



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David



MA COMMERCIAL PRODUCER

CREATION

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SIMONE RECA

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To close my academic experience at Tileyard I intend to bring to your attention a project I have been working on non stop since November 2020, towards which I dedicated a big part of my energy, creativity, thoughts and time.

I haven't come up with a name for the project yet, but I'm talking about a new London based collective formed by three producers and multi instrumentalists, six singers and rappers, one photographer, two video-makers and a graphic designer, plus occasional collaborations with south-east London based artists, designers, videomakers, DJs, stylists of different gender, nationality, background and age.

Not only I will submit a full length album, but ultimately my goal is to present you in the best way that I can, a DIY project ready to go commercial and to fearlessly (but still humbly) enter the mainstream music industry.

In this proposal, I will be mainly focusing on myself through various self assessments, and I will briefly talk you through how I came up with the idea of forming a superband, focusing on how working in a collective has affected my personal growth during the past year and how I'm using this experience to improve myself.

Finally the dissertation that I will be handing in at the end of July will briefly recap my personal growth over the course of these two months and then focus on the collective, diving deeper into its development through researches, studies, business plans, branding proposals etc.

Currently it feels like I am managing two different entities at the same time whom are myself and the collective, and the fact that this assessment is kind of divided into two parts allows me to take this as an opportunity to write in this essay about the project from my point of view in the first submission, in a more personal and perhaps prosaic way, focusing on my perspective, my plans and swot, personal growth, and finally then talking about the same things but from the collective's point of view, under some more elaborate and analytic lenses.

For the sake of the exam, I will be referring to the collective as “LHC” (Lonely Hearts Club), which was the first name idea we came up with as a tribute to the most influential band of all time in my opinion, The Beatles.

During Summer 2020 I was lucky enough to be able to go back to Italy where Covid regulations were eased, which allowed me to travel up and down “Il bel Paese”.

Since I have many friends scattered around the peninsula it was quite easy and cheap to travel around to visit them, and for every destination I would schedule some sessions with songwriters, producers and musicians that I knew but I never had a chance to share the creative process with, yet. I only started writing songs in 2019 and at the time I wasn't much into production, so walking into the sessions was a bit intimidating and at times I wasn't sure whether I would have been up for the challenge.

Once I started getting into these sessions I realised how quickly I was improving and therefore how important it is to work with new people and musicians that come from a different background and have a different skills set than yours, turning point for the way I approach making music today. Being under the bull's eye-light and having to come up with something on the moment due to the time restrictions of the sessions brought me to contemplate music and the workflow with a more focused and perhaps thoughtful approach and state of mind.

Having restrictions on time and gear definitely pushed me to being more productive and efficient, while working with different people taught me to find a good and balanced workflow which would work in any kind of occasions but also to shape the session based on who I was writing with, thanks to a different set of skills of mine such as writing songs on a guitar, making beats, synths jam etc.

Once back in London I was very excited about starting my academic journey at Tileyard and especially looking forward to meet new people and collaborate.

With much more confidence on my shoulders after spending the first lockdown and part of the summer diving deeper into music production and songwriting, I started a few collaborations with some amazing people that still go on today.

Being surrounded by many musicians that I respected and admired for their potential and their skills, I started feeding this idea of a supergroup formed by my closest friends, which then became an ever bigger family.

I was realising that “by bashing heads together you can create a product you wouldn’t be able to do yourself” (Bell, J. 2019), and at that/this moment (possibly the start of my actual professional career) I believe that by working alone I wouldn’t be growing as fast as I am now, and I wouldn’t be able to improve on so many different aspects and levels, which, at the moment, is my main focus while working hard and especially trying to work smart.

As Dylan Grosz brilliantly explains in his article about BROCKHAMPTON for the Stanford Daily “The 15 creative members of BROCKHAMPTON constantly work off each other, seamlessly integrating each of their strengths into a solidly connected discography” (2017).

Odd Future, A\$AP Mob, BROCKHAMPTON, NiNE8, to name a few, we didn’t start a collective because we thought it sounded cool but because at this moment it felt right and natural.

