



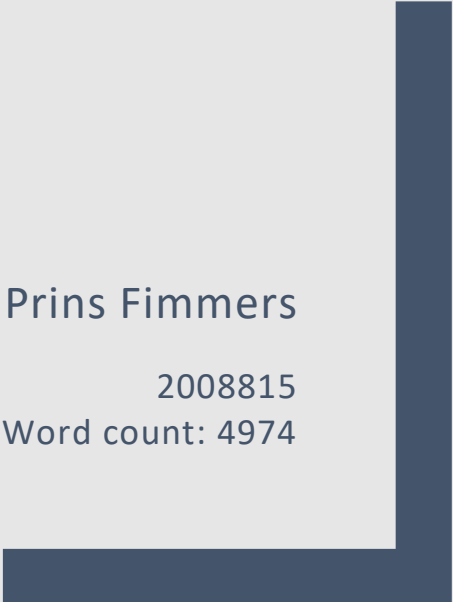
CREATION MODULE: ELEMENT C2B

REFLECTIVE COMMENTARY

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This paper serves as a reflective commentary on the process of creating a 6 track EP that features myself as an artist. The main aim of this project is to allow myself to find my own artistic voice within my productions through exploration and experimentation, whilst also creating music with commercial intent. First, I will discuss some relevant research, then I will discuss the knowledge and skills acquired during the process and any changes that occurred. Then I will evaluate the process and the results, before making some notes on the future of the project and my personal development plan and ending by concluding the commentary.

Current market research

The proposed idea for this EP was to allow myself a final opportunity during my master's degree to find a unique sonic identity within my productions that set myself apart from others to allow me to compete in a crowded music market. The main aim was to find unique sonic elements, such as using my own voice, whilst still creating commercial music with the intent of being categorised as 'pop', meaning it would appeal to a wide audience, would ideally have high streaming numbers and be an assimilation of influences from multiple genres (Lamb, 2018).

Song structure

To make sure the songs on the EP have potential for commercial success, it was important to look at current trends on the chart and try to incorporate some of the characteristics of successful songs. One of these characteristics was that song structures seem to be moving away from the classic verse, pre-chorus, chorus structure and into a freer structure, with artists like Bad Bunny (the most streamed artist of 2020) creating songs with several hooks rather than a central chorus. The goal has shifted from getting audiences to sing along to choruses, to catching their attention on any platform and to compete in this field with TV, apps, podcasts and more (Harding & Sloan, 2021).

This knowledge allowed me to implement some of these characteristics in my project for example with the track 'San Diego', which starts with the post-chorus hook, but only has 2 choruses, and with the track 'Habibi', which has 2 outros where the production and the feel

of the song change, inspired by artists like 1010 Benja SL (1010 Benja SL, 2018). As 'San Diego' is more tailored for the commercial music consumer, I believe that this approach was well suited and could increase its potential for success, whilst 'Habibi' is more experimental.

Song length

Songs are also getting considerably shorter, as artists are being paid per stream, rather than per album sale, and thus they place their hooks in the beginning of the song, and make sure they don't bore the listener with long tracks. Established artists are releasing long albums with short songs, as they are getting paid per song when someone listens to over 30 seconds, so it's in their best interest to create more short songs rather than less longer ones. Artists aren't starting their songs with traditional long intros but will hint at the chorus melody from the beginning, capitalising on its catchiness and 'hooking' listeners into their track and hoping they stay past the 30 second mark for when the chorus hits. The incentive is also to make the listener listen to the whole track, as for example on Spotify, this will appeal to their algorithm and it will be pushed up into larger playlists, again, making it appealing for artists to shorten their tracks, as to not lose the listeners attention (Mack, 2019).

I used this technique of teasing the hook in the song 'San Diego', to comply with this trend in commercial music, and increase its potential for success.

