



CREATION ELEMENT C2b

Reflective Commentary

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List of Collaborators

Acknowledgements

To all the people who helped putting this project together, I wholeheartedly thank you.

Without your collaboration and cooperation this project would have faltered.

You are all very talented musicians and artists, and it has been a true pleasure working with you all.

Peace love and infinite blessing ALWAYS.

Track list and order

Track 1 – Intro [‘Cruisin’] by Xtof Jennings (*Written & Produced by Christof Jennings*)

Track 2 – Excuse Me by Zara Sykes ft Xtof (*Written by Zara Sykes and Christof Jennings – Produced by Xtof*)

Track 3 – Interlude [‘Protecting my peace’]

Track 4 – All Your Lovin’ by Nigel Hinds (*Written By Nigel Hinds and Christof Jennings – produced by Xtof*)

Track 5 – Interlude [‘Resting Bitch Face’]

Track 6 - Slow Down by Sol Morgan (*Written by Sol Morgan – produced by Xtof*)

Track 7 – Interlude [‘Thievery’]

Track 8 – Sex Appeal by Sol Morgan Ft Ethos The Rapper – (*Written by Sol Morgan & Ethos the Rapper – produced by Xtof*)

Track 9 – Interlude [‘Holy Ghost’]

Track 10 – So Obvious by Carlene Lawrence (*Written by Carlene Lawrence – produced by Xtof*)

Track 11 – Interlude [‘Sugar Intro’]

Track 12 – Sugar by Xtof Jennings (*Written by Christof Jennings – produced by Xtof*)

Track 13 – Interlude [‘Energy Leaches’]

Track 14 – Brighter Days by Carlene Lawrence (*Written by Carlene Lawrence, Saskhia Menendez & Christof Jennings – produced by Xtof*)

Track 15 - Outro

Musicians

Ben Bartlett – Lead & Rhythm guitar

Chris Russell – Drums, Bass & Keys

Xtof – Keys, production & MD

Donmeile Montel – Bass

Steve Philips - Bass

1. Introduction

The premise of this project was to create an eight-track album with several artists and musicians from Birmingham and London. Several factors influenced the genre and feel of the album, the lead ones being age and music my age range resonates with.

As a child of the '90s, I grew up listening to the music coming out of Bad Boy Records, So-So Def, LA Face, Def Jam, and a variety of soul R&B and Hip Hop, so the notion to create something reminiscent of 90's R&B/Hip Hop with influences from the contemporary music in the charts today was something I and the group of collaborators were attracted towards.

In this commentary, I will discuss the research that was carried out concerning the many reference tracks, producers, artists, and songwriters and how they did it in comparison with how we did it.

I will gather, interpret and analyze a range of primary and secondary sources to help with understanding how the whole 'Hit-Maker' process is done by others in the industry, which can then be synthesized and scaled down to suit this project.

Along with the analysis of the Hit Makers and writing camps, critical reflection on the development of the project and how it fits with today's commercial music industry will also be deliberated.

There were many aspects of the project to organize, Initially, the idea to invite Chris (*Keys Bass and Drums*) in for weekly writing sessions with the writers and artists was explored, however, did not pan out as most of the writers and singers have day jobs so there had to be careful planning.

When reading "The Song Machine – *Inside the hit Factory*" by John Seabrook. The book recounts the history of the last twenty years of the music industry, the author speaks about Denniz PoP who owned Cheiron Studios in Sweden, along with his protégé Max Martin and the team he assembled who are responsible for hits such as *Quit Playing Game With My*

Heart, As Long As You Love Me and Everybody – The Backstreet Boys, *Hit Me Baby One More Time* – Britney Spears responsible for hits with Katy Perry, NSYNC, Kelly Clarkson, Ace Of Base and a litany of other superstars in the music industry.

Because of this success in the '90s, I was interested in this particular “Hit Factory” and wanted to study their composition and songwriting process, especially because the setup essentially was, writing camps and collaborative efforts among a group.

Other groups mentionable and who I drew a lot of influences from are Bad Boy Records who gave us platinum-selling artists such as *Notorious B.I.G.*, *Cassie*, *Mase*, *Mary J Blige*, *Faith Evans*, and so many more.

There is also Eliot Kennedy’s Songwriting Camps at Sheffield Steelwork Studios which proved very successful for Kennedy, achieving hits with *Gary Barlow*, *Boyzone*, *Aretha Franklin*, *Mary J Blige* to name a few.

For this project, I borrowed a few techniques from an array of sources including my own experiences with writing camps to allow for this project to be completed in the time allotted. With only two and a half months to accomplish this task, it was “pedal to the metal” with organization and planning.

2. Plan Revisited

With eleven people whose schedules were all pretty busy along with the ease of lockdown restrictions, the original plan had to be revised.

It was decided by the musicians that Wednesdays would be the best day for them to come into the home studio to track songs.

For the writers/artists, the days varied so no set schedule could be adhered to, instead, we took it week by week where I would contact everyone on a Sunday to find out which days, they were available.

This way of working had its drawbacks in terms of the vibe and groove of the tracks.

The initial notion was to get everybody's input, to bounce ideas off each other, and really vibe with one another in one room simultaneously, similar to Denniz PoP and Max Martin at their Cheiron Studios in Sweden. According to John Seabrook in his book 'The Song Machine – Behind the hit factory',

“BY 1995, DENNIZ HAD recruited a number of young Swedish writers and producers to the Cheiron hit-making team. They included Kristian “Krille” Lundin, who had taught himself how to be a producer by reverse-engineering songs he liked. He joined the rest of the core group: Andreas Carlsson, Herbie Crichtlow, Jake Schultz, David Kreuger, Per Magnusson, Jörgen Elofsson, John Amatiello, and Martin Sandberg. A strong part of Denniz's vision for the studio was that songwriting should be a collaborative effort; no one was supposed to be proprietary about his work”.

(Seabrook, 2015).

This concept was revised because on the first week of our session the guitarist could not make it, along with a personal hygiene issue with the bassist. My living room is only a small space, because of the strong body odour emanating from him, this placed a dampener on the session, *(So emphatic was the stench, the drummer requested not to be in session with him at the same time.)* this, and the fact his *(The Bassist)* departure was early, and I was his transport, the session ended early with little work being accomplished.

To avoid this type of time-wasting in the future, it was decided on separate sessions, two hours for the bassist and the same for the drummer, the guitarist would come in the following day to add to the compositions. *(A full timetable is available in the appendix).*

3. Composition

The composition phase began with my having discussions with the artists about their favourite 90's era track, we would usually sit and talk for about two hours or so bringing up

YouTube videos, iTunes, and Spotify playlists to get a feel of what that particular artist wanted from their track.

After I received the information, I would usually like to have some time on my own to have a deeper listen to their reference tracks studying the instrumentation and feel, I then searched for samples. As there was limited money for this project, I made do with the sample libraries I already have as buying new packs would have been too expensive.

In a Zoom interview, the legendary production duo Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis imparted to the interviewer Raymond Ang the following.

“Mr Jam: Our philosophy always was to make each artist sound like their best self. That meant, for instance, on the song by singer Babyface, we used a Rhodes piano because we associate it with the Babyface sound. Mariah [Carey] always loves the synthesizer stuff that I do. So we use the Oberheim OB-8 bass and the Roland TR-808 drum machine for the drums. Each artist has their own signature, so we try to bring in the ingredients specifically for them.” (Ang, Jam, and Lewis, 2021)

Analysing the way Jam and Lewis like to work, it's clear the artists they collaborate with, have an established sound that they are affiliated with from previous works e.g., they mention Baby Face being associated with the ‘Rhodes’ sound and Mariah Carey from previous works liking their ‘synthesizer’ stuff. This reveals from the prior works and interactions, Jam and Lewis had a ‘Blueprint’ of sounds and instrumentation they call upon when compiling their recent self-titled record ‘Jam and Lewis – Volume I’. This features countless superstars such as Boyz II Men, Toni Braxton, The Roots, Mary J Blige, Baby Face and Mariah Carey and much more.

I can agree with the statement, *“Each artist has their own signature, so try to bring the ingredients specifically for them”*, However, the artists I am collaborating with on this project

aren't established like your Baby Face and a Mariah and have not necessarily established a sound of their own as yet.

This opens the project up for experimentation and exploring the likes and dislikes of these particular artists.

For Zara Sykes who co-wrote 'Excuse Me', when speaking about her favourite tracks, she had a very strong reaction to Zapp and Roger 'Computer Love', she distinctly wanted the sound of the Talkbox within her track.

This proved opportune because I had recently purchased an MXR Talkbox which I was excited to finally use.

Figure 1 MXR M222 Talk Box



For other tracks where the opportunity to sit and chat with the artists in the studio did not arise, I left it up to creation, doing a lot of experimentation in genres I'm not so used to like reggae and funk.

With regards to the reggae tracks, this was a real struggle because I was unsure of whether it would fit the ethos of the whole album, I wanted everything to sound concise and was afraid that

1. My terrible rhythm would affect the groove of the whole thing. (*I'm always a bit embarrassed that as someone who grew up in Jamaica from the ages between 3 – 8 yrs old, I have lost the 'riddim' and feel*), so I always shy away from reggae music.
2. That I would not be able to find a rapper that sounds similar to Sean 'Da' Paul.

When speaking with Sol, the reference track he resonated with was the Beyoncé Ft Sean Paul -*Baby Boy*. We decided we would give it a try and if it doesn't work at least, we ventured it. Although this track isn't 90's (*The Beyonce ft Sean Paul – Baby Boy was released in 2003*), as a group the writers and I decided to expand the range of era because there also was some great music in the 2000s and indeed the 80's.

The tracks were composed in midi using Logic Pro X, then sent to the musicians three days before the set tracking date. When all the instrumentation was recorded, a rough copy was sent to the artists for their approval and to start the writing process.

There was always back and forth with the artists and musicians where compromises and changes, rectifications and adjudication were always much at play. Eventually, we all agreed on the structures, instrumentation and feel, at that point the writers/artists and I would plan out dates for them to come in for a writing session aka the '*writing camps*'.

4. The Writing Camps

There were several camps researched for this project.

- The PRS Amsterdam Song Writing Camp

This camp started a few years ago, where the opportunity for producers and toplineers to attend dance music camp with PRS for Music and Sony/ATV Music Publishing was established.

According to their website, “*PRS for Music actively engages with its members in a variety of ways to help them further their careers and expand their creativity. Songwriting camps not only serve as a platform for new hits to be written but encourage new creative relationships to continue and develop into the future.*” (Pavlou, 2019)

- The Eliot Kennedy Songwriting Camp at Steelworks Sheffield

In an article found on the ‘Songwritingmagazine.co.uk’ website, Aaron Slater chronicles in detail the three days writing camps he attended at ‘EKSA’ describing it as

“a golden opportunity to dive into the working environment of a professional pop songwriting team.

The three-day EKSA Songwriting Camp comes with a reasonable price tag of £495, but for a budding songsmith, the first-hand experience, one-to-one guidance and advice from a Grammy, Golden Globe and Ivor Novella Award-winning songwriter, is absolutely priceless.” (Slater, 2014)

There were also the American writing camps, particularly the ones run by L. A Reid for the creation of Rihanna’s records including what was describes by John Seabrook as “*The mother of all song camps*” for her ‘Rated R’ album where in attendance was Ne-yo, Stargate (*the production duo*), The-Dream, and a host of songwriters and hitmakers.

As well as analyzing these camps and the varying processes each camp delivers to achieve their smash hits, I also have experience attending both international and domestic songwriting camps, affording a wide range of knowledge from which to draw in respect to this project.

What was observed from all the scrutinized camps, was atmosphere is one of the main priorities when hosting creatives.

In the Rihanna song camp, they were embargoed out to Los Angeles with paid for flight, board and food (*Some swanky studios, hotels and restaurants*) for two weeks with Rihanna in attendance.

In resemblance to the PRS Amsterdam songwriting camp where it's a three-day trip with paid for board and food, and tickets to one of Europe's most significant music conventions the Amsterdam Dance Event [ADE]. (*Some people have to pay for their flight depending on status*) The difference with this one however is that there are more briefs e.g., participants may be composing a track for 'Love Island' or any commercial dance and electro tracks that Sony/ATV can exploit for synchronization.

The theme, however, is "*No worries or stress for the creatives*".

From my own experiences I can also attest to this being a top priority, with my trip to Marrakech in 2019 with Tileyard, we were also treated quite nicely for our week on the songwriting camp, along with boarding, some very tasty Moroccan dishes were served three times per day and a small amount of alcohol was provided.

