

Music: An Instrumental Part of Theatre

An investigation into the use of music in theatre, how it is used advantageously in a production, how it is useful to an actor, and why it is a necessity.

Written by *****

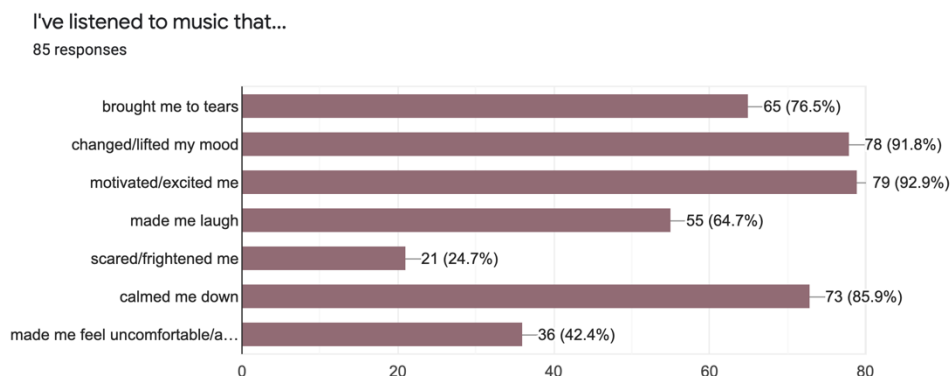
Music is a universal language that has been shared throughout the world from generation after generation. It has been used as a tool for education, a means of entertainment, and an outlet of intense emotion. The benefits of music are felt worldwide as its industry continues to change, thrive, and grow, through streaming services, live shows, radio, movies, and theatre. ***** highlights evidence of this growth in the royalties of streaming services, having surpassed CDs in 2014 by 20 million dollars, and with the technological advances of the 21st century making music more accessible worldwide and a more competitive field for aspiring artists.

***** states that theatre and music work in harmony with each other, having shared an important and integral relationship in the Western world since Ancient Greece, and continued throughout history. It has been considered an essential aspect of live theatre through the ages; its importance echoed through the writings of well-known and respected artists and scholars, such as Aristotle for example, who claimed that “the six elements that make up any drama are plot, character, thought, diction, music, and spectacle.” *****

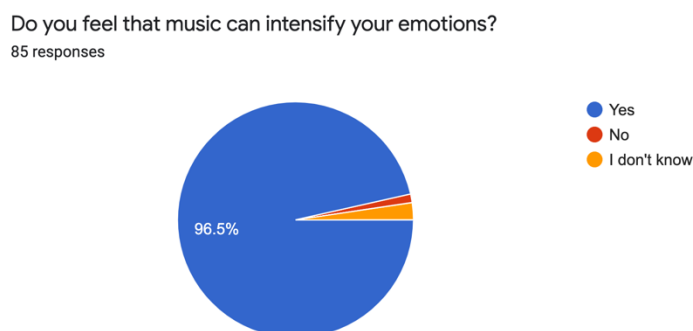
Despite cultural, periodical, and technological differences of the modern world, music continues to be considered a necessity for live theatre by contemporary directors. In speaking with writer, director, and producer Jennifer Lunn over Zoom, I asked if she felt that music was an important aspect of theatre, and whether she used it in her productions. She responded: “Personally, if you can do it, I would always love to have someone writing music for the show... I think it can be really vital, and it can make a huge difference in how the audience experience the show, and particularly in keeping the energy up in spaces, and gaps, and pauses, and just filling the space with something... I’ve worked on some really amazing shows that have just had extraordinary soundscapes that are music in a way, but are actually sound, lots of sound layered together... I love watching a sound designer listening, and you realize that they can hear things in a way that you absolutely can’t. I think it’s extraordinary, so yeah (sic), I would always have that if I could.” ***** Lunn will be working with composer and sound designer Tic Ashfield in her original play, *Es and Flo*. The general conclusion from our discussion was that contemporary directors and producers are excited by and incredibly aware of the immense value that music brings to the theatre, and when the money is available, music is a useful and welcomed tool for any production. But what drives this need? What purpose does music provide that makes it so powerful and so sought after?

