

Creative Music Management

Reflective Summary

Student Name: Lucan Mills

Student Number: 1906671

Module Title: Creative Music Management

Module Code: BMTY7000

Assignment Title: Reflective Summary

Lecturer's Name: Harry Leckstein

- Contents -

1. *Reflective Summary*
2. *Reflections on Digital Technologies*
3. *Bibliography*

1. Reflective Summary

For my Creative Music Management module, we were recently tasked with developing an original artist campaign for up-and-coming act PEONIE. This project would include the recording, digital release, and promotion of all associated media assets. Initially provided with a working budget of £500 from Tileyard Education (Tileyard, 2021), the campaign began using PEONIE's new single 'Mistakes And Heartbreaks' and its accompanying remix as the chosen product.

This task challenged me to be forward-thinking and further develop new skills while working in a team. It also provided me with a clearer understanding of my strengths and weaknesses, working on various campaign elements simultaneously. I believe that reflecting on past experiences can help develop better future skills (Helyer, 2015). Looking back at this group exercise, I will reflect on my role in the campaign and where I could have improved. It could be argued that the campaign assignment was successful, however with some further development in marketing strategies and the ability to hold face to face meetings, I feel we could have taken the campaign even further.

We had four members in our team, and after some discussion on what roles would suit each member, my area of expertise was best suited to managing the PR and Distribution of the campaign's assets. This sector would cover publications and radio, social media assets, and the single and remixes distribution and play-listing. I was reasonably confident in my selection in this task due to my involvement in previous distribution campaigns. However, with an ever-growing market in digital releases, with an estimated 40,000

new tracks a day being released on Spotify alone each day, (Ingham, 2019), I knew I would have to think of creative ways to gain public and media interest.

After the initial meetings had taken place, I set about my first task of obtaining some press opportunities for PEONIE and the upcoming release of the single. After researching ways to promote new music, I found that reaching out to local newspapers and radio was an encouraging place to start (McGuire, 2018). PEONIE is from Colchester, and after discovering her local newspaper The Daily Gazette, I reached out to their entertainment reporter Katherine Palmer (Gazette, 2021). The newspaper agreed to write a piece on PEONIE'S upcoming single and discuss her previous musical theatre endeavours. I learnt that most local publications are hungry for news stories and welcome approaches by potential musical heroes from their area (MusiciansUnion, 2020). This coverage considerably widened our target audience for the single and would coincide nicely with my plans to organise a similar appearance with BBC Introducing in the same area. There were some initial challenges with finding the correct contact at the newspaper, so on reflection, I would make sure I established a solid list of reporters in the correct area to achieve this outcome faster.

My next goal was to obtain some support for the new project on local radio, and the BBC was my first choice. My target was again locally aimed and after the proven success of BBC introducing for artists like Royal Blood and George Ezra, (Awbi, 2014), I decided it was my best option. I reached out to BBC Essex via their Instagram profile and sourced their producer's contact from the Introducing website (BBCEssex, 2021).

After making contact, I arranged PEONIE an interview with Tony Fisher on the drive time show to discuss the new project and perform the new single live on radio. This interview was an outstanding achievement for the campaign. We managed to incorporate the Tik-Tok and Instagram Hashtag strategy into the interview and engage listeners into fan participation early on in the promotion. (Court, 2018), writes that turning your fanbase into your community is the best way to build a highly engaged, inspired and thriving core of fans. I did learn that if I had applied certain time management practices sooner, (Hyatt, 2020), I may have been able to maximise the performance opportunity more efficiently. With the short notice of the appearance, it could be argued that I did not have sufficient time to arrange a larger band for more impact. However, I instead opted for an acoustic performance that I felt did connect with the audience positively. The responses and feedback from social media were assuring.

My third task in the campaign was to establish a distribution avenue for the new single. We currently find ourselves in an ever-growing emerging market of independent artists and a new abundance of distribution channels to choose from, so I needed to establish which service was best suited to our artist and project (TheLabelMachine, 2020). I investigated all the different benefits of each service, and I managed to narrow it down to Kobalt Publishing owned AWAL. This distribution service had a reputation for being transparent and fair to artists by allowing them to retain all of their rights. AWAL take a 15% commission with no distribution fees, but you must be accepted onto the platform by applying.

After collating the relevant assets needed for the application, I submitted this on the artist's behalf. If accepted, AWAL with their industry-leading analytics would offer further support in play-listing and physical distribution. I

felt this would be of substantial benefit to the campaign. It would give us accurate real-time figures of the track upon its release and give us detailed statistics on target audiences and areas in which PEONIE gained the most support. This data would then further our knowledge on the success of the promotion and would be able to influence our decisions going forward (Gateway, 2019). Arguably, AWAL's most compelling benefits are only gifted to the most prominent performing artists. However, suppose you are well organised and can upload your full release to the platform at least four weeks ahead of its scheduled release. In that case, it severely heightens your chances of being heard and reviewed by essential playlist and publishing curators.