Another elucidation was, that camps can and do come in many forms. Because of the Covid 19 Pandemic, many writing camps were moved to an online format where writers, producers and engineers such as Jam and Lewis made use of technology e.g., Audio Movers, Zoom, facetime, we transfer, and other online platforms.

This includes the camps arranged by Tileyard Education where I was in attendance.

For this project the writing camps were small, the most in attendance were three at a time regardless, we came up with some solid ideas, some that work very well and others who need more refinement which will be discussed later.

[*A breakdown of the writing camp schedule can be found in the appendix.*]

5. The Production/Engineering Process

All tracks were created by using a Kontakt ‘Komplete Kontrol’ midi controller utilizing sample kits and instruments. These were then overdubbed by the musicians in individual recording sessions.

In this section, I will mention some of the more creative aspects when producing this project.

5a. Excuse Me and Intro

Vox Box experiment

The reference track for this is Zapp and Roger ‘[Computer Love](#)’. (Troutman and Troutman, 1985)

This track features the Vox Box which is used heavily throughout the vocal production.

Learning the skill of using the vox box came from an ACM tutor I once had some experience with, in a previous writing camp. Producer and songwriter Brian F Henry in his [YouTube video tutorial](#), (The soul Workshop, 2020) gave a much-needed lesson on mouth placement techniques and enunciation.

Using the Roland Juno Di 61 key synthesizer [*routing the output from the Juno to the input of the Vox Box*], then mouthing into the SE2200 cc microphone [*routed through an Apollo Twin MK II interface*], I was able to pick up at least some sound, through practice and countless takes we were able to capture the sound I was looking for.

[*On a side note – initially, I tried to simultaneously play the keyboard and record the vox box into Logic, this had its consequence because, concentration on three things in the forefront that is, playing correct notes on the keys without looking, keep the pipe in your mouth and recording/engineering proved cumbersome*]. The results were very loud “mouth noise” from the vox box pipe because of being too close to the mic. Hence the difference in recording quality between the Vox box on the ‘Intro – Cruisin’ and the one on ‘Excuse Me’. For the latter, I

recruited Chris a musician on the project to play the melody on the keyboard whilst I just record, a much simpler process.

In the Drums section, I recorded some audible ahhs to act as a ‘decay’ of sorts to accompany the snare hits on the four. This adds excitement and a bit more width to what would have been a mono snare hit.

Slow Down

We wanted a rapper who sounded like Sean Paul, alas, we didn’t find one.

Instead, using the Neve 1073 preamp and the low pass shelf, I ducked the high end removing around 6k and above, so we’d get a real muffled sound. Sol (*The vocalist*) did his best Shaggy impersonation which I then recorded. After which, a series of plugins and effects were added to achieve the gritty, distressed sound. (*See figures 2 – 10*).

Figure 2



(Slow down Vox FX Chain)

Figure 3



(IK Multimedia – T-Racks 5 De Esser focused on sibilancies in the 7-13KHz frequency band)

Figure 4



(Soundtoys – Little Micro shift used for a little spread of the vocal effect channel)

Figure 5



(Soundtoys – Decapitator used for distortion on the vocal effects channel)

Figure 6



(Soundtoys – Little Alter boy used for pitching the vocal down one octave)

Figure 7



(Fab Filter – Pro Q 3 dynamic EQ used for ducking illustrated frequencies from the overall tone)

Figure 8



(IK Multimedia – compressor which emulates the Teletronix LA2A)

6. Tracking the musicians

6a. Drums

Recording the drum parts was a big conversation between Chris and me. Ideally, I would have loved for the whole project to be recorded live in a studio environment, alas, numerous obstacles impeded our plans.

- Covid restrictions – *At the start of the project, the studios at Tileyard would only permit two or three musicians in a room, this project has eleven people, most of whom lived in Birmingham and the West Midlands.*
- Budget – *The costs of hiring out local studios for the number of days we needed. (Because all studios were also following government guidelines of two people per room, more time needed to be allocated, costing more money in the long run.*
- Equipment – *With only a home studio setup, that is, one mic, three input interfaces and not a lot of space.*

In this ‘Sound on Sound’ article titled *Man vs Drum Machine* David Greeves sets out on his experiment to compare different drum recording techniques such as ‘Live Studio recording’, ‘Remote session’ and ‘Software Drums’. His session drummer of choice for this experiment Alex Reeves has many years of experience in the industry, playing for the likes of Dizzee Rascal, The BBC Symphony Orchestra, chasing status, both his CV and knowledge is impressive.

One of his findings was “*If you would ideally like to be working with live musicians in the same room at the same time, it seems that remote session recording is no more the perfect solution than programming.*” (Greeves, 2015)

To dig deeper, I contrasted the notions of Greeves with that of Tim Critch. In his book “Recording Tips for Engineers” he presents the reader with an in-depth guide to recording drums. One of his suggestions was, “*If recording real drums is not possible, at least record a*

live high hat with programmed drums. Live percussion will help a lifeless electronic drum track, because no drummer is exact or perfect and these slight deviations in timing are what gives music its groove.” (Crich, 2010)

To resolve some of our issues, it was decided we would work in a live setting “*Being in the same space at the same time*”, also I would programme the drums in ‘Logic’ using various sample packs with Native Instruments’ *Battery ala Tim Crich*. Then Chris (Drummer) would add Hats, cymbals, and toms, using his ‘Roland SPD 5X sampler percussion pad’.

In our usual Wednesday sessions, Chris and I tried out a few techniques, the ones we landed on, and which worked for us were.

- DI connection (*enduring the left from the ‘SPD’ was in the left of the ‘Apollo Twin’ and same for the right.*) We discovered that it greatly diminishes the input level if the I/O is incorrectly set up.
- Recording each part separately (*This allowed for greater refinement of the section*). As a result of separating the takes, I had more to work with in terms of editing e.g., we would record a section of toms and Chris would ask to redo it, by keeping the takes as opposed to deleting them, in editing I had more options. Also, by the time we got to the third take Chris would have the part locked and would deliver perfectly.
- Stereo Toms (*This allowed for the panning of the toms to come straight from the drum machine rather than panning them manually in ‘Logic’*). The benefit of this was time.
- Easier to mix (*Because everything was on separate channels and panned from a drummer’s perspective, it was a lot easier to mix and blend the added drum tracks with my existing software instruments.*)

6b. Bass & Guitar

The Bass and guitar were recorded in the same fashion.

The Universal Audio *'Apollo Twin MK II'* has its built-in DI, all the musicians needed to do is plug in and play.

Later in the mixing process, I would then either use and modify some of the pre-sets provided by Native Instruments' *'Guitar Rig'* or depending on the sound leave dry with some added EQ and compression.

The downside to this technique is that I miss out on the sound and tone of a real amp.

According to Tim Crich *"A close microphone with a direct box is a common method for recording an electric instrument and the standard method to record bass guitar. Record the signal from the direct box and the microphone on separate tracks for more control over the best combination of good tone and tight low end. Check for phase issues between the microphone and the direct signal."* (Crich, 2010)

We made compromises because of convenience, I don't own a bass or electric guitar cab and procuring some for the project was not in the budget, unfortunately.

7. Mixing Techniques

A variety of mixing techniques were used on this project, the three I will focus on in this paper was used quite frequently throughout the project.

- **7a. *"Use a pink- or white-noise generator to help with the snare sound"***

Three sources, all with twenty years and more experience as session engineers and producers, three have achieved great success in the music industry and have accumulated assorted awards.

Rick Snoman in his book, *'The Dance Music Manual, Toys and Techniques'*, states, *"Fundamentally, they allow you to insert an audio signal in the key input that can then be used to control the action of the gate, which in turn affects the audio travelling through the noise gate's normal inputs"* (Snoman, 2004)

Tim Crich simplifies the language by just simply stating “*Run the white noise through the noise gate and trigger it off of the snare drum. The gate opens then closes with the snare, adding fullness to the snare sound.*” (Crich, 2010)

When applying this technique to the snares, claps, or rims, it was discovered that “one size doesn’t necessarily fit all” meaning, some adjustments were made to suit the track and what that particular snare needed. Some required the gate attack/release time to act slower or faster. An EQ with a roll of at around 8/9k was also added to the ‘Gate/Noise’ chain to soften the edges and blend with the existing sample.

Figure 9



(Logic Pro X stock signal generator set to 'Pink Noise')

Figure 10



(Waves C1 Gate set to fast-acting attack/release times)

Figure 11



(Snare/Clap signal generator and noise gate chain without EQ)

It is mentionable that Rick, according to his bio, is an iTunes certified mastering engineer with thirty years of experience working both in private and commercial studios worldwide. Specialising in electronic dance music, he has remixed numerous artists under various pseudonyms and released music under names such as Phiadra, Aeon Soul and Red5. Highlighting is wealth and depth of knowledge in the subject.

The same can be said regarding Tim Crich, who according to his bio has more than twenty-five years of experience in the recording studio, and has collaborated/engineered on records by Bob Dylan, Cher, Bon Jovi, Billy Joel, the Rolling Stones, David Bowie, Ozzy, John Lennon, and a wealth of others. Tim has engineered for some of the world's biggest producers and is the author of the *Assistant Engineers Handbook*.

- **7b. Parallel Compression**

There were many trials and errors when using this technique, on reflection, having learned the “*correct or standard*” practice, which according to Tony Maserati (Grammy award-winning mix engineer), Scott Wiggins (The Recording Solution) and many others, is a process of:

1. sending the desired track to its own AUX channel.
2. Ensuring the routing is set to pre-fader, on the aux channel add the compressor set to very slow attack and fast release with a high ratio *8:1 and above is suggested*.
3. Slam the signal to smithereens almost limiting with the threshold adjusted for major gain reduction *-20db is suggested -40db even better*.
4. Blend compressed signal with original sample for the desired effect.

Both of these sources [Maserati](#) and [Wiggins](#) have their respective YouTube video tutorials on the subject. (Waves Audio, 2017), (The Recording Solution, 2016).

In my interpretation, the process was a little different. For blending, instead of having the (Parallel compressed) send signal set to unity (0db), I have the AUX channels set to unity (0db), then blended the signal through the pre-fader gain. This is because I didn’t want to slam the compression, I still wanted the effect of brightening the high ends especially on snares and rims, but I didn’t want the thud of 3/4k that happens when using samples as opposed to live kick or snare.

Another variation was the added EQ on top of the AUX track. By placing the EQ before the Compression, I can accentuate certain frequencies within the paralleled track e.g., when placed on a snare, a boost to 2.5K will give more slap in addition, a boost at around 7K will convey sizzle, making for a sharp and punchy snare hit overall.

(Please see figures 12 & 13).

Figure 12



(Fab Filter – Pro Q3, Illustrating the EQ setting for the snare parallel compression for ‘hi’ ‘slap and sizzle’)

Figure 13



(IK Multimedia – White 2A Compressor, Illustration the heavy compression and gain reduction)

Figure 14



*(Fab Filter Pro Q3 – Illustrating the EQ setting for the snare parallel compression to accent ‘lo’ depth n
fatness)*

As a result of the initial ‘high end’ parallel compression, sometimes the snares can sound shiny and too top-end heavy. To counteract this, I added another parallel send this time, concentrating the EQ on the lower frequencies. Boosting 60 – 80Hz gives depth whilst around 250Hz will convey the harmonics adding fatness.

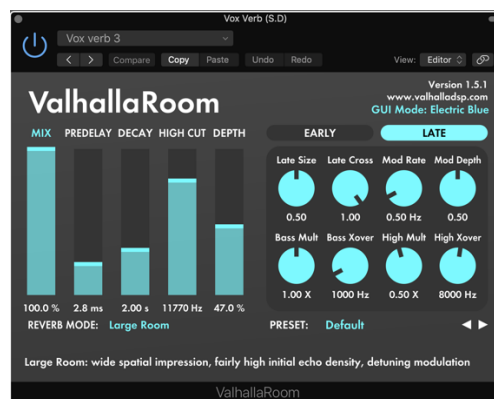
7c. Multiple Vocal Reverb

In a lecture with Ciaran Robinson, one of the mixing tips he imparted was to make use of multiple reverbs on vocal tracks. He explained the technique by demonstrating the use of decay variations e.g., a (*short decay*) time of 2.00s, then a (*Med decay*) time of 4.00s and depending on the vocal you could even add a third verb with a longer decay time.

