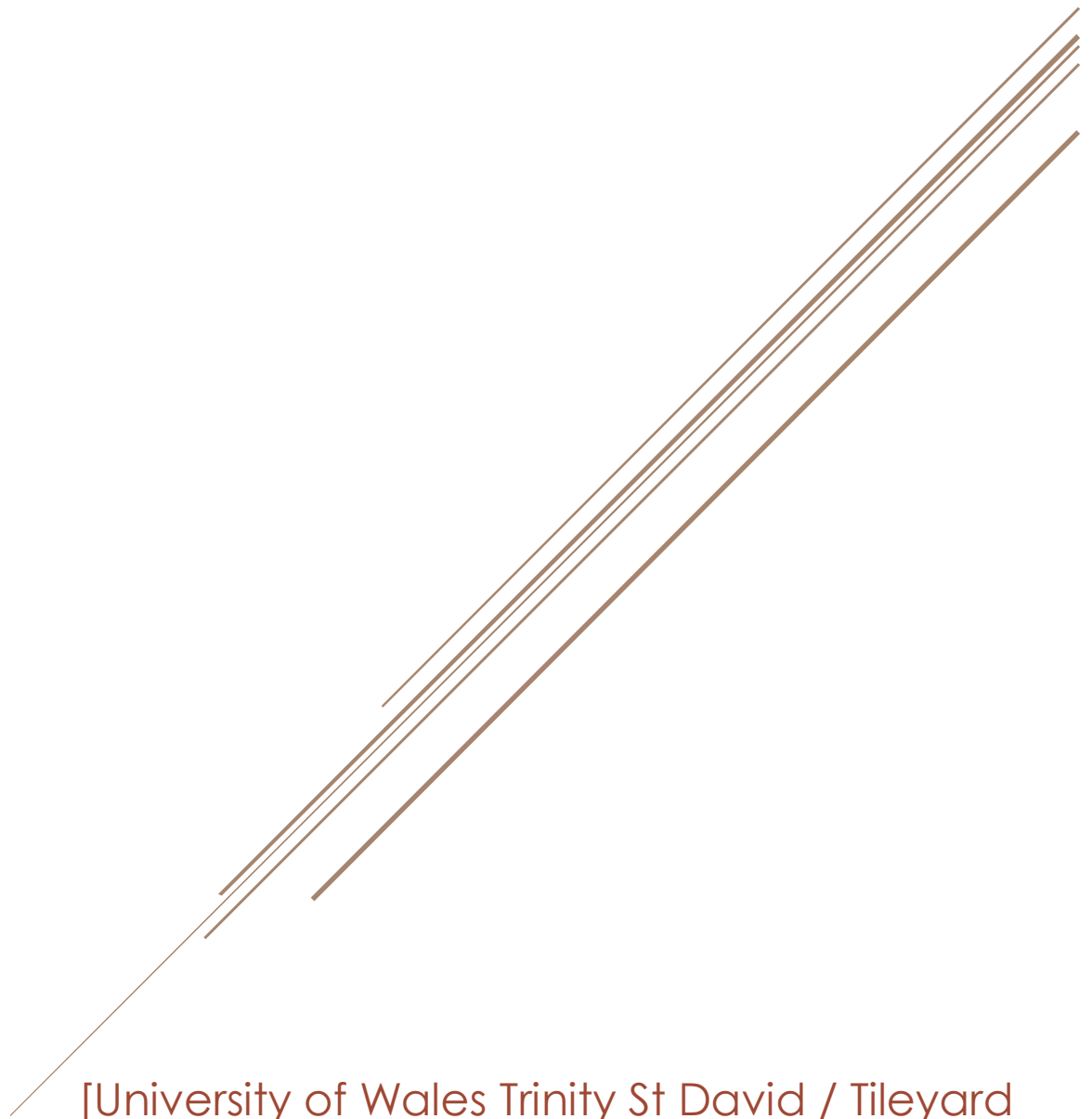




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Introduction - What I'm Planning

My Project is to create a portfolio of 6-10, high quality produced and recorded, excellently written songs that are ready to pitch to artists or release. This Portfolio will showcase my songwriting ability, production skills and mixing skill.

I will write, produce & record a collection of songs with the intent to either pitch to artists and labels or release. If time and budget allows, this may culminate in an Invite only, industry playback Session.

I am using this project to explore my career choice and decipher whether I want to, solely be a Songwriter/Producer, a Producer/Artist or an Artist who performs but also writes and produces for myself and others.

In this report, I will be exploring the benefits and advantages of each and also the pitfalls and disadvantages of each.

