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Introduction

In this project, I aim to prioritize the procedure of recording vocals and drums to produce an EP Album, based on my influences so far. In the 20 minutes required for the project, I will present a song that I have created from scratch emphasizing mainly on the editing and mixing of vocals and drums rather than the main melody as the 'new-school' rap/hip-hop generation is consisted of. I have decided that for this project the context of the lyrics does not really matter, therefore the lyrics will be from a known artist. Furthermore, since I will be recording drums for this project, I have also decided that I will make a 'drum sample pack' that I will be able to use in the future. Finally, I am looking forward to focus on and develop skills such as teamwork, creative thinking and communication.

Aims and Objectives

- Be comfortable recording. (Before studio time)
 1. Make the recording process a routine.
 2. Be aware of all the equipment required for the recording (Including Digital VST's).
 3. Be able to detect and possibly resolve any technical issue in the studio while recording.

- Practice Recording techniques. (During Studio Time)
 1. Understand how to record voices in different manners.
 2. Learn how interact with the different personalities-artists.
 3. Guide and inspire the artists for a more promising recording.

- Extend my knowledge in mixing. (After Studio Time)
 1. Extend my knowledge in mixing via practice and feedback.
 2. Create a permanent library of sounds that could be used in the future for similar purposes.
 3. Develop a work ethic that will spark my future career.

Main Influences

In order to put his project together I had to make a very hard decision of choosing the artists that influenced me the most all these years. My choice was made based on the impact of their music in my life (the rhythm, the melody, the vibes) as well as the circumstantial “life-schooling” that would take a place in some of their songs. The three artists I have chosen for this project are ‘Nipsey Hussle’, ‘Wiz Khalifa’ and ‘Berner’ -who has been signed under Wiz Khalifa’s Taylor Gang Entertainment since 2012. These artists in specific were of particular interest, since each represents their own original style of branding; Nipsey Hussle had a very rare type of sound to his music, embodying the essence of street life and its struggles, Berner heralds back to the West ‘old-school’ type beats, with his bragging being more about the struggles of his come-up and establishing respect through unique actions, and Wiz Khalifa being the centre of various party anthems and lifestyle that many try to embody to this day unsuccessfully.

Nipsey Hussle

Ermias Asghedom aka ‘Nipsey Hussle’ was born on August 15th, 1985. He was an underground legend, as described by many in his close circle, because he was a big philanthropist and caring for the community, but also an activist, entrepreneur, and a big influencer through his songs. His nickname was taken from African American comedian and actor, Nipsey Russel, only adjusted to his lifestyle.

Nipsey was also renowned for his business acumen, as he was selling his own mixtapes off his car and has the audacity to prise them at \$100 when most were sold for \$5 or less. Media were shocked when rap-legend Jay-Z bought 100 copies to support his movement. He was self-made in the music industry and had no studio albums until his very first ‘*Victory Lap*’ (February 18th, 2018) which went directly to the Grammy nominations for ‘best rap album of the year’.

Unfortunately Nipsey Hussle was assassinated on March 31st, 2019, at the same parking lot where his carrier took off, causing a massive discomfort in the rap scene as his lyrical content in his songs was touching and in a sense ‘guiding’ hundreds of thousands of people across the world. His death was considered a tragedy by many, since his music was the first innovation in terms of a fusion between the different feuding gangs, ‘*The Bloods*’ and ‘*The Crips*’, who had their own musical influences in their own areas, but had failed to collaborate prior.

Wiz Khalifa

Cameron Jibril Thomas was born September 8th, 1987 in Minot, North Dakota. He is an American rapper, singer, actor, and entrepreneur who has gained much reputation and influence in his illustrious career. As an entrepreneur, he is the owner of '*Taylor Gang Entertainment*', which signs many other major artists; he also runs many assorted businesses, such as different apparel and cannabis related businesses, and has a partnership with "*McQueen Violet Fog*", which is a liquor as well as with "*Raw*", the rolling papers.

More recent successful album drops include *Rolling Papers*, *The Saga of Wiz Khalifa*, and several other remixes of popular songs. Hit singles such as '*Black and Yellow*', '*See you again*' and '*We Dem Boyz*' have remained relevant to his many listeners even to this day, and pioneered some of the common club anthem type songs that are prevalent today. His lyrical content along with his 'wavy-slow' music as well as his dressing style and constant appearance while under the influence of cannabis has made him the star we all recognize today.