When cross-referencing this technique, Crish’s book gave much insight into the subject also saying, “*Sometimes two reverbs combine to get one great reverb sound. A short reverb then another longer reverb. A longer reverb with less low end and a longer pre-delay brings out the shorter brighter one.*” (Crich, 2010).

This technique was used on this project furthermore, using the ‘*Abbey Road Reverb Trick*’ by placing an EQ In front of the verb worked well to keep those decays out of the low and high-frequency ranges. The high pass filter is set with a roll-off at around 500Hz on a 48db oct slope, this is then repeated at 600Hz and 700Hz respectively. (*Please see figures 15 – 21*)

Figure 15



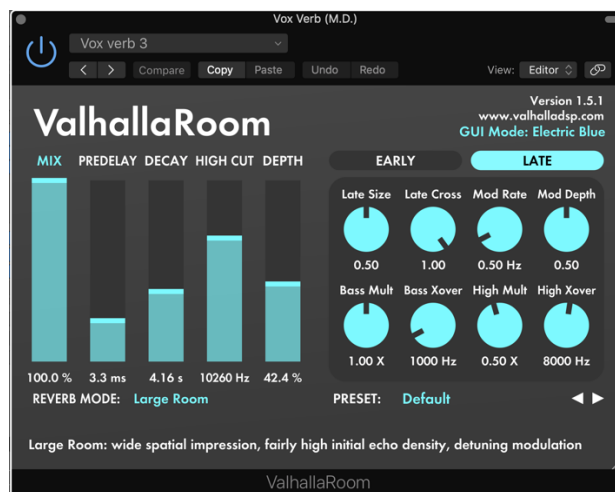
(Valhalla Room Reverb – Short decay setting)

Figure 16



(Reverb Short decay EQ illustrating roll-off at around 500Hz)

Figure 17



(Valhalla Room Reverb Med decay)

Figure 18



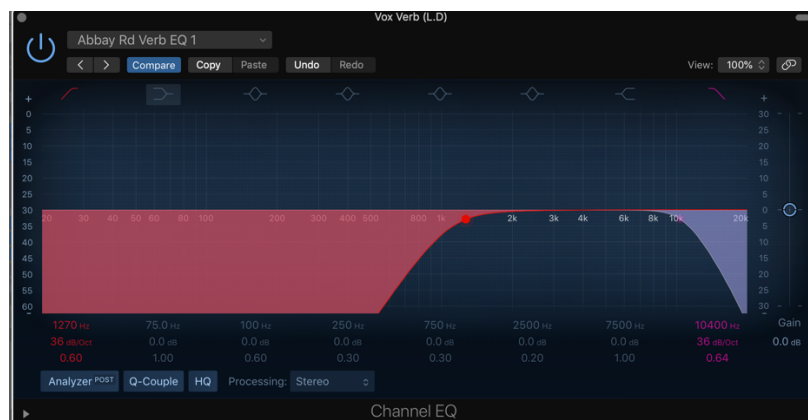
(Reverb med decay EQ Illustration roll off at around 700 – 800 Hz)

Figure 19



(Valhalla Room Reverb Long Decay)

Figure 20



(Reverb Long Decay EQ Illustration Roll-off at around 1K)

8. Commercial Viability

One of the main reasons for developing this project was the understanding that some of the tracks are intended to be pitched for commercial briefs. Gone are the days when you could pitch unmastered demos to record labels and A&R, in today's industry, professionals want to receive a finished product.

For most of the tracks in this portfolio, I am semi-happy with the mix and feel.

When writing '*Excuse Me*' by Zara Sykes, we both felt that it would suit artists such as 'Little Simz', whose track ['Woman'](#) which features 'Cleo Sol' is quite similar in the groove.

The same can be said for '*So Obvious*' by Carlene Lawrence, this particular track is one of my favourites on the album and could easily see an artist like Snoh Alegra taking this to a top position in the Billboard Top 100.

Another is '*Sex Appeal*' by Sol Morgan, with the '90s sound souring back into fashion, this dance vibe would keep the likes of Joel Corey and MNEK in the radio playlists for the whole summer. When compared to their collaboration ['Head and Heart'](#) which dominated the UK charts in 2020, I tried to get a similar vibe to what the two are doing in this track.

9. Further Development

When thinking about my future in the music industry, the end goal is to retire having achieved many awards for mix engineering and music production, I would like to collaborate with a wealth of artists worldwide and accomplished countless smash hits.

To do this, however, will take a lot of time and experience.

Four years ago when I stepped back from singing I developed a five-year plan to change direction, establish new skills and grow those skills into career opportunities.

This started with my enrolling on a Music production degree, four years later and I'm about to finish a Master's degree which wasn't even in the original plan.

Moving forward, for the next five years I would like to further develop my music production prowess and experience.

In the following diagram, I have planned out the next five years and how I will achieve the goals set.

10. Personal Development Plan

Christof Jennings Personal Development plan 2020 - 2025

	Skill	Current ability	Target Ability	Development opportunity	Criteria to judge Success	Time Frame	Evidence
Priority 1	Complete a course in Commercial music production.	Bachelor's Degree from ACM Birmingham and Middlesex Uni (Obtained 2020)	Masters' Degree in Commercial Music Production.	ICMP, BIMM or Tileyard Education have good courses. After researching all three and BCU I decided Tileyard would be the best choice because of writing camps and access to commercial briefs after the course	1 Results/Gra des from assessments . 2 How I utilize pitching opportunities. 3 The amount of knowledge gained. 4 The types of doors this will allow opening.	1 year	1 Is my production including composition, arrangement, and mixes any better from ACM.

				has finished.			
Priori ty 2	Join or establish a Music Production house.	*Production and engineering skills (Level 7) *Songwriting and arrangement *Composition to commercial briefs. *Vocal Toplining/Harm ony. *Writing Lyrics and melodies.	*Master of mixing. <i>(Where I am the go-to guy for clean and polished mixes).</i> *Hitmake r. <i>(With the team of producer s and songwrite rs, amount huge success for song placemen t and chart smashes).</i>	*Session with Sean Hargreaves where he will show me how he approaches his mixes. *Invitation the BHM <i>(Big Help Music)</i> Dutch Van Spall the C.E.O. has kindly invited me down to his studios to show him my work and discuss opportunitie s for work with his artists. * S.L.M.G. <i>(Street Level Music Group)</i> Is a music	1 [S.H.] the improveme nt of my mixes after the session with Sean. 2 [B.H.M] Placement of a track or opportunity to create something with an artist. 3 [S.L.M.G] A positive synergy and workflow amongst us. 4 [S.L.M.G] Placement of tracks we compose together.	[Sean Hargreaves] 0 – 6 months [B.H.M] 0 – 6 Months [S.L.M.G .] 3 – 5 years	[Sean Hargreaves] A working relationshi p where I can call or email for advice. [Dutch Van Spall] A working relationshi p where I can call or email for advice and vice versa. [S.L.M.G.] Monetary – being paid for our work. Growth in the production house and

				production group initiated by Sam Crawford who I met at Tileyard. Together Sam, Steve and I culminated our skillset and is currently working on our business plan and strategy.	5 [S.L.M.G] Radio play and chart positions for our releases.		widening our range of services. A strong bong amongst us enabling longevity.
Priorit y 3	Be eligible and apply for the PRS Hit Maker Fund	4 ‘cuts’ within a year * DT Records – Arrhythmia <i>Fly</i> <i>On The Wall</i> – (Jan 21) *DT Records – Misti <i>S.O.S</i> – (Feb 21) *Beatfreaks – Namywa <i>Coming Together</i> – (May 20)	PRS – “looking for writers and producers with successes in their writing careers and they must have a	1 Writing camp. Being an alumna of ‘TYED’ I am included in the marketing and PR email blasts which will inform me	Building strong working relationship s between publishers such as ‘Juice Music’, ‘Electric Pineapple’, ‘Ninja Tunes’.	1 – 2 years	Tracks being synced to TV and Radio. Have accomplis hed 10 cuts by July 2022.

		*Sony/ATV – Love Island USA <i>Dance</i> Like Shakira (Mar 21)	previous track record.” I want to make 6 – 10 ‘cuts’ within the next 12 months.	when the Tileyard song camps are coming up. 2 The PRS Amsterdam Songwriting Camp The 2021 Camp was cancelled because of the Corona Virus however application is open for the 2022 Camp on Aug 21 so I will apply when opened. 3 Working with the guys from S.L.M.G	Having made the targeted ‘cuts’ in the specified time.		
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				will provide much growth and experience with working as a team in a collaborati ve effort.			
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11. Appendix

11a. S.W.O.T Analysis

S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS			
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITY	THREATS
• Proficient in Logic Pro X, Pro Tools and Studio one.	• Can spend too much time on attention to detail.	• Is able to foresee great opportunities and is willing to play the long game.	• Location, being in an area (Moseley) which is saturated by producers.
• No initial over-heads costs as studio is situated at home.	• Some clients may not want to do a session in my home	• Low over-heads so can invest monies into musicians fees	• Working in close proximity to musicians may cause friction.
• The vast network of musicians willing to give "mates rates".	• Recording Loud Guitar amps can only be done in the daytimes.	• Meetings with Sean Hargreaves, Dutch Van Spall. • Set up SLMG with Sam and Steve	• Studying in London may disrupt the flow of work already established in Birmingham.
• Having already secured a sync placement on "Love Island USA" gives clout and something to add to resume.	• Only One Microphone in Home studio.	• Being on the London music scene will develop contacts list and network.	• No Money to pay the musicians • Falling out with musicians. • Health (Sickle Cell crisis)

11b. E.P.K

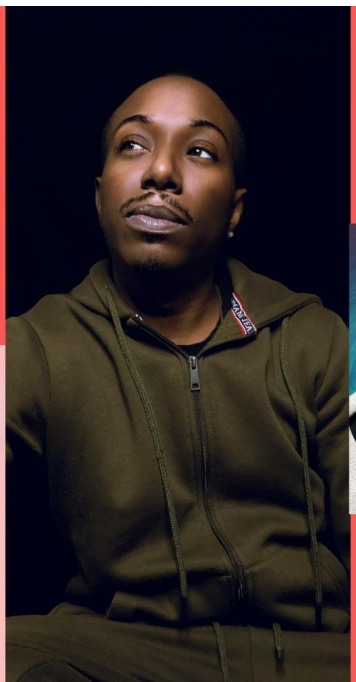
The EPK was created on canva.com, a graphic design website. Unfortunately, I haven't figured out a way to import a PDF into this document which means the clickable links do not work in this document.



Music Style and Influences



Honesty



TRAP



RLB



SOUL MUSIC



Your
sound is
what I
aspire to
achieve...

Xtof Productions



My Story.

Hailing from Birmingham, Christof strated his musical soujourn as a performer. Singing on many stages, opening up for established artists and event organising.

This assisted with his understanding of the local music scene and gave opportunity to build a network of artists and venues to collaborate amidst.

As a commercial Music Producer, Xtof is influenced by, Quincy Jones, Missy Elliott, Timbaland, The Neptunes and aspires to become a great mix engineer following the examples of Toni Messerati and Mike Dean.

I Like Soul music, but understand that Soul, R&B and other genres from the 90's are pretty much dead in terms of Commercial viability, in order to remain relevant I have started experimenting in the mashing up of genres, mixing Soul with Trap, along with genre Bending other styles of music.



The Music



SWEETNESS

El-Emcee Ft Xtof



SEEDED GRAPES

Danielle Jennings



THE END

Teddy Reiss

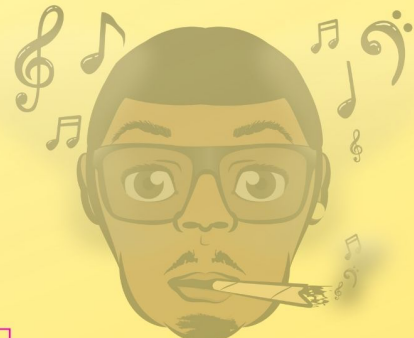


S.O.S

Misti Dior



CONTACT



christofjennings@gmail.com

E
TEL

07412700725

11c. Weekly Schedules

Week 1

Christof Final Project Timetable Notes

DATE	SESSION TYPE	TRACK	NOTES
May	RED = composition/writing YELLOW = Tracking/Recording GREEN = Mixing/Mastering		
Week 1			
Tues 4 th May		Carlene Lawrence T1	For this session we will talk about style, Carlene mentions she wanted a Snoh Alegra type track so we will experiment with some sounds and maybe start writing the lyrics.
Wed 5 th May		Complete Demo of Carlene T1 for musicians	- Work on the Carlene T1. Place drums, keys and bass ideas to send off to the musicians. - Send off demo to the musicians to get them familiarized.
Thurs 6 th May		Writing session with Sol & Marissa	Both Marissa and Sol wanted reggae tracks so in this session we will discuss what type of reggae and I will make a start on the beat whilst they make a start on lyrics and concept.
Fri 7 th May		Complete Demo from Marissa & Sol Session for Musicians	- Work on the reggae beat. Place drum pattern, keys, and bass ideas to send off to musicians. - Send Demo off to the musician.