The songs I write in this project, I will be able to release as an artist, if I choose to, or pitch to another artist, record label or publisher to be re-recorded and released commercially.

I will also use these songs, to approach publishers and managers, in the hope of signing a publishing deal and hiring a manager, both will help further my career and take it to the next level.

How I'm going to carry out my project

To fulfil my goals and complete this project, for recording, the studio time I will need is:

1 Day Piano Session 4-6 hours

1 Day Drum Session 4-8 Hours

1 Day Vocal Session – 6 Hours

1 Half Day Brass Session – Trumpets & Saxophone – half day 4 hours

2-4 Days for Mixing.

My budget is £200 to pay

- Trumpet Player - £50
- Sax Player - £50
- Travel for Paul (Piano/Hammond Player) and lunch - £50
- Travel expenses for session musicians and any other unexpected costs - £50

I will mix all songs submitted in the project, to showcase my mixing skills, so that once I graduate, I can take on mixing and engineering work too, which will become another income source for me.

Resources I'll use for project planning

For my final project, I will be using a Gantt Chart to plan and fulfil my goals and it will help me set and stick to deadlines.

[Click Here to view my active Gantt Chart](#) ⁱ

My production process will follow this structure:

1. Songwriting / Programming / Arranging
2. Rehearsals
3. Recording / Tracking
4. Feedback
5. Mixing
6. Reflection

As I am completing each stage, I will be journaling and reflecting on my process. I will also create a personal development plan to refer to.

My process is inspired by Waves' 6 Stages to music Production.

Their process is 'Songwriting, Arranging, Tracking, Editing, Mixing and Mastering'. (Yoni Leviatan, 2017)

Because I am not mastering my songs, I have decided to focus more time on the songwriting and recording, and also time for on reflection and journaling my process.

I will do most, if not all of the programming and arranging at my home studio, as well as some of the recording for guitar and bass instruments.

Feedback is also an essential part of my process because I want the final product to be the best it can be. I will ask producers who are successful and whose opinion and critique I trust, to give me advice and feedback on the songs and how they can be improved before I go into the mixing phase.

It is also good practice to separate these phases. In an ideal situation, and if budget allowed, I would have a different person focusing on each, e.g. send recorded stems to a mixing engineer to be mixed, this stereo mix is then sent to a mastering engineer.

The Career of being a Non Performing Songwriter/Producer

The job of a working Songwriter / Producer is to write lyrics, songs and/or instrumentals for commercial release or bespoke songs for syncs.

When they reach a certain level of success, or either party feels they have something of interest to offer, the songwriter can hire a manager, and/or a publisher who can help to exploit their copyrights, act of their behalf, and put them in the right places at the right time. (e.g. Co-writing sessions with other songwriters, topliners or producers).

A lawyer and an accountant are also important people to have on your team, to handle your business and financial affairs.

Potential income streams for a non-performing songwriter ⁱⁱ

- PRS Songwriting Royalties
- Mechanical Royalties
- Publishing royalties (if they are self-published),
- A Publishers Advance.
- PPL if they featured on the work, produced or played an instrument.
- Composing original works for Broadcast
- Remixing work
- PRS Foundation – Writer Producer Fund. *Grants of up to £10,000 available to songwriters & Writer-Producers to put towards career development* (Foundation, 2019)

Here are some of the music related expenses a Non-Performing Songwriter has to think about and consider for their advancement and success:

- Studio Time,
- Recording Equipment
- Software, e.g. DAW's, Plugins,
- Travel
- Subscriptions

These expenses are sometimes be covered by their publisher if they are signed to one or their manager depending on their responsibilities, the deal signed, and the situation.

The internet opens the door to more opportunities for international collaboration. Websites like MusicGateway.com and Syncr, make it easier to collaborate with other creative and pitch songs to live briefs.

It also means the market is much more saturated, but a larger audience can appreciate great music and talented artists.

Case Studies

Jake Gosling and Ed White, are British producers who have worked with Grammy award-winning artists and their songs have sold multi-platinum across the globe.

I mentioned these two writers because they have focused on their strength and continue to write for current artists across genres including Ray Blk, Sam Smith, Adele, Ed Sheeran, Maverick Sabre and Izzy Bizu.

Jonny Coffey, is another british songwriter/producer who has credits on Beyonce's 'Lemonade' album on the song Freedom, and has also worked with Sam Smith, Naughty Boy and Ellie Goulding. (Bristout, 2016)

Alexander Shuckburgh, better known as Al Shux, is another influence of mine, a british songwriter/producer who co wrote Empire State of Mind which was eventually released by Jay Z and Alicia Keys.

