

Written Proposal

MA Commercial Music Producer

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Project Proposal

What am I intending to create?

I am intending on writing and producing a 6 track EP for my project under the artist name Darcy Blu. I will use the feedback given from my previous production submissions to improve my skills as a producer for this project. I chose to create an EP for my project as I am an artist as well as a producer, so I wanted to incorporate my production skills into my artist project. The EP will be released as a “waterfall release” as I believe this to be the most fitting way to release EPs in the modern world of streaming. Deahl (2019) supports this idea stating that the “waterfall strategy” is becoming more popular. Deahl (2019) explains the waterfall strategy is when an artist will “put out singles month after month, eventually building them into an EP or an album”. Albums are no longer dropped anymore, they are instead built via the waterfall strategy.

I plan to release each individual single every 2 months which will eventually lead to an EP. I have chosen to do this in order to build up my artist fanbase further with the end goal of turning ‘Darcy Blu’ as a producer and artist into my full-time career. Due to it being a waterfall release I decided I wanted the EP to have some form of concept. As I am a pop producer and artist the song subject is usually focussed on heartbreak. Therefore, I decided to write an EP about the journey of heartbreak and healing. Picken (2022) supports this idea when stating “it is surprisingly hard to think of many recent chart-toppers that have no connection whatsoever to love”. Picken (2022) explains there is no denying the importance of romance and heartbreak in pop music. As heartbreak is a universal feeling, songs about heartbreak are most relatable for listeners through their own personal experience meaning these songs are easiest to market and sell. I kept this in mind when planning my project to ensure maximum success. Lomax (2019) supports this idea stating, “it seems the gravitational pull towards music when heartbreak hits is almost as universal as heartbreak itself”.

Why am I taking on this project?

By creating this EP not only am I improving my skills, my portfolio and credits as a producer but I am also improving my skills as an artist, songwriter, entrepreneur and businesswoman. I intend to make my artist career my main career in the industry so this project will be beneficial to more than one part of my musical journey. I was inspired to produce my own EP

through seeing other female producers and artists in the industry doing the same, such as Griff and Nina Nesbitt.

Another reason I am taking on this project is I am intrigued to explore my musical journey having full control over the sounds I choose and create. Despite producing for other people's projects before, I have only collaborated with other producers on the songs I release under Darcy Blu. Combining my own production and song writing will add another layer to the EP and to the release. I am taking on this project with the intention of increasing momentum within my production and artist career. I have already built a small fanbase through my previous releases. I intend to create this project with the hope that my current fanbase will understand and love the EP on a personal level and feel even more connected to Darcy Blu.

What are the benchmarks for success?

In terms of the production side of this project the benchmarks for success are more subjective compared to the entrepreneurial and business side of this project. Subjectivity is when personal beliefs or feelings influence a decision (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). Whether music is good or not is subjective as it all depends on what one feels. However, I can determine success by judging if the tracks sound professional and commercial enough to be released under the artist name Darcy Blu by comparing them to my other commercially produced tracks. I can also use other commercial songs and EPs that are already out as reference tracks to benchmark success by comparing the tracks similarities and if the quality sounds the same. I could compare the quality of production to other similar artists in my genre such as Nina Nesbitt, Griff and Finneas.

In terms of subjective data, I can have benchmarks for success when it comes to the audience's response and the success of the tracks in terms of label interest. When it comes to qualitative data, I can ask fellow musicians and producers whose opinions I trust if they are seeing improvement in my production as a benchmark for success. If there is improvement and the tracks are deemed as commercially ready, this is success to me.

The main goal of the project is to grow my fanbase. In terms of the entrepreneurial and business side of this project I can use benchmarks for success with quantitative data such as Spotify streams once the EP is out. I can also use quantitative data to determine the success of the project by looking at social media insights and streams on music platforms. The growth in followers and streams alongside engagement on my socials would be my benchmark for success.

I currently have over 11,000 monthly listeners on Spotify with over half a million streams on Spotify all together (Darcy Blu, 2022). I have over 1,500 Instagram followers and 800 TikTok followers (see Appendix 1). Some would define success as a growth in ones following and a rise in numbers on socials and Spotify, as this shows more people are listening. McGuire (2019) supports this stating “having loads of adoring fans around the world is what many musicians might rightfully consider a signifier of musical success”. Even though this is subjective, I would consider a growth in my fanbase and following as a benchmark for success. Daniels (2019) also supports this idea stating, “half of independent artists said success looks like building up a fan base of any size”.

McGuire (2019) does argue having millions of streams may not actually result in artists or producers feeling “successful”. This is because a lot of streams don’t necessarily translate to living wages. This made me realise it is important to bear in mind my end goal being turning my production and artist project into my full-time career. Therefore, a benchmark for success would be receiving a stable income from my music. Although this would be a benchmark for success, I see this as more of a long-term goal. The only way to reach that goal is to achieve the smaller successes first such as growing my fanbase further.

