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Module Title: Creation

Assignment Title: Element 2b

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Word Count: 5500

Introduction

In this essay I will discuss and reflect upon the process and outcomes of creating my portfolio and how through this process, and my year as an MA student, I have developed as a music producer.

The Project - And Heaven May Be Mine

This is the project description I provided in my project proposal:

The project [Nim] has conceptualised focusses on the theme of 'Relationships in Crisis'. It will be delivered through an album release, a series of music videos and a live show that combines both. I will be working with Nim to produce the album and act as music director for the live shows as well as inputting on marketing and visual direction.

The live show is intended to be the focal element of the project and will consist of a live performance of the recorded music synchronised to the music videos. The video will be portrayed across three screens, each showing a different visual and the stage design will feature elements of these videos. (Newhook, 2019)

Generally, this concept stayed the same. However, after a meeting with our course leaders considered how to improve the project. They felt that the project needed more layers to compete with existing productions, and did not see much difference between it and a simply a band playing with visuals. They suggested researching immersive productions such as Secret Cinema and escape rooms, which are currently very popular (see Appendix A).

After the meeting, Nim and I discussed these suggestions and we both felt that these kind of events could be used as inspiration but that he wanted to keep the production closer to the style of an art exhibition than an interactive event.

We did however discuss how to make the project more than 'a band playing to visuals'. We would achieve this by implementing a more experimental stage layout: a 360 stage in the centre of the room, like that used by U2 in their U2 360° Tour (McGuinness, 2009) but on a much smaller scale. This allows the three screens to become part of the band itself, being positioned level with the band members in a circle.

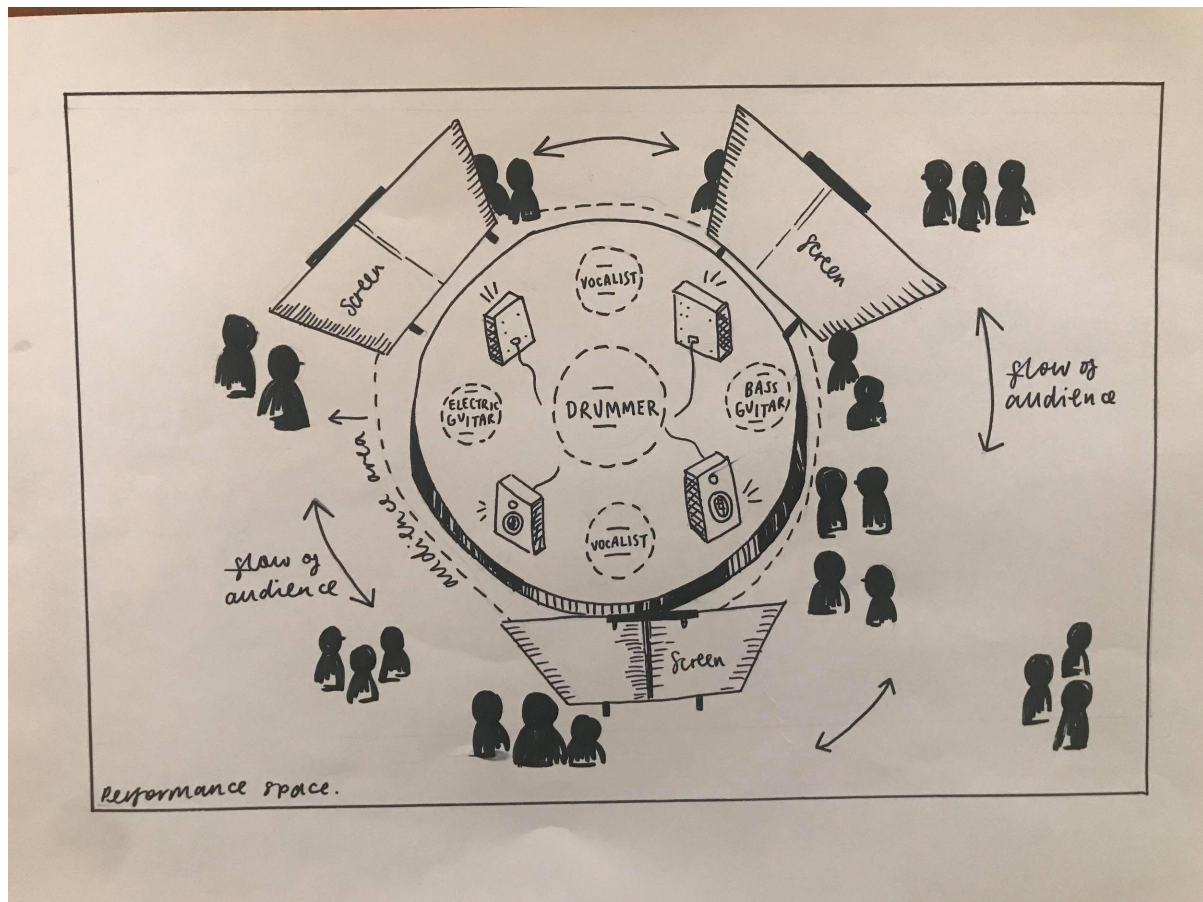


Figure 1, A sketch of the stage set up

This setup requires further consideration as it does not allow for a typical stereo set up. However I do see this as an opportunity for experimentation with sound and am planning to meet with Martyn Ware in the future to discuss 3D sound in a live environment.

