

Written Proposal

Element 1

Creation Module (ADAD7004_LON)

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1. Introduction

This proposal will document and analyse the concept for the major project assignment. The submission will include five to seven singles that will be released strategically to suit a creative vision behind the project while trying to maximise exposure. A full chapter is devoted to the analysis of the current streaming market, specifically Spotify. The proposal also contains an explanation of my musical style, a detailed plan of all featured singers, planned sessions and session musicians. Including potential risks that may hinder completing the major project.

2. Goal

The main goal of my musical career is to develop my artist project called "Ree". Playing my first set as a DJ over six years ago ignited a passion to create my own music and eventually led to a move to London to study music production. Initially as an undergraduate and now at the postgraduate level, the focus of my studies has lain on attaining the necessary skills to make music at the commercial standard. The quality of my productions has improved, leading to a record deal with TGR Music Group, a sub-label of Sony Sweden, in 2018. Since my initial release in October 2018 I have accumulated over 800'000 streams on Spotify in just under seven months (Spotify for Artists, 2019). Working with TGR has aided in gaining exposure and has substantially contributed to the success of my artist project considering that I had less than 4'000 streams before October 2018 (Spotify for Artists, 2019).

I joined Tileyard Education to improve my collaborative skills, production speed and song-writing. Mostly producing electronic music and working alone has led to the use of a lot of vocal samples and unwanted repetition that had no real connection to my creative vision. I wanted to be part of the writing process and include messages that bear some significance to me. Gaining experience in sessions and writing for briefs has helped in improving my abilities and contributed to receiving a sync on ITV4 (Appendix 10.1). However, my main goal remains my artist project which would appear promising, given the aforementioned increase in streaming numbers. Hence, this proposal will be focusing on creating and releasing a body of work that showcases my sound as "Ree" and aids in the development of my fanbase.

3. Creative Vision

This chapter will explain the genre and style that will be created and submitted.

The aim of the body of work is to showcase "Ree's" sound, which has continuously evolved over the past four years. Commercial Electronic Dance Music (EDM) was followed by Hip-Hop, Trap, Afrotrap, Moombahton and later on Pop. EDM is still my main focus, however, most of my past releases include elements of several of the above-mentioned genres.

Combining a Trap verse with a House drop or changing the second drop to an Afrotrap groove has become common practice for me.

Adding elements of other genres can create a sense of variety and aids in keeping a song interesting and unexpected. The rise of streaming services has also made music more global leading to continuous diversification (Muggs, 2019).

Analysing my productions led to the realisation that “Ree” does not have a distinctive genre but a distinctive sound, i.e. specific characteristics that reoccur in my productions. There is a focus on heavily-processed elements, big electronic drums, wide synth sounds, harmonic 808 basses, vocal chops, tropical instruments and energetic drops (audible in Appendix 10.2). Overall, my releases can still be categorised as EDM as they feature a drop, which is the main element of Electronic Dance Music (Cymatics, 2019). However, they are also aimed to be suitable for the pop market.

I try to create songs that can be listened to on the radio, while also carrying enough energy for clubs and festivals. “Lean On” by Major Lazer and DJ Snake is a good example, being an EDM song with Moombahton elements that managed to be very successful on both the radio and in clubs. In November 2015, it was the most streamed song on Spotify reaching 1 billion plays (The Guardian, 2015). It was also played live by most DJs such as Martin Garrix, Calvin Harris, Tiesto, Marshmello etc. (1001tracklists, 2019). Another more recent example is “One Kiss” by Calvin Harris and Dua Lipa which has also managed to be successful on the radio and festivals (Hugh McIntyre, 2018). These two songs are great references for my major project, in terms of structure, sound selection, and pacing.

Furthermore, the artists behind those songs are important: Both Calvin Harris and Diplo (producer of Major Lazer) have been consistently successful for over a decade (Flood, 2018). Partially due to their constantly evolving sound. For instance, "One Kiss" differs from Calvin Harris' previous singles, like "We Found Love" with Rihanna released in 2011. Both of them feature a female Popstar, a similar structure and similar success but the instruments featured are quite different, with more acoustic elements included in "One Kiss". As an artist my goal is to be known for the characteristics of my sound, such as the energetic drops and variety, not just one specific genre. By doing this I have the option to evolve my sound and not being associated with just one genre. Typecasting oneself as an artist can have dangerous consequences as genres go out of fashion and music constantly evolves (Saunders, 2016). Longevity is an important part of my creative vision as my taste keeps changing and therefore my productions evolve as well. According to the previously assessed musical characteristics this submission will showcase the main characteristics of my sound. The tracks submitted will mainly be Pop and commercial EDM with elements of Trap, Hip Hop, Moombahton and Afrotrap.