Week 2

Christof Final Project Timetable Notes

DATE	SESSION TYPE	TRACK	NOTES
May	RED = composition/writing YELLOW = Tracking/Recording GREEN = Mixing/Mastering		
Week 2			
Mon 10 th May	Composition	Zara Sykes Track	Sykes mentioned she really loved the sound of “Computer Love” by Zapp and Rogers. Using this as ref track compose a demo for the musicians to familiarized themselves with.
Tues 11 th May	Tracking	Carlene T1 Sol/Marissa T1	12 – 2pm (Guitar recording session) BJB 2 – 4pm (Drums recording session) Chris R
Wed 12 th May	Tracking	Carlene T1 Sol/Marissa T1	12- 2pm (Bass recording session) Donmeal
Thurs 13 th May	Composition	Sol T2 (slow beat)	Sol has provided a ref track to the kind of beat he would like, having listened to the track it does fit with the theme of this project. - Work on the demo for the musicians to become familiar with structure. - Send off to musicians.

Christof Final Project Timetable Notes

Fri 14 th May	Composition	Christof T1	I really like the sounds from ‘Bad Boy Records’, ‘So So Def’, songs like 112 “Only you” Jagged edge “Lets get Married” I would love to have a go at.
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Week 3

DATE	SESSION TYPE	TRACK	NOTES
May	RED = composition/writing YELLOW = Tracking/Recording GREEN = Mixing/Mastering		
Week 3			
Mon 17 th May	Composition	~~Christof~~ Track	This is a rescheduled session – Compose track for Christof ready for writing session on Thursday 20th
Tues 18 th May	Tracking	Carlene T1 (Sweat) Sol T1 (Slow Down) Sykes' Track	12 – 2pm (Carlene Vocal demo session) Carlene 2 – 4pm (Sol Vox demo session) Sol 5 -7pm (Record Vox Box Part on Sykes' Track) ~~Christof~~
Wed 19 th May	Tracking	Marissa Track Marissa T1	12- 2pm (Bass recording session) ~~Donnielle~~ [Marissa Track] 2 – 4pm (Drums recording session) Chris R
Thurs 20 th May	Composition	Sol T2 (slow beat) ~~Christof~~ (Writing session with ~~Saskhia~~ zoom)	Sol has provided a ref track to the kind of beat he would like, having listened to the track it does fit with the theme of this project. - Work on the demo for the musicians to become familiar with structure. - Send off to musicians.

Christof Final Project Timetable Notes

			~~Christof~~ Writing session with ~~Saskhia~~ Mendes on zoom. Complete the writing so that I can record a demo for the muses.
Fri 21 st May	Composition	Christof T1 Carlene T2	I really like the sounds from 'Bad Boy Records', 'So So Def' <u>songs</u> like 112 "Only you" Jagged edge "<u>Lets</u> get Married" I would love to have a go at. Carlene wants an upbeat track the reference she has provided is...

Week 4

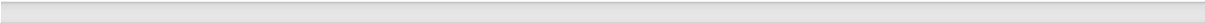
DATE	SESSION TYPE	TRACK	NOTES
May	RED = composition/writing YELLOW = Tracking/Recording GREEN = Mixing/Mastering		
Week 4			
Mon 24 th May	Composition	Carlene Track 2	Continue working on Carlene Track in time for the writing session on ~~thurs~~ 27 th May
Tues 25 th May	Tracking	Carlene T2 (Dance beat) Sol T1 (Slow beat) ~~Xtof~~ Track	12 – 2pm (Carlene Vocal demo session) Carlene 2 – 4pm (Sol Vox demo session) Sol 5 -7pm (Record Vox demo) ~~Xtof~~
Wed 26 th May	Tracking	Sykes' Track Marissa T1	12- 2pm (Bass recording session) ~~Donnielle~~ [Sykes' Track] 2 – 4pm (Drums recording session) Chris R
Thurs 27 th May	Composition	Carlene Writing sessh ~~Xtof~~ (Writing session with Saskhia zoom)	Write & track demo of vox - Work on the demo for the musicians to become familiar with structure. - Send off to musicians.

Christof Final Project Timetable Notes

			~~Xtof~~ Writing session with Saskhia Mendes on zoom. Complete the writing so that I can record a demo for the muses.
Fri 28 th May	Tracking	Christof T1 Sykes Track 1	Track vocal for ~~Xtof~~ track 1 Track Vocal for Sykes' Track 1
Sun 30 th May	Admin Day	~~Xtof~~	- Make schedules for the week ahead - Send out Demo tracks to the muses - Arrange the recording sessions with muses

Week 5

DATE	SESSION TYPE	TRACK	NOTES
June	RED = composition/writing YELLOW = Tracking/Recording GREEN = Mixing/Mastering PURPLE = Editing		
Week 5			
Mon 31 st May	Composition	Nigel Track	Compose a track for Nigel. He has mentioned he wants something up tempo and provided some reference tracks. Start composition ready for Wednesday session
Tues 1 st June	Composition	Xtof track Nigel Track	Write lyrics for the introduction. Continue working on Nigel. Track in time for Wednesday session.
Wed 2 nd June	Tracking	Nigel Track Interlude 1 Interlude 2 Sex appeal	12- 4pm (Bass recording session) ~~Donnielle~~ [All Tracks] 5 – 8pm (Drums recording session) Chris R
Thurs 3 rd June	Tracking	Nigel Track Interlude 1	12pm – 2:30pm (Tracking session with BJB to do Nigel's Track and the Interludes.)



Christof Final Project Timetable Notes

		Interlude 2 Sex appeal	
Fri 4 th June	Tracking	Sykes Track – Excuse me	6pm – 9pm (Track Vocal for Sykes' Track "Excuse Me".)
Sun 6 th June	Admin Day	Xtof	- Make schedules for the week ahead - Send out Demo tracks to the muses - Arrange the recording sessions with muses

Week 6

DATE	SESSION TYPE	TRACK	NOTES
June	RED = composition/writing YELLOW = Tracking/Recording GREEN = Mixing/Mastering PURPLE = Editing		
Week 6	EDITING WEEK		
Mon 7 th June	Editing	Sol Morgan - Sex Appeal	Now that we have Eithos' Rap Stems, I can edit them into the track along with the drums, Bass and guitar. Select the best takes edit and comp takes and prepare the track for mix stage.
Tues 8 th June	Editing	Sykes - Excuse Me	Now that I have all the musicians and all of Sykes vocals along with mine Edit the Guitar, Bass and drums. Select the best takes edit and comp takes and prepare the track for mix stage.
Wed 9 th June	Editing Tracking	Carlene - Sweat Interludes 1 & 2	Now that I have all the musicians and all of Carlene's vocals, Edit the Guitar, Bass and drums. Select the best takes edit and comp takes and prepare the track for mix stage. 2:30pm With Chris R for tracking of the drum parts of Interludes 1 & 2.
Thurs 10 th June	Editing	Sol – Slow Down	Now that I have all the musicians and all of Sol's vocals along with Edit the Guitar, Bass and drums. Select the best takes edit and comp takes and prepare the track for mix stage.

Christof Final Project Timetable Notes

Fri 10 th June	Editing	Marissa - Sugar	Although I do not have all the vocals to this because Marissa is still in the writing process. Still go ahead and edit all the muso recordings. Comp the guitar, bass, and drums along with Tuning and tidying up Marissa's vocal. Bring the track up to mix ready.
Sat 11 th June	Editing	Nigel Track	Although I do not have all the vocals to this because Nigel is still in the writing process. Still go ahead and edit all the muso recordings. Comp the guitar, bass, and drums along with Tuning and tidying up Marissa's vocal. Bring the track up to mix ready.
Sun 12 th June	Admin Day	~~Sol~~	- Make schedules for the week ahead - Send out any tracks which needs touching up to the musicians along with explanation of the things I would like done different if anything at all. - Arrange the recording sessions Nigel, Carlene and Possibly Jerome ~~Buckner~~ (It has been a while since I heard from Teo, to avoid any disappointment I have asked Jerome to write and record to this particular track as a safeguard) - Start thinking about date to recording the interludes. (The Plan is to get most people involve in the project over to my flat for ~~la~~ link up listening session/discussion. Serving food and drinks we will just have a jam and chat with each other about how the 90's music influenced them. Talking about

Christof Final Project Timetable Notes

			what was going on in our lives at that time which made it so profound and relating that to the music we were listening to.) Will most definitely need to take another week for editing. Simultaneously, Start the mixing process in week 7.
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Week 7

DATE	SESSION TYPE	TRACK	NOTES
June	RED = composition/writing YELLOW = Tracking/Recording GREEN = Mixing/Mastering PURPLE = Editing		
Week 7	EDITING WEEK		
Mon 14 th June	Editing	Sol Morgan – Slow Down	Edit all vocals to mix ready
Tues 15 th June	Editing	Interlude 1	Guitar, Bass and drums. Select the best takes edit and comp takes and prepare the track for mix stage.
Wed 16 th June	Editing	Interlude 2	Guitar, Bass and drums. Select the best takes edit and comp takes and prepare the track for mix stage.
Thurs 17 th June	Editing	Jerome Track	Guitar, Bass and drums. Select the best takes edit and comp takes and prepare the track for mix stage.
Fri 18 th June	Editing	Carlene dance `track	Although I do not have all the vocals to this because Carlene is still in the writing process. Still go ahead and edit all the muso recordings. Comp the guitar, bass, and drums along with Tuning and tidying any vocal.

Christof Final Project Timetable Notes

			Bring the track up to mix ready.
Sat 19 th June	Editing	~~Xtof~~ Intro	edit all the muso recordings. Comp the guitar, bass, and drums along with Tuning and tidying up Marissa's vocal. Bring the track up to mix ready.
Sun 20 th June	Admin Day	~~Xtof~~	- Make schedules for the week ahead - Send out any tracks which needs touching up to the musicians along with explanation of the things I would like done different if anything at all. - Arrange the recording sessions Nigel, Carlene and Possibly Jerome ~~Bucknor~~ (It has been a while since I heard from Teo, to avoid any disappointment I have asked Jerome to write and record to this particular track as a safeguard) - Start thinking about date to recording the interludes. (The Plan is to get most people involve in the project over to my flat for link up listening session/discussion. Serving food and drinks we will just have a jam and chat with each other about how the 90's music influenced them. Talking about what was going on in our lives at that time which made it so profound and relating that to the music we were listening to.) - Will most definitely need to take another week for editing. Simultaneously, Start the mixing process in week 7.

Week 8

DATE	SESSION TYPE	TRACK	NOTES
June	RED = composition/writing YELLOW = Tracking/Recording GREEN = Mixing/Mastering PURPLE = Editing		
Week 8	Mixing Week		
Mon 21 st June	Mixing	Sol Morgan – Sex Appeal	Mix tracks to master ready.
Tues 22 nd June	Mixing	Sol Morgan Sex Appeal	Continue mixing Sex Appeal.
Wed 23 rd June	Mixing	Zara Sykes ft Xtof “Excuse Me”	Mix track to Master <u>Ready</u>
Thurs 24 th June	Mixing	Zara Sykes ft Xtof “Excuse Me”	Continue Mixing Track to Master Ready.
Fri 25 th June	Mixing	Carlene “So Obvious”	Mix track to master <u>ready</u>

Christof Final Project Timetable Notes

Sat 26 th June	Mixing	Carlene “So Obvious”	Continue mixing track to master ready.
Sun 27 th June	Admin Day	Xtof	- Make schedules for the week ahead - Send out any tracks which needs touching up to the musicians along with explanation of the things I would like done different if anything at all. - Arrange the recording sessions Nigel, Carlene and Possibly Jerome ~~Bucknor~~. (It has been a while since I heard from Teo, to avoid any disappointment I have asked Jerome to write and record to this particular track as a safeguard) - Start thinking about date to recording the interludes. (The Plan is to get most people involve in the project over to my flat for ~~link~~ link up listening session/discussion. Serving food and drinks we will just have a jam and chat with each other about how the 90's music influenced them. Talking about what was going on in our lives at that time which made it so profound and relating that to the music we were listening to.) - Will most definitely need to take another week for editing. Simultaneously, Start the mixing process in week 7.

