

FOUNDATION ASSESSMENT COURSEWORK

MA COMMERCIAL MUSIC PRODUCTION
JAMES ANTHONY OFORI-POKU (1808647)

INTRODUCTION

Music has been a constant evolving art form which has been around the world for a long period of time. A crucial part of art, the evolution of music can be attributed to the birth of various styles or genres that have been discovered and developed over the years. Music genres, ranging from hip-hop, house, soul to classical music, are distinct in terms of their instrumentation, arrangement, mix, use of effects, tempo and time signature. These characteristics give musical genres their tone or style. Thus, this assessment purposely analyses three music genres of choice in the aforementioned areas that makes them different to one another. The music genres to examine in this assessment would be drum and bass, garage and house music. With the help of reference tracks, the main goal is to produce and mix tracks to the genres of choice accordingly. The DAW in which I would be producing and mixing these tracks would be in Ableton.

MUSIC GENRES

DRUM AND BASS:

Drum and bass is a genre of electronic music that is generally defined by the use of sped-up breakbeats (i.e. usually 160-180 BPM) along with the use of heavy and sub bass, samples and synth sounds. The origins of drum and bass can be traced back to the early 1990s during the emerging rave and jungle culture in Britain when samples of breakbeats, samples of music, effects and dialogue from television and movies were combined to form a faster style of music. At the time, there was hardcore which was a faster subgenre that was consistent with fast breakbeats alongside heavy basslines and sampled old Jamaican music and these became known as **jungle techno**. This would later be referred to simply as **jungle**. By the mid 1990s, jungle, as a separate music genre, had achieved mainstream recognition and was popularly played at raves and **pirate radio** stations across Britain. The genre had also gathered a popular following amongst the youth subculture. The jungle music genre evolved over time as elements of differing music genres which comprised of dancehall, basslines from dub music, the sounds of **raggamuffin**, the chants of MCs and increased composite percussions of breakbeat that had been heavily edited, were fused or combined into the genre. Although jungle grew popular, it often attracted negativity for its affiliation of crime and violence due to the genre's frequent characteristic of ominous sound. With that in mind, some producers of the genre decided to shift from **ragga-inspired** character of jungle and collectively form what would be known today as drum and bass. From the year 1995 onwards (including the turn of the millennium), the productive technicality of drum and bass, which had developed largely with additional composure and refinement. Drum and bass grew from pirate radio stations to commercial radio stations as is also gathered increased acclaim from the populace. As a result of the growth of the genre, sub-genres such as **hardstep**, **techstep**, **liquid funk**, **jump-up** and etc, were created as well as introducing a new wave of producers adding complex techniques and concepts to help evolve the drum and bass genre further. In the present, drum and bass continuously appears in commercial media and still remains well known to the populace. Popular artists that are mostly associated with the genre include **High Contrast**, **Chase & Status**, **Goldie**, **London Elektricity**, **Sub Focus**, **Netsky** and etc. The major influences of drum and bass from the early days were the original sounds of **Jamaican dub** and **reggae** music which were incorporated or combined to create the jungle sub-genre of drum and bass.

My Track:

Liquid Solace.

Reference Track:

Culture Shock – There For You

Additional Tracks:

Metrik – Hi

Cyantific – Cyborg (ft. B-Motion)

Photek – Ni-Ten-Ichi-Ryu

Instrumentation:

The instruments involved in the general production of drum and bass would be a variety of sampled kick drum sounds, a layered sample of differing breakbeats (as previously mentioned), synths, a distinct bass or bassline sound, vocal chops, arpeggiated chords, chord progression loops and etc. In the case of my track, I picked a Kick 3k Deep, DW KIK 7, Clap Analog 2, Rim Casual Roomy, DBS 174 BPM Old Skool Stepper 8 (i.e. a breakbeat sample), RetroPoli1, Analog Bass, Soothing Minor 11, Ascend Squares (i.e. arpeggiated chords) and

FX sounds, which are: Cymbals Reversed, Clap 808 Dry, FX Clap Hit Impact, FX Sound 9, BB2 FX 1 and an organic vocal recording contained in a simpler instrument, for transitioning in between the stages of the track. My choice for selecting these sounds adheres to the instrumentation principles of the reference track or in other words, give my perspective on the sounds I would use to create the track after the reference track. In terms of the individual drum sounds, I handpicked them based on the sound and feel of what drum and bass is commonly known for.

Arrangement:

The arrangement and composition of my track is more instrumental based and less vocal dependant (i.e. a minor use of vocal chops) as is a defining character of the reference track I picked and thus, the instrumentals of the track get sonically distinctive as the track progresses. An example being the analog bass. With most drum and bass tracks, there are mostly instrumentals and no vocals, and sometimes, instrumentals with vocals. With regards to the track I have created for this genre, there are some vocal chops recorded with a change in the pitch as plays. The arrangement pattern of my track is *intro-texture A-texture B-break-chorus-outro*. The track arrangement has got an intro (i.e. it is here where the vocal fall within the arrangement of the track), texture part A and B, a break and the chorus itself. The chorus of the track goes on for 96 bars while halfway, the Ascend Squares sound is layered after the 46th bar. The DW KIK 7 begins the track and after 4 bars, the Kick 3k Deep follows. The initial steps of the track introduce each elements of the drums involved after the first 4 bars. The Analog Bass sound begins with the DW KIK 7. FX sounds start from the first bar as well. The BDS 174 Old Skool Stepper plays throughout the track. In the case of the Analog Bass, the frequency of the bass gets distinctive as the track progresses further with the implementation of automation.

Mix (EQ And Level Balances):

The overall track is bass heavy and a moderate amount of high end. The kicks in the track have got a minor amount of boost on the low end to give it the heavy bass feel as the genre has in the name. EQ and compressors have been laid into all the channels or tracks mentioned to either give boost or decrease the gain depending on how their frequencies are in the overall sound of the track. The EQ and the compressor have been the fundamental mixing devices available to use to get the levelling of the channels fairly even.

Use Of Effects:

With the use of reverb, specifically with decay time, it helps some interesting transitions in the track. Automation also plays a vital part of creating effects with transitioning. This is with the analog bass as mentioned earlier.

Tempo:

The tempo of the track is 173 BPM as it is within the usual tempo range of drum and bass.

Time Signature:

The time signature of the overall track is in 4/4 (commonly known as common time).

GARAGE:

Garage music, otherwise known as UK garage (i.e. UKG), is an electronic music genre or style that originated in the early 1990s from England. The genres that contributed to the birth of garage music range from R&B, dance pop, jungle to garage house. The defining character of garage music is its unusual patterns of the kick drum, rhythmic percussive cymbals, snares and hi-hats. Another general feature of garage music also includes the use of vocal samples sliced, pitch changed and warped to fit along with the rhythm of the BPM given, normally at 130 BPM. The growth of the house music genre in England in the 1990s originated the term “garage”

Reference Track:

Additional Tracks:

Instrumentation:

Arrangement:

Mix (EQ And Level Balances):

Use Of Effects:

Tempo:

Time Signature:

HOUSE:

Reference Track:

Additional Tracks:

Instrumentation:

Arrangement:

Mix (EQ And Level Balances):

Use Of Effects:

Tempo:

Time Signature:

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