I believe this is because music has an unquestionable power over our minds and emotions. And this is considered to be true psychologically, emotionally, and

spiritually by Pegasus, the Magazine of the University of Central Florida, who broke down how the brain responds to music in their article, *Your Brain on Music*. In their research, it has shown that music acts on areas of the brain that seek pleasure, process emotions, retrieve memories, and it triggers the release of dopamine, functioning almost like a drug, as it acts on the same part of the brain as illegal substances ***** This means that music makes us feel good, and it can affect and support our emotions. Personally, I've had many moments where I've put on a song to cry to, to sing to, to lift my spirits to, depending on what I feel I need, and I know I'm not alone in this. This was shown when I conducted an online survey on Google Forms in March 2022, called the Music Preference Survey, which focused on how we respond to music, as well as individual preferences, and shared it on social media for friends, family, acquaintances, and peers alike to fill out. All 85 respondents claimed that music had affected them emotionally in some way, shown in this graph below:

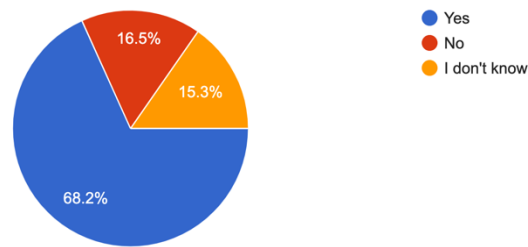


Similarly, over 95% of respondents felt that music can intensify the emotions you are already feeling, as shown in the graph below:



Furthermore, the majority felt that music has the power to manipulate and change our emotions, based on their individual experiences.

Do you feel that music can manipulate your emotions?
85 responses



In a separate question asking what people loved most about what music offers them, many answers highlighted how music enriches their life by amplifying happy moments with happy tunes, or alternatively, validates them and offers solace when they are feeling down. A quote from one respondent says: "I love that music can either amplify, be a release for, or help change how I'm feeling. When I'm in a terrible mood, music helps me work through that, or when I'm in a great mood, music is a way to express that feeling, especially when I can sing along to the music. I also really love enjoying music with people, there's something about enjoying music together that connects people." Music is born from an emotional place in our minds and hearts, so it's no wonder that music is so intertwined with our emotions. Ayako Yonetani, world-renowned violinist and UCF Professor, says that: "Music can control your fear, make you ready to fight, and increase pleasure," ***** as it influences our minds and triggers feelings of any variation, depending on the mood of the piece. It's clear that we are incredibly responsive to songs and sounds. I believe music binds us to our deepest selves, it holds fond moments of our past, it teaches lessons and shares memories. UFC Professor Kiminobu Sugaya explains that "memories associated with music are emotional memories, which never fade out — even in Alzheimer's patients." ***** The innate power music must have to be able to cause such a personal reaction, even in people with a cerebral disease that affects one's memory, such as Alzheimer's or dementia, is quite fascinating. I was able to see its cognitive effects very clearly in a documentary about music and memory in Alzheimer's and dementia patients called *Alive Inside*. Patients were interviewed and asked questions about their lives before, during, and after listening to music, and the results were enlightening. These people with debilitating diseases and disabilities seemed to come completely alive at the sound of their favourite song, shifting their presence and allowing them to interact more easily with the outside world, rather than subconsciously internalizing their focus which they are quite often subjected to. In one particularly severe case, dementia patient Henry, who was initially quite unresponsive and could not remember the name of his visiting daughter, was able to recall his favourite musical artist, Cab Calloway, and recounted fond memories of going out on the town to dance, and even began to sing along after he was given an iPod to listen to music from his earlier years. In this moving scene, Henry was able to, in some ways, reacquire his sense of identity through the power of music (*Alive*

Inside, 2014). The psychological advantages that music can offer to a production is undeniable, because listening to music has so many advantages in and of itself that it can offer to an audience on a very personal level. There's no other drug out there that can deliver that kind of widespread power, but as they say, with great power, comes great responsibility.

How to use that power advantageously in a production can be difficult to discern, especially with little experience. My musical background consists mostly of singing and song writing as an independent artist or in a professional choir setting, and I have rarely dived into the world of composing, which is generally successful for its subtlety. With a goal of writing an original composition for my classmate's play to highlight the effectiveness of music in theatre, I turned to an industry professional for advice; Ioan Hefin, a well-known actor and musician, was gracious enough to meet with me over Zoom to discuss our shared interests of the arts and give me some extremely helpful tips on how to use music to one's benefit in a theatre context. He shared with me that the need for breathing room between the song and the text is crucial when he said, "the biggest thing about it is space," as it is important for the music to be "evocative rather than declamatory," or to support the action and the drama rather than conduct it. In film, there is generally more freedom with this challenge because triggering emotions through music isn't distracting with higher visual stimulation, but on a live stage it can quickly become across as vehement or melodramatic. Hefin suggests that in a theatre context, "it's got to be the text or the visual or something else that triggers (emotion), and the music is secondary." *** **

He also notes that commissioned pieces where the composer is present for most of the rehearsal process often have greater outcomes, because they get a better feel for the narrative, speed, and energy of the piece which they can then translate into a musical element with more thought and consideration behind it. It is equally as important to have the courage to admit when the music doesn't fit a certain scenario, and to think about why you are adding music to the production in the first place.