These three producer/writers are great examples of producers who are solely Writer/Producers and shows me that it is possible to be successful if this is the path I decide to choose.

The career of being a Performing Artist as well as a Songwriter & Producer for other artists

Here is a list of some income streams available to the artist who also produce and song write.ⁱⁱⁱ This list also sometimes includes the above list, dependent on their level of success, their skills and their career choices/route.

- PRS – Songwriting Royalties
- Physical Sales (CD's, Vinyl, Cassette Tapes)
- Merchandise
- Live Ticket Sales
- Record Label Advance
- Publishers Advance
- Song Licensing
- Private Appearance Fees (Corporate gigs, birthday parties, Shows)
- Featured artist Fee.
- Donations
- Mixing
- Record Label Advance.
- Teaching – Workshops, online tutorials
- Paypal Tip Jar

"If you have a blog, you could add a Paypal 'tip jar' to your site and ask for donations" (Wiebe, 2018)

- Membership/Fan Club recurring Monthly payments

"If you have an email list, you can start a fan club and encourage your fans to pay for their membership. ...You would have to give people a reason to come back." (Wiebe, 2018)

Here are some case studies on my favourite songwriters who are also recording artists

In 2002, **Ryan Tedder**, moved to LA, and was mentored by Timberland for two years. *Ryan Tedder*, had his first break when his song apologize was remixed and featured on Timberland's album 'Timberland Presents Show Value'. The song was a #1 pop hit, and led to Ryan's Band, One Republic being signed to Timberland's Label.

He has since written global hits for every genre of artist Beyoncé, Adele, Maroon 5 and Leona Lewis. (Lamb, 2017)

Jessie J, got her first big break into the music industry as a songwriter, when she co wrote 'Party in the USA' which was released by Miley Cyrus and Charted at number #2 in the Billboard Charts. (Williams, 2017)

Charlie XCX, had her first songwriting success and break into the industry when she co-wrote 'I Love It', which was release by Icona Pop in 2012. (Garvey, 2014)

The Position of UK R&B and Rap in the Global Market

In an Interview with The Guardian Newspaper, R&B Singer Ella Mai said this about UK R&B.

"The music industry in England doesn't really know what to do with R&B," Mai says. "If it were up to England, Boo'd Up definitely wouldn't be where it is now." (Myers, 2018)

In 2017 Shakka, was chosen to represent the UK at Midem's Artist Accelerator, which gave him the platform to perform at Midem in front of an audience of music industry leaders and professionals and creatives from all over the world.

With the internet and social media, it is now a global marketplace. Fans have changed the way they listen to and buy music. Record sales, on the whole, have declined as fewer people are buying music and more people are streaming.

The age of streaming music has arrived in full force, displacing both physical sales (e.g., CDs) and downloaded songs (e.g., iTunes). As streaming has taken hold, U.S. album sales, both physical and digital, have plummeted from a peak of 785 million in 2000 to just 241 million in 2015. The change comes from people switching from purchasing full albums, either online or offline, to listening to individual songs through a streaming platform such as Spotify, Tidal, or Pandora (where one of us works, full disclosure). (McFadden, 2016)

Beyoncé made history with her album **Lemonade**, which was streamed a record 115 million times in its first week. Just one week later, Drake broke that record when his album **Views** was streamed 245 million times. (McFadden, 2016)

With genre-specific playlists, specialist curated playlists and new music Friday playlists on both Spotify and Apple Music; it's now easier for fans to hear to new music and be recommended songs based on their listening tastes.

IFPI reports that 86% of consumers are listening to music through on demand streaming (audio and video)

(IFPI, 2018)

There are also more music festivals in the UK that are focused on R&B genres, including Cross the Tracks and Love Supreme. Glastonbury also has stages dedicated to urban music, for example, the headliners for this year's West Holt Stage includes, Jorja Smith and Janelle Monae.

My position in the UK and International Marketplace

I feel that with the success of Bruno Mars, Justin Timberlake, John Legend and Pharrell (e.g. Get Lucky) The throwback R&B/HipHop sound is coming back into the mainstream, with live instruments being appreciated and embraced more in songs. These artists who are my main influences have had successful careers so my music stands a good chance too of being successful.

Bruno Mars was the 10th most successful artist of 2018 in the globe according to IFPI Global Music Report 2019 // State of the Industry, with Ed Sheeran being 3rd, and Drake being the 1st. (IFPI, 2018)

Some of the songs i'm producing in this project have funky production, are in a similar to Bruno Mars throwback 80's disco style.