Further to this, we took inspiration from Secret Cinema, an immersive cinema experience (Riggall, 2013), by deciding to implement parts of the film sets from the supporting videos into the live show, placed around the stage, to add another layer of immersion for the audience.

Production

In this section, production refers to the production of the music, rather than the overall project.

Our process of production was:

1. Nim would create a rough demo. Focusing on the chords, melody and lyrics, sometimes adding some additional arrangement.
2. I would take the song and start playing with arrangements and restructuring ideas.
3. We would meet to discuss the track and refine it. I would then take the song away and continue to refine the track in more detailed.
4. Before entering the studio I researched recording techniques that I felt would benefit the song.
5. After the recording sessions I edited the recordings and rearranged sections and added additional elements as needed.
6. Finally, I mixed the songs alone at home.

- Composition and arrangement

An aspect of production I kept at the forefront of my mind was musically setting the scene. In a tutorial with producer Adam Moseley that I attended, he compared music production to a painting in that you have a large, 3D canvas on which to paint your image, composed of: the frequency spectrum (height), stereo spectrum (width) and reverb, delay and other tools to create depth (see Appendix B). Nim's lyrics are very narrative driven and, given that the songs were intended to be delivered alongside video, I decided to think cinematically about the project, using the 3D canvas analogy as a way to create the setting in which the song takes place.

This is most apparent on Running Through The Woods. The story follows a daughter and her father and how their relationship has evolved with time. The daughter still needs his guidance but not his guardianship. The lyrics of the song relate to the woods and are quite dark, so I decided to use a dark, atmospheric style of production to give the impression of walking through a large forest.

I found that this approach to the songs made making production decisions easier and also informed my personal production style in general. I've always gravitated towards a cinematic

sound but connecting this style more closely to the lyrics and meaning of the song improved the production as a whole. This is something I will continue to practice and implement further into my style.

Drums Recording

Originally, as per Sean Hargreaves suggestion, we had intended to record drums and bass simultaneously (see Appendix C). According to Sound on Sound Editor in Chief, Paul White 'It always gives the best feel if the band play together' and that 'trying to do the drums on their own is asking for problems, as the feel will never be quite right.' (White, 2010). This technique therefore is good for capturing the energy and groove of a performance to provide a strong foundation for the track. Nim and I were hiring professional musicians to reduce risk given our limited studio time. However, a number of factors such as budget and incomplete drum and bass arrangements made us decide to instead record just the drummer.

Ultimately, this proved to be the right decision as the drums session was very intensive and, since it was my first day of recording and I was unfamiliar with the studio, it would have caused a lot of stress to have recorded the bass simultaneously, in turn leading to poor recordings. I would like to try this method in the future but with more preparation and a better understanding of the studio I am working in.

I had recorded drums previously in the Tileyard Education Studio and decided to use a similar set up, which had initially been recommended to me by Alex Hollingsworth, the studio engineer. If I'd had more experience in the studio and in recording drums, I would have experimented more with microphones choices and placement and preamps but instead trusted the experience of the studio engineer to reduce the risk of a bad recording.



Figure 2, My drum recording setup

One experiment I did do however was to place a Shure SM7b pointing to a space in between the kick drum, snare and hi hat, running through a Chandler Germanium preamp with the gain turned all the way up. This resulted in a very saturated and compressed sound.



Figure 3, The Shure SM7b placement and preamp

When mixing I did not use this microphone much but in a tutorial I attended with drummer and producer Nikolaj Bjerre, he discussed how microphone placements like this are often what make a drum recording (see Appendix D). He showed us a drum recording he'd done recently with a microphone intended for similar purpose, placed next to the drum stool facing into the kit. He heavily compressed and saturated it and slowly mixed it in, adding a lot of energy and interest to the drum sound.

After this tutorial, I returned to my mixes and was a lot more extreme with my usage of the SM7b recording, as well as adding heavy parallel compression to the full drum mix using the Soundtoys Devil Loc Deluxe. This added much more vibe to the drum sound and improved the energy of the song as a whole. Taking this forward, I intend to experiment more with my drum sounds, considering more non-standard microphone placements and taking more time in the studio to achieve different sounds.

Piano Recording

I had a clear idea for the piano sound, taking inspiration from modern classical composers such as Dustin O'Halloran, Nils Frahm and Olafur Arnalds. As detailed in my project proposal I wanted to produce 'a round intimate sound' that would 'compliment the songs that deal with very personal and intimate subjects' (Newhook, 2019).

I knew that the studio engineer, Alex, is a big fan of this style of music so I used his knowledge to help me obtain the sound I was after. This involved miking the piano very closely, turning the preamps up high and the pianist playing softly with the felt down. I didn't want to go too far with the sound like in *An Ending, A Beginning* (O'Halloran, 2013) where you can very clearly hear the mechanics of the piano but find a balance between this and an intimate sound like in *Daydreaming* by Radiohead (Greenwood et al., 2016).

The first attempt at this sound mainly utilised a pair of Coles 4038s running through Heritage 73's Junior preamps placed very closely to the top of the hammers. There was not enough mechanical noise in this position. As Alex pointed out, a lot of this style comes from prepared piano, which involves placing items on the strings of the piano and playing it not just via the keyboard, and sometimes with various objects (Cage, 2012). We were not able to do this so I instead placed two KM184s lower on the hammers to capture more of the percussive sound. I chose these microphones as I feel they have a bright and present sound.



Figure 4, The Coles 4038s and KM184s on the piano

Adding these microphones got me closer to the sound I was looking for. However, in the mixing stage I found the room microphones I'd set up (another pair of KM184s) added a lot of my desired sound to the performance as they picked up the sound of the piano stool creaking and the pedals being engaged.