When used well, music is an especially useful tool for adding a unique quality to the show itself and giving the audience subtle notes of information about specific moments. Director Katie Mitchell forms the main functions of music in theatre into 6 roles:

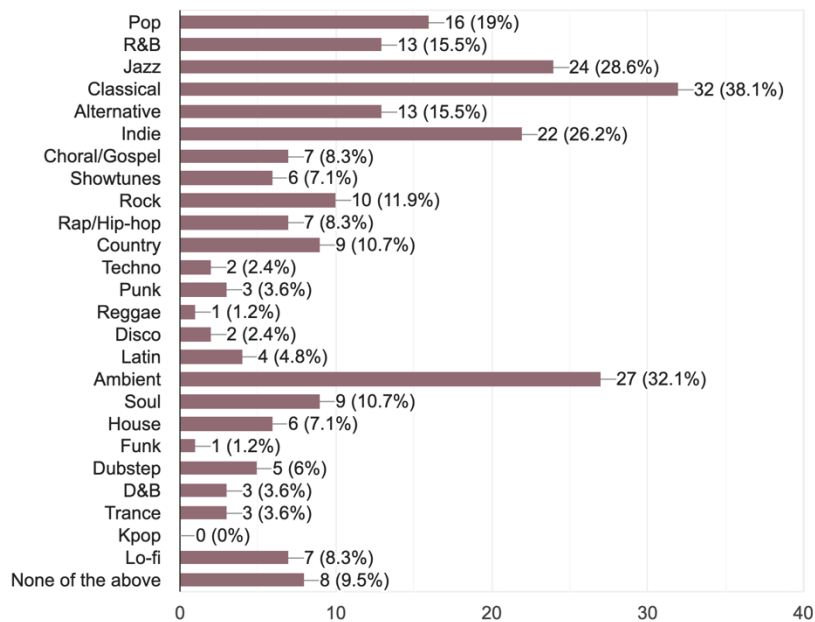
- “1. To describe time and place.
2. To establish the atmosphere or mood of a scene.
3. To underscore changes during the action.
4. To support set pieces, like dances or parties.
5. To cover scene changes.
6. To give production a sense of coherence, by judicious use of the same or similar musical material. It does this by making very different scenes feel like they belong together, or helping to draw out the ideas or themes underpinning the action.” ****

The layers music can add to a production often excite and benefit the audience's experience by providing auditory context to certain moments in the production. It can be informative, such as adding ambience to a coffee shop scene, or it can be unifying, like when filling up moments of silence and providing continuity during a scene change. The important thing to consider is keeping the music simple so as not to overpower or outshine the rest of the performance. One must "be careful not to overwhelm it with brass or percussion instruments," as they can be "difficult or tiring to maintain a consistent quiet pitch." *****

It is interesting how certain instruments or musical styles can affect a person's concentration and focus. I usually find it useful to have any genre or style of music playing as background noise when studying, cleaning, driving, etc, as it helps me to centre myself on the task at hand, and it drowns out any outside noise or intrusive thoughts. There are sources that prove this is true for the general population as well. The University of Stanford did a study in 2007 that found that music "can help your brain absorb and interpret new information more easily," and that it "can engage your brain in such a way that it trains it to pay better attention to events and make predictions about what might happen." ***** This is especially true for classical music, according to the study, and it is encouraging information for an artist looking to use music to amplify a piece of storytelling, as in theatre, but it must be said that not all musical styles are fitted for improving concentration and focus, and I do not have the privilege of a full-scale classical orchestra at my disposal. In order to keep the audience's focus, it's important to remember that music that is too loud or too fast can sometimes interrupt a person's thoughts and hinder their concentration, as music also has a great power of being distracting **** The best course of action seems to be using acoustic or softer instruments, like the piano/keyboard, a small string ensemble, or the acoustic guitar, rather than an electric bassline or loud percussive drums, as this will have the opposite effect one would want the audience to experience in a theatre context and make it harder for them to connect with the action happening on stage. It is recommended that, in order to receive the full benefits of background music and its effects on one's presence, lyrics should be kept out of the picture, the music should be instrumental and ambient, and should avoid surprising the listener with abrupt or experimental changes in rhythm and sound ***** I put this information to the test in my previously mentioned online survey. While there were many variations of musical preference that differed between all the respondents, the 2 genres that were generally most popular for studying/concentrating/focusing were Ambient and Classical, with approximately 1/3 of the respondents preferring each of these mostly instrumental genres over other more colourful/exciting genres, as evidenced in this graph:

What are your favourite genres of music to listen to when you are trying to concentrate/focus/study?

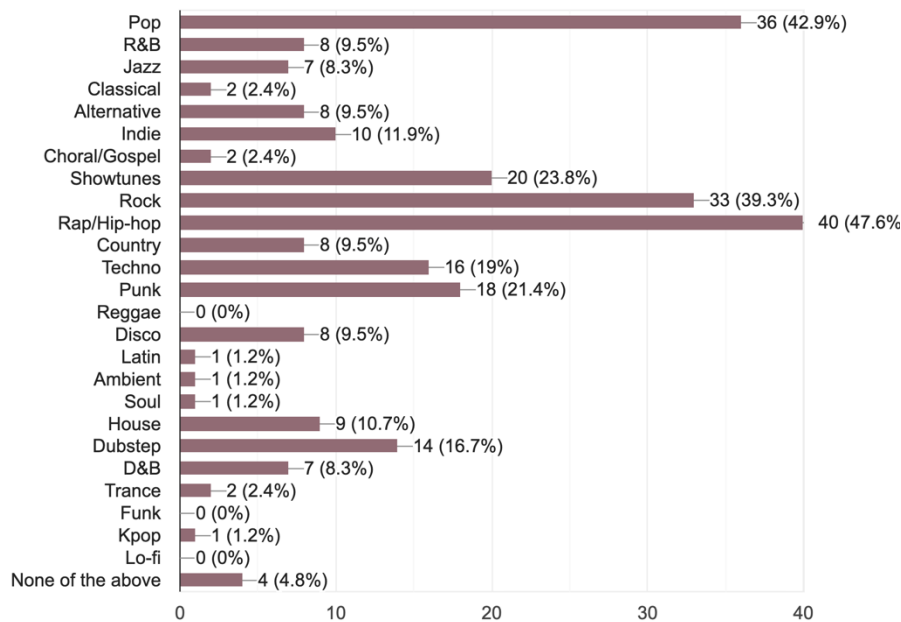
84 responses



When asked a follow-up question about what specific songs or artists were their favourites to listen to while trying to focus, many gave responses of famous classical artists like Chopin, Mozart, Beethoven, and more, as well as many recommendations for Lo-fi playlists on Youtube, and even movie scores. Other responses echoed the same idea, saying they would much rather the music be instrumental as lyrics can be distracting. The 2 genres that were found to be most distracting were Rap/Hip-hop and Pop music, as shown in the graph below:

What genres of music do you find most distracting when you are trying to concentrate/focus/study?

84 responses



As can be expected, this shows a sheer contrast in relation to the first question, as these genres are very lyric-heavy and involve catchy melodies that might make us more in tune with the music rather than at any task at hand. After all, popular and mainstream music styles, such as these that we would hear on the radio, are meant to stand alone and make you want to sing along, not sit in the background, so it's no wonder that these genres seem to be a bad match for keeping focus. This is useful information, however in the context of writing music for a play, it does not necessarily need to follow these guidelines. Surely one would always want for the audience to be engaged, but the audience is there to observe, not memorize text or study for an exam. How music is used in a production is entirely dependent on the effect the director wants the music to have on the audience. In some cases, that could mean distracting the audience, or making them want to sing along, so although there are benefits to having more ambient sounds for the sake of one's presence, I think there are also other benefits that come from music that engages our minds in other ways.

Music has other services it can provide as well, not just for the audience, but for the performers. Adding another skill to your repertoire is never a bad idea, because as an artist, it gives you an advantage over someone without that skill. In this case, having some form of music training or a musical background can help you find rhythm, exposition, modulation, energy, and other bits of information in the text that someone without that training would miss out on completely. As Ioan Hefin told me, it works as a "home base, a working pattern, something that you can launch,

whatever your process is, into [the theatre].” I find myself in agreement with this statement, because I am always aware of the musicality of a scene or play, and to translate that into an actual piece or pieces of music, will be a challenging but exciting journey to embark upon.

