

Creation Module - Element C1 - Proposal - ADAD7004_LON

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What I'm Creating and Why I am Taking on the Project

My project for this trimester is going to be split into two. For the first half I will have a solo project of songs which I've written, recorded and produced myself. The second will be a collection of songs which I've written and produced for another artist. It is apparent now in this industry that musicians need to have their skillset or business not just in one place. As well as writing and releasing unaccompanied projects, more and more artists/writers/producers now co-write and help produce other works other than their own. Furthermore they often look to sites like BeatStars (BeatStars, 2021), attempt to create their own business or even sell drum kits on several platforms (Splice, 2021). This demonstrates that the income of any musician no matter what level of experience they have can range from royalties like PRS and PPL, to social media video monetisation, to selling beats online or even teaching people (MasterClass, 2021). These all provide access to more "revenue-generating opportunities" (Robley, 2021) which allows the musicians to gain money. The reasoning for this would seem that because there isn't a lot of money in streaming, musicians have to do more than ever now to pay their bills. Take singer/songwriter James Blake for example. He is a well known artist with seven million monthly listeners on Spotify... But is that enough? Apparently not, Blake also produces and writes for many R&B, Hip-Hop and Trap artists too (Horner, 2019) and is now known for dipping his finger in the rap pie as well as still pursuing his alternative, solo career. Similarly to this, the famous Pierre Bourne also takes on the role of being both an artist and producer/writer, but focuses more on production and mixing rather than the solo artist path like James Blake. Bourne has a distinctive sound in his production with his short 808s and futuristic, retro 80s synth sounds which he implicates into all his bodies of work. Having his own sound as well as producer tag allows the audience to instantaneously know who's either producing or singing/rapping on any song. This shows that if a musician creates their own sound for both producing for artists as well as themselves, people will recognise their brand and will no doubt listen to both the solo and producing material. I want to take this one step slightly further though. Despite Bourne's business idea being flawless, as someone who loves making all sorts of music, I want to create songs further out than just in the genres that I am producing for my solo work. The music that I produce for rappers and singers is slightly different to that of which I'm creating, which is where I take more inspiration from James Blake. I want to use him as a reference as to how this can work as my career.

After discussing with peers regarding their projects, I noticed the idea of creating an album was very much so implanted in their heads. Personally I

feel as though this is a poor choice for an artist who is either creating their first release(s) or even just a project such as this in the world that we are in now. As an undiscovered or up and coming artist it is, in this day and age, more wise to release singles rather than an entire project. This is due to streaming services such as Spotify or Apple Music which coincides with the latest mindset of the young generation and their short attention spans (Chadwick, 2020). The fact that there is so much music out there now available and furthermore, the current music market is targeted for singles so that they can be added to a playlist (Gomori, 2019); suggests that an EP will not be given enough attention until the artist has had a decent amount of traction from an audience of actual fans. Due to these reasons I am going to be working on a project which is more of a “collection of singles” so that I can have the songs ready with a year business plan to strategise and make the most of my songs. Roughly there will be 5-7 songs between 2 and 3 minutes in length which have an original sound.

The second half of my project will be a range of songs that demonstrate my production skills and additionally it will display the artists and styles that I shall be working with for hopefully the next few years (if not more.) Ranging from Rap to R&B I shall be submitting singles of my best and latest work. I suppose the reasoning behind this section of my project - which will also be a collection of singles - is to add them into a portfolio where clients in the future can look over once the songs are archived and placed in my EPK. Another reason would be purely because I love making rap music as well as R&B, however I could never see myself being able to rap and sing in that manner because I know plenty of people who can do it far better than myself. I relish working with others and feel as though collaborating often brings out the best, and sometimes unexpected, music. In reference to my first point, I don't believe myself to be more of an artist or producer, I feel as though I am somewhere in the middle of them both - and I like that. Not only does this give me the freedom to create all sorts of music and to not let songs which I can't see myself on go to waste, but it also it allows me to gain income from streams and royalties off of other artists as well as myself.