Overall, I was happy with the sound achieved as it was reminiscent of the sound I was inspired by without being a direct copy, which would have been out of place in the music. There was, however, too much hiss on some of the individual microphones. I had purposely turned the gain up high to capture some hiss but, especially in the case of the Intro where there are three simultaneous piano recordings playing, the noise level became far too high and I had to employ Izotope's RX Noise Reduction software to eliminate some of it.

Although this software is very good at removing noise without affecting the tone or quality of the recording, I should have been more careful in the studio, especially on a single Coles 4038 that was placed behind the piano. This microphone ended up, surprisingly, providing a lot of attack to the piano recording but I had turned the gain too high without engaging the

pad on the preamp, resulting in an overly noisy recording. In future, with more confidence and experience in the studio, I would take more time to individually assess each microphone and consider the overall hiss level. This being said, the availability and quality of software such as Izotope RX allows for repairs like this to be made with little to no repercussions. Having this in mind when recording can certainly ease your mind and, in the case of limited studio time, allow you to not spend too long on issues like this which can be fixed in post production.

Acoustic Guitar Recording

An overall creative direction on the album was to have it sound dark and vintage versus a modern, clean hi-fi sound. This instructed the use of ribbon microphones in a lot of the recording sessions as they typically have a 'relatively flat frequency response' (Owsinski, 2017, p 26) compared to a lot of condenser microphones that add 'extra high-frequency hype'.

A reference for the acoustic recording was Johnny Cash's cover of Hurt by Nine Inch Nails (Reznor, 2003). This track features a rich and full acoustic guitar recording. The acoustic guitar we were using was quite bright and thinner in comparison. This could have been because of the small body and the light strings along with thin guitar plectrums being used to play it.

To combat this I tried a few different methods of recording with ribbon microphones. Since the acoustic guitar recording was for a track with a sparse arrangement, I wanted to record the guitar in stereo to cover more of my canvas.

I first tried two Royer R-121 microphones as a spaced pair but found I did not like the stereo balance of the guitar. Next I tried the R-121s in a Blumlein Array, a technique which 'uses two bidirectional microphones in the same point and angled at 90 degrees to each other' (Owsinski, 2017, p 113). I much preferred the stereo image with this set up but found the frequency response to be too flat and lacking in colour. I swapped the Royer R-121s for two Coles 4038s in the same position (figure 5).



Figure 5, Two Coles 4038s set up in a Blumlein Array

This sound was much closer to what I was trying to achieve as the Coles 4038 picks up more lower mid frequencies (Figure 6) than the R-121 (Figure 7) which added to the richness we wanted. However the sound was now lacking some attack and, with the revelation of the rear Coles 4038 on the piano adding attack, I placed a single Royer 121 behind the guitarist pointing slightly down from above at the body of the guitar. This did achieve the attack I was after, particularly for the song Follow The River. I believe this is in part due to the Royer's frequency response between 2KHz and 5KHz.

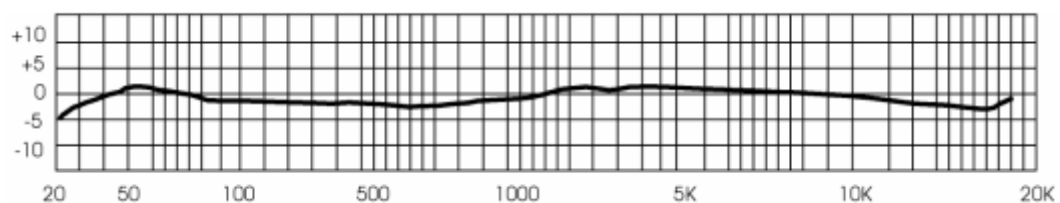


Figure 6 Frequency response chart of the Royer R-121 (Royer Labs, 2015)

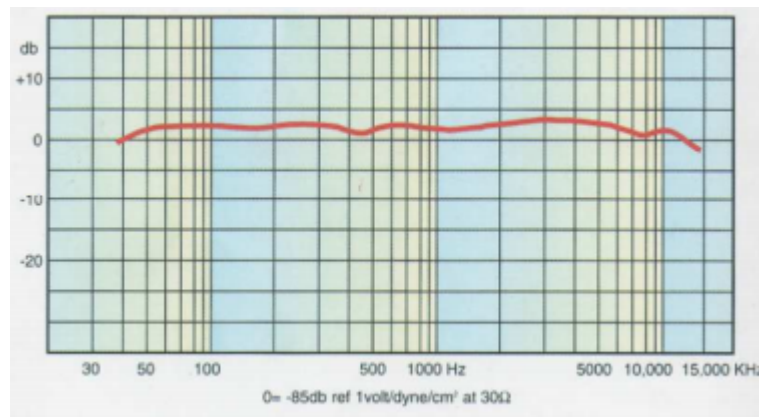


Figure 7, Frequency response chart of the Coles 4038 (Coles Electroacoustics, 2015)

Vocal Recording

Apart from She's Wild and Follow the River where we recorded Nim's vocals with an SM7b as he was playing guitar simultaneously and I needed to limit bleed, we recorded all the vocals on the Soundelux E251c. I found that this microphone suited Nim as it smoothed the grit in his voice. Paired with a Heritage 73' Jr preamp it provided a rich, deep sound that we used for And Heaven May Be Void. This sound was not ideal for other tracks however and I switched to a Focusrite ISA828 for these, for a cleaner more transparent sound. The microphone also suited Irene's voice as she is fairly sibilant and it really smoothed out the highs in her voice, which seems to be a strong characteristic of this microphone.