According to the IFPI Global Music Report 2019 // State of the Industry, 'Girls Like You' by Maroon 5 (Featuring Cardi B) sold 11.9 million units worldwide.

Ed Sheeran's 'Perfect' sold 13.5m and 'Shape of You' sold 14.9M.

These are all songs by male artists, which have R&B elements but are not solely R&B songs. (IFPI, 2018)

Ed Sheeran continued to help exports soar by 13 per cent to £2.5 billion. His third album ÷ (Divide) was the biggest selling album in the world in 2017. This is the third time in the past five years that a UK artist has achieved this accolade. (UKMUSIC, 2018)

This is encouraging for me and the potential for my songs to be successful if they are produced to the highest quality and pitched to the right artist. Ella Mai agrees with this statement given in an interview with the Guardian newspaper;

"There's a place for R&B in the UK industry, a huge market," she says. "I hope that Boo'd Up can be a testament to the fact. Sometimes, it takes you moving outside the box to prove that it can be done."

(Myers, 2018)

However, it is interesting to see that according to IFPI's MUSIC CONSUMER INSIGHT REPORT of 2018, R&B was the 8th most popular genre out of the top 10, Soul/Blues closely followed behind in 9th place. The most popular genre being Pop. (IFPI, 2018)

With the success of the artists I feel similar to in style, I have to acknowledge the teams supporting them and the length of time they've been working on their craft.

Record companies invest more than US\$1.7 billion annually in marketing artists. They also assign expert teams to create and deliver the campaigns that break their music worldwide. These teams will work with an artist to develop a bespoke campaign. They create content that tells a compelling story about the artist and their music and find the right channels to appeal to their future fan base. (IFPI, 2018)

Once a record company has helped an artist to break through to an audience with their music, further revenue opportunities can be developed. (IFPI, 2018)

Justin Timberlake, Bruno Mars, John Legend and many other successful R&B artists are signed to major labels.

Virtually every artist who reaches the charts has partnered with a record company. They do so by choice, in a landscape that offers artists more ways to release their music than ever before. They choose this route for good reason: to gain the experience, expertise and significant investment that a record deal brings. A record company works with a constellation of different teams, all centred around the artist. There are songwriters and producers, A&R (artist and repertoire) professionals, marketing, publicity, promotion and video production teams, as well as those in merchandising, accounting and distribution. (IFPI, 2018)

Here is a diagram of the investment and teams that support recording artists when they are signed to a record label.

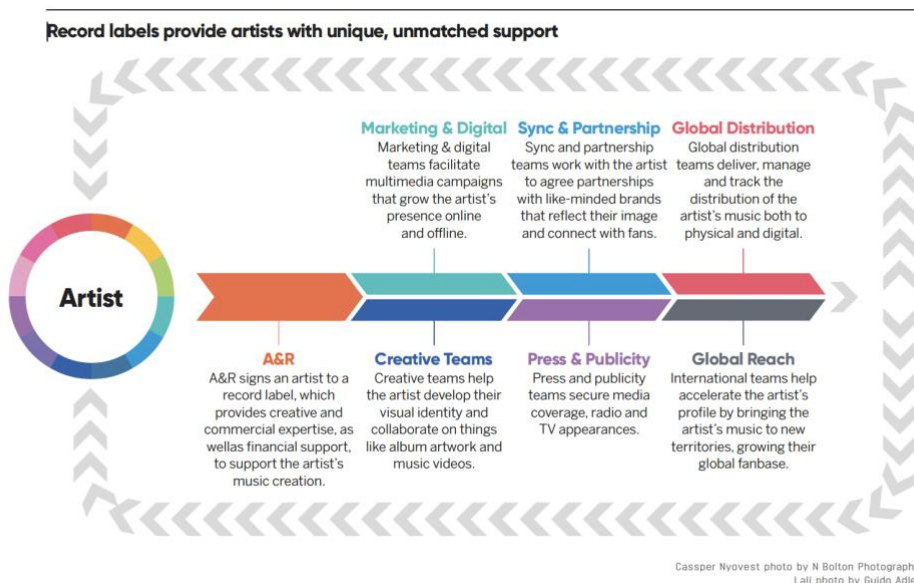


Figure 1 Record Labels provide artists with unique, unmatched support. (IFPI, 2019)

My portfolio would be more attractive a record label if I packaged into an EPK or launched a website, which is something I may consider as my project progresses, and if budget allows. This will only be done after I'm happy that all of my songs are produced to the highest level.

This diagram also shows the many roles an independent artist would have to play and balance on their own, and in most situations with their own financial investment.