I would argue here though that in my experience as a listener some artists do not adhere to these streaming rules and simply experiment with their structures as a part of their musical journey and exploration. Artists like Frank Ocean, Björk and Robyn come to mind. But then again, I believe they aren't as widely considered for their commercial success as for their artistic excellence, which arguably comes from their unapologetic experimentation and lack of interest in following trends. For this project, I tried to find a mixture between shorter songs, such as 'Saudade', more in line with streaming trends, and 'Habibi', which is lengthier and more suited to showcasing experimentation and exploration rather than commercial potential. Evaluating on this, I believe 'Saudade' is well suited to commercial audiences, as I created it with catchiness in mind and considered its structure, which sees a breakdown chorus and a dance-able post-chorus, but contains itself to only 2 repetitions, enticing listeners to play it again. 'Moses' has a more classic structure and I believe it would also suit radio play and streaming because of its fast bpm, and subsequent shorter length.

Minimalism

Another trend that can be observed in the music on the charts is the minimalist and repetitive approach in music production. The use of minimalism in music draws the attention of the listener to the intricacies of the voice and its rhythmic play and it can transport the listener to a place of contemplation (Shaw, 2020). Minimalist tracks can draw in the listeners attention, and I would argue here that using this tool in music can allow the artist to capture people's attention as quickly and effective as possible, which is seemingly the goal now, considering the streaming realities mentioned above. However, repetition and simplicity are not easy to get right in music. All the elements that are being used need to serve a purpose and need to be balanced. But the benefits of creating something that is easy to sing along to (simplicity), is its potential for commercial success. Overproducing something is easy to do whilst arranging a well-balanced track is a true skill. A successful track can be achieved by focusing on rhythmic variations, muting elements, thinking about what the most significant layers are, then editing them (Sirma, 2020).

Most of my tracks are based around loops that are inherently minimalist in nature, in line with current trends, but especially with 'Haunted' I tried to use this knowledge to create something that focuses on the vocals, with minimal harmonic elements and drums, especially inspired by tracks on Rosalia's 'El Mal Querer' album (Rosalia, 2018). I think the minimal production really suits the songs, as there is a lot of changes in the melody, allowing the listener to focus on the vocals and the lyrics, which was my intention for this track.

'Moses' was inspired by 'Aute Cuture' by Rosalia, which I used as a reference track as it uses a similar, minimal loop of horns (and strings in mine). Using her tracks as a reference allowed me to create productions that had similar elements to hers, aiding me to ensure potential for commercial success and bringing me closer to the aim of this project, to experiment and find a sonic identity that is close to my reference artists, but with my own style intertwined (Rosalia, 2019).

The project: knowledge and skills, changes

The aim of this section is to reflect upon the results and the creation process of this EP, evaluate on these, note of any changes that occurred, and to see how this relates to the initial goals I outlined in the proposal of this project. In this reflective commentary, 'hard skills' mentioned will refer to the technical skills of the production, whilst 'soft skills' refer to any other areas of growth and development that came up.

Hard skills

As I was featuring as an artist on these tracks, I had to record many vocal parts. Although I have had singing lessons in the past, I wouldn't consider myself a technically proficient vocalist. This proved to be a major area of development during the recording process of this EP, and a path of growth that is still ongoing. As I was recording, I found that I was often struggling to get the parts right, doing too many takes and as a result causing vocal fatigue, which meant I couldn't go on singing and I needed vocal rest. I think this was caused by a mixture of not having proper vocal training, not being familiar enough with the melody (if I had just written it), and a lack of harmonic knowledge of intervals. As a solution to this, I started doing vocal warm-ups before every recording session, from a YouTube channel that was recommended to me by a friend who is a singer. This helped me to warm up my voice, get familiar with the mouth shapes of vowels, which in turn helped me to sing intervals more accurately and with better pitch, resulting in better vocal takes. Therefore I would say this was a successful approach for this project, although this area of development continues (Jacobs Vocal Academy 2019).

