



AUGUST 17, 2021

CREATION

ELEMENT C1 -WRITTEN PROPOSAL

JAMIE PROPHET

2019078



Jamie Prophet, Student Number:2019078, Creation Assignment Proposal,
Element C1 – Written Proposal

My journey of music making at Tileyard Education has, on one hand, opened my mind to the many avenues of what is possible and realistic artistically, when considering my future as a commercial music producer. On the other hand, the Tileyard experience has greatly focused my creative musical thought process to what I believe my future in the music industry looks like and I am now much clearer regarding which areas and genres I should focus my efforts and mind upon. In the current climate and in particular how the music industry has been affected by the global pandemic in the past two years, having a strong idea of one's capabilities going forward is vital. I believe that my creation term project should demonstrate my professional and future aspirations as strongly as possible and use the opportunity as a platform to express my abilities, whilst hopefully providing me with a professional quality body of work I can use in my showcase portfolio to send to future employers.

My intention is to create a body of work in two halves – this effectively demonstrates my considered career path. One half of my project is to compose around twenty minutes of music to short film. The other half is to write and produce a thirteen to eighteen minute EP (Extended Play) record with my close writing partner and singer/songwriter, Rebecca Lauren, aka Ronniee.

The rationale for deciding to go down the route of creating a project in two halves was borne from an email conversation I had with Tileyard's own Sean Hargreaves. I had approached Sean privately for advice on how I should shape my career once I have graduated from Tileyard. I provided him with a playlist of my work and asked him pertinent questions regarding my ability, prospects and what areas or genres he believes I should focus my attention on. We also discussed what the quickest route to making a viable living out of being a music producer looked like for me – it is Sean's view that I should point my efforts at writing film and TV music in the short term and to foster my professional relationship with Rebecca Lauren (along with other singer/songwriters) whilst taking the time to hone my unique sound as a commercial producer and music creator in the long term. I take Sean's advice very seriously, as he is a musician and producer I admire greatly – I would very much like my own career to take the shape that Sean's has and I take great inspiration from how multi-directional and creatively diverse he is as a musician and producer.

My work thus far has been well received by my mentor Martyn Ware, who first piqued my interest of writing to film and TV during the Tileyard "Writing to Commercial Brief" module throughout the Development Term. Martyn has also encouraged me to open my mind to the various avenues in which producers and composers can form their livelihoods. I believe I do demonstrate skills that are necessary for film and TV composition and Martyn's feedback has bolstered my own beliefs. I consider my successful 20 year performing background as a classical and session trumpet player gives me a unique first hand insight into this field and, I hope, provides me with an advantage amongst the strong and fierce competition for employment. Working as a performer in the recording studio with great composers and producers for many years is an extremely powerful weapon in my musical arsenal.

"The most valuable contribution of experience comes from the self-awareness it gives you. The advantage of having worked on an actual job lets you learn about your strengths and weaknesses, areas of improvement and gives you an insight about where your passion lies. For people wanting to find their passion, getting some work experience is a must!"

(Gill, 2015)

I am determined to make the absolute most of this experience and compound it within my composition and production. Film and TV may appear an obvious avenue to take in my case considering my background, perhaps appearing to fall back into my comfort zone, particularly when contrasted with my master's degree with Tileyard Education, which is quite general with a strong leaning towards commercial pop production. However, I am exceedingly passionate about film music and hope to make a living from it. Hence my desire to create a solid body of work to short film for my creation project.

Martyn Ware has also generously received the songs I have written and produced with and for Rebecca Lauren, aka Ronniee (a former MA student at Tileyard). Martyn believes we have a special musical relationship and I am in total agreement. Our styles merge well and we have found a certain sound and style that brings out the best in both of us. Rebecca has had very positive feedback from industry professionals regarding the songs we have written together so far and of the production quality. During a listen party hosted by Rebecca's manager a couple of months ago, extremely positive feedback was given concerning a particular track called "Make My Mind" we had written together and that I produced. Such was the extent of the feedback – "career changing song" was mentioned by a professional producer – that there has been the possibility of writing for an album in 2022 mooted. Rebecca also has interest from various industry labels. My rationale for deciding to write and produce an EP for my creation project with and for Rebecca is that my work with her has professional potential to be successful and would reinforce my future working relationship with her. My creation project EP will be designed to further build upon our work so far with a focus on creating strongly written and well produced songs that Rebecca can market and release commercially.