The Power of Collaboration

Collaboration is something that brings a breath of fresh air into writing and producing. I feel like some of my best work has come out of collaborations and co writes.

Being able to bounce ideas off another creative is something that is valuable to the song to bring the best out of it, and it helps you to be objective about your ideas and not subjective.

Pam Sheyne, a multi platinum selling songwriter, vocal producer, singer and co founder of songwritercamps.com wrote about her 6 benefits of collaboration in Songwriting, which are:

1. Working with people who compliment your skillset, lightens the load and increases productivity
2. Working with people who are more experienced than you, helps you fine tune your skills and elevates you and your craft.
3. Extend your network and you will find "your people" and the ones you have the best chemistry with.
4. Enhances your professional and personal development.
5. More people marketing the song and finding a home for it can only enhance your strike rate.
6. Different minds bring different perspectives and a mix of styles.

(Sheyne, 2019)

Writing Camps

In April, I spent five days in Stockholm, Sweden for a Songwriting Camp. I found this to be a very productive and beneficial experience for my career. Each day I wrote with a new team of people to an active industry brief. I not only learnt new production tips and tricks from professional producers but there is also the possibility for a cut if the pitches are successful. It also opened me up to international collaborators.

In an interview with PRS about songwriting camps, Christophe Muller, Head of International Partnerships for Youtube said *"The Songwriting Camps are exciting opportunities to bring together creative, inspiring songwriters and producers to learn from each other."* (PRSForMusic, 2016)

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). Similarly, West's *Ye* deals with mental illness and other intimate themes, but numerous writers, from Benny Blanco to Ty Dolla \$ign, helped him turn those issues into songs.

(Knopper, 2016)

The Producer / Artist

"The producer is just as important as the artist right now. People listen for the producer just as much as they listen for the artist.

(Setaro, 2018)

Producer/Artists are established figures in the R&B and Hip Hop Genres, with the likes of Pharrell Williams, Timberland, DJ Khaled, Mark Ronson, releasing music they've also produced and written.

Case Studies

Mark Ronson is a well known producer/artist who is most known for his work with Amy Winehouse. He continues to collaborate with artists and released music as an artist including Uptown Funk.

DJ Khaled started out as a DJ and record producer, and rose to international fame with the release of smash singles and album featuring collaborations of some of the worlds most successful artists.

He has had platinum-selling success releasing projects under his own name, in no small part due to the star power he's able to bring aboard. (Setaro, 2018)

Timbaland leveraged his market saturation into a string of gigantic mid-aughts pop hits, but he was singing and rapping and wickedy-wickedy-ing on those songs, not just producing. (DeVille, 2016)

Because I feel that my main creative strength is songwriting, I don't personally see myself going down this route.

Industry Mentors

Throughout my studies, I have had advice from various mentors who are successful producers in the industry.

I found it to be very valuable and useful for my productions, and their advice has been implemented into my productions in this portfolio.

My mentor this year is Martyn Ware of the successful bands, The Human League and Heaven 17 and the Founder of Illustrious company, a 3D sound installation company.^{iv}

He is a great mentor for me because of his longevity in the music industry, as both a producer/writer and a member of a successful international band.

"Good mentors will work with you to identify your strengths and weaknesses and assess strategies to get you closer to your goals. They will provide honest and constructive feedback, help you develop self-awareness, and inspire you to reach beyond your own perceived limitations. In addition, mentors also often have the clout and connections to guide you in your career pursuits. Their job is to pass on their knowledge to you but it is also your responsibility to take action and implement the information they offer." (Ferreira, n.d.)

My Final Reflection and Summary of my Final Project

I believe that longterm, being a Songwriter/Producer is a more lucrative career path and also less pressure when 'on the journey to becoming successful'. As an artist, there are many more things you have to focus on and build simultaneously like branding, marketing, PR, social media, and building a loyal fanbase, all while writing new music. On the other side of the decision, I do think being an artist would be the more enjoyable career path because I will be able to perform on stages and festivals and travel the world.

Fans want to hear and see unique and new perspectives in the songs they listen to and have a great live experience at a show. They want to feel an emotion and be entertained, and the quality of music they expect need to be excellent. So artists songwriters and producer, need an understanding of what has been successful in the past, how it got successful, and the ability to stay relevant by creating your own sound.

At the core of these career paths I've explored, whether I decide to become an artist and producer/songwriter, a producer/artist or solely a writer/producer, the common thread that is fundamental and required is impressive songs. So this is going to be my focus, **to create a portfolio of 6-10 high quality produced, recorded, and excellently written songs**. Everything else (Branding, Social Media, Marketing and promotion) is secondary after that.

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Appendix

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