4. Release Strategy

After explaining the creative aims behind the submission this chapter will look at its implementation. As stated in the introduction, my goal is to showcase my creative vision and production abilities. Nonetheless, it is important to evaluate the best way to maximise exposure and to get the productions heard once they have been finished. Hence, the release strategy will be assessed.

I have considered making an album or an EP. My mentor, Martyn Ware, has suggested stepping away from only making singles to create a bigger interconnected piece of work. It is an interesting concept, that I will try to pursue at some point in my career, but at this point it is not the best option for the following reasons:

Currently, I have a contract with TGR Music Group for five singles and they have verbally agreed to work with me on a long-term basis (Appendix 10.3). As mentioned previously, working with TGR has consistently increased my number of streams. Releasing the tracks of the major project through them would seem the most lucrative option as I am not in contact with any other labels that could provide the same promotion, exposure, marketing possibilities as TGR at the moment. In a meeting with TGR and Sony Sweden in May 2019 we discussed a potential album. They recommended focusing on singles for now so as to build up a sustainable following first. Therefore, the tracks created should to be approved as singles by the label.

TGR distributes to the streaming market only, which accounts for 75% of the music industry's revenue (Hernandez, 2018).

Based in Sweden, TGR focuses on Spotify the most popular streaming service worldwide with over 217 million monthly active users, 100 million of them are paying subscribers using Spotify Premium (Iqbal,2019). It is followed by Apple Music which does not offer a free ad-based option like Spotify. Apple Music has over 50 million premium subscribers worldwide (Statista, 2019). It has also managed to overtake Spotify in the US with 28 million paying subscribers (Li, 2019). Spotify has 26 million subscribers in the States. Nonetheless, on a global scale Spotify is the biggest player, the focus of TGR and therefore the key platform for the release of my music. Maximising exposure on Spotify is one of the aims of this project and is the main reason why producing singles instead of an album makes sense for the time-being.

Spotify and streaming services in general have altered the behaviour of listeners (McFarlane, 2015). Attention-spans are changing, songs are getting shorter and playlists have become a major part of music discovery and driving streams (Pierce, 2017).

Streams on Spotify mostly come from editorial playlists and private playlists. To accumulate streams, a song needs to be added to some of these playlists or a large following is required. Usually success depends on a combination of both. The Weeknd for example, has almost 40 million monthly listeners with 4.5 million followers on Spotify (Cho, 2017). Analysing his data via ChartMetric, a Spotify data website, reveals that 26% of his total monthly listeners come from only five editorial playlists as visible in the table on the next page (Cho, 2017).

Hence, a considerable portion of his streams come from playlists but his following on Spotify and other social media play a major role as well (Cho, 2017).

	Listeners	Percentage
Global Top 50	3,946,853	10%
Today's Top Hits	3,395,838	9%
United States Top 50	1,239,095	3%
Rap Caviar	1,112,803	3%
United Kingdom Top 50	603,002	2%
Top Five Playlists Total	10,297,591	26%
Total Monthly Listners	39,352,512	100%

Image 1: Cho, 2017

Looking at lesser-known Swedish EDM act KREAM reveals a different story. They have over 4.8 million monthly listeners with only 3'747 followers, because of these popular editorial playlists. Over 60% of their listeners originate there, as visible below.

	Listeners	Percentage
Global Top 50	2,244,922	46%
Today's Top Hits	292,278	6%
United States Top 50	247,014	5%
Rap Caviar	111,361	2%
United Kingdom Top 50	106,094	2%
Top Five Playlists Total	3,001,669	62%
Total Monthly Listners	4,828,347	100%

Image 2: Cho, 2017

Even though, The Weeknd receives a considerable number of streams from popular playlists his following is large enough to drive sustainable traffic to his Spotify profile. This is not the case for KREAM. Without the playlists they would lose most of their traffic. My artist profile has 143 followers (Spotify for Artists, 2019). The trend is going upwards but similar to KREAM I am highly dependent on playlists. Releasing singles makes it easier for TGR to pitch my music to playlists, hopefully leading to more streams and followers. TGR is part of Sony, which gives them access to the Filtr playlists. Filtr is one of the largest third-party playlisting companies with over 26 million followers across Spotify, Apple Music and Deezer (Filtr, 2019).