In short, my creation assignment is designed to demonstrate my capabilities, in a professional capacity, to enter the commercial music industry successfully. I also dearly hope that it will illustrate how much I have improved and learnt during my time with Tileyard Education.

Overall success of my project will be determined by various factors and individuals. In terms of the EP half of the project, Rebecca's manager will be a major voice in how successful the project will be professionally. *"If you're managing unsigned artists, your priority will be to generate as much work as possible to get them noticed and paid."* (Elkabas, 2013) With his backing, the potential for online release and reviews from music press would provide a real-world measure of success. Peer review will be essential as well as feedback from Tileyard staff and in particular from my mentor Martyn Ware. Label and publishing interest would be another major marker of success. Perhaps there is pressure on myself to produce an EP of a certain quality that would attract enthusiasm from industry professionals. However, this is a challenge that is professionally very real – hence my desire to include this work within my project to push myself in a professional manner, preparing myself for the industry.

Determining the success of the film and TV half of the project could feasibly be a more immediate situation. The difficulty here is pitching my music to publishers and receiving constructive feedback. Success will be measured against my ability to sell my film music. Again, in this instance, peer and mentor review is essential.

Personal goals in achieving success include how closely I can adhere to the original plan of my project. Of course, challenges will present themselves along the way and being prepared for those eventualities is paramount.

"I always suggest people, respond to the challenging situation and not react. You need to keep in mind that patience and perseverance are the keys to success. Remember most of the time in your workplace, things will not happen as per your expectation and you have to tackle the situation with integrity and positive."

(StressManage, 2018)

In researching this project, both halves have thrown up challenges that have made me deviate from my original notes. However, I will now present how I intend to approach each half.

Whilst emailing with Sean Hargreaves, the website "Shooting People" was mentioned. This is a community website of independent film makers, script writers, actors, crew and other industry professionals, including composers. Collaborations and connections are made through this website and its forums. I signed up, paid the annual fee and immediately posted on several of the forums for film makers to collaborate with, along with a link to my Soundcloud showcase reel. This was with the knowledge that I would be having to undertake work, no matter what the budget of the film was. Sean's advice was to seek around ten short films, no matter the budget, to bolster my film music portfolio. After thoroughly sifting through the website, it became very clear to me that I was simply not going to find the length nor depth of work I needed to successfully complete my target of twenty minutes of music to short film. There are also many composers touting for work on this forum and offering their services for free, often appearing blasé about it.

I set about researching other avenues in which I could fill my project quota. I joined the website "IndieTalk", several Facebook and Instagram groups and sought the advice of a successful composer connected to Tileyard named James Wilkie. James is of the opinion I should seek existing film to write to – he believes the risks involved in working with film directors, with a master's degree deadline imposed, to be too great. Having had a somewhat stressful time attempting to find live films and briefs on forums and social media groups without much success, I now believe James' advice of choosing existing film to be the stronger option. That being said, I have connected with two film directors about work. The first is a short film of less than five minutes, scripted to a 48-hour competition set by the London Sci-fi Film Festival. This is a perfect opportunity and one that I welcomed. The dates are writing over a 48-hour period in September with screening in October if the film is chosen. The second is another Sci-fi film but with a projected end date of April 2022 – no use for my creation project but still a good proposition.

After deciding that I would now use existing film for my project, I have opted to use the website "The Cue Tube". This is a site that specifically allows composers to use their short films for scoring purposes. They allow composers to use their films free of charge and to add to their portfolios accordingly. The only caveat is the "The Cue Tube" branding must be included at the beginning of each film. I am relieved to have found this resource – I can work at my own pace, the films are of exceptional HD quality, are varied in genre ranging from action to documentary and vary in length from thirty seconds to five minutes.

If such cases arise that I do not feel I have enough quality content, I will back up my short film composition project with another idea I have, to include in my project. Bridgerton has been a huge success on TV and uses chart pop music as its soundtrack but arranges the songs into orchestral classical pieces that fit this period drama genre.

"According to showrunner Chris Van Dusen, the choice to sneakily drop contemporary music into the decidedly noncontemporary setting was meant to reflect Bridgerton's fresh take on the period romance genre as a whole."