The play I’ll be writing music for follows the story of a doomed marriage, as evidenced by its title: ***** Though the play starts off rather upbeat, it quickly starts to descend into darker territory as it goes on, and we learn more about the characters, their relationship, and their past. With this theme in mind, finding inspiration for the musical accompaniment for part of this play should be reflective of that information. I believe, even though this is a theatre piece, there are still notes that can be taken from other mediums of entertainment that use music to capture the listener in the moment, such as film, and even video games. Though the processes and outcomes of these musical aspects differ from each other, they hope to achieve the same goal: keeping the listener engaged.

As composer Jeremy Douglass says, when it comes to theatre underscoring “it is nearly impossible for a piece of recorded music to specifically reflect the shifts in mood or tone throughout a live scene,” and so you must “distill a complicated scene down to its most basic element and hope that it works, hope that it informs the audience,” ***** whereas in film, the underscoring is based off scenes that are pre-recorded, leaving a lot more freedom for exciting and complex underscores. Even so, in his work on ‘Hedda’ at the Jobsite Theatre in Tampa, Florida, Douglass managed to use inspiration from the video game ‘*Alien: Isolation*’ to tackle the constraints of live performance. In this game, the enemy alien’s proximity is warned to the player by how many layers of sound are playing on top of each other. Douglass took this concept of layering multiple loops of music, without beginnings or ends, at different times to attempt a more cinematic approach at the scene music. His experimentation with loop sequences and using different layers of sound allowed for a more reactive feel to the music that responded well to the action on stage, rather than the usual static, cautious, or even bland, compositions that theatre composers are usually confined to ***** This idea of layering would be fun to explore when making my own score for the scene in ‘An American Divorce’, which will play in the background of an argument between 2 characters. This technique could allow for a more conversational feel between the action and the music and could hopefully achieve a more responsive relationship between these areas, because it is most important that the action informs the scene first rather than the music, and layering gives one greater control over the auditory atmosphere. This method, however, is also much more complicated, as each layer of sound would need to work seamlessly with each other no matter where one starts or finishes, and each sound layer would need its own cue, making it a much harder task for both myself as the composer and the person controlling the sound cues. In my experimentation, it might be worthwhile to play around with a few layers of sound, but not too many that might overcomplicate or overwhelm the production behind the scenes. During our recent production of ***** , there was use of music

from the 90s/00s that helped contribute to a fun atmosphere before, during, and after the play, and provided some opportunities for comedic moments throughout as well. Songs like Around the World by Daft Punk and Things Can Only Get Better by D:ream filled the space with an upbeat, school dance vibe that no doubt helped the audience to really immerse themselves in the joy of the play. The music was an essential part of the production and helped tell the story in a light-hearted and exciting way. This also came with its challenges, of course, as sometimes cues can be missed, and our production did have a few hiccups during show week. If we had to use more layers of sound/music, and cue them separately, this would have caused more complications to work around, and would have left more room for error. As a performer, we obviously must strive to crack on with the production despite the occasional mishap, but in an effort to make this process as simple as possible for a beginner like myself, layering sound could be more of a hinderance rather than an advantage.

I plan to take part in the rehearsal process for this play to get a good feel for the characters, images, themes, and pace of the piece, which will be useful for the conception of the musical component. In that time, I also will be working closely with Marshall to decide exactly how the music takes part in the scene and what vision he, as the director, wants to achieve. Whether that means the track simply plays in the background, or if it actively reacts and changes with the escalating action on stage, will be entirely dependent on his directorial decisions and how the rehearsal period reveals what is needed for the scene. Because the music piece we are creating is intended to be used for the characters to dance to, though that's not necessarily how it ends up playing out, the genre and style is open to almost any interpretation. There will be use of the song 'Handcuffs' by Parliament at the top of the show, which is an upbeat funk song featuring lots of brass, so it is possible to continue in that same vein and give a sense of cohesiveness between the two music pieces, or we can explore a completely different style and see how that affects the scene or the mood of the whole play. The rehearsal period, taking place in March 2022, will be a crucial part of the process of composing, as this will be the time of scene analysis that will shape the whole musical element and atmosphere that we hope to achieve.

