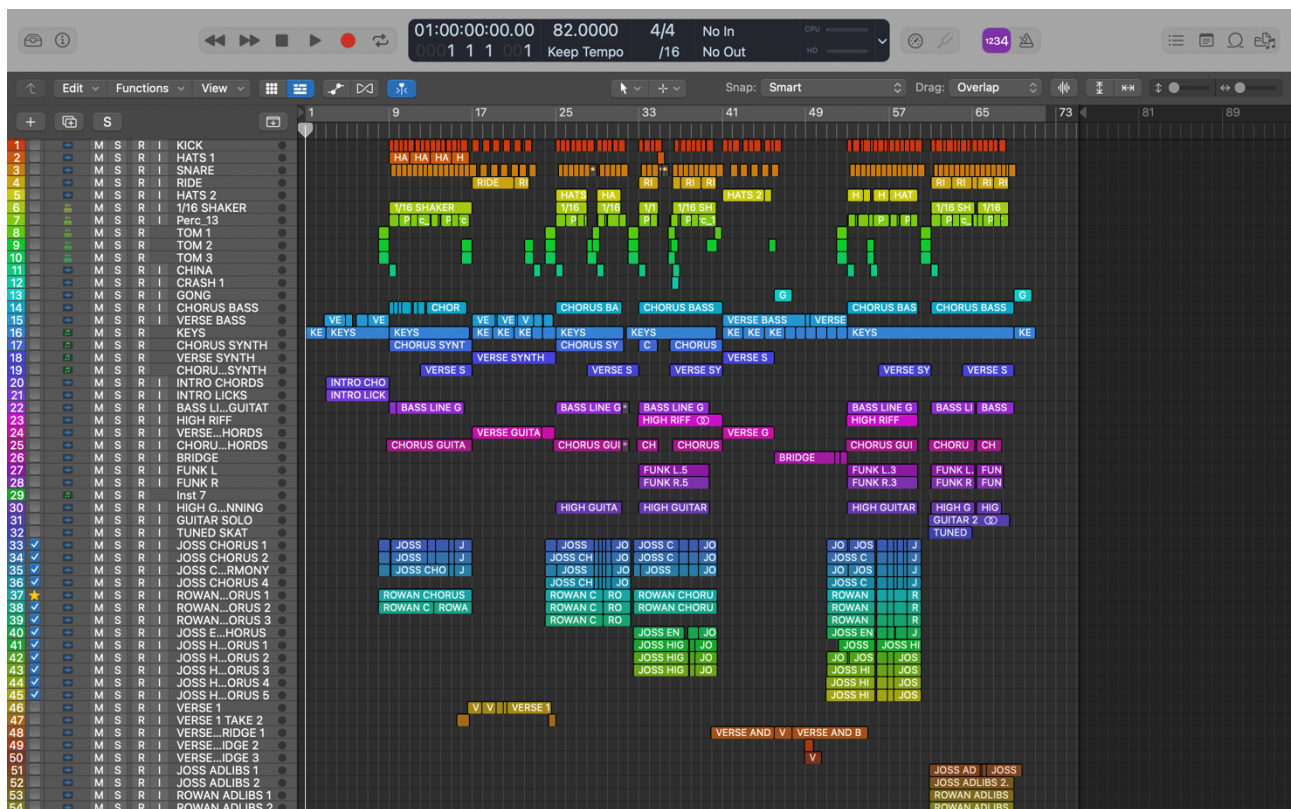
 SWEET HONEY.mp3 ⓘ

 SWEET LI...EY 2.mp3 ⓘ

Appendix 6 – on-going bounces of project for future reference and documentation



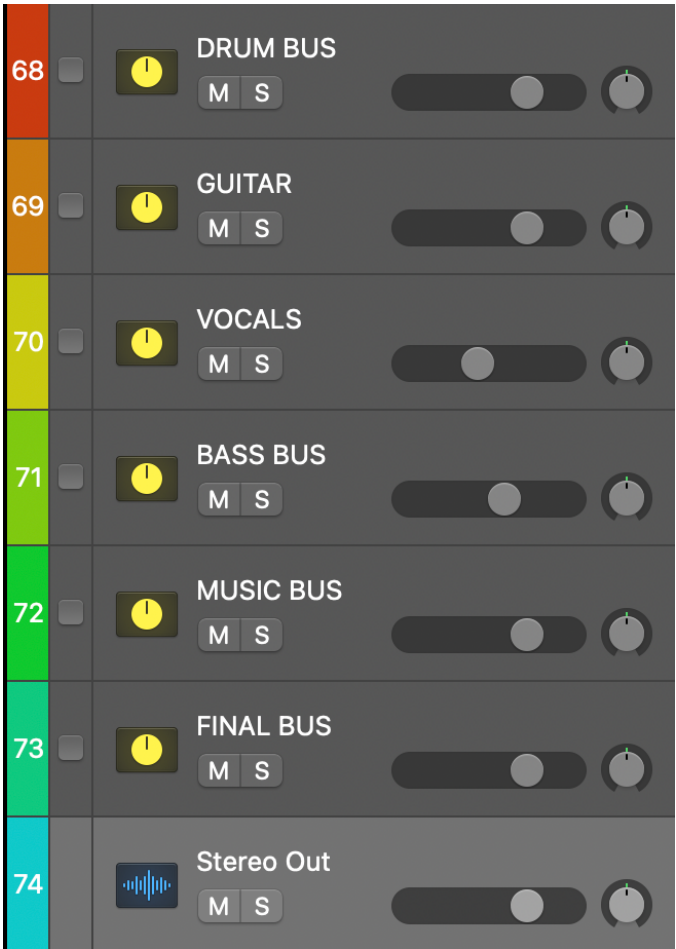
Appendix 7 - The MAAG Magnum-K with the famous 'AIR BAND' causing CPU issue



