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Creative Practice 2 (M4X01558)

Michael Johnson – Case Study Assignment

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The role of the music producer is to help Artists achieve the required sound and recording quality to cater for individuality and genre specifics. During the recording process, a producer could contribute to the composition, arrangement, and song writing of a track. Within this process, necessary adjustments and overall control is essential to obtain a high level of creativity for the final product (Sage audio, 2019).

Producers take different approaches within their practice, whether it be the choice of collaborating with Artists and musicians or having complete control of the project and hiring relevant staff, to carry out specific roles with guidance and supervision. The Music Producer supervises every facet in the creative process of crafting the track or album. This could be the choice of the genre, vocalists, musicians, instrumentation, and the structure. To be able to drive the session and make necessary adjustments is essential. This supports the ability to transmit vision of the result of a track to the audio engineer and participants. By doing this it brings out the best performance and effective time management. The Producer must be able to focus on everything that is going on in real-time as the tracks are recorded, as well as plan and organise studio time, logistics, budgets and communicate with participants (Sage audio, 2019).

The roles of the music producer and the sound engineer are crucial to the production of the music. The Sound engineer is a technician who operates the technical aspects of the production process. He operates the mixing desk, sets up the studio, microphones, any other equipment and is usually employed by the studio. They work closely with the producer and artist to create the same vision that the producer/artist envisions. The sound engineer is frequently liable for mixing tracks and ensuring the recording has no unwanted sounds (Morgan, 2020).

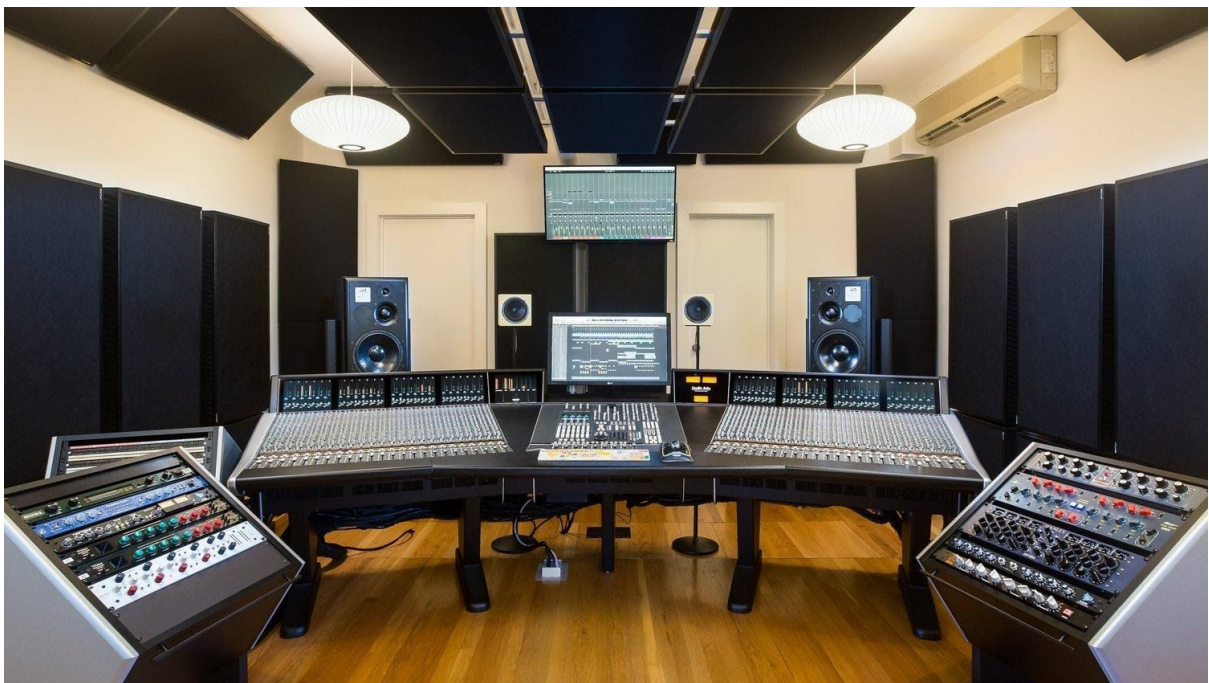


Fig.1 Studio

A Music producer is usually the creative one who directs every part of the production. They operate as a project manager and are answerable for the whole production as well as managing the people involved in the projects. The producer supervises every stage, the mixing, arrangements, and the recording process. Most producers are also great sound engineers and have a profound understanding of composing (Morgan, 2020)

The important difference between the music producer and sound engineer is that the producer has more of a managerial role, thus, is responsible for directing and managing the creative project and everyone involved.



Fig.2 Dre and Iovine

Dr Dre is arguably one of the world's most successful and wealthiest, multi-platinum selling record producers/executives (Biography editors, 2019). The chosen case study will highlight working practices, methodology, music career and journey to *Dre's* successful achievements to becoming a sensational DJ and rapper. *Dr Dre* is known to have had a very successful career. The Grammy award winning Gangster rapping visionary has produced countless albums, by collaborating with well established artists from Tupac Shakur, Snoop Dogg, Mary J. Blige, Kendrick Lamar, and Eminem. *Dr Dre* is also founder of Aftermath Records and co-

founder of Beats Electronics. Through conducting this case study, my aim is to find out how *Dr Dre* has had a huge success as a producer and the entrepreneurial venture with the "Beats by Dre " headphones. This is to obtain more knowledge about his story, background, and the pillar of his success. *Dr Dre* is an American rapper, record producer/audio engineer, entrepreneur, songwriter, actor, and is one of the most renowned and successful producers in Hip-Hop of all time. After receiving an audio mixer at Christmas of 1984, *Dre* then began his work at creating music. Rather than doing schoolwork, *Dre* would strip down songs to then make his own mixes. Within a short amount of time he joined the "World Class Wreckin Cru" (Biography editors, 2019).