All of my past releases on TGR have been featured on the "Filtr Deep House" playlist with over 800'000 followers (Spotify, 2019). It has generated almost 400'000 thousand streams, half of my overall streams. I have also been featured on one of Spotify's editorial playlists called "New Music Friday Sweden". Tracks have to be submitted a minimum of seven days before the release to be considered for editorial playlists and Release Radar (Resnikoff, 2019). Spotify's algorithm also creates playlists like Spotify Radio, Release Radar and Discover Weekly. Release Radar is updated every Friday with new songs from artists a specific user follows. Therefore, TGR uploads my tracks a minimum of four weeks before release.

It is important to focus on gaining followers for a long-term strategy as they make artists less dependent on playlists, The Weeknd is a great example. A strategy to gain more followers could be consistent releases and analysing the data on "Spotify for Artists" which shows how my tracks perform.

In the meeting with TGR they showed me their Spotify stats tool called "Apollo". It is made by Sony and gives them exclusive data on the performance of their releases and includes the parameters that the Spotify algorithm uses to suggest songs to users. Some of the parameters include how often a song is skipped, how long a song is listened to, the amount of people coming back to the song, the number of offline saves etc. On Apollo all these parameters create a status bar from 0-10 that shows how well a track is performing. The songs that perform well climb up and stay in the playlist. The ones that do not perform well get removed after a week.

To maximise exposure, I will research more about Spotify's algorithm, playlist placement and gaining active followers. Analysing my stats and asking for more info from TGR with their Apollo tool could help me to analyse which of my songs are performing well and what makes them perform well (I am not allowed to disclose screenshots of Apollo in this proposal as it is proprietary to Sony Music). In the meeting we had a look at one of my singles called "Giving Up On Love". It has over 230'000 streams and is still performing well according to Apollo (Spotify for Artists, 2019). The song is quite short and has a lot of changes, i.e. the pacing seems to be an important factor which is something I will consider. TGR has also shown me the progression of some of their artists that they signed two years ago. One of them is "Hogland" who has over 1.2 million monthly listeners and is currently touring with Kygo (ChartMetric, 2019). They showed me that Hogland started gaining a lot of streams in recent months after releasing consistently for about a year.

A key factor evidently is consistency. A verbal agreement with TGR has been reached to release a song every six weeks, starting in August (Appendix 10.4). My goal with this major project is to have enough tracks to have scheduled releases until the end of 2019. Potentially even longer depending on the quality of my tracks. My aim is to make seven tracks and fully develop five of them to be released.

5. Planning

This chapter will outline all planned production sessions, recording sessions, writing partners, session musicians and equipment needed.

Defining my creative vision and release strategy has led to the aim of making seven tracks and releasing at least five of them. Most of my music is created in the box with a MacBook and V-Moda Crossfade headphones at home.

Thus, most of the production sessions will happen at my flat and occasionally writing rooms at Tileyard, which are available most of the time. For this project I have access to Sean Hargreaves' studio at Tileyard. In a meeting with Sean we discussed how many hours of studio time will be required for this project.

The studio will be used for final vocal recording and a flute recording session.

Vocal demos can be recorded in the writing rooms. As mentioned in chapter three, flutes are a key characteristic of my sound. So far, I have only used digital flutes from synthesisers and sampled ones. Working with a live flautist will develop my sound into a new direction and will help gaining experience with session musicians. "Archie Xn Trick", a student in the songwriting course plays the panflute and will be part of my project.

The writing partners for this project are:

- Francesca Di Biasi (Pop and Commercial EDM artist)
- Hannah Beighton (Pop singer)
- Alexander Austin (Trap and Grime artist)
- Benedetta Atti (Pop and Dancehall artist)
- Will Nias (Pop singer)

I have worked with all of these artists before. In past sessions they have been very reliable and helped in getting interesting results. They have all agreed to work with me for this project. Their preferred genres vary, which will help me to produce various styles and showcase my production skills, which is one of my aims.