The only other vocal microphone set up was for Through The Cracks in which I attempted an ORTF set up with a pair of Neumann KM184s for the spoken word in the verses. I wanted the recording to sound as if Nim was in front of you speaking directly to you. I felt that the ORTF miking technique could deliver this immediacy as it 'provides a much greater sense of space due to time/phase differences, since the capsules are as far apart as your ears' (Owsinski, 2017, p 117). I tried to use a stereo bar to correctly set up the ORTF method, with the microphones placed at an angle of 110 degrees and 17cm between the capsules but I could not get the bar to work and so approximated the set up using a tape measure. An alternative to this method would have been a baffled-omni pair that tries 'to emulate the way our ears are placed on our heads and, therefore, the way we hear' (Owsinski, 2017, p 119). However I did not have the required materials, or a purpose built microphone such as a Neumann KU 100 for this method.

I was pleased with the outcome of this recording although given the sensitivity of the microphones, there was some issues with plosives. I did attach the pop shields but removed

them shortly after as I found they reduced the clarity of the recordings. When using this technique again in the future I'd spend more time getting the correct set up with the stereo bar or try to source a Neumann KU 100.

Mixing

In comparison to the recording process, I feel that I did not plan or prepare enough for the mixing. This was in part due to not meeting deadlines and having to rush the mixing process. For example, I did not prepare reference tracks for mixing, something that I had intended to do. This inhibited the mixing process as often lost sight of what I was working towards and ended up with unbalanced mixes.

In hindsight, the time I thought I was saving by rushing into mixing and not setting everything up properly was lost later on by having to repair some poor mix decisions. For the purposes of the album release, I will be revisiting the mixes for this project and will take my time, using reference mixes and leaving time between mix sessions to refresh my perspective.

As I've learned throughout my time at Tileyard, the mixing process is not something I enjoy a lot. When possible in the future, I intend to employ someone else to mix the music I produce. Not only could this improve the production overall but would free up my time to work on the areas of production where I excel. This may however, not always be possible depending on the budget or time restraints so I would still like to improve my mixing skills which I plan to do through practice.

Reflection

Throughout the production process I developed a number of new skills. My knowledge of microphones has increased, and I now understand much better how to make microphone and preamp choices based on the sound you are trying to achieve. I gained this through experimenting with different set ups especially in the acoustic guitar and piano recording sessions. I also learned the importance of knowing what you are trying to achieve before beginning recording.

Although I am not satisfied with the outcome of my mixes, I did find mixing more straightforward than some of my previous productions that had not had as much attention given the recording process. This has opened my eyes to the difference a professional studio and attention to detail in recording can give to a final produce.

The Live Show

As mentioned previously, the project is intended to be delivered as a multimedia live show. In order to present this part of the project, we recorded and filmed a live performance at The Gallery at Tileyard Studios.



Figure 8, Still from video shoot (see Appendix E)

We had decided to record the musical performance first and then film the show after, syncing the two elements in post production. Since we would be performing to a metronome, this wouldn't cause any timing issues with the video. For the film sets mentioned previously, we had not had the opportunity to create this yet but is something we would include in the future.

On the day we had planned to first set up the stage layout which included the band and 3 screens placed around the drummer in the centre. We had measured the space previously and had a rough floor plan of how we would set up.