Collaboration and Practical Application

The first rehearsal we did as a company was done through Zoom, just to do a readthrough of the play in its entirety and to get a feel for the themes and mood of the piece. Immediately I noticed the naturalistic nature of the text, the child-like tendencies of the characters during arguments, and the underlying conflict of push and pull from each of them during the more difficult scenes. I also felt a strong image of lightness to darkness, and an integral theme of fairness and loyalty. All of these ideas were noted down in my idea board as a reference to come back to once we started to write the accompanying music.

The first in-person rehearsal focused primarily on team building and ensemble-based exercises, which I took part in at times. This was less based on the play itself and more on getting comfortable with each other and setting the tone for a safe rehearsal space while we work through some potentially difficult and emotional scenes. Though this related less to my role as the music composer, I still wanted to be present, taking loan Hefin's advice to take part in as many of the rehearsals as possible, especially from the very beginning. I believe it is important and useful to be there for as much of the process as possible, not just for the sake of the music piece I'm creating, but also to integrate myself more with the team and our vision.

During the next few rehearsals, as we started to work through the scenes, I asked the actors to provide me with some imagery for their characters that might help bring in another angle of artistry and inspiration to the music piece I'm creating. Trinity Sullivan, who plays as Katie, sent me some photos she had collected for her imagery work on the character, a few of which I've attached below:



Pictured: French Horn (left), Thorny Devil Lizard (right)

Additionally, I asked the actors what instruments they thought would represent their characters the best, with the idea that I could potentially incorporate their chosen instruments into the song. They took their time and gave their thoughts for both their respective character's mind and their own actor's mind. As an example, in her images for **** above, *****felt that her character would believe she is a Trumpet, but***** herself thinks that ***** is more of a French horn. Both of these brass instruments can sound quite beautiful, when played correctly, but they can also be hard to learn or understand, much like how in the play, ***** is unable to comprehend ****'s needs. Similarly, thorny devil lizards, or any reptile at that, are notoriously difficult to take care of for an unqualified or unprepared individual, as I have personally come to know from owning a bearded dragon. I get a very self-sufficient vibe from Katie, she is strong and confident, so a trumpet or french horn seemed very fitting as solo instruments, though she tends to deal with issues on her own rather than treat her marriage like a real partnership, thus leaving her husband ***** feeling less involved, less important, and less loved. The way I visualize this musically is like a solo brass melody over a Silk Sonic style R&B ballad type-beat, which can be beautiful on its own, but also perhaps a bit lacklustre, until you bring in more harmonies and change the rhythm to add more kick, incorporating some funk

and zest to the mix, which could represent how ***** would blossom in an ideal partnership.

When I spoke with ***** who plays the role of *****, about his thoughts on his character's instrumental representation, he felt that his character would think he is a saxophone, but ***** sees him more as an acoustic guitar. This is perhaps because ***** is trying to be something he is not for the sake of his marriage, and perhaps he wants to be more like Katie to make himself believe they are still a good fit for each other. Immediately I noticed a trend towards brass instruments between the two characters, only strengthening my thoughts to go for a more funk-driven piece, although without someone who knows how to play any of these instruments, we may be confined to digital/artificial means of getting that sound through Logic Pro or another music-making program.

At the start of our music rehearsals, we took some time to jam together before testing our ideas. We improvised bits and pieces of songs we already knew to warm ourselves up and get into the swing of things. I found this very helpful, as this was the first time I've played with this group of people before, and I found myself reminiscing the jams I so often have back home with my own band. I took to the keyboard and mostly provided chords and piano fills for *****, on the bass, and ***** on the electric guitar, to play around with. We then decided on a simple chord progression we could build from and let that repeat itself while we tested guitar riffs and basslines. By the end of the first music rehearsal, we had a rough draft of a simple 4 chord song (C-Em-G-D) with a repeating guitar riff and a funky bassline, recorded on the Voice Memo app on my iPhone. The song didn't have any lyrics, and our bass was out of tune, but it was only meant to be a blueprint for the actual piece, simple enough that we could still add things on later if we wanted to, which left us in a good starting place. I tentatively named this song Climbing to give it a place on my idea board and made some notes about what we could add/change the next time we looked at it, such as replacing the guitar riff with horns, and maybe increasing the tempo of the song as it goes on to match the heightening tension of the scene, or transposing the chords upwards to simulate a rising atmosphere with each upwards key change.