(Park, 2021)

I find this a very clever use of current chart hits and it inevitably raises Bridgerton's popularity - as well as that of soundtrack music and the actual pop song that has been used as the basis of the arrangement. This is a style of film composition I had planned on utilising in the future anyhow, so it would be a welcome addition to my project should such a situation arise.

In terms of the second half of the project, I approached Rebecca to gauge her reaction to my plan of writing a four to five song EP. Thankfully she said yes and regards it as I do – a perfect opportunity to showcase my (and her) ability to hopefully enter the commercial profession successfully. The music will be mostly piano led pop, ranging from deep, emotional ballads to up tempo pop with synths, drum machines and guitars. I will play all instruments and produce. I plan on writing soaring string arrangements and will record my wife (who is a professional violinist) numerous times to sit on top of sample libraries, so the sound is far more realistic.

However, as a producer I must be able to balance Rebecca's own career currently taking off and my project deadline. With this in mind, I can envisage problems arising such as differing priorities. Should a situation arise that Rebecca becomes too busy or has new priorities, I plan on carrying on with my EP concept but to use other singers too. This would afford me the chance to add to my portfolio whilst producing an EP. It would have the advantage of granting me more real time writing session practice also. Nevertheless I would much prefer to be able to uphold my original plan of working solely with Rebecca on my project.

I will endeavour to write the film music as an ongoing timeline throughout, wishing to fit myself and that half of the project around Rebecca's personal schedule. I believe this is the best way of splitting my time between the two halves of the project. This way, I can give Rebecca my full creative attention. Splitting my time into halves – for example film music during September, Rebecca during October – would be a viable option. However, I feel it adds time pressure and constraints that would add unnecessary stress to the music making experience, possibly resulting in an inferior outcome.

To make certain my intentions of producing professional quality music for my project that is worthy of competing in the professional arena, I have very recently invested heavily in improving my existing modest home studio so that it is of a fully professional grade. Analogue outboard hardware such as the SSL SiX super analogue console has been added; Adam Audio A5X monitors; Aston Spirit condenser microphone; Aston Starlight Stereo Pair (particularly to capture my acoustic piano instead of relying on software instruments); Arturia DrumBrute Impact drum synthesiser; acoustic treatment; producer's desk. This will provide a vast improvement on my capabilities in recording, monitoring, mixing and mastering in a beautiful sounding room with analogue preamps, compression and other such hardware. I thank Ciaran Robinson for his invaluable help and advice in this matter.

"When it comes to audio, some aspects of analogue technology introduce artifacts and distortions that are perceived as pleasant, and are often musically enhancing — and this is something that lies at the heart of the idea of 'analogue warmth'."

(Robjohns, 2010)

I can see that my own personal musical and creative growth is going to be hugely significant whilst working on this ambitious project. I feel inspired and motivated. However, I am old enough and experienced enough to realise that I will be challenged and stretched – not just musically either.

Bearing this in mind, I have already approached Tileyard's Suzanna Storey for well-being sessions to manage myself and my time more comfortably over the coming months.

Bibliography

- Gill, N (2015) *Linkedin*, April 21, 2015. Available at: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/5-reasons-why-experience-matters-more-than-education-namrata-gill> (Accessed: 13 August 2021)
- Elkabas, D (2013) *The Guardian*, April 26, 2013. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/careers/what-does-a-music-manager-do> (Accessed: 13 August 2021)
- StressManage (2018) *Challenging Situation At Work | Example* [blog]. November 7, 2018. Available at: <https://www.stressmanage.org/2018/11/challenging-situation-at-work-example.html> (Accessed: 13 August 2021)
- Park, A (2021) *The 'Bridgerton' Soundtrack Is Filled With Classical Covers of Modern Hits* January 6, 2021. Available at: <https://www.marieclaire.com/culture/a35091663/bridgerton-soundtrack-music-season-1/#:~:text=The%20%27Bridgerton%27%20Soundtrack%20Is%20Filled%20With%20Classical%20Covers,Yourself%20%28Short%20Reprise%29%22%20by%20Sufjan%20Stevens.%20More%20items> (Accessed 13 August 2021)
- Robjohns, H (2010) *Analogue Warmth* February 2010. Available at: <https://www.soundonsound.com/techniques/analogue-warmth> (Accessed: 13 August 2021)