Week 9

DATE	SESSION TYPE	TRACK	NOTES
June	RED = composition/writing YELLOW = Tracking/Recording GREEN = Mixing/Mastering PURPLE = Editing		
Week 9	Mixing Week		
Mon 28 th June	Mixing	Sol Morgan – Slow Down	Mix tracks to master ready.
Tues 29 th June	Mixing	Sol Morgan Slow Down	Continue mixing Sex Appeal.
Wed 30 th June	Mixing	Nigel Hinds Track	Mix track to Master <u>Ready</u>
Thurs 1 st July	Mixing	Nigel Hinds Track	Continue Mixing Track to Master Ready.
Fri 2 nd July	Mixing	Carlene – Brighter ~~Dayz~~	Mix track to master <u>ready</u>
Sat 3 rd July	Mixing	Carlene Brighter Dayz	Continue mixing track to master ready.

Christof Final Project Timetable Notes

Sun 4 th July	Admin Day	~~Xtof~~	- Make schedules for the week ahead - Send out any tracks which needs touching up to the musicians along with explanation of the things I would like done different if anything at all. - Arrange the recording sessions Nigel, Carlene and Possibly Jerome ~~Bucknor~~. (It has been a while since I heard from Teo, to avoid any disappointment I have asked Jerome to write and record to this particular track as a safeguard) - Start thinking about date to recording the interludes. (The Plan is to get most people involve in the project over to my flat for ~~ljl~~ link up listening session/discussion. Serving food and drinks we will just have a jam and chat with each other about how the 90's music influenced them. Talking about what was going on in our lives at that time which made it so profound and relating that to the music we were listening to.) - Will most definitely need to take another week for editing. Simultaneously, Start the mixing process in week 7.
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Week 10

DATE	SESSION TYPE	TRACK	NOTES
June	RED = composition/writing YELLOW = Tracking/Recording GREEN = Mixing/Mastering PURPLE = Editing		Last week ~~Donnaile~~ and I had a falling out. After paying him the full amount for the project early to avoid this situation [because I could feel the spirit of greed and opportunistic coming from him], the cheeky wanker has the cheek to call me accusing me of ~~short changing~~ him saying I owed him a further £20. After checking and triple checking my records and my bank statements it was found that I had paid him all his money £200. This has left a real bitter taste in my mouth regarding him and having him on the project at all, so after some consideration I've decided with the amount of time that is remaining, to replace him on as many tracks as possible. Steve from SLMG has agreed to do some of the track with his live bass and Chris Russell has agreed to replace ~~Donnaile's~~ bass with some synth bass using his Roland Juno Keyboards.
Week 10	Mixing Week		
Mon 5 th July	Mixing	Marissa – Sugar	Mix tracks to master ready. (While mixing this track I realized ~~it~~ didn't really fit with the ethos of the album. I will have to take some time to re-write and record some new vocals along with changing and re-arranging the beat and instrumentation to fit the new vocals)

Christof Final Project Timetable Notes

Tues 6 th July	Composition	~~Xiof~~ = sugar	Continue writing ~~Sugar~~ Version of Sugar & rearrange the beat and instrumentation.
Wed 7 th July	Composition Tracking	~~Xiof~~ - Sugar Chris Russell Bass Session	Continue writing ~~Sugar~~ Version of Sugar & rearrange the beat and instrumentation. Re-record all the bass to replace the ones ~~Donnaile~~ tracked. (Steve from SLMG is recording half of the album's bass parts and Chris Russel has agreed to record the other half).
Thurs 8 th July	Tracking	~~Xiof~~ - Sugar	Record the vocals to sugar.
Fri 9 th July	Mixing	~~Xiof~~ - Sugar	Start mixing Sugar to master ready.
Sat 10 th July	Mixing	~~Xiof~~ - Sugar	Continue mixing sugar to master ready
Sun 11 th July	Admin Day	~~Xiof~~	- Make schedules for the week ahead - Send out any tracks which needs touching up to the musicians along with explanation of the things I would like done different if anything at all. - Start thinking about date to recording the interludes. (The Plan is to get most people involve in the project over to my flat for ~~it~~ link up listening session/discussion. Serving food and drinks we will just have a jam and chat with each other about how the 90's music influenced them. Talking about

Christof Final Project Timetable Notes

			what was going on in our lives at that time which made it so profound and relating that to the music we were listening to.) Will most definitely need to take another week for editing. Simultaneously, Start the mixing process in week 11.
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Week 11

DATE	SESSION TYPE	TRACK	NOTES
June	RED = composition/writing YELLOW = Tracking/Recording GREEN = Mixing/Mastering PURPLE = Editing		I contacted Chris to Plan the recordings of the bass and the interludes <u>session</u> and he tells me that he may have "The Rona". After getting his results back he was indeed positive so that put a spanner in the works in terms of re-recording the bass parts for half the album. It has also put a curb on his attending the recording session for the interludes which is a shame because I really wanted to capture his laughter. At this stage there is no more that can be done, with no time left I will just have to submit the ones with ~~Donna~~ on there for the meantime. And then for future use of those particular tracks, ask Steve to jump on them which would give more continuity anyways.
Week 11	Mixing Week		
Mon 12 th July	Mixing	Intro	Mix tracks to master ready.
Tues 13 th July	Tracking	Interludes	For this I met up with Sykes, BJB, Nigel, Jerome and Carlene, Sat around the mic and chatted for a few hours. We discussed everything from politics, raring of children, spirituality, and life in general.

Christof Final Project Timetable Notes

Wed 14 th July	Editing	Interludes	Go through the three hours of recording and select sections that can be used for the interludes. Initially there were only supposed to be two interludes for the whole project however, there are so many conversation pieces we discussed I have decided to place the inters in between each track, one because there were some poignant moments, two because it <u>add</u> to the feel of the whole album and three to make up for time and length of album. Re-record all the bass to replace the ones ~~Donna~~ tracked. (Steve from SLMG is recording half of the album's bass parts and Chris Russel has agreed to record the other half).
Thurs 15 th July	Mixing	Interludes	Mix the interludes to master ready
Fri 16 th July	Mastering	Project	Send whole project of 17 tracks over to Steve (SLMG) for mastering. Steve agreed to Master the project and have it back in time for the deadline which is next week Wednesday the latest to give us time to make any alterations.
Sat 17 th July	Day Off	Day off	Today I was supposed to start the written element of this project, but I just cannot. I feel a ~~bit~~ burned out so will have to rest for a couple of days to recharge.
Sun 18 th ~~July~~	Admin Day	~~Christof~~	Start gathering all the evidence, the reading materials from books magazine and articles over the past few weeks.

Christof Final Project Timetable Notes

			Contact the guys from SLMG to ask for advice on how they approached their "Personal Development Plans", as we have established that I now a member of the production house, I feel that this should be a mention in my so it would help to find out how they did theirs and plan mines accordingly.
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Week 12



DATE	SESSION TYPE	TRACK	NOTES
June	RED = composition/writing YELLOW = Tracking/Recording GREEN = Mixing/Mastering PURPLE = Editing		
Week 12	Mixing Week		
Mon 19 th July	Reading and writing week	Reading and Writing week	Synthesise my findings, reflect upon the project, compare and contrast with chosen sources, critically analyse the project, make a personal development plan for the next 5 years, make an EPK of what I intend to release and what is meant for briefs. Etc ~~etc~~
Tues 20 th July	Reading and writing week	Reading and Writing week	Synthesise my findings, reflect upon the project, compare and contrast with chosen sources, critically analyse the project, make a personal development plan for the next 5 years, make an EPK of what I intend to release and what is meant for briefs. Etc ~~etc~~
Wed 21 st July	Reading and writing week	Reading and Writing week	Synthesise my findings, reflect upon the project, compare and contrast with chosen sources, critically analyse the project, make a personal development plan for the next 5 years, make an EPK of what I intend to release and what is meant for briefs. Etc ~~etc~~

Christof Final Project Timetable Notes

Thurs 22 nd July	Finish everything ready for Hand in	Finish everything ready for hand in	Finish everything <u>make</u> sure the tracks are in folders, named and formatted correctly (48hz WAV) Make sure the written part is formatted, with Harvard references, quotes, pictures clips etc and begin the upload of the tracks.
Fri 23 rd July	Hand In	Hand in	Hand in project to ~~moodle~~ and ~~turnitin~~ .
Sat 24 th July			

11d. Budgeting Form and Payment Schedule

Date	Muse	Payment details	Amount Paid	Amount Owed
Wed 12 th May	Donmeille	Payment for tracking session for Carlene & Sol track	£50.00	£150.00
Wed 12 th May	Chris Russell	Payment for tracking session for Carlene & Sol track	£20.00	£180.00
Wed 12 th May	Ben Bartlett	Payment for tracking session for Carlene & Sol track	£20.00	£180.00
Wed 19 th May	Ben Bartlett	Payment for tracking session for Carlene T2 & Teo T1 & Sykes T1	£40.00	£160.00
Wed 19 th May	Chris Russell	Payment for tracking session for Carlene T2 & Teo T1 & Sykes T1 & Xtof T1	£20.00	£160.00
Wed 19 th May	Donmiele Montel	Payment for tracking session for Carlene T2 & Teo T1 & Sykes T1 & Xtof T1	£20.00	£130.00
Wed 26 th May	Donmiele Montel	Payment for tracking session for Carlene T2 & Teo T1 & Sykes T1 & Xtof T1	£20.00 (Bank Transfer)	£110.00
Wed 26 th May	Chris Russell	Payment for tracking session for Carlene T2 & Teo T1 & Sykes T1 & Xtof T1	£20.00	£140.00
Wed 26 th May	Ben Bartlett	Payment for tracking session for Carlene T2 & Teo T1 & Sykes T1 & Xtof T1	£0.00	£160.00
Wed 2 nd June	Donmiele Montel	Payment for Tracking session for Interludes 1 & 2, along with Nigel track & Sex Appeal.	£20.00	£90.00
Wed 2 nd June	Chris Russell	Payment for Tracking session for Sex appeal & Nigel Track	£20.00	£120.00
Wed 2 nd June	Ben Bartlett	Payment for Tracking session for Interludes 1 & 2 along with Nigel Track	£20.00	£140.00
Wed 9 th June	Donmiele Montel	No session this week	£20.00	£70.00

Wed 9 th June	Chris Russell	Payment for “Sweat”, Intro, Interlude 1&2	£20.00	£100.00
Wed 9 th June	Ben Bartlett	No session This week	£0.00	£140.00
Wed 16 th June	Donmeilie Montel	No Payment this week (<i>Double payment next week</i>)	£0.00	£70.00
Wed 16 th June	Chris Russell	No Payment this week (<i>Double payment next week</i>)	£0.00	£100.00
Wed 16 th June	Ben Bartlett	No Payment this week (<i>Double payment next week</i>)	£0.00	£140.00
Wed 23 rd June	Donmiele Montel	Made final payment to Donmeile	£70.00	£0.00
Wed 23 rd June	Ben Bartlett	Payment For project	£40.00	£100.00
Wed 23 rd June	Chris Russell	Payment for project	£40.00	£60.00
Wed 30 th June	Ben Bartlett	No Payment this week	£0.00	£100.00
Wed 30 th June	Chris Russell	No payment this week	£0.00	£60.00
Wed 7 th July	Ben Bartlett	Payment for project	£40.00	£60.00
Wed 7 th July	Chris Russell	Payment for project	£40.00	£20.00
Wed 14 th July	Ben Bartlett	No payment this week	£0.00	£60.00
Wed 14 th July	Chris Russell	No payment this week	£0.00	£20.00
Wed 21 st July	Ben Bartlett	Payment for Project	£20.00	£40.00
Wed 21 st July	Chris Russell	Final Payment for project	£20.00	£0.00

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Element C2b Research

Jam and Lewis

Here, the pair tell us about recording the album in lockdown and why they still use gear from the “Rhythm Nation” days.



PHOTO: GREATSYNTHESIZERS

Mr. Jam: Our philosophy always was to make each artist sound like their best self. That meant, for instance, on the song by singer Babyface, we used a Rhodes piano because we associate it with the Babyface sound. Mariah [Carey] always loves the synthesizer stuff that I do. So we use the Oberheim OB-8 bass and the Roland TR-808 drum machine for the drums. Each artist has their own signature, so we try to bring in the ingredients specifically for them.