The shift in chords themselves can directly translate to a shift in tone/story, as I've come to learn in looking at music theory over the years. The artist development company I work with back home in Canada, called Fusionpresents, uses this graph to explain the emotional context of a chord in a major scale progression:

“CHORDS AND WHAT THEY COULD MEAN:

1 MAJOR - The HAPPY HOME, the ROOT, the MAJOR KEY of the song, commonly called the RELATIVE MAJOR.

2 MINOR - The yearning chord; the sad emotional stretch, “What happened???? I was just happy!”

2 MAJOR - Unnatural to the key and imposes a tension that needs resolution,

typically succeeded by the 5 MAJOR.

3 MINOR - The melancholic state. Sorrow. Depression. "Why did this happen???" Sadness with no resolution.

3 MAJOR - Unnatural to the key, creates tension and emphasis, typically succeeded by 6 MINOR or 4 MAJOR.

4 MAJOR - The HOPE chord. The first HAPPY CHORD after 2 sad chords in the scale.

4 MINOR - Unnatural to the key. The DEFEAT chord, could be saddest chord of the scale.

5 MAJOR - "We're going home!" Naturally feels like it wants to resolve on 1 MAJOR or 6 MINOR.

5 MINOR - Unnatural to the key, and typically used as a pivot chord to modulate and transpose to a new key.

6 MINOR - The SAD HOME. The RELATIVE MINOR KEY of the song.

6 MAJOR - Unnatural to the key, creating tension typically resolved in the 2 MAJOR or 2 MINOR.

7 DIMINISHED - The hallway chord, in between the sad home to the left and happy home to the right. Which way to go?" *****

Although this concept is open to interpretation and would only be fully understood by people familiar with music theory, it certainly gives me a better understanding of the relationship between the notes we play in a song. When creating a song with my team at home, we would often refer to this graph, as it can outline a story just by using the chords themselves as our reference. Using this guide as a lens on our song Climbing, which is in the key of G Major, we know the chord progression starts on the 4 MAJOR (C), to the 6 MINOR (Em), to the 1 MAJOR (G), to the 5 MAJOR (D), which translates to feelings of hope, then an emotional descent into the "sad home", then a switch to the "root/happy home", then the transitional "going home" to end the sequence. I felt this chord combination had a very forward energy, which I liked, and this repeating progression shows a short journey or auditory storyline from optimism, to pain, to finding our way back home. I find common themes in this musical journey in relation to the play, as the main characters keep trying to move forward and push through, but there is always that sad home waiting to bring them down again.

During the next music session, we tried to expand on the song we made, but we concluded that something was missing from the overall vibe of the song. The minute-long repetitive 4-chord C-Em-G-D song felt less captivating than we originally thought, and I found it perhaps a bit too redundant for a song that should urge these characters to dance, move, build tension, and then cut out. There was no change in chord progression, I wasn't moving along to the beat as much, and I was missing that after playing it in person again; I could just feel the need for a shift in tone. So, as it happened, we decided to scrap Climbing entirely, and look for a different kind of vibe.

The song we ended up creating instead has more indie-pop influence, similar to artists like Walk the Moon and Bad Suns. These are the kinds of songs you blast with your friends on a road trip, in your flat, at a campfire, where everyone knows the words, and you can't help but move along to the beat and sing at the top of your lungs. A few examples could include songs like Tongue Tied by Grouplove, The Borders by Sam Fender, or Anna Sun by Walk the Moon. These songs feel dreamy, and nostalgic, and freeing, and that makes sense with the context of the scene: Adam is trying to "lighten the mood", as he so often does, by playing a song that maybe they used to sing together all the time, or that they saw in concert together, or that holds any reminiscent memory of their happier past, but***** is not looking to change her mood and would instead rather process what she is feeling on her own. The framework of these songs offers more room for variation, and as such, the chord progression now goes C-F-Em-G in the verse, F-G-Am in the pre-chorus, and C-Bb-F in the chorus. We also added lyrics on top of that which indirectly reflect upon the hopelessness of ***** relationship, and we named the song Circles. The lyrics include imagery inspired by one of the themes I had initially been inspired by when I first got my hands on the play: lightness to darkness, as I wanted to incorporate more of the initial research from my idea board, and lyrics were a terrific way to achieve that which the chords alone could not. There's also something very gripping and ironic about an upbeat song that has dark or serious lyrics, which is what this song includes. Following the example of songs like Swimming Pools by Kendrick Lamar; a party anthem that ironically details the dangers of alcoholism, or like Pumped Up Kicks by Foster the People which takes you through the story of a school shooting through the dreamy sounds of indie-alternative melodies, we have an opportunity to add layers to the song, having more value in its deeper messaging than just on its surface level. I find that these songs often offer a whole new perspective when you really take time to listen to the lyrics. This contrast of positive and negative energy was a welcomed outcome, as I think it also works as a metaphor for the character's relationship; things may seem positive between them both at first glance, but with further inspection, we realize that there is pain and tension here that could go unnoticed without the proper attention. Even though the lyrics are not the focus point in this case, the lyrics are there in case someone's presence falls on them, and instead of being empty words, they have meaning and relevance to the play.