After being accepted onto the AWAL and establishing a distribution rep within the company to assist in registration and process for the campaign, I then tasked myself with finding a digital play-listing company that could help service the new single to relevant playlists that suited the genre. After utilising some artist contacts, I was recommended a service that had proven successful in other projects. The importance of music play-listing in the last few years has become increasingly apparent, with many artists now earning a living salary off effectively procuring playlists with large followings for their music (Danton, 2019). I managed to negotiate a deal, in which both single and remix would be serviced for two months to playlists with a minimum following of 200k. Upon consideration, I feel that I could have negotiated a better deal if the budget had allowed. I have learned that I would attribute digital play-listing in future campaigns as I think this would help extensively secure the singles awareness.

Overall this project presented an exciting and in-depth challenge. It was insightful working as part of a team and collaborating on such an extensive

campaign, whilst drawing on current knowledge and discovering new areas of expertise. I contributed a healthy workload to the project and managed to achieve my deliverables within the time granted successfully. My main takeaway from this campaign was the need to be flexible and explore the wealth of options available to the team in detail, whilst nurturing further what attributes each team member can bring to the table. In the past, I have often believed I can take on multiple projects and complete every task required myself; however, the importance of utilising people's strengths around you has been a significant learning curve. In *Managing Creativity*, it states, "A handful of key individuals cannot, however, be expected to have detailed knowledge of all areas of the market" (Davis and Scase, 2000).

2. Reflections On Digital Technologies

The music industry landscape has changed dramatically over recent years, and technology has been a driving force in that evolution. From the transition of analogue to digital in the early 1980s with the CD to the inception of Napster and peer-to-peer music sharing in 2001, (Kusek and Leonhard, 2005), music has continuously adapted its surroundings. David Bowie predicted in 2002, stating, "The absolute transformation of everything that we ever thought about music will take place within 10 years and nothing is going to be able to stop it. Music is going to be like running water or electricity." (Chu, 2016).

That prediction was accurate, as in the last few years alone technology has changed music for decades to come, from the introduction of the synthesiser to Auto-Tune's pop innovation, and we're now even

witnessing virtual reality pop stars, (Needham, 2018). Technology has not just changed how we consume music, but it has impacted how we create, share, and promote music. Back in the early noughties, artists promoting their latest tracks would appear on Top of the Pops, chart shows and even in magazines and newspapers. With the introduction of social media, digital marketing and YouTube, artists have made an appearance on consumer's playlists through viral videos and social media posts (Page, 2019).

In the past, the creation of original popular music worked very differently. New digital technologies have opened doors to new opportunities, exciting new experimental genres, and made the art of making music more accessible than ever. Changing methods are not only offering enhanced convenience but are cost-effective too. Back in times, creation and recording of music needed thousands of dollars and many enthusiastic participants. With digital workstations such as Logic, Pro Tools, Ableton, Nuendo and many others have made the recording process significantly more comfortable and cheaper (BestDigital, 2017). With technology growing at such a dramatic rate over the last decade and hardware becoming increasingly affordable music makers can create music anywhere. This technological advancement has given rise to many producers and artists who have been able to breakthrough in the industry with projects created and often recorded entirely at home. With the added emergence of apps like GarageBand, creators could even use their mobile devices to create music and started to realise that they did not necessarily need all the equipment they thought they did. After his sudden rise to fame, Skrillex found himself on tour most of the year. He created a portable studio to take with him on the tour bus (Pack, 2018). Technology has provided a whole new generation of music creators with the ability to compete.

Digital technologies have also enhanced how music is promoted in the modern age. The music industry is now equipped with new consumer channels to monetise in a growing social media outlet industry. This evolution has given rise to fan engagement by giving artists the ability to create personal experiences with fans which otherwise would be logistically challenging to provide. This shift can be attributed to the increasing demand for customisation. Fans want to choose the music they listen to and skip the music they do not like. They want to access curated playlists and create their own with songs they love. As a result, streaming has allowed genres generally overlooked by traditional radio stations to flourish, with Hip-Hop/R&B becoming the most popular (musicFirst, 2018). Studying this recent blog describes the impact of digital technology on the music genre, and how the change in public control has opened doors to artists, who otherwise would not have had a platform.