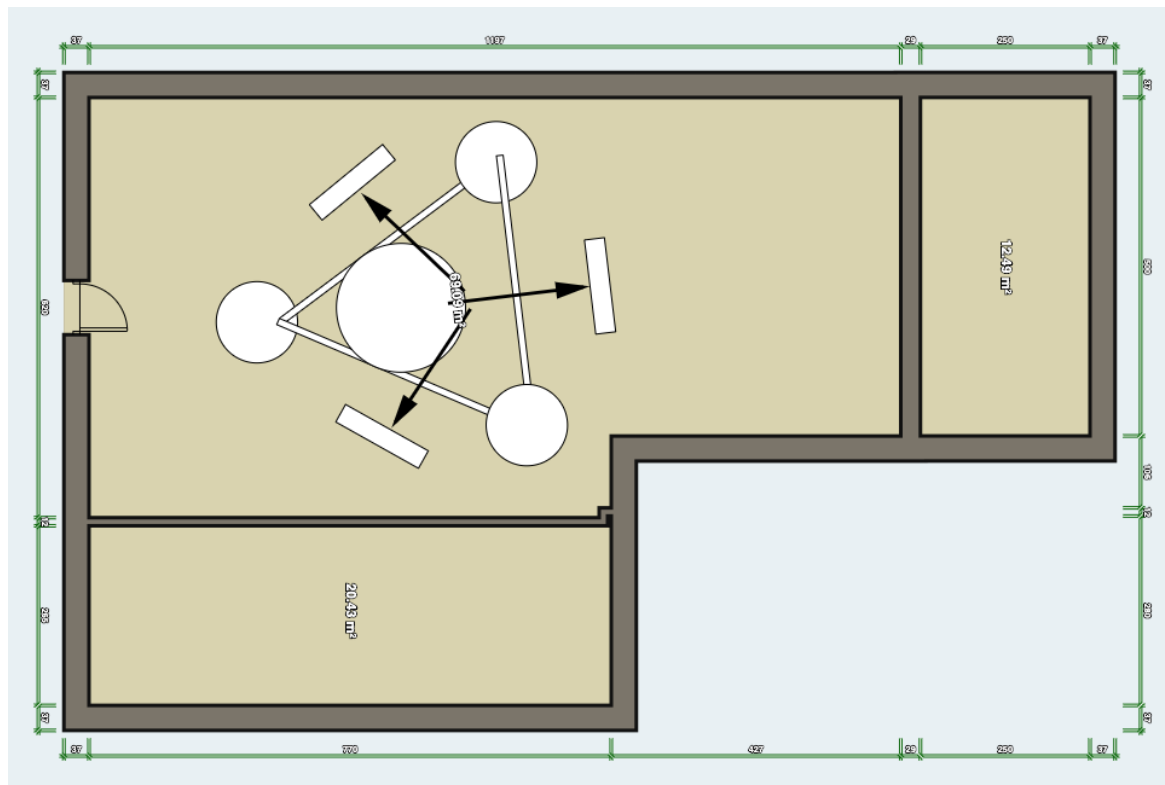


Figure 9, Proposed floor plan for the video shoot

However, as I detailed in my journal (see Appendix G), there was some confusion between myself, Nim and Tom in how we would set up as 'I had intended to record the music as it was to be "performed" in the video, with the drummer in the centre and myself, Nim and Irene placed around him in a circle'. However 'When Tom arrived, it was clear we all had different and hazy ideas of how we would set up for the day.'

Due to the amount of preparation and workload we all had leading up to the day, we had not taken time to have a meeting to properly plan how we would set up for the day. This meant that we discussed it on the day and wasted a lot of time in the morning.

Once I had set up everything for recording, resolved issues first with audio quality and then losing headphone mixes, we were starting to be concerned about time. I noted in my journal (see Appendix G), that:

I found myself unable to actually act as producer due to being too overwhelmed and pressured by time. I had no opportunity to go through the songs with the drummer and we only rehearsed once or twice before jumping into recording.

In my project proposal I outlined my role as musical director for the live show:

...my role of musical director for the live shows will include live music arrangements, backing track production and technical planning. (Newhook, 2019)

In addition to this role I also took on performing guitar and keyboards and engineered and produced the live recording session. This combined with our lack of planning and rehearsal was what overwhelmed me on the day. I became very stressed and was unable to perform all of my roles properly.

Reflecting on this day, I need to reconsider my role in this project. If we are able to secure funding for the project, we would be able to hire an engineer and a roadie to assist in the set up, allowing me to focus on producing the show and performing. Without this however, we would have to hire these people with the aim of recouping their fees in ticket sales and this may not be possible. This is something I will have to discuss with the other stakeholders of the project to find a better way to manage the workload.

Since the video shoot did not feature the fully realised live show that would include the film sets and larger screens, the videos we did produce are intended as promotional videos to advertise the project as well as sell it to various venues, events and festivals.



Figure 10, Still from video shoot (see Appendix E)

Soft skills

Working with musicians and artists

A key skill of a producer is to be able to communicate effectively with musicians, artists and others involved in the studio production environment. Going into this project, I had not worked with many musicians outside of my band.

The drummer we chose to work with was very professional and a great communicator himself and I found that this, coupled with my experience in drum arrangement, made for a very smooth process. The pianist we worked with however was a different situation. He had just arrived back in London from a 2 month tour in South America and was suffering from jet lag. Nim had worked with him before and had assured me that he was an excellent pianist and easy to work with. He was the former but in the case of the latter I did not find him easy to work with. This could have in part been due to his jet lag but regardless, I feel he should not have accepted the job based on his schedule. In my journal (see Appendix G), I wrote:

“We also needed him to play very softly to achieve my desired sound; too hard and the microphones clipped. He really struggled on getting the right technique and feeling for one song and after 30 takes we still didn't have it. This was a challenge for my "social producer" skills as I didn't know how to work with a tired and spaced out musician. After a lunch break he got a few good takes and although I felt he could have done better, we were spending too much time so we moved on.” (Newhook, 2019)

On the day, I feel that I could have been firmer with him. As the producer in the studio, it is my responsibility to keep things moving and make efficient use of expensive studio time. I struggled to do this as I was too concerned with upsetting a musician who I could tell was feeling vulnerable as they were struggling with a part they could usually play in their sleep. As a musician, I have been in this situation myself and it can be difficult to keep your composure. I suggested taking a break as I knew this would help but he insisted on continuing and I backed down. In future I will push harder in this situation as after we did eventually take a break, he was able to record the piece much quicker.

In general, this is an area I need to improve on. In a similar situation where Nim was having difficulties getting a good take, playing guitar and singing to a metronome at the same time, I opted to use what we had rather than pushing for more takes. This resulted in me spending

a lot of time editing the recording afterwards with some less desirable results. This happened in both situations and learning how to better deal with moments of insecurity in musicians brings better results in the music as well as reducing, overall, the time spent on the song.

Organisation

Nim and I set a series of deadlines at the beginning of the project as below.