Especially during Covid, when getting together has become such a difficult and extraordinary event, the need and feel of closure is stronger and more prominent than ever.

On the other hand, as much as I enjoy being part of the collective, I cannot rely only and completely on that, I need a backup plan and even if it might sound a bit pretentious at the moment, that backup plan is me.

I don't know yet if my friends are going deeper into this as I am, and I must be sure that whatever happens, I am improving everyday and working on my skillset and mindset constantly, in order to get better at everything that I'm doing.

Eventually, if things go south "Their first act as a brash collective of adolescents eventually gave way to a second act as mature solo artists" (Younger, B. 2018).

I am always questioning my choices and always looking for ways to improve, and being surrounded by talented artists that I believe in is just an amazing opportunity to being in touch with different workflows and personalities which if put to scrutiny and under the lenses as much as I do with myself, gives me an even bigger room of improvement as I'm learning different things from different people which otherwise would have take me way more time to figure out myself.

The first ever session happened in the living room of my house around October 2020: we wrote our first ever songs together called "Jimmy Fallon", "dirk diggler" that you will be able to find and listen to in their demo version through the private Soundcloud link in the appendix (Figure A) and "mi\$\$uncertainty", which we didn't think it was good enough to make it into the album.

Giulia, one of the songwriters I work with on a regular basis, was spending a few days in my house at the time so we could work on her stuff together and while she was working on her album she heard us jamming and writing music, she tagged along and eventually ended up joining the project. Everything up to that point happened in my living room and it's all about "who catches the vibe right there and right then" (Jenkins, C. 2018).

There would be people in the room jumping on the mic as soon as the beat hit, recording mumbled melodies. Some other would be smoking on the sofa writing bars waiting for their moment to stand

up to the mic, while others would be outside the living room writing something else or just chilling, but everyone of us is important and fundamental in that moment as that's what creates the vibe.

Since the first session we got together to write a few times, and by the end of January we had a collection of 16 songs demos plus another 10+ beats and ideas in store.

At that point I made a selection based on what I thought were the strongest songs that we had and those that would work together as an LP/EP and came up with the tracklist for an album made of 10 songs, which I then sent to all the members.

Working on an album, has been so far one of the hardest and most exciting things I've ever done. Especially because I am the person that is involved the most as I am usually the producer in control of the sessions, I played and then recorded all the instrumentals (bass, guitars, synths) in the studio, I sing/rap in every song and I'm making schedules, booking studios, and just genuinely spending my free time on the project however I can, whether is thinking about names, going through everyone's lyrics or planning the next moves.

I have never been in such a lead position in my music career but I really think I am ready, each day I'm going deeper into what I'm doing, and I think there's a good balance between keeping the vibe and not overthinking things, and making actual pondered decisions that comes from hours of brainstorming or solo deep thinking.

At the end of January I made a timeline (figure B) going from February to July, which is when I'm aiming to have the album done by.

So far we are on track with the timeline that I made, it's the first week of May and we started tracking singers a couple weeks ago, perfectly on schedule.

March was definitely the most challenging month so far as I also had to hand in all the uni exams, luckily thought it didn't slow down the plans I made and I managed to get most of the productions and lyrics done.

Most of us work full time in hospitality so the next big challenge will be to keep the work consistent and to not fall behind schedule, even though we will be all back to our regular jobs in the next few days.

The whole overwhelming situation is then amplified by the fact that we're dealing with everything our own, cutting the costs to as low as possible if not zero.

All the sessions happened in my house, then we recorded all the instrumentals in between a few Studios in London such as Tileyard Studios, Abbey Roads Studios, Damon Albarn's Studio 13 completely for free and averaging two 8 hours studio sessions per week in the past few months, which allowed us to a huge step up in the quality of recordings as we had access to lots of fabulous and expensive gear.

I developed two personal SWOT analysis (figure C) for myself, one based on my overall strengths and weaknesses related to a technical aspect of things, and one to a more "theoretical" side, perhaps more connected to the collective.