Mr. Lewis: To record songs remotely, we did a lot of Zoom (and a little bit of FaceTime), but mostly Zoom. An audio program called Listento, made by Audiomovers, let us record high-quality music even when we weren't in the room with artists. The process is a little bit complex but was still the simplest way of making it happen.

Mr. Jam: The Babyface song ("He Don't Know Nothin' Bout It") on our album was actually recorded in analog. We still have our Otari MTR-100 tape machines. So it's kind of like you have your old pots and pans that are your go-tos, and you have your new high-tech whatever. You can just use whatever tool is appropriate for whatever you're working on. The [Otari] we have is actually from our old studio in Minneapolis... not quite [the era of Janet Jackson's album] "Control" but certainly [Ms. Jackson's] "Rhythm Nation" days.

Mr. Lewis: We try to listen to our songs on bad speakers, good speakers, in the car—the speakers listeners are interacting with. You try to find speakers that give you an idea of what's happening in the sonics of a song. Sometimes it's a boom box or a small speaker like my little Bose.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/from-mariah-carey-to-mary-j-blige-jimmy-jam-and-terry-lewis-on-recording-superstars-remotely-11625852225>

How have you been working this past year?

Jam: We've been using everything from Zoom to a whole bunch of different things. The engineer will set up at our studio when we're doing mixes. We'll be listening to the audio that he's playing; we'll be on headphones or on speakers and we can make little tweaks and little suggestions. We've been finishing the record like that for the most part—which has been

cool, actually. It allows you to concentrate on it in a different way, which is kind of interesting.

We have been doing some projects where we actually will go to the studio and all work together, socially distanced and masked. Mostly, we've just been utilizing the technology.

Lewis: It's the age of traveling without moving. The main tool we use right now that's the simplest is probably [Audiomovers Listento](#), which is just a plug-in-based app that you plug in on a fader, and then broadcast. There's another really good one called [Sessionwire](#) that works really well, it's just harder to set up.

You've clearly found so much inspiration in music technology. How has technology informed the way you work together?

Lewis: It's kind of a twofold thing. It brings an ease to working together, but it also brings an uneasiness because it gives you so many different ideas for what you could do, so the possibilities increase, and then you're having to sort.

In the past, being confined made you make decisions based on the moment. You didn't leave it to chance. We would mix down the background to make sure that the stems all sounded like we liked it, the day that we did it, instead of going back and having the engineer change the balance.

Now, with more possibilities, you can do more with less and you don't always need to be in a pronounced space or the studio. That part of it is really fantastic, but I think technology complicates things sometimes when it doesn't need to. We've been doing it long enough where we know how to let the technology only do what we need it to do, instead of taking it to the next step. With that in mind, the record that we are making now, I don't know if 20 or 30 years ago we could've made.

Jam: We didn't know enough.

Lewis: Still, it's about the people. The one thing that we've always said is, buildings don't make hits, tape machines don't make hits, people make hits. So how you interact with people is always the catalyst that we start to build from.

<https://www.mixonline.com/recording/the-mix-interview-jimmy-jam-and-terry-lewis>

As technology gets more complex, it can sometimes be challenging to find that balance where your tools are serving you, not the other way around—especially when the lines blur between production and performance.

Jam: With that in mind, even with drum machines, we always tried to keep a human element to it in some way. We would never really sequence whole tracks; we would sequence maybe a beat of some sort, but then there would be fills that would happen that we'd play live.

The whole idea of a loop-based song simply being a two-bar loop or a four-bar loop playing throughout the whole song, that really never was the idea. Even if we were going to do that, we'd always add what we call "pings and zings." We'd always put in live percussion, cymbals and things to keep it human.

How do you know when you've finished a song?

Jam: The way we know when a record's done is always when we can't wait to play it for the artist. If it's not feeling like that, it's not done yet. We're just enjoying the process of doing it.

Terry always says, "I don't want to reach the destination, I just enjoy the journey."

So we're just on a journey, and we're having fun. We joke that we want to be the oldest Best New Artists.

<https://www.mixonline.com/recording/the-mix-interview-jimmy-jam-and-terry-lewis>

Writing Camps

“It’s telling that so many recent hits have been written by a Swede, Max Martin, and his Swedish-trained collaborators. The distinction between R&B and pop, which in the United States has as much to do with race as with music, is less pronounced in Sweden, a more racially homogenous country. Beginning with the Backstreet Boys and extending through major hits for Britney Spears and ’N Sync, Kelly Clarkson, Katy Perry, Kesha, and Taylor Swift, Max Martin and his fellow Swedish writers a”

Excerpt From: John Seabrook. “The Song Machine: Inside the Hit Factory”. Apple Books.

“Max Martin and his fellow Swedish writers and producers have created a genre-bursting hybrid: pop music with a rhythmic R&B feel. Their foreign-ness to English and American music allows them to inhabit, and in certain ways co-opt, different genres—R&B, rock, hip-hop—and convert them to mainstream pop using working methods developed in Stockholm in the ’90s at a place called Cheiron Studios, where the song machine begins.”

Excerpt From: John Seabrook. “The Song Machine: Inside the Hit Factory”. Apple Books.

[The Song Machine. Inside the Hit Factory \(P.32-33\) John Seabrooke. \[18th July 21\]](#)

“Some of the mixes merely extended songs for dancers by adding instrumental sections and long drum breaks, like Tom Moulton’s pioneering disco remixes at the Sandpiper Club on Fire Island a decade earlier. But Denniz got far more creative than that, as in his remix of Soul II Soul’s track “Keep On Movin’,” which he combined with Donna Summer’s “Love to Love You Baby,” creating a sort of proto-mashup.”

Excerpt From: John Seabrook. “The Song Machine: Inside the Hit Factory”. Apple Books.

[The Song Machine. Inside the Hit Factory \(P.40\) John Seabrooke. \[18th July 21\]](#)

“BY 1995, DENNIZ HAD recruited a number of young Swedish writers and producers to the Cheiron hit-making team. They included Kristian “Krille” Lundin, who had taught himself how to be a producer by reverse-engineering songs he liked. He joined the rest of the core group: Andreas Carlsson, Herbie Crichtlow, Jake Schultz, David Kreuger, Per Magnusson, Jörgen Elofsson, John Amatiello, and Martin Sandberg. A strong part of Denniz’s vision for the studio was that songwriting should be a collaborative effort; no one was supposed to be proprietary about his work. Songwriters would be assigned different parts of a song to work on; choruses would be taken from one song and tried in another; a bridge might be swapped out, or a hook. Songs were written more like television shows, by teams of writers who willingly shared credit with one another. The Swedish artist E-Type (Bo Martin Erik Eriksson) recalled, “I get this feeling of a big painter’s studio in Italy back in the 1400s or 1500s.” In a STV documentary, *The Nineties*, he told producer Jens von Reis, “One assistant does the hands, another does the feet, and another does something else, and then Michelangelo walks in[...].”

Excerpt From: John Seabrook. “The Song Machine: Inside the Hit Factory”. Apple Books.

[The Song Machine. Inside the Hit Factory \(P.105 - 106\) John Seabrooke. \[18th July 21\]](#)

Songwriting camps have convened since the early ’90s, when Police manager and I.R.S.

Records chief Miles Copeland invited heavy hitters such as Cher and Squeeze’s Glenn

Tilbrook to his French château. For Rihanna’s 2009 album *Rated R*, Def Jam Records chief

Antonio “L.A.” Reid hosted what John Seabrook, in his book *The Song Machine*, called “the

mother of all song camps.” Camps have multiplied since then: In June, Alicia Keys held an all-female retreat, called *She Is the Music*, at Jungle City Studios overlooking the Manhattan skyline; publishing giant Warner/Chappell Music invited 45 writers to Las Vegas; and independent label and publishing company Concord Music Group held one with 87 songwriters in Nashville to create music for movies, ads, trailers, promos, and TV shows (and has made \$3 million so far from songs written at these “synch” camps). At an ASCAP camp in France, three veteran country writers penned “Somethin’ Bad,” which turned into a Grammy-nominated duet for Miranda Lambert and Carrie Underwood; Dua Lipa’s 2018 hit “IDGAF” came out of a Warner/Chappell camp in Las Vegas. “If you’ve got a huge song coming out of the camp, it’s definitely paid for the camp and probably beyond that,” says Kara DioGuardi, who has written hits for Pink, Kelly Clarkson, Britney Spears, and others and recently purchased a Nashville building to hold camps and other music-business events. <https://www.vulture.com/2018/08/the-songwriting-camps-where-pops-biggest-hits-get-crafted.html>

The camps, or at least the collaborative songwriting process, have fundamentally changed the way pop music sounds — Beyoncé’s *Lemonade* was a strikingly personal album, full of scorned-lover songs, but it was conceived by teams of writers (with the singer’s input and oversight) <https://www.vulture.com/2018/08/the-songwriting-camps-where-pops-biggest-hits-get-crafted.html>

When I walked into a room at the Lakehouse Recording Studios in Asbury Park, New Jersey, in late June, my eyes took a few seconds to adjust from the fluorescent hallway lighting.

Through flickering candles, I made out Chelsea Jade, a New Zealand singer-songwriter, dressed in black, singing in a high, glassy pitch; Danny Mercer, a Colombian-American guitarist and singer, tapping out a Depeche Mode–style riff on a keyboard; and Randy Class, a Bronx producer, capturing everything on a laptop and looping it back. This was the BMI songwriters’ camp, which split up ten top writers into groups of three or more with the hope of regurgitating multiple daily songs. In this case, it was entirely songwriters and producers in their 20s and 30s; BMI put them up at a downtown hotel and arranged activities like a day of surfing. They worked hard (three writers struggled for half an hour over the line “This feels like a movie, right?”) and partied hard (my Friday-night interviews were full of background whooping).

<https://www.vulture.com/2018/08/the-songwriting-camps-where-pops-biggest-hits-get-crafted.html>

Pop songwriting has been moving in a more collaborative direction for years, leading behind-the-scenes creators to scramble for credits — production duo Cool & Dre told *Billboard* that collaborating on an instrumental loop on the Carters’ *Everything Is Love* was “life-changing.” Drake’s “[Nice for What](#)” and Cardi B’s “[Be Careful](#)” list 16 and 17 writers, respectively. (Some are not new collaborators but authors of samples in the songs.) “Looking at the charts, nine times out of ten, pretty much everything is co-written,” BMI’s Cox says. “There’s at least three to four to five writers on every song that’s out there right now.”

<https://www.vulture.com/2018/08/the-songwriting-camps-where-pops-biggest-hits-get-crafted.html>

With more than 20 years’ experience in the music business, from an apprenticeship as an audio engineer to becoming the go-to pop songwriter and producer of the 90s, Eliot has

cemented his reputation as one of Britain's most successful songwriters. He has won both a Grammy Award (for *Never Gonna Break My Faith* by Aretha Franklin and Mary J. Blige, used in the film *Bobby*) and an Ivor Novello award (for *Picture Of You* by Boyzone). And now, with the Eliot Kennedy Steelworks Academy (EKSA), he's opened the doors to the next generation of songwriters and producers, to soak in the atmosphere of the Steelworks Studio and learn from Eliot and his team. For anyone like me who has dreamt of writing a pop hit, this was a mouthwatering prospect, but as someone who also hadn't been on a 'songwriting camp' before, I really didn't know what to expect.

<https://www.songwritingmagazine.co.uk/interviews/a-trip-to-eksa-songwriting-camp>

Naturally, the first day was spent getting to know one another and setting the loose agenda for the next three days. The plan being that we'd split into two writing teams and be thrown straight into the assignment of writing for another artist, rather than ourselves. We'd need to get to know what the artist was like, what they needed from a song and then work with them to write it. That would be day one and part of day two, then our next assignment would be to write a song for a movie. At some point we would also have a guest as well – someone who was a 'living, breathing' songwriter – to tell us about how their career had developed and impart some knowledge. Then, on the final afternoon, Eliot promised we'd each get some time with him one-to-one to discuss our progress and get some direct feedback.

<https://www.songwritingmagazine.co.uk/interviews/a-trip-to-eksa-songwriting-camp>

In attempting to explain the 'secret' to his songwriting success, Eliot referred to having "balls out honesty" – that songwriting is about transferring emotion and that it's important to be honest with yourself and anyone you're writing with. It's possibly another reason why EKSA

look to instil a relaxed environment and encouraged everyone to express their ideas and be open to other's.