Despite his reputation as such, he has still garnered enough mainstream reputation for more public appearances on television and in movies, such as several magazines and television interviews, a cooking show with Snoop Dogg and Martha Stewart, the '*Eric Andre Show*', as well as some voice acting on animated shows like '*American Dad*' and '*Duncanville*'. Wiz Khalifa now has not stepped back from producing music despite this success but has taken some more time to spend with his son, and to partake in some martial arts training and gym routines.

Berner

Gilbert Anthony Milam Jr., aka Berner was born on October 27th, 1981. He's an American entrepreneur and eventually rapper signed under Wiz Khalifa's '*Taylor Gang Entertainment*' record label (March 2012). As an entrepreneur he is known for his empire of cannabis related companies including "*Cookies*", "*Vibes*", "*Hemp20*" and others.

A Sunset District native, Berner attended Galileo Academy of Science and Technology before dropping out. Originally, his father had worked in a restaurant, and the family had plans to open their own restaurant when he moved from Sunset Drive at the age of 13. As a rap artist he has released 16 studio albums many of which have charted the Billboards top Hip-Hop & R'n'B, but also 22 collaboration albums, 3 compilations, and 10 singles and all that since 2007.

Despite his claims on social media that his music career was 'not a major source of his income', nor does he take it as seriously as his brick and mortar businesses, he has still made a considerable impact in the music genre of old school, California Hip-Hop styles, heralding back to older types of rap beats that were original and creative, and not just a highly produced beat in an over-saturated market. His latest album, '*Los Meros*', includes collaborations with big name artists, such as *B-Real*, *Wiz Khalifa*, to name but a few.

Outcome of the Project

At the beginning I thought of a 3-4 track EP Album, but little did I know of the unpleasant surprises that were coming along. At first, there were a few complications with the university's establishments and specifically the studios. A flood in the building occurred during the first semester (as a result of the extremely harsh weather conditions at the time) which was then spread among the rest of the studios setting the whole building out of order for a week, during the beginning of the second semester. This event personally set me back a few steps because I was planning to record the drums first, with another student from the class, Adam Edmunds, and then the vocals, led by the thought that, in the worst case, I could record the vocals at home. Not long after part of the establishment became available for use a global virus pandemic was announced, known as *COVID-19*, followed by self-isolation restrictions across all nations causing a complete lockdown to all public establishments including universities. That was a massive set back. Now the studios are completely closed, but luckily, I had some recordings of a kick, a snare and a hi-hat from Adam's performance in the first semester so I directly sampled those. Better than nothing right?

Afterwards, due to self-isolation restrictions by the government, the performers I had assigned for this project, (people outside the course, one female for backing vocals and two males for lead vocals) left in a rush at the beginning of the announced 'quarantine', to self-isolate at home with their families. At start I decided to return home as well but as my flight was cancelled, I took a second chance and stayed with the hope that everything would be over quickly but unfortunately it wasn't. This action costed me a whole week time. At this point I had realized that I would not be able to complete most of my aims and objectives such as a big part of the first aim and all the objectives of my second aim. While being confused and stressed with what the outcome of the project would be if I did not have anyone to perform so that I could record, I was creating new tracks (beats) and practicing different mixing techniques every time to keep myself busy while self-isolated, so I have significantly extended my knowledge in the mixing sector.

Coming close to the (extended by the university) deadline of the project, I realized that the only option available was to do the vocals myself and to also include a section in the EP, presenting the mixing skills I gained through practice for this project. As I have never attempted to record my voice in the past (let alone rap), it was a big challenge for me but at least now I have created a start line and I have gained a little experience which will help me if I need to record myself again in the future. I also decided that the best way for someone to see a difference in the mixes, was to place all the selected tracks in a playlist based on a timeline of when they were created and let the audience be the judge. Therefore, I chose to perform '*Berner's - Car full of killers*' on the latest beat I created and include a '*medley*' of beats as a second track respectively.

Concluding, for various reasons the project did not turn out to be as planned at all. I learned a lot regarding time management, adaptability and work ethic. I feel disappointed for not achieving most of my aims and objectives (for reasons that were beyond our range to resolve), yet very confident as I personally theorize this project as 'incomplete' for the time being, meaning that under normal circumstances I would be able to see through this project and present it afterwards. Last but not least, I feel ready to face a similar or more advanced project in the future and I will definitely try to avoid all the mistakes and wrong decisions I made on my side, as well as try to embrace every obstacle that comes my way and use it as my advantage.

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