The ideas will be shown and critiqued by Sean Hargraves, Martyn Ware, TGR and more before submission. Multiaward-winning mix-engineer Goetz Botzenhardt has agreed to assess my productions as well (Botzenhardt, 2019). Their constructive feedback will help in developing and refining ideas.

6. Time Management and Risk

To ensure that seven tracks will be made there is a Gantt at the end of this chapter with deadlines for every track and planned writing sessions. Gantt charts can be useful to manage time and schedule accordingly to keep an overview of a project (Taylor, 2019). I aim to have seven rough demos by the end of June to have the recording sessions as early as possible. The first two weeks of June will be devoted to writing sessions.

The recordings should be done by the first week of July, leaving two weeks to finish the productions. Three tracks have already been written and are in development. Recording the vocals and the flute is a priority. As I mostly work from home, the production can be improved at any time but writing and recording requires serious scheduling and enough time to make potential adjustments later. The singers and writers may have busy schedules or a session might be rescheduled due to an unforeseen reason. Recording as early as possible reduces the risk of not being able to finish this project.

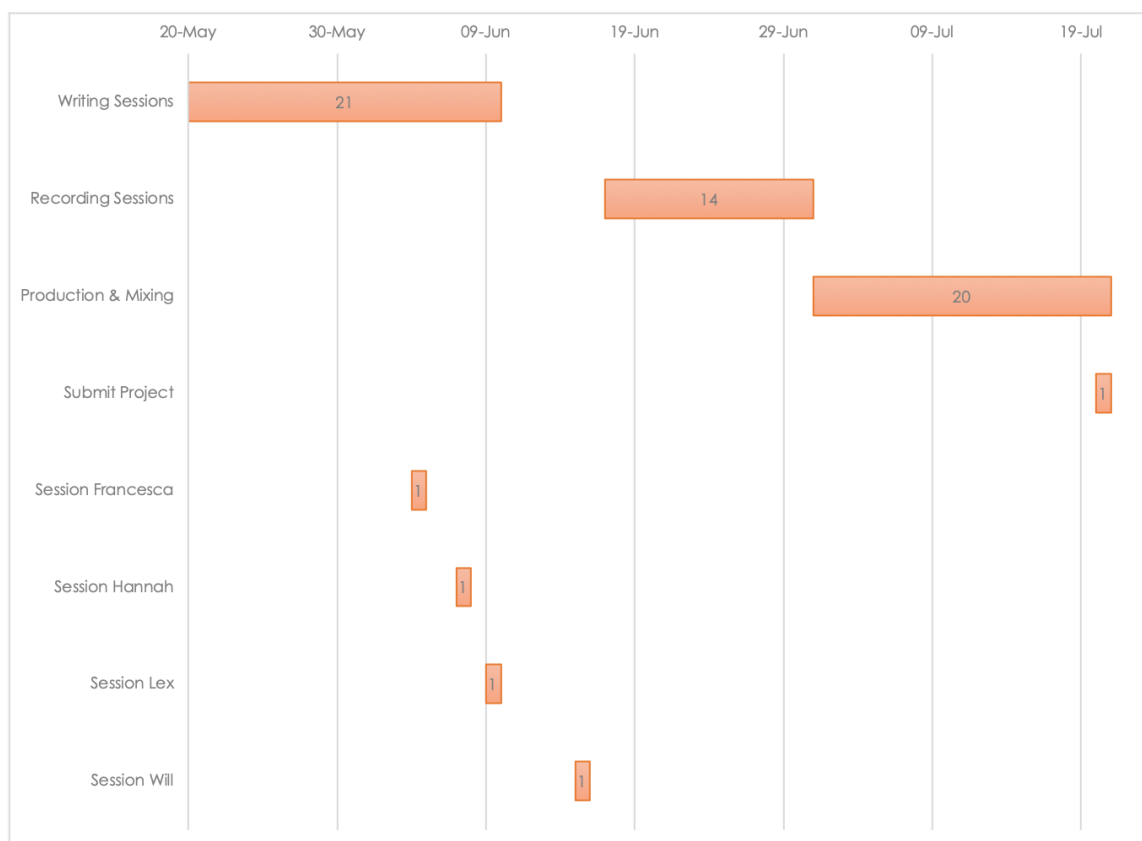


Figure 1: Gantt Chart Major Project, 2019

7. Conclusion

With this submission I want to develop my artist project and increase my following and streams on Spotify. Analysing my sound and the best way to get it heard with my current means has culminated in the aim to make seven singles of various styles of commercial EDM with elements of Trap, Hip Hop, Moombahton and Afrobeat. At least five of the seven songs will be released via TGR music group once every six weeks starting in August. The goal is to release consistently to develop my artist profile. There will be a focus on pacing and creating excitement to be successful on Spotify. More research will be done to find out about the key parameters of the Spotify algorithm to give the songs the best shot of getting streams.