<https://www.songwritingmagazine.co.uk/interviews/a-trip-to-eksa-songwriting-camp>

Rihanna

“In addition to covers, Fenty recorded an original pop-soul song Sturken and Rogers wrote for her, “Last Time.” They also changed her professional name to Rihanna, Fenty’s middle name. Robyn didn’t feel like a Rihanna.”

Excerpt From: John Seabrook. “The Song Machine: Inside the Hit Factory”. Apple Books.

[The Song Machine. Inside the Hit Factory \(P.281\) John Seabrooke. \[19th July 21\]](#)

“RIHANNA’S FIRST ALBUM, Music of the Sun, was completed in a speedy three months. Sturken and Rogers wrote or co-wrote all but three of the thirteen songs on the album, and they produced all of the tracks, with a notable assist on “Let Me” from a Norwegian production duo called Stargate, who had recently arrived in the United States and who would soon figure largely in Rihanna’s career.”

Excerpt From: John Seabrook. “The Song Machine: Inside the Hit Factory”. Apple Books.

[The Song Machine. Inside the Hit Factory \(P.293 -294\) John Seabrooke. \[19th July 21\]](#)

“LIKE MANY AN ARTIST’S signature song, Rihanna’s breakout, “Umbrella,” was actually written for someone else.

The song was the work of three men: Tricky Stewart, a producer; Terius Nash, a singer-songwriter who called himself “The-Dream”; and Kuk Harrell, a vocal producer.” Together they make up the songwriting team at RedZone Entertainment, a music production company and publishing firm based in Atlanta.”

Excerpt From: John Seabrook. “The Song Machine: Inside the Hit Factory”. Apple Books.

[The Song Machine. Inside the Hit Factory \(P.297\) John Seabrooke. \[19th July 21\]](#)

“To keep her supplied with songs, her label and her manager periodically convene “writer camps”—weeklong conclaves, generally held in Los Angeles, where dozens of top producers and writers from around the world are brought in and shuffled and reshuffled in pairs over multiple-day writing sessions, in the hope of striking gold.

Last but not least, “Umbrella” was the song that earned Rihanna a prime spot at Clive Davis’s Grammy party the following year, on February 8, 2009—the night her life would change again.”

Excerpt From: John Seabrook. “The Song Machine: Inside the Hit Factory”. Apple Books.

[The Song Machine. Inside the Hit Factory \(P.309 - 310\) John Seabrooke. \[19th July 21\]](#)

“L.A. Reid, who was still running Def Jam in the wake of Jay-Z’s departure, was determined not to lose all they had invested in the young star. He put on the mother of all song camps. A-list producers and topliners were summoned to Los Angeles for two weeks and installed in studios around the city, their hotel and food all paid for. It was the kind of immensely expensive undertaking that only a major label can afford to arrange.”

Excerpt From: John Seabrook. “The Song Machine: Inside the Hit Factory”. Apple Books
[The Song Machine. Inside the Hit Factory \(P.358\) John Seabrooke. \[19th July 21\]](#)

“A camp is like a pop-up hit factory. Labels and superstar artists convene them, and they generally last three or four days. The usual format is to invite dozens or more track makers and toplineers, who are mixed and matched in different combinations through the course of the camp, until every possible combination has been tried. Typically, a producer-topliner pair spends the morning working on a song, which they are supposed to finish by the lunch break. In the afternoon new pairs are formed by the camp counselors, and another song is written by dinner. If the artist happens to be present, the artist circulates among the different sessions, throwing out concepts, checking on the works in progress, picking up musical pollen in one session and shedding it on others. At the end of each morning and afternoon session, the campers come together and listen to one another’s songs. The peer pressure is such that virtually every session produces a song, which means twelve or more songs a day, or sixty a week, depending on the size of the camp.”

Excerpt From: John Seabrook. “The Song Machine: Inside the Hit Factory”. Apple Books.
[The Song Machine. Inside the Hit Factory \(P.358 - 359\) John Seabrooke. \[19th July 21\]](#)

PRS Amsterdam Song writing Camp

PRS for Music actively engages with its members in a variety of ways to help them further their careers and expand their creativity. Songwriting camps not only serve as a platform for new hits to be written, but encourage new creative relationships to continue and develop into the future. PRS for Music has previously also supported and hosted songwriting camps at the

world-famous Abbey Road Studios in conjunction with the Country Music Association and more recently, the first ever grime and rap songwriting camp at Tileyard Studios with Notting Hill Music.

<https://www.prsformusic.com/press/2019/amsterdam-songwriting-camp-2019>

Eliot Kennedy writing camp steelworks Sheffield

And now, with the Eliot Kennedy Steelworks Academy (EKSA), he's opened the doors to the next generation of songwriters and producers, to soak in the atmosphere of the Steelworks Studio and learn from Eliot and his team. For anyone like me who has dreamt of writing a pop hit, this was a mouthwatering prospect, but as someone who also hadn't been on a 'songwriting camp' before, I really didn't know what to expect.

<https://www.songwritingmagazine.co.uk/interviews/a-trip-to-eksa-songwriting-camp>

Back in the studio, we were split into two groups and given our first assignment: to write a song for an artist. The artists in question being Max Restaino or Laura Erby – two young pop singers being developed by Steelworks Studios and EKSA. We were briefly introduced and we got a chance to hear some of their material, before being whisked away into one of the three studio rooms. My team worked with Max, a softly-spoken 18 year-old who we quickly discovered could play almost any instrument and wondered if we could come up with something like Ollie Murs.

<https://www.songwritingmagazine.co.uk/interviews/a-trip-to-eksa-songwriting-camp>

Luckily, the second day started with us picking up where we left off, and we had the chance to really develop the lyrics, It felt like pulling teeth, but with hindsight I can see how we were slowly learning the sometimes painful process of crafting a song. Meanwhile, in another

studio the other group had also made good progress, working with Eliot, to come up with a song for Laura – a ballad more suited to a female voice, with the title *Jupiter & Juno*. Back in our team's room, the words slowly developed and, after what seemed like hours, we had the basis of modern lyric with the working title *Head In The Cloud*. Our best line was undoubtedly 'My inbox is full but my life's still empty' which amused James and Eliot no end, and showed that some of the best ideas take time to emerge. Max had recorded the guide vocal, but before the end of day we needed to record some backing vocals, which we tracked and layered with James' help.

<https://www.songwritingmagazine.co.uk/interviews/a-trip-to-eksa-songwriting-camp>

Suddenly, it was day three, and we started the morning by playing our songs for Max and Laura to the rest of the group. Eliot was suitably impressed with both efforts, especially considering that we were 'thrown in at the deep end' but in reflecting on the process we'd just been through, we could see what we'd learnt.

<https://www.songwritingmagazine.co.uk/interviews/a-trip-to-eksa-songwriting-camp>

And with that, the three days had flashed by and it was time to take our newfound experience, knowledge and enthusiasm (as well as a certificate signed by Eliot) away with us. Whether the EKSA Songwriting Camp is able to launch its participants' songwriting careers remains to be seen, but it's certainly inspiring, enjoyable and insightful in equal measures.

<https://www.songwritingmagazine.co.uk/interviews/a-trip-to-eksa-songwriting-camp>

It's really a golden opportunity to dive into the working environment of a professional pop song writing team.

The three-day EKSA Song writing Camp comes with a reasonable price-tag of £495, but for a budding songsmith, the first-hand experience, one-to-one guidance and advice from an Grammy, Golden Globe and Ivor Novella Award winning songwriter, is absolutely priceless.

<https://www.songwritingmagazine.co.uk/interviews/a-trip-to-eksa-songwriting-camp>

Aaron Slater (Writer of the EKSC article)

In 2002, Aaron's music career changed direction and took him to London where he began performing as a solo singer/songwriter on the acoustic circuit. Spotted by singer, Mark Owen, Aaron was asked to co-write and audition to be a guitarist on his next solo album, but as Take That reformed, the album project was shelved.

2005 saw Aaron's music feature on the BBC Sports Review Of The Year television programme which, along with sudden online interest via internet radio stations, scored him a worldwide recording contract with American record label Fiberlineaudio who released singles 'Alien To Me' and Super Natural. Picked up by Nick Warren and Jody Wisternoff of Way Out West, Alien To Me became a regular track in their DJ sets at Space in Ibiza, the Miami WMC 2006 and John Digweed's show on Kiss FM. In the U.S. the track was reviewed in Billboard Magazine as "An engaging vocal performance, catchy lyrics and a captivating acoustic guitar. Brilliant".

<http://www.aaronslater.com>

Microphone and Vocal recording

Choose Your Pattern – If recording one singer, a cardioid may work best. 2 singers opposite each other you may need a figure – 8 Pattern. With four singers around one microphone, an

omnidirectional pattern may work best. If the singer likes to jump around in the studio, try an omnidirectional pattern.

Recording Tips For Engineers, Third edition for cleaner brighter tracks (Mastering Music)

Tim Critch, 21.7.21 p.127

Six to eight inches in front. This setup tends to be a great starting point, as the distance adds a warmth that may be lost with close miking. It can mean less compression is needed if the singer knows what he is doing and can control his dynamics.

Recording Tips For Engineers, Third edition for cleaner brighter tracks (Mastering Music)

Tim Critch, 21.7.21 p.127

Quite close. For a very intimate vocal, place a singer's microphone a few inches away from the mouth to record all the little nuances of the vocal. This works when the vocal track is dynamically consistent and the singer doesn't suddenly yell into the microphone. Both condenser and dynamic microphones record well when close miked. Perhaps set up a windscreen.

Recording Tips For Engineers, Third edition for cleaner brighter tracks (Mastering Music)

Tim Critch, 21.7.21 p.127

Take time to find the best pre-amp for the vocal. Just as microphones have different sounds, so do pre-amps, equalizers, and compressors. Due to the nature of physics, every device contributes a tiny amount of distortion. Inexpensive equipment, such as cheap pre-amps, contains inexpensive circuitry, which introduces distortion earlier.

Recording Tips For Engineers, Third edition for cleaner brighter tracks (Mastering Music)

Tim Critch, 21.7.21 p.131

Musicians Recording

The advantages of using a direct box include the absence of leakage, no amplifier distortion, and a full, clean sound. A good direct box records the full spectrum of the instrument where a microphone in front of an amplifier may not. Many engineers agree that a direct box alone just can't recreate that chest-cavity-vibrating thump that an amplifier and microphone can deliver.

[Recording Tips For Engineers, Third edition for cleaner brighter tracks \(Mastering Music\)](#)

[Tim Critch, 21.7.21 p.53](#)

Click track going to the drummer. A click track is normally sent through the drummer's headphones to help him maintain proper tempo throughout the song. With today's wide array of sounds available, ask the drummer exactly what he prefers for the click sound. Some may want a snare, some may want a cowbell. Maybe he wants the click to be in quarter notes or half notes. Work this out with the drummer beforehand to make him as comfortable as possible.

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[Tim Critch, 21.7.21 p.83](#)

Record live high hat or percussion. If recording real drums is not possible, at least record a live high hat with programmed drums. Live percussion will help a lifeless electronic drum track, because no drummer is exact or perfect and these slight deviations in timing are what give music its groove.

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[Tim Critch, 21.7.21 p.84](#)

One microphone and a direct box. A close microphone with a direct box is a common method for recording an electric instrument and the standard method to record bass guitar. Record the signal from the direct box and the microphone on separate tracks for more control over the best combination of good tone and tight low end. Check for phase issues between the microphone and the direct signal.

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Tim Critch, 21.7.21 p.99

Use individual returns. Recording every drum to an individual track is great if you have a plethora of tracks. If you are recording all tracks to stereo, return the separate outputs from the drum machine into individual tracks on the console and buss them over to the two stereo tracks. This allows you to process each drum sound individually so you can equalize them to work with the rest of the instruments. This also allows you to separate the sends to any effects unit so all instruments aren't going to the same reverb.

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Tim Critch, 21.7.21 p.84

Punch the drummer. To give a drum machine more life, ride the different tracks as you record them, maybe push the kick a bit in the chorus, or punch the high hat into a verse, much like a real drummer would do. Just don't overdo it.

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Tim Critch, 21.7.21 p.85

Use different drum fills. No two drum fills or tom rolls should be the same unless they are an actual written part. For example, the tom-tom roll into the second chorus of a song should be different from and stronger than the tom-tom roll into the first chorus.

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Tim Critch, 21.7.21 p.85

Route the electronic drums through a set of speakers in the studio. Set up two microphones in the studio and aim the microphones into the corners of the room, not toward the speakers.