With other promotional tools like SmartLinks, which can continually adapt based on various factors including location, and target audience, and artist analytical apps like AWAL and Spotify for Artists, the music industry can see results in real-time. This benefit means a team working on a creative industry project can better plan its promotional campaign to suit the audience needs and data metrics.

At the end of 2019, the music industry was worth between \$20-21 Billion Dollars. Behind all of this revenue are the teams of creative people that keep the industry alive. With an estimated average of 4 million new song releases a year, (Stein, 2020), an enormous amount of resources, people and time are needed to support these promotional campaigns. Technology has also helped streamline how teams can work together in the development of a project.

New services like pCloud, Box, and Dropbox have provided teams with the ability to file share in an instant and build databases of music that can be viewed, shared, and downloaded live across the world. Technology has given rise to international collaboration, and teams from Los Angeles to London can instantly create, edit, and review music, marketing strategies, and campaigns.

Recent times have made apps like Zoom more prevalent than ever with teams worldwide, relying heavily on communicating successfully to achieve goals and targets. From the teams working behind the scenes to the artist and songwriters themselves, creatives have continued to develop as a team and establish extensive creative projects. Those in the music industry were concerned about how they would be able to write songs, make music, and keep their careers afloat amid shelter-in-place orders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. An industry typically relies on a group of people in a room for hours or even days on end, visualising that being accomplished without being together seemed difficult (Birnie, 2020). Zoom has become a go-to tool for millions of business users. It has also become a lifeline of sorts for professional and amateur artists and performers looking to be seen and heard outside the walls of their homes (Melendez, 2020).

Digital technologies have significantly influenced the music industry whilst expanding their creatives' growth and opportunity. With new advancements appearing at a considerable rate, these services are only set to improve this further. Not only has it added value to the creation of music as discussed, but it has also opened up other questions in the industry in regards to transparency, marketing, and royalties. The technology could answer many of these issues, for example, blockchain, and further expand its ability to analyse industry data faster. From the origins of vinyl, cassettes

CDs, mp3s to streaming, the music industry's economics have been shaped by successive waves of technological innovation (Mirarchi, 2019).

We are experiencing a new wave that will pose more challenges, and equal successes in the future and the music industry as ever will learn to exploit these technological advancements to their benefit. This progression will ensure that the music industry and the teams will continue to push boundaries, build memories, and continue to create magical experiences for listeners. Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence are two fascinating developments in recent times, that could soon become the norm with music creation, live touring, and fan interaction.

If the Sony Research labs, '2016 experiment' Artificial intelligence programme is anything to go by, then implementing up-and-coming technology in music could soon go way beyond anything we could have predicted.

Word Count: 2500

3. Bibliography

Awbi, A., 2014. *Inside BBC Introducing*. [online] Prsformusic.com. Available at: <<https://www.prsformusic.com/m-magazine/features/inside-bbc-introducing-producer-kieran-yeates/>> [Accessed 4 January 2021].

Aziz, A., 2019. [online] Available at: <<https://www.vibe.com/photos/10-ways-music-industry-changes-10-years/abbey-road-studios-opens-its-doors-to-the-public>> [Accessed 5 January 2021].

BBCEssex, 2021. *BBC - About BBC Essex*. [online] Bbc.co.uk. Available at: <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/hNH1Mx9Q94KQSWjzcRg3rh/about-bbc-essex>> [Accessed 4 January 2021].

BestDigital, 2017. *How Technology Affects Music And Musicians*. [online] Bestdigitalpianoguides.com. Available at: <<https://bestdigitalpianoguides.com/how-technology-affects-music-and-musicians/>> [Accessed 5 January 2021].

Birnie, M., 2020. *How Songwriters Are Creating Music On Zoom - Zoom Blog*. [online] Zoom Blog. Available at: <<https://blog.zoom.us/how-songwriters-are-creating-music-on-zoom/>> [Accessed 5 January 2021].

Chu, B., 2016. *David Bowie'S Predictions About The Future Of The Music Industry Were Right*. [online] The Independent. Available at: <<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/analysis-and-features/david-bowie-s-predictions-about-future-music-industry-were-right-a6813321.html>> [Accessed 5 January 2021].

Court, L., 2018. *How To Build A Fanbase And Turn It Into Your Superfan Community..* [online] Disciple. Available at: <<https://www.disciplemedia.com/building-your-community/build-a-fanbase-complete-guide/>> [Accessed 4 January 2021].

Csathy, P., 2020. *The Future Of Music: Where It Is Today & Where It'S Going In The Next Decade.* [online] Forbes. Available at: <<https://www.forbes.com/sites/petercsathy/2020/02/02/the-future-of-music-where-it-is-today--where-its-going-in-the-next-decade/?sh=378b661d707e>> [Accessed 5 January 2021].