2	JUN, SUN	● All day	DEADLINE: All demos finished
3	JUN, MON	● All day	Meeting: J, N, I
4	JUN, TUE	● All day	Recording: Drums and Bass
5	JUN, WED	● All day	Recording: Guitar + Piano
6	JUN, THU	● All day	Recording: Vocals
		● All day	Video Production "Running Through The Woods"
8	JUN, SAT	● All day	Video Production: "Running Through The Woods"
10	JUN, MON	● 3 – 11pm	Recording: bass guitar, Acoustic and vocals
13	JUN, THU	● 3 – 5pm	Meeting with James Tom
16	JUN, SUN	● All day	DEADLINE: Tracks edited, ready to mix
17	JUN, MON	● 10am – 4pm	Recording: Organ+Leslie
20	JUN, THU	● 4:30 – 5:30pm	Ciaran Meeting
		● 5:30 – 6:30pm	Sean Meeting
24	JUN, MON	● All day	Video Production: "She's Wild"
27	JUN, THU	● 3:30 – 4:30pm	Meeting with Martyn
29	JUN, SAT	● 9am – 9pm	Live Recording
5	JUL, FRI	● All day	recording BV's and mixing
7	JUL, SUN	● All day	DEADLINE: All songs mixed

In hindsight, the deadlines for editing and fully mixed tracks were too optimistic, especially the editing which wasn't finished until the beginning of July. I had not worked on a project before with this amount of music and live instrumentation. As mentioned previously, some of the less successful recording sessions resulted in a lot of editing to repair the performances, something that pushed the deadline back. These deadlines were also not specific enough

as, for the live recording on the 29th June, we needed the studio versions of three songs being performed to be mixed in order to generate stems for the live backing tracks as close to the final versions as possible. This meant that the other 5 songs were put on hold and were edited much later than the original deadline. However, setting these deadlines was very useful in keeping momentum throughout the project, even if they weren't realistic. After working on a project of this size, I can now make more informed decisions when setting deadlines.

Time management

Throughout my year at Tileyard I have improved my workflow but I still found it was not as efficient as needed for this project. For example, my intention had been to edit all the recordings instrument by instrument but due to changes in our recording schedule this was not always possible. Even with a checklist I kept, I still found it difficult to organise the recordings.

Recorded Taken confirmed Edited	Drums Perc	Bass	Piano	Acoustic Guitar	Electric Guitar	Synth Organ	Other	Vocals N : I	BV N : I	Mixed ?
Intro	N/A	N/A	R	N/A	N/A	?	N/A	N/A	?	
Follow the River	N/A	N/A	N/A	R			N/A	R : R	N/A : N/A	
She's Dild	~~R~~ ~~T~~ ~~E~~	~~R~~ ~~T~~ ~~E~~	~~R~~ ~~T~~ ~~E~~	~~R~~ ~~T~~ ~~E~~		~~R~~ ~~T~~ ~~E~~	N/A	R : R	R : R	
Running through the Woods	~~R~~ ~~T~~ ~~E~~	~~R~~ ~~T~~ ~~E~~	N/A	~~R~~ ~~T~~ ~~E~~		~~R~~ ~~T~~ ~~E~~	Trumpet	R : R	R	
War Song	~~R~~ ~~T~~ ~~E~~	~~R~~ ~~T~~ ~~E~~	~~R~~ ~~T~~ ~~E~~	N/A		~~R~~ ~~T~~ ~~E~~	N/A	R : ?	R : ?	
And Heaven may be Void	R	R	R	N/A	N/A		Cello R	R : N/A	N/A : ?	
Through the Cracks	N/A ~~R~~ ~~T~~ ~~E~~	N/A ~~R~~ ~~T~~ ~~E~~	~~R~~ ~~T~~ ~~E~~	N/A	N/A	~~R~~ ~~T~~ ~~E~~	N/A	~~R~~ ~~T~~ ~~E~~	~~R~~ ~~T~~ ~~E~~	
Follow the River (Reprise)	R : R	R	R	R			Whistle	R : R		

Figure 11, My production checklist

Moving forward, I need to find a more efficient way of managing the editing and mixing stage of a project. This will include a clearer checklist, clearer file structures on my hard drives and better organised DAW files.

Another area closely related to this is my focus when working within the DAW. Over long sessions, and with impending deadlines, my focus drifts, and I jump all over the project, rather than focussing on the area I had set out to work on. When working in shorter sessions I found this much easier to manage, as I set a task I knew was possible in the time I had. In future, with intensive tasks such as editing where a lot of musical decisions are involved such as compositing takes, editing performances and tuning vocals, I will set myself mini tasks and break these up with non-musical tasks.

Conclusion

Below is the argument I put forward in my project proposal:

Unlike a traditional music producer whose role ends at the studio door, I want to contribute to the whole of the artist's output in addition to the recorded music, including but not limited to live performances, marketing and visuals. For my final project, I will explore this role by collaborating with an artist on a multimedia project through the production of an album and contribution to their project as a whole.

Overall, I have achieved my goal of creating an album and have contributed significantly to the project of Nim, the artist I chose to work with. However, where I believe I have strayed from this initial argument is in my ambitions as a music producer. Through the process of this project I have learned more about how I work best and where I wish to focus my career.

(The below contains references to the personal development plan (PDP) I completed at the beginning of my year at Tileyard (see Appendix F))

Throughout the project, I found I was much more engaged with, and concerned about the album production than the live show. In my argument I wrote 'I want to contribute to the whole of the artist's output in addition to the recorded music, including but not limited to live performances, marketing and visuals.' A more accurate statement would now be 'I want to experiment with performing different roles in a multimedia project, to aid in directing my career path as a music producer.'

In my PDP I wrote 'Clearly identify both my strengths and weaknesses through working on a variety of projects.' I feel this project gave me a larger scope of responsibility and experience than just producing an album but that the production of the album was of much more interest to me than the other areas of the project. Although, the involvement of visuals in the project and their importance was a source of inspiration to me, and is something I would like to continue exploring. I still wish to be involved with projects like this, but not as involved as expressed in my project proposal. This is in part due to the time commitment; at this stage in my career I would rather produce the music for two projects like this, rather than produce and be a musical director for one.