With this new song now under our belts, we were prepared to record after finally being content with this development. While our space and recording equipment was limited, we did what we could with a headphone mic, my laptop, and a quiet room. Although the recorded sound wasn't as clean as it would have been had we had access to a real recording studio and proper equipment, we were able to use a filter on the audio in the post-production stage to give it more of a vintage/indie vibe whilst also cancelling out the white noise with a purposeful gritty texture. In the pre-chorus, I chose a telephone vocal filter to put over my voice as a nod to the voicemails we hear throughout the play. I was also able to access artificial

instruments through our recording program, LogicPro, and that gave us access to a drumkit and a keyboard/pad which we incorporated into the song. I experimented with adding some horns with a trumpet trio in the chorus to try and incorporate more of the characters' instrumental representation, but the artificial horn sound wasn't fitting with the rest of the track, nor was it as satisfying as a real trumpet melody. I also wanted to be careful not to overwhelm the piece with too many sounds, as I've come to learn in my research, it would be distracting rather than engaging, especially when a horn section is not completely essential. With this research in mind, I decided to leave the trumpets out, and focus on going simple, but effective. The resulting song only uses 2 live instruments, 2 artificial instruments, my own vocals, and harmonies from ***** and myself. This was also the first song I produced almost entirely on my own, let alone for a stage production, so keeping things as straightforward as possible for myself was needed with the few LogicPro skills I have.

Though the duration of the song was only a minute and a half, and its playtime on stage was even shorter, the general feedback I received after both show nights was that the music fit well with the context of the scene and the situation at hand, and the song did not take away from the action on stage. In one particular discussion with an audience member, they noted that the music worked as a prompt or emotional foundation which informed those in the space on what to feel in that moment, and they felt that all productions should include music in their work. Even though the song was not fully mastered to the extent we would normally achieve for a song I'd release with my band for example, this was not obvious to the ears of the audience, and they expressed enjoyment at the upbeat vibe of the song. Others expressed that they hadn't taken much notice in the music at all, which in this case, is still positive feedback, as this indicates that the music blended well within the atmosphere, and they weren't distracted or surprised by it for all the wrong reasons. All things considered; I was quite proud of the outcome of the music.

Through this research process, and through my own experience with this creative challenge, I've found that adding music to a production is a great way to give the show more body and fill the spaces that have potential for more sensory information. Many productions I've been involved in and witnessed have used music in some form for a variety of creative reasons, and in each case, it has benefitted the audience's experience and enriched the overall production by tapping into that pleasure centre in our brains. In our production of *****example, the music was a conduit for comedy, and in *An American Divorce*, it was a base for a build-up of energy. It is evidently a very welcomed accompaniment by theatre professionals, such as those I've had the pleasure of interviewing like *****, and those I've worked with recently such as ***** So many things go into making a song for a play that are slightly different than making a song for the common commercial market. The themes, images, tone, pace, and context of the play are all things that must be considered, tested, and built upon. This analytical method of song creation is useful work from a musical artist's perspective and having music skills to translate

into acting work is without question an artistic advantage, thus demonstrating the symbiotic relationship that music and theatre share. The research I've highlighted also shows favour towards simplicity and careful planning. I know through my own practical process that it can be tempting to add more layers of instruments and melodies into the musical element but showing restraint and leaving space for the action on stage to trigger emotion is a necessity. This project gave me resources, articles, books, insight, and information about two veins of the artistic industry that I will continue to use throughout my career, and the connections I've made with those involved throughout this process, I will keep with me forever. In fact, my next composing project is already underway as I will be acting in and playing live original music for our upcoming production of ***** directed by the wonderful ***** This will be a great opportunity for me to explore the ins and outs of live music in a theatre context and continue down this path of discovery that conveniently fuses my interests in a way that excites and challenges me as an artist.

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