Dre's first major success was at the time of being a co-founder of the group 'NWA' with Eazy-E, Ice Cube, MC Ren, and DJ Yella. Four albums were produced with "NWA" over five years but later, Ice Cube left the group over a financial dispute with Eazy-E and group manager Jerry Heller (Capital Xtra, 2020). *Dre* then made the decision to be free from the contracts with Ruthless records as it was believed there were financial discrepancies. In 1991, *Dre* went on to co-found record label Death Row Records along with Marion "Suge" Knight, The D.O.C and Dick Griffey. In 1992, his album 'The Chronic' introduced the "West Coast G-Funk" production style, a style of hip hop that somewhat leaned on synthesized beats, defined by synth waves and creatively sampling 1970's funk music (Capital Xtra, 2020). The album earned *Dre* his first Grammy award for "Let Me Ride". The label became a major worldwide success after releasing multi-platinum Hip-Hop albums by West coast artists such as Snoop Dogg, Dr Dre and Tupac Shakur (Fuertes-Knight, 2014). In 1996 after producing Tupac's "All eyes on me" and Snoop Dogg's "Doggystyle", he resigned from Death Row Records and then launched his own label 'Aftermath Entertainment'. Three years later in 1999, *Dre* released his second solo album "2001" which awarded him another Grammy

award for “Forgot About Dre”, as well as other great hits. By that point, his producing works for other artists like Snoop Dogg and Eminem had earned him major recognition and respect throughout the world (Fuertes-Knight, 2014). He won a Grammy for producer of the year in 2001, mainly because of his contribution of work that he invested into producing Eminem’s “Marshall Mathers LP”, an album which also won a Grammy award. *Dre* went on to collect two extra Grammy awards in 2009 for his later projects with Eminem. From 2001 – 2004, he started to work on a spin off album to “2001” titled “Detox”, however, the release of the album was eventually aborted (Fuertes-Knight, 2014). In the meantime, *Dre’s* career as a producer continued to thrive while collaborating with artists such as Jay-Z, 50 Cent and Mary J. Blige. Despite delay, in 2015, *Dr Dre* then released his third album “Compton”, which was influenced by the movie ‘Straight Outta Compton’, which was about the story of N.W.A. A year later, Dre was initiated into the “Rock and Roll Hall of Fame” as a member of N.W.A.

Jimmy Iovine, who has really had an exceptionally successful career, is a world-renowned record producer and is also the co-founder of Interscope Records and Beats Electronics (Heaf, 2020). He is also a co-creator of Apple Music. Jimmy is an American entrepreneur who had a chance to work in music production from his early adulthood back in 1973 (Heaf, 2020). He has produced more than two hundred and fifty albums and has worked with so many successful artists. Jimmy’s extensive experience has given him such a deep understanding and knowledge as a record producer, record executive, film engineer and entrepreneur (Heaf, 2020). After producing albums for John Lennon, Stevie Nicks, Bruce Springsteen, and Tom Petty through the 1970’s and 1980’s, Jimmy co-founded Interscope Records with Ted Field. In the early 90’s, *Dr Dre* approached Jimmy at Interscope Records with his album “The Chronic”, and after they had chatted about how the album was engineered, Jimmy was blown away and instantly started to market and distribute “Death

Row Records” albums throughout the 1990s. More than ten years later, Jimmy and *Dre* bumped into each other on the beach and during their conversation, Dre had said that he had been considering designing and manufacturing trainers, however, Jimmy quickly talked him out of the whole idea (Valorose, 2019). The first thing that Jimmy told Dre straight away was that he should make speakers instead. It was at that moment that “Beats by Dre” were born. They started the company in 2006 and released their first project in 2008 (Valorose, 2019). Jimmy and Dre founded “Beats” to bring the emotion back to music and bring back the sound quality of the studio to their headphones (Valorose, 2019). Jimmy believed that music videos were the answer to be able to reach the younger music fans, so some of the world's most successful artists started to trial their new headphones and they gave a lot of positive feedback, so they then put their “Beats” in to artists music videos and also put the artists in their “Beats” advertisements. Dre later went on to sell “Beats Electronics” to Apple for a whopping \$3.2 billion (Valorose, 2019).

In conclusion to this case study, I have a very good understanding of *Dr Dre's* background, his

life and career. After so many knockdowns throughout his life, he has had the work ethic, fierce drive, and determination to just get up, dust himself off and keep on going. His production style really has completely shaped the DNA of hip hop and hip-hop culture and he and N.W.A were absolute pioneers for gangster rap in the 1980's (Biography editors, 2019). *Dre* created G- Funk as a genre and discovered some of the biggest rappers in history. His thirty-year career has given him an enormous knowledge and understanding and has all contributed to making him the musical genius that he is today (Biography editors, 2019).

To summarise, I was not at all surprised after reading through my research about producers.

I did learn more about being a producer and I acknowledge the time and effort involved in working in that profession. I did learn a lot of interesting facts about Dr Dre's story which are very relevant to this case study.

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List of Illustrations

Figure 1: *Studio* (2020) [Website]. Available at: (Accessed) 23rd May 2020

<http://precisionsoundstudios.com/>

Figure 2: *Dre and Lovine* (2014) [Website]. Available at: (Accessed) 2nd June 2020

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