How I intend on approaching the project

Before starting this project, I considered the planning requirements needed to make sure my goals were realistic and achievable for an artist and producer my size, as well as making sure there was enough time to achieve these goals. I had to leave enough time for the songs to be written and produced, mixed and mastered, the artwork needed to be ready in advance as well as the logos fitting with my brand, promo photos and promo artwork for social media. This is how I realised through doing this project it would push many more skills within me than purely production skills. I am willing to take on this challenge.

I intend on approaching this project by writing 6 songs that are all based around the concept of heartbreak for my artist project Darcy Blu. The title of the EP will be “Bathroom Talk”. I will start with the song writing first and then produce the songs myself. I will analyse the data I currently have on my artist profile on Spotify and Instagram to ensure I create the correct campaign plan when releasing this project. Through my current analytical data, I can see 80% of my Spotify listeners are female and 50% are aged 18-22 (see Appendix 2).

Due to my current fanbase being mostly young females I found it fitting to focus my EP on ideas that would relate to young females. I intend to use samples of conversations I've had with my sisters and friends and subtly incorporate them into the production.

Considering the songs are all based around the subject of heartbreak, I intend on the EP telling a story alongside each track being individual stories as singles. I want it to be a journey from heartbreak to healing making the EP as relatable as possible. My intention is to create an image of Darcy Blu to be seen as the type of person you'd tell your secrets to, I want her music to resonate as a best friend, or older sister giving advice whilst letting you in to pieces of her life while she does it. I will not only be creating image through my music but also through my socials on Instagram and TikTok. The energy I want to create is the same as when girls are chatting in a bathroom on a night out. They are strangers but are still telling each other their deepest secrets and relating to each other even though they've only just met. This is the type of energy I want to be surrounding the EP which is why I decided on the name "Bathroom Talk". This sets the scene and paints an image in the listeners mind before even listening to the music. I will ensure to capture this imagery within the production as well as song writing.

In terms of production, I will be focussing on the genre Pop. The DAW I will be using is Logic Pro X along with using samples from Splice and a variety of plug-ins. I will study other pop EPs to ensure I capture the right sound such as Finneas, Maisie Peters and Griff. I will use The Mirror Talk EP by Griff as a reference and case study for this project. Griff is an up-and-coming female pop artist who not only writes all her own music but also produces the tracks too (Griff, 2019). She started off her music and production career by releasing The Mirror Talk EP on Spotify. Her EP was solely written and produced by her and achieved great success which is what has inspired me to aim to do the same.

Once the production is finalised, I will reach out to PR companies and labels. I will also research distributors and potential distributor deals to release with, as a backup plan if the EP doesn't get picked up by any labels. An example of distributors that could be helpful are Believe, Platoon, Spinnup and CD Baby. In the past I have used AWAL who take 15% of revenue from the songs released (AWAL, 2022). I have released with them as I thought they would be best due to their ability to pitch to playlists (AWAL, 2022). Through experience I discovered they haven't provided me with the playlist support I thought they would, making me realise there are better options out there for my project. I am already in conversations with

Spinnup who are offering to release my EP with them for free and they won't take a percentage.

Alongside PR companies and distributors being important I have learnt through my own experience it is also important to be able to have your own form of promotional methods to assist with a release as an independent artist, such as reaching out to playlists. Boder (2022) refers to the importance of playlists stating "a spot on a playlist can help boost your track and expand your audience like never before" suggesting the importance of having promotional methods for playlists for independent artists.

Daniels (2019) supports the idea of independent artists and the importance of knowing the music business as they are actually "the fastest-growing segment of the global recorded music business". Daniels (2019) explains thanks to technology this is enabling independent artists to take their careers into their own hands which is what I will be doing with my EP if it doesn't get picked up by a label. I will still have control over my career and my decision to release music. This is why it is important to understand and navigate the business side of the industry too when releasing as an independent artist.

An alternative approach I could have taken for my project was to produce a similar pop EP for somebody else. I believe this could have been beneficial as it would have pushed me in other ways in terms of production, producing for someone else would've forced me to get into the mindset of the artist I'm producing for and understand them. I would have also had to work around their feedback which could have pushed me further as a producer. I chose not to do this as I wanted my project to be personal and advance my artist and production career further. Producing a project for myself enabled me to do both.

Timeline

When it comes to planning releases, it is important to work backwards when it comes to the timeline. Because of distribution uploads, the single needs to be ready more than a month in advance for it to be uploaded, released on all music platforms in time and pitched to playlists. I used a Gantt chart to help me plan my timing effectively. Being able to keep track of my projects process and being aware of what can or can't be done at a given time should prove to be an effective method of managing my project. Even though it is only myself who is doing the production and the writing I will still be collaborating with others when it comes to the artwork surrounding the project, the social media campaign and reaching out to labels. If I end up releasing through a label or a distribution deal, I need to align with their timeline too

meaning it is important to have a clear timeline of my deadlines to ensure I stay on track (see Appendix 3).

