

Creative Practice 2 – Music Technology

Producer Case Study Outline/Pointers

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In this Case study I will be looking at the work of “Deadmau5” an electronic producer and musician known for his progressive house club music and “Kshmr” another electronic producer known for his work on multiple genres, I will be focusing on these two producers in order to find the contrast between digital and natural sound and how they appeal to listeners, how this has had an effect on their line of work when it comes to their success, fanbase and the effect their sound and style of music has on new producers.

The role of the producer:

Recording producers work in sound studios for a variety of media, like movies, television, radio, or music. Using a range of microphones and other equipment, they record speech, sound effects or music, these recordings are then uploaded to a computer for adjusting and editing the recorded sounds.

A producer has varying roles and the exact responsibilities will depend on what segment of the media industry, they find themselves working in. The roles of a producer including radio and TV stations, record labels, sound design studios and production houses.

Wherever employment is found, they will most likely begin their career in the area of recording or as a production technician. Responsibilities will include monitoring and maintaining the levels set on the mixing board and installing and operating the microphones used to capture the audio output. They might also set up audio production equipment, such as sequencers or samplers and will probably work as part of a production team, along with an executive producer, music or audio producer and other technicians. Music producers oversee all aspects of a recording session focusing on the creativity of a project.

An engineer is involved, both during and after the recording process. An engineer works on the recording of the audio itself, that will be used by the producer who ensures everything is mixed well together for a polished sound getting rid of any harsh frequencies

in the audio that has been recorded by ensuring correct microphone placements for clear recording of the subject.

The Producers:

Deadmau5

Joel Thomas Zimmerman is a Canadian electronic music producer, DJ, and musician. He has worked with other DJs and producers, such as Kaskade, MC Flipside, Rob Wire and Wolfgang Gartner.

His works have been included in compilation albums such as Tiesto's *In Search of Sunrise 6: Ibiza* and presented on Armin van Buuren's *A State of Trance* radio show. Joel has been active since 1998 with his career in music taking off late 1990's with a chiptune and demo scene movements-influenced sound with the impulse tracker ([Burns, T. \(2008\). Deadmau5: It's complicated.](#)).

Joel's production style is mainly focusing on analogue synthesizers for the progressive house, electro house, genre which is easily recognizable with his use of Analog modular systems. He is involved with all aspects of the recording and engineering stage due to producing his music at his home studio, which is filled with some of the most expensive tech for music production, with a Neve Analog console, Analog modular systems and many synthesizers, ([Linus tech tips](#)). Joel's production style has not changed much over the years since his career started other than his stage show, which has become more visual with his use of "the cube".

Since Joel released his debut album in 2005 called "Get Scraped" he has grown his fan base via his music, in 2007 started his own recording label "mau5trap" he has been nominated for 42 awards and has won 15.

Joel is also known for his love of online gaming, in 2020 Deadmau5 was ranked number 71 on DJ magazine's Top 100 DJs of the year ([djmag](#))

When producing Joel is known for livestreaming some of his work during the production process, where he focuses on the chords of his next piece of music sticking to the same

sound he is known for and building on it over time working in this way eventually led to the creation of “veldt” which a fan “Chris James” wrote and recorded vocals and sent them to him during a livestream, this was then used to finish the project for release.

Kshmr

Niles Hollowell-Dhar better known by his stage name Kshmr (pronounced “Kashmir”) is a musician, record producer and DJ. He was originally a part of the hip-hop production duo, The Cataracs with David Singer-Vine, releasing hits like "Like a G6" with Far East Movement, "Bass Down Low" with DEV, and on multiple occasions Kshmr has DJ'd with a live orchestra ([Yaskey, 2019](#)). In 2020 Hollowell-Dhar was ranked number 15 on DJ magazine's Top 100 DJs of the year ([djmag](#))

Kshmr's genres are electro house, big room, house and psytrance, he has been in the music industry since 2006 collaborating with other producers and building his fan base, He uses Ableton live 9 for producing his work, which is recognisable with his use of Indian ethnic sounds, from vocals, to ethnic drums.

Kshmr tends to sit through any idea blocks he may have and pushes through until his projects are complete and finds thinking of it as a story is the best way to create as it becomes more personal, he is heavily involved in all aspects of his projects from recording to engineering, and known for recording sound packs which he sells, and uses in his own projects in many creative ways.

His style overtime has remained sound design focused which has increased the creativity of his work looking for more natural sounds for his music which in turn has grown his fan base, many who are producers themselves and looking for insight into his methods of sound design when producing, which has led to him doing producer masterclasses, eventually creating his own Label in 2017 “Dharma worldwide”, as well as the website by the same name which focusing on producers giving tutorials on creative ways to produce, sharing templates, and sound Packs to create a community of producers who can grow and learn together and given more opportunities for up and coming producers ([dharmaworldwide](#))

Conclusion

Both producers work in the electronic genre and use sounds design as a main aspect of their work, however there is a clear difference in the outcomes of their sound and fanbase, both

produce and engineer their own work, and connect with their fans directly, have their own label, and give masterclasses on their methods, yet the differences between them are very noticeable, it seems upon closer inspection it would be due to Kshmr being new to the music scene compared to Deadmau5 which some would think there would be more to give from Kshmr than Deadmau5, who has been in the music industry for a lot longer.

Deadmau5 tends to have a pure nightclub style genre compared to Kshmr who tends to think bigger in essence of sound, including orchestras on stage during his performances which is not common in the DJ world, and with there not being much of a change to the methods or style of Deadmau5 through his career in music, it is a difficult area to compare, not knowing everything ever done with a stage show for each, however knowing the amount of work that goes into producing and that the creative side is one of the most important parts, it seems that Deadmau5 may have focused too much on the tech side than the areas of natural sound that Kshmr has gone for, so to compare the difference in those areas would become more simple.

Deadmau5 is mainly digital with the use of analog synthesizers, and Kshmr working with more natural recorded sounds, with some digital aspects more in the background of his sound, it's clear that people are drawn to the natural as opposed to the digital sound we have had for so long in the industry.

Deadmau5's style remaining the same through his career, and Kshmr's sound varying due to an increased focus on his natural sound design there is a change in his music's sound, yet with the same methods that Deadmau5 would use.

Summary

Overall when it comes to being a producer it seems that making music more natural to the sounds we hear around us is far more compelling than creating a digital sound, that although appealing to some, can have less of an appeal to those listening, with the rise of more digital producers it is a surprise to me to come to the realisation that digital, although easy to make, is not the most appealing, and focus should definitely be based more on the natural sounds around us.

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