Appendix 8 – 'FIGURE IT OUT' Logic Pro project, colour coded for quick and easy distinction of components, also demonstrating clear labelling



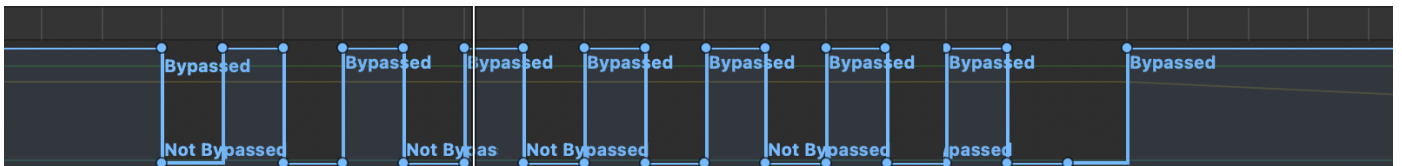
Appendix 9 – the ‘Paul Stacey trick’, using Soundtoy’s Little Primal Tap as a vocal doubler



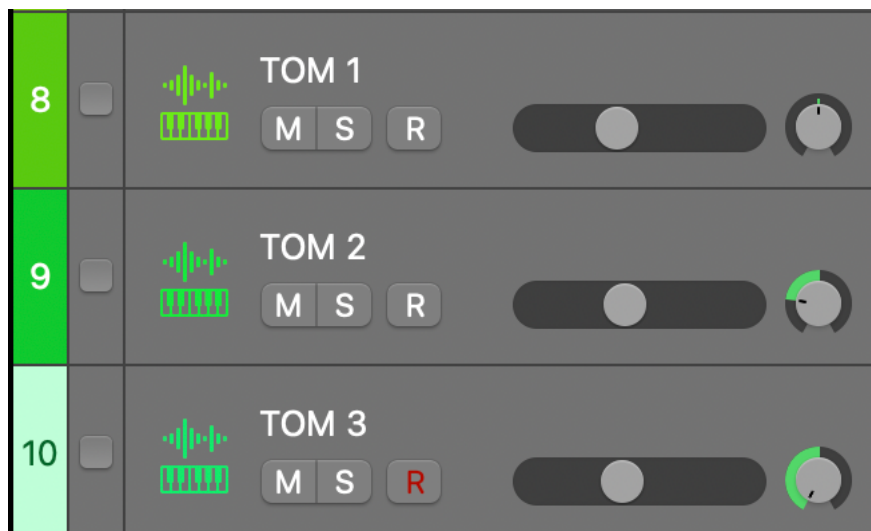
Appendix 10 – Ricky Damian bus routing



Appendix 11 – Nate Williams’ saturation chaining technique through small levels of sends



Appendix 12 – Pro-G automation for pumping effect on stereo out



Appendix 13 – Realistic tom drum panning

o

Ornithology

By Charlie Parker and Benny Harris

'BIRD SYMBOLS'
C. PARKER 407



Appendix 14 – Ornithology guitar solo quote (anacrusis and bars 1 and 2)

1	Before Paris	Tom Misch	10,928,350
2	Lost in Paris	Tom Misch, GoldLink	61,186,039
3	South of the River	Tom Misch	50,089,919
4	Movie	Tom Misch	100,722,739
5	Tick Tock	Tom Misch	12,565,992
6	It Runs Through Me	Tom Misch, De La Soul	135,489,252
7	Isn't She Lovely	Tom Misch	19,017,921
8	Disco Yes	Tom Misch, Poppy Ajudha	71,203,429
9	Man Like You	Tom Misch	11,331,686
10	Water Baby	Tom Misch, Loyle Carner	24,878,316
11	You're On My Mind	Tom Misch	24,354,468
12	Cos I Love You	Tom Misch	11,715,272
13	We've Come So Far	Tom Misch	6,691,400