A development area I specified in my PDP was that I 'need to learn to present my ideas better, both clearly and influentially.' Throughout my final project, I found that how you sell a musical idea depends on the person. For example, Nim sometimes disapproved on first listen of new production ideas I sent him but after this happening a few times, I found that asking him to take a second listen the next day, he would warm to the idea. I think that it's important to learn about who you are working with as different people process things in different ways.

Another development area I identified was 'having been more analytical of my playing recently I have realized I can be quite sloppy. I would like to tighten up my playing and develop my ability in other styles outside of rock'. I feel that I improved on this, playing a lot of the instruments on the album. Although this point refers to guitar, I found that a universal skill I learned was to be more mindful of the music, rather than paying too much attention to my technique. Often this resulted in better performances that were also technically sound. I also learned the importance of allowing the brain to absorb information. When trying to record a difficult part, I found that leaving it until following day meant it had been absorbed into my muscle memory, making for an easier performance. As a producer, this understanding was also useful to share with musicians by encouraging them to practice for shorter periods of time, more frequently to learn their parts.

A threat that I specified in my PDP was 'In the face of people who appear more talented/accomplished/experienced than myself I often forget my own strengths and focus on my weaknesses'. Being amongst many talented peers and professionals at Tileyard Education, I found that this happened to me quite a lot. However, throughout the year I learned to focus more on my strengths and my aspirations and learned to be more aware of moments when I felt like this. This is one of the most important outcomes of the year for me,

because I am now less afraid of attempting new challenges due to the amount I feel I have achieved this year.

Next Steps

Having explored how I take on the role of music producer in this project, I now have a plan of where I would like to take my career. Because of my interest in working with visuals, I would like to explore composition for media and in particular video games due to the positive commercial state of the industry (Ell, 2018). I would like to continue, in some capacity, exploring multimedia productions but taking a more focussed role on the music production rather than spreading myself too thin, especially with other commitments.

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Appendix A

Meeting notes from meeting with Harry, Ciarán and Steve.

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3 June 11:18 | 218 characters

Needs to be more than jus band with visuals

4th wall

Investigate the mobile rig

Microphones

A/B of show

Experiential

London Bridge venue - vaults?