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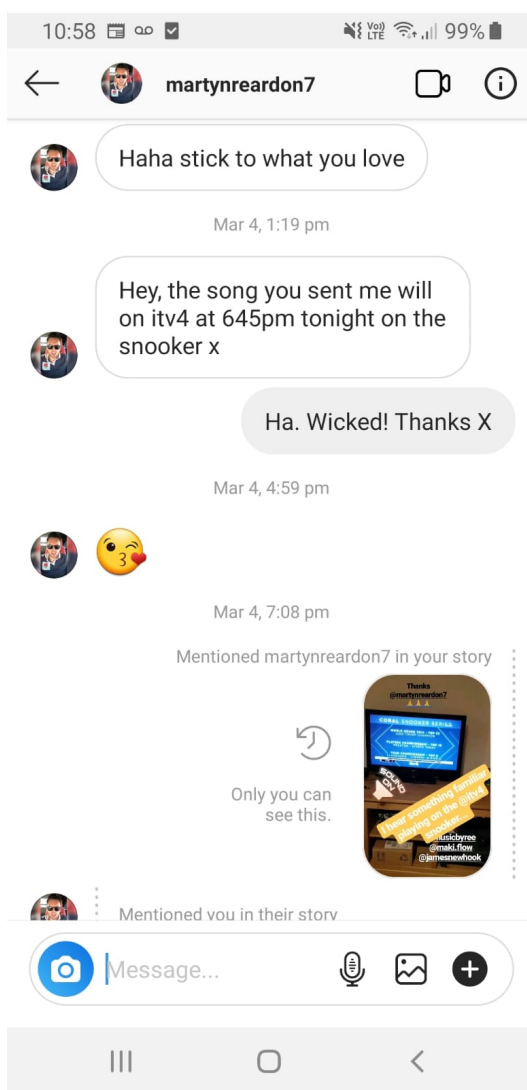
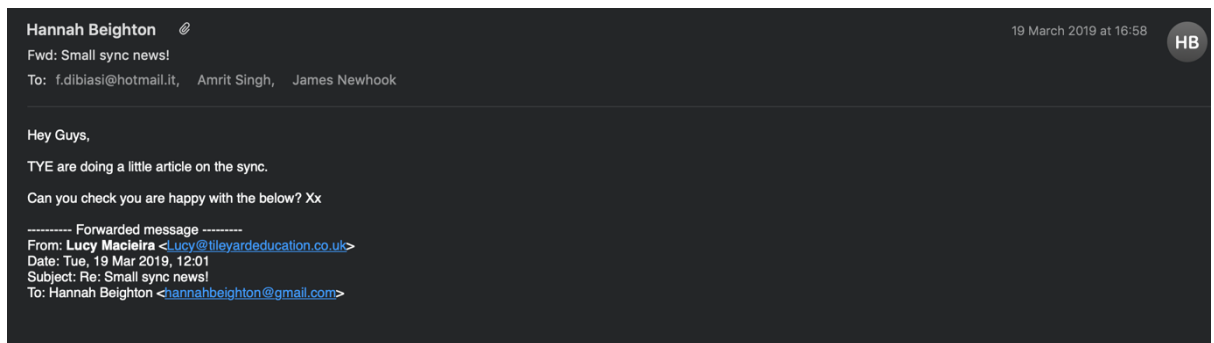
9. Images

Image 1: Cho, S. (2017). *The Power of Spotify Playlists*. [online] chartmetric. Available at: <https://blog.chartmetric.io/the-power-of-spotify-playlists-8cda3d84b7d0> [Accessed 2 Jun. 2019].

Image 2: Cho, S. (2017). *The Power of Spotify Playlists*. [online] chartmetric. Available at: <https://blog.chartmetric.io/the-power-of-spotify-playlists-8cda3d84b7d0> [Accessed 2 Jun. 2019].