Conclusion

To summarise, my overall project is to write and produce a 6 track EP “Bathroom Talk” to enhance my skills as a producer and further my artist career. I hope through doing this project it reaches its full potential enabling me to grow my fanbase, be recognised and taken seriously as a successful producer in the industry and not just solely an artist.

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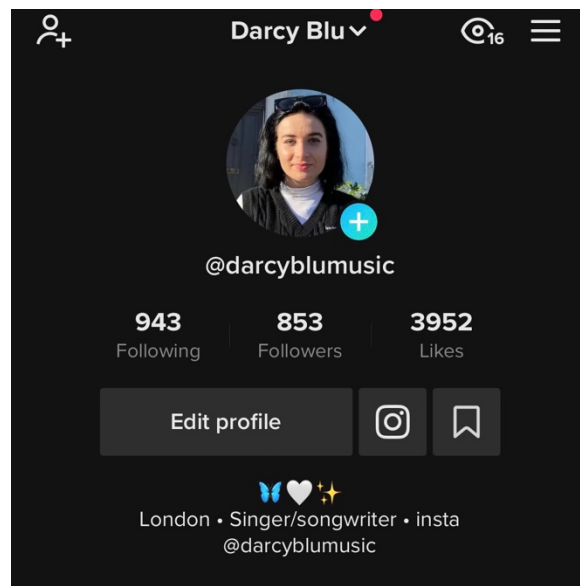
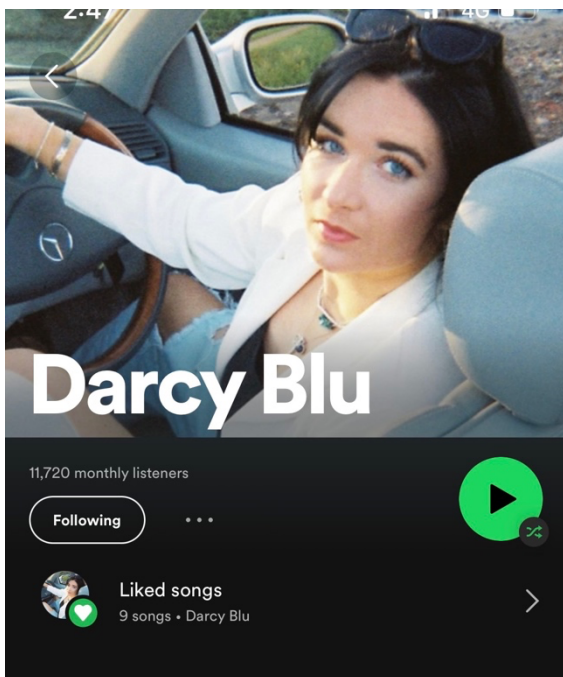
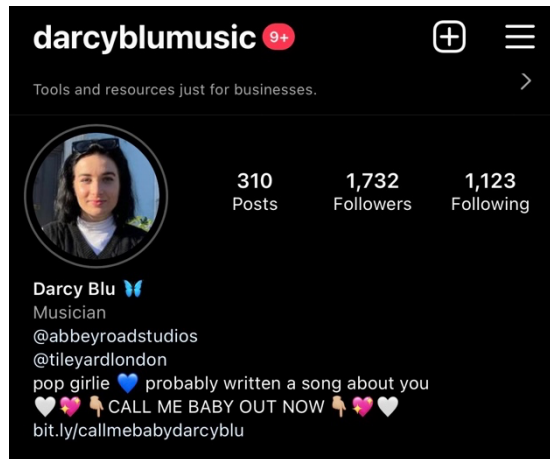
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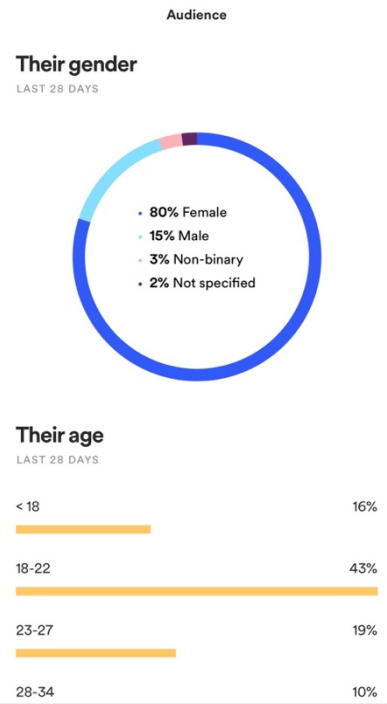
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Appendix

Appendix 1:



Appendix 2:



Appendix 3:

	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22
Plan concept, research reference tracks									
Start writing tracks									
Record vocals									
Start producing tracks									
Get visuals ready for EP									
Plan order of EP release									
Create moodboard for EP concept									
Reach out to illustrators									
Further production on tracks									
Finish artwork									
Plan social media promotions									
Reach out to PR companies and labels									
Research playlists to reach out to									
Mix and master tracks									
Upload to distributor									
Start social media campaign									
Release on Spotify									
Reach out to playlists									