You want ambiance, not direct signal. Add this live stereo track in with the originals.

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Tim Critch, 21.7.21 p.85

Man vs Drum Machine

Sound on sound – David Greeves

For a few styles of electronic music, ‘real’ drum sounds play no part. But for most music-makers in the mainstream, the sound of an acoustic drum kit played by a real drummer — whether left in its natural state or processed, chopped up and looped — forms an integral part of the mix.

<https://www.soundonsound.com/techniques/man-vs-drum-machine>

So, when the ideal is unattainable, what are we to do? One approach is to use a session musician remotely: someone who has their own recording space set up and ready to go, who can record their parts themselves and then send them over to be incorporated in your mix.

The modern marvels of Skype, email, WeTransfer and the World Wide Web have made this

process much easier, and typing “remote session drummer” or “online session drums” into Google turns up pages and pages of hits. You can take your pick of session drummers all over the world, with advertised prices ranging from £50 per track to considerably more.

<https://www.soundonsound.com/techniques/man-vs-drum-machine>

Producers Mike Chapman and Simon Pilton had always planned to use a session drummer on their song, and as a result had created the track using only a basic programmed loop that left space for further embellishment. By contrast, Dave Lockwood’s track was completely finished before we asked Alex to replace the drum part, leaving next to no wriggle room. Tim Goalen had likewise put a lot of work into creating a detailed programmed part before Alex was called in, and it’s perhaps no surprise that, while all three sets of producers felt that the sound of their drum parts had been improved, only Chapman and Pilton noticed significant benefits in terms of feel. Clearly, if you plan to use a remote session drummer, some thought needs to be given as to what stage in the project you involve him or her.

<https://www.soundonsound.com/techniques/man-vs-drum-machine>

“If, as the producer, you’re unsure, you can ask the musician to provide several different options, approaching the song in different ways. For instance, I might record three different passes, each using a different snare drum, each with a slightly different feel, maybe using a ride cymbal instead of hi-hats in the chorus and so on. This can be extremely time-consuming for the musician, though, which will potentially add to the cost for the producer

<https://www.soundonsound.com/techniques/man-vs-drum-machine>

An alternative is to use sampled, programmed drums. Technological advances have had an even more radical effect here, with sample libraries becoming ever bigger and more detailed,

with high-definition audio, multiple mic options and abundant multisampling. At the same time, a new generation of ‘intelligent’ virtual drummer software, beginning with Steinberg’s Groove Agent and continuing with Pro Tools’ Strike and Logic’s Drummer, will take care of much of the programming for you. If you believe the hype, we’re tantalisingly close to not needing flesh-and-blood drummers at all, with perfectly recorded sounds and totally convincing performances available on tap, all inside the box.

<https://www.soundonsound.com/techniques/man-vs-drum-machine>

Alex Reeves has a lengthy CV that’s as varied as it is impressive. He’s toured and played live with Dizzee Rascal, Bat For Lashes, Anna Calvi and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. His session work takes in just about every major recording studio in the UK, most recently playing on Guy Garvey’s forthcoming solo album at Real World. From his own Drum Fortress studio, a modestly sized but well-equipped room in the Fortress Studios recording and rehearsal complex in central London, he has provided remote session services to the likes of Nick Cave, NAS, Bobby Womack, Chase N Status, Avicii and UNKLE, not to mention music for commercials, video games, TV and film. His standard rates for remote recording — £150 per track or £300 per day — are higher than some, but reflect the breadth and depth of his experience.

<https://www.soundonsound.com/techniques/man-vs-drum-machine>

Part of the appeal of the remote session approach is that it has made very good professional players accessible for anyone to use in their productions. For Alex, offering his services in this way was simply a natural step. “I’m of an age where I didn’t start out recording in the major studios,” he explains. “When this kind of recording started is roughly when I started recording, 15 years ago. Major-league recording was starting to wind down in the late ’90s

and early 2000s, and the studios were starting to work in a different way. So I grew up playing a lot of this stuff in my own studio.

<https://www.soundonsound.com/techniques/man-vs-drum-machine>

So what have we learned from our session drummer and three test tracks? For a start, **if you would ideally like to be working with live musicians in the same room at the same time, it seems that remote session recording is no more the perfect solution than programming.** While a good remote session drummer offers access to high-quality sounds, expressive performances and the creative input of a real musician, the challenge of communicating what you require and the intrinsic delay in shuttling tracks back and forth mean this is still a second-best — though it should be noted that none of our test subjects remarked on experiencing any difficulties in these areas.

<https://www.soundonsound.com/techniques/man-vs-drum-machine>

Mixing

The trick is, there is no trick. A good mix is akin to a jigsaw puzzle, where there is a perfect space for every piece, and all spaces are covered. The image should have width and depth.

The best mixes come from well-written, well-arranged, well-played and well-recorded songs.

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[Tim Critch, 21.7.21 p.180](#)

Leave some time between the recording and the mixing. If possible, don't record overdubs and mix on the same day. A good mix normally takes at least a full day, and recording something will throw off the flow of the mix.

When you must do an overdub before the mix, use the input button on the recording machine to verify the correct signal flow. As tracks are often cross-patched, or patched into different channel line inputs, it would be a shame to record over the kick drum while intending to repair a vocal part.

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[Tim Critch, 21.7.21 p.181](#)

Assign the kick drum and bass guitar to a subgroup. The interplay between the kick and the bass is crucial. If one is changed, the other may sound off. When the mix needs a touch more low end, preserve this interplay by moving the subgroup, rather than the individual faders.

Subgrouping instruments together early, such as all the guitars, or all the background vocals, may help you when experimenting with different level changes, pans, mutes, and ideas.

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[Tim Critch, 21.7.21 p.185](#)

Yes to de-ess. Use a de-esser in the snare drum track to minimize high hat leakage. A de-esser also works to pull the ‘screech’ or string noise from an acoustic guitar track.

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[Tim Critch, 21.7.21 p.190](#)

Pink or white, I just can’t decide. Use a pink- or white-noise generator to help with the snare sound. Run the white noise through the noise gate, and trigger it off of the snare drum. The gate opens then closes with the snare, adding fullness to the snare sound.

Noise as a drum layering ingredient

A concentrated burst of noise can be added to percussive sounds to reinforce them, adding impact, click or bite.

One method is to play a noise-outputting synth at the same time as the sound you want to enhance, then adjust the noise's volume envelope in context: a tightly decaying envelope will give a short click for emphasising transients, while a longer decay can provide fizz or splash. Alternatively, load up a white noise sample in the same sampler as your percussive hit, then use a custom low-pass filter envelope so only the initial burst cuts through, pulling the two sounds together.

<https://www.musicradar.com/tuition/tech/10-ways-to-use-noise-to-enhance-your-mixes-633348>

One final aspect of gates is that many will also feature a side-chain connection. In this context they're often referred to as 'key' inputs, but nonetheless they behave in a similar manner to a compressor's side-chain. Fundamentally, they allow you to insert an audio signal in the key input that can then be used to control the action of the gate, which in turn affects the audio travelling through the noise gate's normal inputs. This obviously has numerous creative uses, but the most common use is to program a kick drum rhythm and feed the audio into the key input. Any signals that are then fed through the gate's normal inputs will be gated every time a kick occurs. This action supersedes the gate's threshold setting, but the attack, release, range, hold or hysteresis controls are often still available, allowing you to contour the reaction of the gate on the audio signal.

Pro tips for mixing with Pink and other Noises – by Enrico Tiberi (nrec).

1. Add a bottom snare layer with noise.

This is really useful, for example when you're mixing acoustic drums but don't have a recorded bottom microphone. However, it's just as useful for sampled drums. One way to do this is to take a noise generator and add a gate to it – another is to use the Noize plugin's adapt feature. When the plugin is added to your snare channel, you can simply adjust the rise and fall parameters for a tighter or looser sounding noise.

<https://www.denise.io/blog/2018/10/pink-noise-mixing-explained-in-1-minute-with-pro-tips>

Tim Crich

Biography

Tim Crich has over twenty-five years of experience in the recording studio, and has worked on records by the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, John Lennon, Billy Joel, David Bowie, Bon Jovi, Ozzy, Cher, and many more. Tim has engineered for some of the biggest producers in the world. He is the author of *Assistant Engineers Handbook*

<https://www.routledge.com/Recording-Tips-for-Engineers-For-Cleaner-Brighter-Tracks/Crich/p/book/9781138123069>

Rick Snoman

Biography

Rick Snoman was born in Manchester, UK., and spent much of his time in the Hacienda during the 1980s. He would later become an artist, producer, and award-winning author.

An iTunes certified mastering engineer he has close to 30 years of experience working in both private and commercial studios worldwide. Specialising in electronic dance music, he has remixed numerous artists under various guises and released music under names such as Phiadra, Aeon Soul and Red5. His ghost production work for international DJ's have earned millions of views on YouTube and his recording studios – Altar (based in a converted church) – regularly ghost produces, engineers and masters music for a variety of electronic dance music artists signed to Armada, Spinnin' Records, Hospital Records, Anjunabeats, Anjunadeep, Future Sound of Egypt, Mau5trap, ToolRoom, Warner and Polydor.

His textbook, the Dance Music Manual (first published in 2004 via Focal Press), has won awards, critical acclaim and accolade across the electronic music industry. Translated in five languages, it is recognised as the industry standard textbook and was shortlisted as an “outstanding book of the year 2019”. It is required or recommended reading at many international educational institutions across the globe including Harvard, Yale and Cambridge.

Rick is also co-chair of Electronic Dance Music for the Audio Engineering Society, a member of the A.E.S Education Committee, and curated the Audio Engineering Society's first-ever EDM event in 2021. He regularly talks at colleges, universities and at **A.E.S**

conventions worldwide, was keynote speaker on EDM at NAMM 2020, and DJ for the After Party Tec Awards in L.A (2020).

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Dance-Music-Manual-Rick-Snoman/dp/0415825644>

Enrico Tiberi

Bio & Credits

I am an Italian musician, producer and sound engineer based in Berlin.

I studied piano and classical guitar at Conservatorio G. Pergolesi (Fermo, Italy) and mixing/sound engineering with Mr. Tchad Blake at LaFabrique Studio (Avignone).

I'm collaborating with a number of studio/live projects, both on the live and on the studio production and composition side under the alias Lullaby Productions. I make these productions happen in my own studio in Berlin and at studio Noize Fabrik, where I co-work.

View my [personal equipment & production philosophy](#).

Bands and collaborations as a musician:

[The Shell Collector](#) | [Nrec](#)

[Brain](#) | [Tapewhore](#) | [Resurrecturis](#) | [Sides](#)

[Giorgio Serafino](#) | [PeopleInMyHead](#) | [Serena Abrami](#)

[Dziga](#) | [Last Union](#) | [Jenni Lark](#) | [K.Lust](#)

[HBRD](#) | [Nigredo](#) | [Cats Await Takeover](#)

<https://www.enricotiberi.com/credits/>

Verb

Use two reverbs on the vocal. Sometimes two reverbs combine to get one great reverb sound. A short reverb then another longer reverb. A longer reverb with less low end and a longer pre-delay brings out the shorter brighter one.

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Tim Critch, 21.7.21 p.196

Parallel Compression

The compressor is set up with a very high ratio — in fact, limiting is often used — and the threshold adjusted so that it provides a lot of gain reduction when the input signal is at its loudest. The more gain reduction the better, in fact: 20dB is a good start, but 40dB would be better! Of course, this requires a compressor that behaves nicely when applying a lot of gain reduction and doesn't generate any distortion products, which some do. The attack and release controls are set to suit the material and the effect required, in the usual way.

<https://www.soundonsound.com/techniques/parallel-compression>

When configured for parallel compression in this way, the contribution from the compressor during the loudest signal peaks will be well over 20dB quieter than that of the direct path, because of the massive gain reduction it is being forced to apply. This means that at those points, its involvement in the mixed output signal is virtually insignificant; the output signal is completely dominated by the original input signal coming via the direct path. As a result, those loud but delicate transients are left completely intact and unchanged — which is the primary aim of this technique. That's a tick on that one, then!

<https://www.soundonsound.com/techniques/parallel-compression>

what parallel compression allows you to do is take the original tracks, say drums for instance, treat those original tracks with normal EQ and compression or whatever you want, but then send a copy of the original tracks to another track where you can really add some heavy compression and effects.

<https://www.therecordingsolution.com/use-parallel-compression-drums/>

