D3 Portfolio – Overview of Briefs and Improvements

Track 1 - "Insurgence" (originally submitted for D1 portfolio)

Written to pitch for a movie trailer. I received the below info from the trailer company:

It is a high – intensity action-thriller where special forces face off against a terrorist insurgency at a secret intelligence black site. The music should have a sense of light and dark, building tension and blockbuster-style cues that are made for huge on-screen action moments. There should moments of repetition and tension, coupled with a release that is both explosive and monumental. Production should be purely instrumental and cinematic.

Improvements made since D1 submission:

- On reflection, I thought much of the track felt a bit rushed (especially in the first half), due to the spaces in-between the hit-points perhaps being too short. In this new version, I added some extra beats into many sections of the track to space it out in a way that felt more natural to me.

- I made the climactic beat section at the end of the track twice as long, as I felt it was too short in the previous version.

- I refined the mix a little – e.g. making the drums a little quieter and aiming to make the whole track sound "fatter". Some mix refinements are still needed (e.g. some of the sounds are perhaps over-limited / over-compressed).

Track 2 - "Eternal Light" (originally submitted for D1 portfolio)

For this track, I chose an album in the catalogue of trailer music label Audiomachine and pretended that I had been asked to contribute a track for that album. I aimed to create a track that fitted the album description and would fit-in coherently with the other tracks in the album, whilst also following the stylistic and structural conventions expected of trailer music.

Album title and description:

HERE AND NOW

Not all legends that stand the test of time are about kings or superheroes. Many of the greatest stories ever told are our own, reflecting our curiosity about the natural world around us, or about the tenacity of the human spirit. Here and Now leans in to the humanity in our modern storytelling, fusing organic instruments with strings and synths, building powerfully, but without the over-the-top bombast of traditional epic music.

Link to reference tracks: https://search.audiomachine.com/albums/am55

Improvements made since D1 submission:

- Choir – the use of "wordbuilder" lyrical samples in my previous submission sounded clumsy, with the sibilance being especially distracting. I've now opted for simple "ooh" and "aah" samples.

- There are some adjustments to the way the melody is voiced between the string instruments (aiming to make the track sound more "fluid").

- (Some mix refinements are still needed, e.g. The noise floor hiss needs to be dealt with).

Track 3 - "Crush" (originally submitted for Foundation portfolio)

Written to pitch for a K-pop boy band, for the below brief:

SONG #3 immatureness of first love experience, misunderstanding, disputes (hiphop based dance song)

-lyrically talking about hurting by misunderstanding/immatureness when you love someone for the first time

-hiphop based, strong dance song

MONSTA X - FANTASIA

MONSTA X - Shoot Out

SF9 - Now or Never

THE BOYZ - REVEAL

ATEEZ- HALA HALA (Hearts Awakened, Live Alive)

Improvements made since Foundation submission:

- Vocal mixing – I made the vocals more upfront, through compression, EQ and saturation.

- Vocal layering – I added many layers of pitch shifted vocal harmonies, to thicken the vocal sound.

- I aimed to make the whole track a bit thicker, through use of compression, harmonic exciters and arrangement additions (e.g. layering sounds and programming in more drums).

- I sped the track up by 2 bpm, as it felt “sluggish” to me at the original tempo.

Track 4 – Soundtrack for a Native Instruments product trailer (originally submitted for D1 portfolio)

Created for a Metapop scoring competition. (I was lucky enough to win the runner-up prize)

Link to higher quality video is below (the video submitted on Moodle is low res due to file size limit).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7avEXL8UWM

Improvements made since D1 submission:

- Very slight changes to the arrangement (e.g. strings programming) in attempt to make the track “flow” better.

Track 5 – Charlie Scoble – “You're On My Mind” (originally submitted for Foundation portfolio)

Improvements made since Foundation submission:

- The guitar tone has been adjusted to have a less pronounced chorus effect, as it previously sounded too detuned.
- Backing vocal harmonies have been added in.

Track 6 – Untitled trailer track

Instead of writing to a specific brief, here I attempted to conform to the stylistic expectations of trailer music, so that I could pitch the track to trailer music publishers.

The brief I interpreted, from my research into the genre was:

- The track should be between 2 – 3 minutes long.
- The track should follow the "three-act structure" that many movie / TV trailers use.
- I made this with a specific TV genre in mind – Nordic / Scandinavian Noir crime genre.

Track 7 – "Changing" (Sigma cover)

Sync music publisher/label Pusher asked me and vocalist Javeon to create a cover of "Changing" by Sigma, reimagining it for a movie trailer context. They asked for it to be based on piano and orchestra, and they also wanted it to have a "magical" quality, suited for Disney movies.

Improvements made since D1 submission:

- The instrumental previously sounded a little thin during the first verse. In attempt to make it sound a little thicker here, I added a very quiet sub bass – I wanted this to be felt more than heard, hopefully just thickening the low-end of the track, giving the illusion of the piano sounding fuller.

- The lead vocal was previously getting a little bit masked by the instrumental during the latter half of the track. For this new version, I used some side-chained multiband compression to hopefully improve this a little. I grouped all the harmony instruments (the orchestra/piano/guitars) to a bus, and used a dynamic EQ plugin to dip the low mid frequencies with sidechain input from the lead vocal. This hopefully allowed the warmth of the vocal to cut through the mix a bit more.

Track 8 – Dakota Simpson – “Flaneur”

The brief:

I was provided with just vocals and acoustic guitar takes (and some pads/bass during the end section), and was asked to turn this track into a full arrangement and production, adding all the other instruments.

I was asked to reference Pheobe Bridgers’ *Punisher* album.

Track 9 – Charlie Scoble – “Clockwork”

The brief:

The artist wanted my production to emulate an old-fashioned soul sound. The main reference track I was given was “Hello Like Before” by Bill Withers, though I was also asked to reference tracks by BADBADNOTGOOD, such as “Time Moves Slow” and “Key To Love (Is Understanding)”.