10. Appendix

10.1 ITV4 Sync Email and Instagram Confirmation



10.2 Examples of Music

Song 1: Ree (2018), Ree – Giving Up On Love, [online] available at:

<https://open.spotify.com/track/5fXTaCUJoFQfRxifxnnP3r?si=asENR9CUR-aGUKyr69pi8w>

Song 2: Ree (2017), Ree, LexBlaze – Late Night, [online] available at:

<https://open.spotify.com/track/4aR2X1GHMNUDPDWKdf8k1x?si=9MvIH4kXTqKP7XPP1G-rwA>

Song 3: Ree (2019), Ree, Emma Horan - Reality, [online] available at:

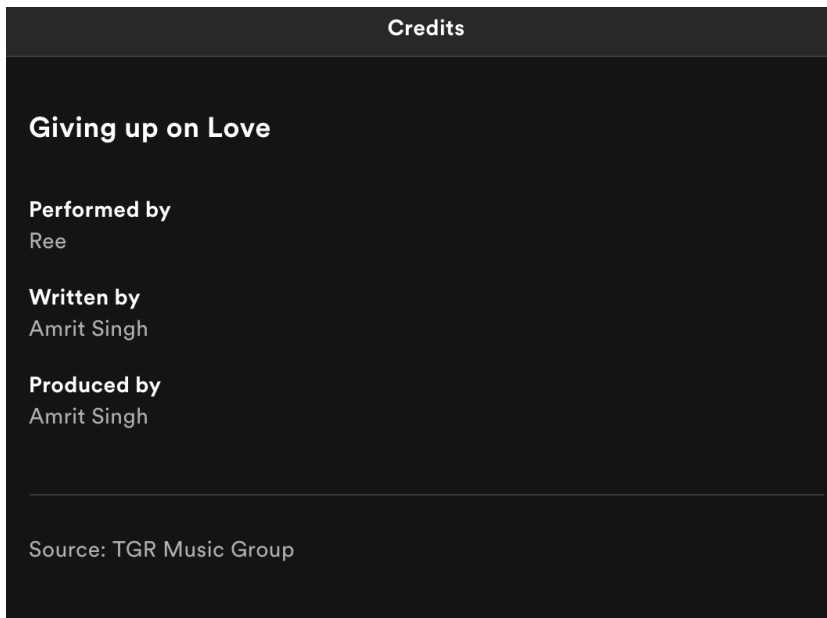
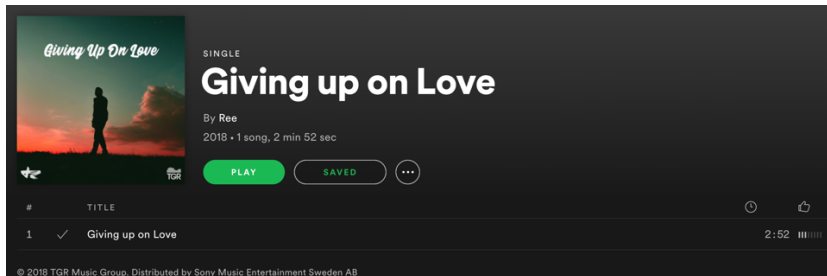
https://open.spotify.com/track/7INcww2VCLP2zDDDAw1C4n?si=l_quEFQJQV-8RHxhdMOyMw

Song 3: Ree (2018), J Balvin – Cuando Tu Quieras (Ree and LexBlaze Remix),

[online] available at: <https://soundcloud.com/h6mrecords/cuandotuquireas>

10.3 TGR Contract:

I have signed a confidentiality agreement with TGR Music Group and am not allowed to add the full contract to the appendix of this proposal. My releases on Spotify shall serve as proof of the agreement.



Available at:

<https://open.spotify.com/track/5fXTaCUJoFQfRxifxnnP3r?si=asENR9CUR-aGUKyr69pi8w>

10.4 TGR Verbal Agreement by Label Manager Martin Alén



Martin Alén



songs over the next to weeks. Preparing a lot of stuff.

TUES 23:52

Awesome , thanks man.
Yes, sure! We could
make a schedule for the
upcoming releases!
Every 6 week sounds
good ! Sounds like a plan



1