Appendix 15 – Geography – Tom Misch stream evidence

1	Moonlight Conor Albert, Mac Ayres	5,735,587
2	Stuck In The Middle Conor Albert, ELSAS	812,779
3	Crescent Moon James Smith, Conor Albert	6,437,368
4	I Think You Should Know Maya Delilah, Conor Albert	2,184,672
5	Keep Your Faith Conor Albert	373,548
6	Dealbreaker Conor Albert, Quinn Oulton, Lily Agnes	175,744
7	Sunflower Conor Albert, Max Pope	1,139,822
8	piano joint Conor Albert	904,444
1	Moonlight - Live at The Pool Conor Albert	134,789
2	Crescent Moon - Live at The Pool Conor Albert, James Smith	50,081
3	Stuck In The Middle - Live at The Pool Conor Albert, ELSAS	25,208
4	pool jam - Live at The Pool Conor Albert	52,979

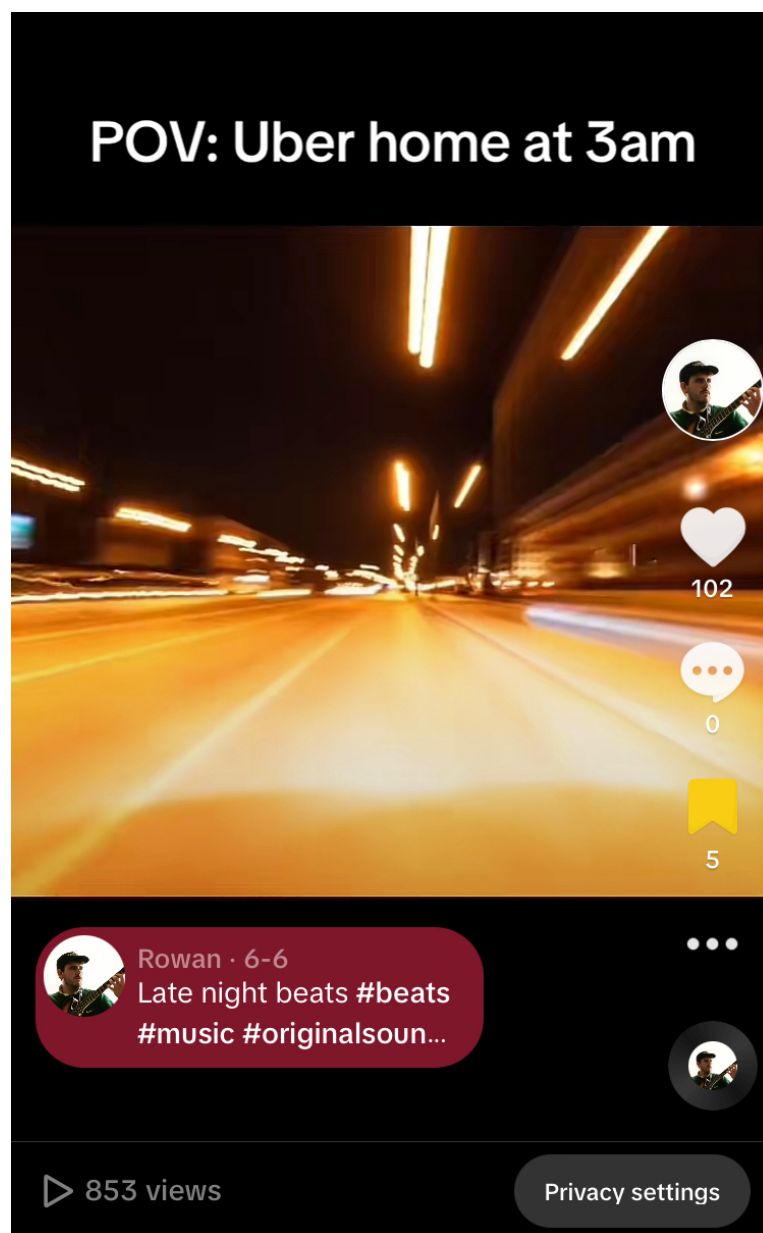
Appendix 16 – Collage 2 – Conor Albert stream evidence

1	Get You (feat. Kali Uchis) Daniel Caesar, Kali Uchis	779,481,604
2	Best Part (feat. H.E.R.)  Daniel Caesar, H.E.R.	1,065,018,141
3	Hold Me Down Daniel Caesar	115,197,977
4	Neu Roses (Transgressor's Song)  Daniel Caesar	35,560,759
5	Loose Daniel Caesar	76,179,629
6	We Find Love Daniel Caesar	153,584,195
7	Blessed Daniel Caesar	122,781,489
8	Take Me Away (feat. Syd)  Daniel Caesar, Syd	61,832,598
9	Transform (feat. Charlotte Day Wilson) Daniel Caesar, Charlotte Day Wilson	42,639,575
10	Freudian  Daniel Caesar	28,918,510

Appendix 17 – Freudian – Daniel Caesar stream evidence



Appendix 18 – Album cover '25 2 12', inspired by the time on the clock in the photo background that has been removed



Appendix 19 – TikTok 'slowed and reverbed' version of 'HELLO'

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