The strengths marked by " ^ " are the ones that I mostly developed this year and that are more linked to working in a collective, while the weaknesses followed by "+" or "++" are the skills that I'm focused on improving at the moment.

In the past few months I've been asking feedbacks from both from musicians and artists and from average listeners and music passionates, and I was able to determine that at the moment the collective's biggest strength is the vibe that it creates, so I'm trying not to loose that while recording new vocals or finalising the productions.

We are still childish and immature under certain aspects such as lyrical content, arrangements or more in general songwriting, but I believe that these ten songs are connected and coherent and that after the last big touches we will be able to bring an exciting new project on the table, with a lot of potential and room of improvement, and as long as we keep improving personally and collectively I really believe in LHC and I can see this project getting more mature and further developing its style, perhaps becoming something more than just a vibe.

Even though the main focus at the moment is getting the music done, we started a Pinterest profile where we're saving and pinning content to use as reference and as ideas of aesthetics for photoshoots, logos, visuals, posters etc on a daily basis.

In the appendix you will find three photoshoots (Figure D, Figure E and Figure F) and three posters (Figure G, Figure H and Figure I) which approximately summarises our vision of the aesthetic that we want from the project.

These next couple of months will be fundamental for the success of the project and we will need to keep staying focused and work smart, as the number of hours available for us to spend working on the project will be cut due to the resuming of our old jobs in the hospitality.

I'm very looking forward to submit a more elaborate essay based on the collective's point of view and to finally being able to have finished product to start pitching to labels, managements and PRs.

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3. Younger, B. (2018). "Found family: how Odd Future changed everything", *Pitchfork*. Available at <https://pitchfork.com/thepitch/found-family-how-odd-future-changed-everything/>
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APPENDIX:

Figure A. <https://soundcloud.com/user-633552677/sets/album-x-harry/s-UCpxg2WtFeO>

Figure B. Timeline

MONTHS - - - - >	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY
Week1	electric gtrs rec +prod + exams	Lyrics review + dictation + singers rehearsals	2 singers tracking + comping	Mixing + brainstorming + photoshoot	Mixing
Week2	Drums rec + Prod + exams	Singers rehearsals + comping	Adlibs + comping	Mixing + brainstorming + photoshoot	Mixing
Week3	drums rec + lyrics + comping + exams	2 singers tracking + comping	Prod + brainstorming	mixing + brainstorming + photoshoot	Music video + mastering
Week4	Lyrics + comping + exams	2 singers tracking + comping	Prod + brainstorming + photoshoot	Mixing	Music video + mastering

Figure C. SWOT

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
-Propositive -Not afraid of trying/don't hold back due to intimidation -Experimenting -Leadership -Often self evaluating (focus on improving) ^ -Able to see the bigger picture ^ -Able to compromise ^ -Trust (necessary when working with other people)^ -Hype Man ^ -Communication ^ -Willpower -Competitive -Determinate TECHNICAL: -Multi instrumentalist -Coming up with instrumental hooks and leads -Toplines	-Quick tempered -Stubborn -Get distracted easily -Mood swings -Too straight about things (If I think something isn't good I won't sugarcoat it) -Procrastinator -Organization TECHNICAL: -Run a studio session + -Production ++ -Mixing -Rapping ++ -Lyrics ++
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

- London
- Tileyard
- Working with signed artists
- In touch with Kevin Abstract

- London
- Full Time bartending job
- Achille's tendon injury
- Overload
- Covid
- Money



FIGURE D. ODD FUTURE PHOTOSHOOT



FIGURE E. PHOTOSHOOT INSIDE MY HOUSE/STUDIO/LIVING ROOM - PARTIES - SLEEPOVERS -



FIGURE F. PHOTOSHOOT LONDON COUNCIL HOUSES - LEWISHAM/SOUTH EAST



FIGURE G. POSTER



FIGURE H. POSTER



FIGURE I. POSTER 2