Benchmarks for Success and How I Intend to Approach the Project

I know for a fact that my aims for the second part of the project (produced works) are for the artists to be content with their songs as well as ready for release. There's a chance that I might at times work with another songwriter rather than an artist, meaning that there is a possibility for us to pitch a song to a label or for a brief. Success from this would be a well written and produced song that hits all of the qualities and references to the brief, thus getting the track signed. Even if the song(s) are not signed I still see there

being success from the tracks because I am positive that whatever music comes out of the sessions that I organise with the songwriters, they will be used at some point in the near future. Making sure that the songs are pitchable will be done from peer reviewing as well as asking my mentor and other contacts I have in the industry for their advice and opinions. Formulating a pattern from all of their feedback collectively I will then implicate what has been said to improve the track if I feel it is necessary.

In regards to my solo project, the success focuses more from a creative aspect than a business side. This is because I have much more freedom to be experimental with my own sound. I find my tracks very personal and take my time crafting the lyrics as well as harmony. Success from this section would be that I am happy with the songs, and for them to be ready to release so that my first single can be prepared to come out in July/August time. The idea of having a collection of singles is so that I can create a plan of dates over the course of 2021 to release my 5-7 songs so that they consistently give me monthly listeners on streaming services (DIYMusician, 2016). Pitching these songs to playlists will come later in a business plan once everything in this project is finished. As long as I am happy with the music in this part of the project, then there is no higher form of success.

I feel as though the aims are sufficient in the given time as long as everything goes to plan. They are right for me because this is what I want to base my whole career on and it is what I've been wanting to do for years. This project will be the start of my career and it is good to have high aims for it because this is what it will be like for all of my future endeavours: long hours and lots of music. The greatest obstacles that I can see would be vocals. When coming to singing on my solo work I'm not the most comfortable being as it's not something that is my strong point. Luckily, thanks to the current direction of popular music (Reynolds, 2018), autotune is used throughout the charts and genres in which I target my music, so hopefully tracking my vocals won't take too long. Finishing songs completely has always been the hardest thing for me in regards to my own music. Often it is because I get too caught up in the creation of songs and once everything is drafted, I then want to make the next one; which results in me to never go back and finish anything. Setting myself goals and targets for the next upcoming weeks/months will guide me to progress and keep me in order for this project. Another difficulty that I may have involves mixing and mastering my own tracks. Being as I will have taken many hours creating, then tracking the vocals... it may already seem extremely repetitive to my ears once mixing. It's not for certain yet however once the songs are all finished and ready for mixing, I may have another producer/engineer in the room with me once I mix just to supervise and give me instant feedback in case that I am being biased or not thinking correctly.

Mixing for artists is quite easy, but when its for yourself it feels quite daunting.

For part two I don't feel as though there will be too many obstacles, as long as the musicians show up for recording in the studios - which I'm sure will be fine. Even if there are times that get mixed up there will always be a solution anyway. I'm sure I will have to have multiple sessions with artists because not always after one session will the team record a hit, however I have faith in the people that I have chosen to record with for this project.

An alternative approach for this project would have been either to build a large roster of songs for my archives as a producer, or to have double the amount of singles written and finished for my solo project. Being as I want to do both of these paths in unison throughout my years in my music career I felt as though it would be best to tackle both spectrums to see how I get on. Basically the choice of doing both parts for this objects is so that it prepares me for what is to come in my life.

Timeline

Over the course of the next month I shall be writing all of my solo works and tracks that I intend to release with other artists (or pitch to briefs.) This will be finishing previously worked on tracks from my solo work and creating new ones, as well as having multiple sessions with different songwriters/artists. If somehow I manage to finish all of the tracks before the end of May then I will start to mix them as well. But the aim for June will be to mix and master the finished tracks written in May. Hopefully this would mean that by the first week of July, I will have a collection of singles for both my solo work and my producer work. The final few weeks will be dedicated to writing my final essay and fixing any tweaks that I have to correct production wise.

Music is subjective like any art form, thus so is the time space and effort of people making the music. I know that it took 6 weeks for Pharell Williams to write and produce the album "Justified" (Neale, 2020), Miles Davis' "Kind of Blue" took two 3 hour sessions to record and projects from Steely Dan took years to complete (Lockwood, 2020). In an article with Dummy Magazine (Dummymag, 2018) James Blake states that he's "more focussed on creativity and coming up with new things" when coming to writing. This is exactly what I will be giving my most attention to, the music. I am not going to base my schedule off of anyone else's because I know exactly what I want and I know that I can do it. The music is the most important part of these songs, meaning that my efforts will be fixated first on the writing and musical elements, then finally I shall focus on the sonic elements of this project.

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