Danton, E., 2019. *Streaming Success? How Some Artists Are Building Their Careers Through Spotify Playlists.* [online] Fortune. Available at: <<https://fortune.com/2019/12/12/spotify-artists-success-streaming-playlists/>> [Accessed 5 January 2021].

Davis, H. and Scase, R., 2000. *Managing Creativity.* Buckingham: Open University Press, p.66.

Gateway, M., 2019. *The Best Music Distribution Services For 2020.* [online] Music Gateway. Available at: <<https://www.musicgateway.com/blog/how-to/best-music-distribution-services>> [Accessed 4 January 2021].

Gazette, T., 2021. *Profile: Katherine Palmer.* [online] Gazette-news.co.uk. Available at: <https://www.gazette-news.co.uk/author/profile/74494.Katherine_Palmer/> [Accessed 4 January 2021].

Helyer, R., 2015. *Learning through reflection: the critical role of reflection in work-based learning (WBL).* *Journal of Work-Applied Management*, 7(1), pp.15-27.

Hyatt, A., 2020. Time Management Tactics Every Musician Must Know - Cyber PR Music. [online] Cyber PR Music. Available at: <<https://www.cyberprmusic.com/5-time-management-tactics-every-musician-must-know/>> [Accessed 4 January 2021].

Ingham, T., 2019. Nearly 40,000 Tracks Are Now Being Added To Spotify Every Single Day - Music Business Worldwide. [online] Music Business Worldwide. Available at: <<https://www.musicbusinessworldwide.com/nearly-40000-tracks-are-now-being-added-to-spotify-every-single-day/>> [Accessed 4 January 2021].

Kusek, D. and Leonhard, G., 2005. *The Future Of Music*. 1st ed. Boston: Berklee Press, pp.4-5.

McGuire, P., 2018. 5 Ways To Promote New Music Way Before Your Release Date | LANDR Blog. [online] LANDR Blog. Available at: <<https://blog.landr.com/promote-music-free/>> [Accessed 4 January 2021].

Melendez, S., 2020. For Artists, The Show Must Go On—And Zoom Is Their Venue. [online] Fast Company. Available at: <<https://www.fastcompany.com/90478442/for-artists-the-show-must-go-on-and-zoom-is-their-venue>> [Accessed 5 January 2021].

Mirarchi, A., 2019. Technology And The Music Industry: A Complicated Relationship. [online] Medium. Available at: <<https://medium.com/design-and-tech-co/technology-and-the-music-industry-a-complicated-relationship-7181bcac66e4>> [Accessed 5 January 2021].

musicFirst, 2018. *How Technology Is Changing The Music Industry*. [online] *musicFIRST Coalition*. Available at: <<http://musicfirstcoalition.org/technology-changing-music-industry/>> [Accessed 5 January 2021].

MusiciansUnion, 2020. [online] *Musiciansunion.org.uk*. Available at: <<https://musiciansunion.org.uk/events-career-development/career-development/career-guides/marketing-and-promotion/how-to-get-press>> [Accessed 4 January 2021].

Needham, J., 2018. *BBC - What Does Technology Mean For The Future Of Music?*. [online] *Bbc.co.uk*. Available at: <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/1f3JQ4knLJBWhgpj3wPv7xL/what-does-technology-mean-for-the-future-of-music>> [Accessed 5 January 2021].

Pack, B., 2018. [online] Available at: <<https://www.sonarworks.com/blog/studio-stories/5-producers-who-made-their-hits-in-their-bedrooms/>> [Accessed 5 January 2021].

Page, L., 2019. *How Has Technology Changed Music?*. [online] *FDM Group*. Available at: <<https://www.fdmgroup.com/how-has-technology-changed-music/>> [Accessed 5 January 2021].

Stein, G., 2020. *How Much Music Is Really Released Per Year?*. [online] *Streaming Machinery*. Available at: <<https://streamingmachinery.com/2020/07/13/how-much-music-is-really-released-per-year/>> [Accessed 5 January 2021].

TheLabelMachine, 2020. The Label Machine. [online] The Label Machine. Available at: <<https://thelabelmachine.com/blog/an-ultimate-list-of-music-distributors/>> [Accessed 4 January 2021].

Tileyard, 2021. MA Music Business - Tileyard Education. [online] Tileyard Education. Available at: <https://tileyardeducation.co.uk/courses/ma-music-business/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMIutjw8J6D7gIVhe_tCh3lDQaLEAAYASAAEgJeZvD_BwE> [Accessed 4 January 2021].