Secret cinema

Research and include elements of existing
projects

Don't release the songs because of exclusivity



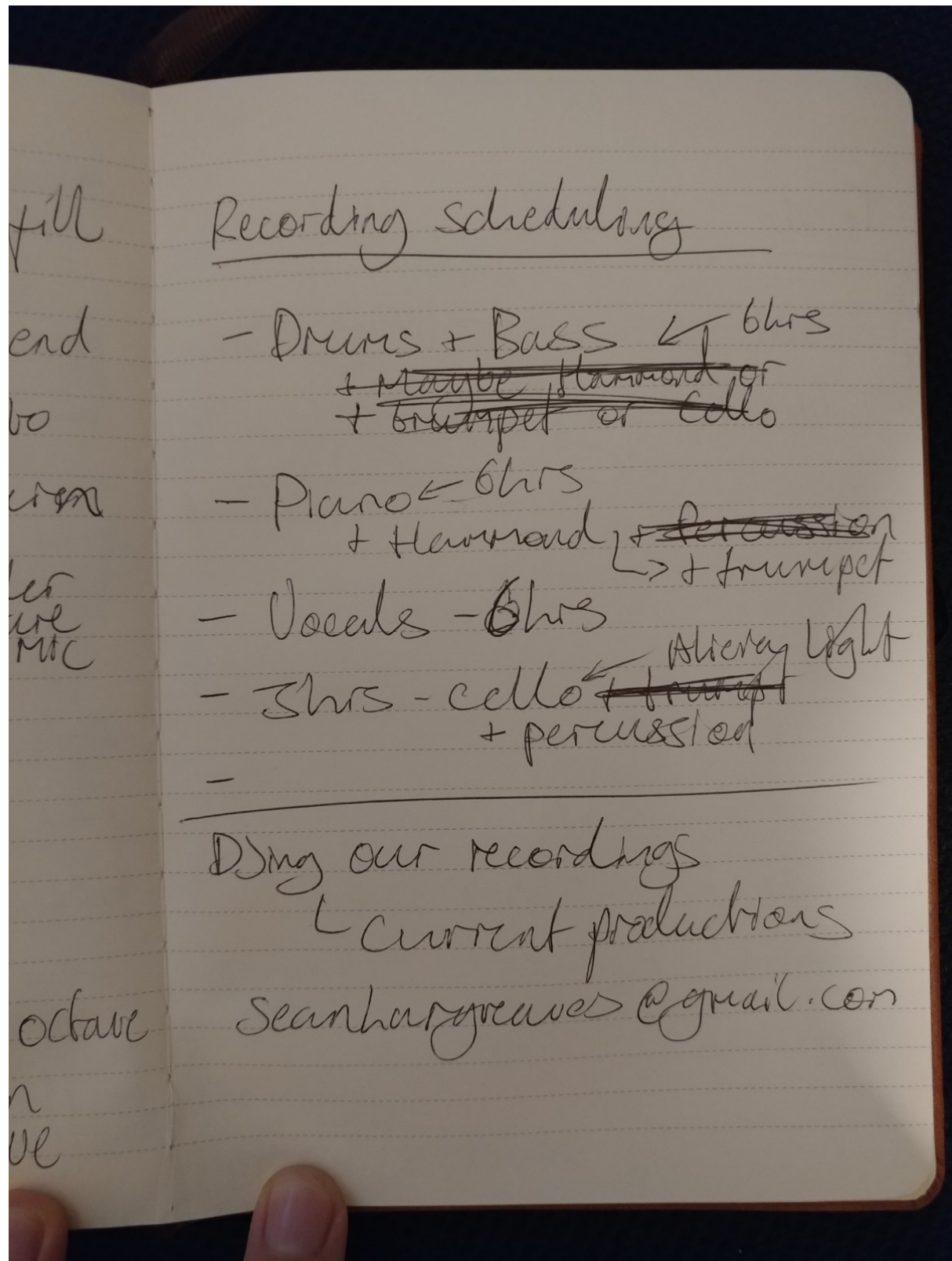
Appendix B

Link to audio recording of tutorial with producer Adam Moseley

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1GBLesr3avCUOmg8xc9dWQ3xwRLhMxu2g>

Appendix C

Notes from pre-production meeting with producer Sean Hargreaves



Appendix D

Link to notes from tutorial with Nikolaj Bjerre (Abrahamsen, 2019)

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1OVnsitrylQZh0H_kPRpjDe3hPXOWSyX-

Appendix E

Link to promotion videos of live performance. Includes a promotional trailer, a live performance of She's Wild and a live performance of Running Through The Woods.

https://drive.google.com/open?id=11onm_g8hCdIMtS4lnSPUrq8uAjf2Ah_J

Appendix F

My personal development plan from the beginning of the MA.

Tileyard Education		MA Personal Development Plan	
Name: James Newhook		Course: MA Commercial Music Producer	
Vision and Goals			
My Vision			
To work for myself, full time in music within the next 2-3 years			
.			
Short/Medium Term Goals (next 6/12 months)			
Clearly identify both my strengths and weaknesses through working on a variety of projects. Strengths will help me to define myself as a producer. Knowing which weaknesses to prioritize and improve will help me reach my goals quicker (for example I am not a good mixer; I need to improve to strengthen my demos for pitches etc but I may not have the ability or drive to master the skill in which case incorporating an external mixer into my workflow will allow more time spent on what I'm good at).			
Diversify my musical palette. I am very good at writing in the style I am used to but this is not useful for everything.			
.			
Long-Term Goals (2-3 years)			
.			

SWOT - Personal Analysis

Strengths	Development Areas
Engineering and live recording. I come from a background of playing in a band so have a good knowledge of recording techniques and working “outside of the box”. Dark, moving, melancholic music. This is probably my specialty and I’ve become very good at it. I’d also consider it a weakness as when working on music with other ‘vibes’ I find it to easy to gravitate back towards what I know. Rhythm, arrangement and dynamics. I understand well how to build a track that retains the listeners interest, establishes a strong groove and that builds to and emphasizes the key parts of a song. Coming from a background in progressive music though I need to be careful not to go too far with this. Logic Pro X. I’ve used Logic Pro extensively for 6/7 years and although I wouldn’t consider myself a master I am highly capable, and a quick Google usually patches up anything I’m unfamiliar with. I consider myself a quick learner and adaptable. Particularly with software and technical skills.	Establishing myself as a producer. Having now worked in a few songwriting groups I’ve discovered I need to better establish my role in the group. I don’t consider myself bossy and like to keep things fluid but I need to somewhat take control of the session and retain a general, managerial overview. Communication and influencing skills. This continues from the above and is quite a broad subject. I can work in a group but need to learn to present my ideas better, both clearly and influentially. I believe this will come from working with a variety of different people but also developing my music skills to quickly show ideas. Ability as a musician. I was a guitarist before I was a producer but having been more analytical of my playing recently I have realized I can be quite sloppy. I would like to tighten up my playing and develop my ability in other styles outside of rock to allow me to better utilize one of my biggest strengths. Music theory. Similarly to the above, I want to develop my piano playing skills which are currently quite basic. Learning piano from the ground up would allow me to start properly learning music theory, something which I need to make my songwriting more efficient. Mixing skills. I often approach my mixes a bit too fast without thinking about what the track needs first. I am also lacking some of the skills to make and carry out these decisions. Networking. I’ve come to Tileyard with a very small network mostly down to not putting myself out there. I will feel more confident once I’ve developed a more diverse portfolio. Following up after networking is also something I need to get in the habit of.
Opportunities	Threats
The variety of songwriters and producers I am studying with immediately opens the door for sessions to improve my producer skills (soft, tech and knowledge). Taking advantage of this is important. The facilities, staff, other students and network at Tileyard are all ways to learn and improve skills. Also networking here is key.	Becoming overworked and stressed. In the moment I can become overwhelmed with my workload. I sometimes forget to designate relaxation time and go long periods without exercise, which helps to manage stress. I also have some health issues that I need to keep on top of which can also be affected by this. Self-esteem. In the face of people who appear more talented/accomplished/experienced than myself I often forget my own strengths and focus on my weaknesses. This can really affect my desire to work and create. My relationships with family, friends and girlfriend. During times when I feel overwhelmed or down I can become to engrossed in my own world and forget to give attention to the relationships that are so important to me.

Course: MA Commercial Music Producer

[illegible]

Appendix G

Link to my production journal

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1nnkIQBku9yQYaTeUrphWR3fM99I1vUMP>