From my work in the K-pop field I had also been introduced to a method of recording used for 'demo' tracks that are being pitched to labels and artists. It's taken from a YouTube tutorial video uploaded by established K-pop topliner Anna Timgren, and subsequently my fellow writers/producers and I like to call it the 'Anna Timgren method'. This method excludes the use of looped vocal recording to minimise the time spent recording and comping, and to maximise the intention and accuracy of every take. All the vocals are recorded on to one recording track at the top of a DAW project and when a take goes wrong, you delete it and

start the new take from the point you left off, rather than looping the whole section like in traditional recording. When a take is right, you drag it down into a pre-made DAW template (Anna Timgren, 2020).

Evaluating on this, I found that using this method reduced my stress whilst recording, and because I was less agitated, I was able to focus more, thus work more efficiently and get more things done. However, I also argue that using comping will allow for more variety and overall dynamics in the vocals as there are more options to choose from.

As this project entailed a large part of experimentation when it comes to finding my own artistic voice, I chose to be inspired by Timbaland's use of his own voice within his productions. Although I am not able to beatbox, much like he does, I was able to find ways of incorporating my voice, in a similar way to his style. I accessed Timbaland's series on producing and beatmaking on Masterclass and tried to replicate some of his techniques when recording and creating beats. For example, using my own fingers to create snaps, instead of using royalty free samples from online libraries, and using my own voice to create percussion loops and snares, and little melodic vocal loops that are more a part of the production and drums than a topline (Masterclass, 2021).

Evaluating on this, I can note that I am quite satisfied with the results of this technique. My takes don't sound as polished as Timbaland's, but I only just introduced this technique in the past few months whilst he has years of experience beatboxing and producing, so overall I am happy with the results of this inspired experimentation. However, I must note that mixing these elements was a lot harder than using royalty free samples, as there are a lot more dynamics to consider.

I used my Rode NT1-A microphone to record these rhythmic vocal parts in most of the songs, but I found myself taking out most of the frequencies and often creating a telephone effect on them, so I also tried recording them with my wired Apple earphones, as this was easier to set up. Using the earphones allowed me to get the ideas down quicker, and because I would usually compress and distort them anyway, the quality of the recording didn't matter that much, and I would argue it even added a desired DIY element. Evaluating on this I would say I am quite happy I was able to explore this new way of creating beats, as I thoroughly enjoyed it and I am pleased with some of the results it brought forward after processing them. Not all

the tracks I used my voice on turned out to be a success, some of the earlier ones I produced, with just my voice and no other production elements are bad, but when I use my voice as additional rhythmic elements and sonic 'colour', combined with samples from libraires and loops I've gathered over the years, the results are more pleasurable. This slightly more subtly yet still obvious organic style really suits my productions. It's a similar technique used in Ariana Grande's 'thank you, next', which showcases the producers shouting and tapping on things as part of the track's percussion. Mimicking this technique allows me to place my tracks in a similar world to that of commercially successful ones, therefor increasing their potential for success (Genius, 2019).

Another inspiration for this EP was Rosalia. I especially like her use of real claps, shouts, and little vocal elements, so upon research and by recommendation of Sean Hargreaves, I decided to record my own claps, and used shouting as a rhythmic and harmonic aspect in my compositions. It instantly changes the feel of the track to a more natural and elevated feel and takes it away from the more conventional category I described my music in in my proposal.

For the first time since I started producing, I also developed a singular vocal chain that could be used across all songs. Since all songs were recorded in the same conditions and with the same tools, with the knowledge from the tutorials I watched, I was able to develop a chain for my own voice that I was happy with. This was then saved as a preset in Ableton and only slightly altered per song where needed. This was another hard skill I was able to develop during the process that I am pleased with, as it will make my future work much more efficient, although I don't doubt that I will keep updating the chain when I gain more knowledge about vocal production or even purchase new plugins.

For the mastering I decided to use Ozone 9 Elements, a plugin I had used before with favourable results. I did brush up on my skills by watching tutorials, mainly one from iZotope (the creators of the plugin) themselves. Evaluating on this I note that I like the results of using this on my master channel, as it brings the layers of the track together and allows me to fix any minor mixing issues quickly (iZotope, 2019).

Soft skills

As I was taking on this project mainly by myself, organising the workload became the biggest task of all, and a soft skill I had to establish early on. I realised quite a way into the timeline of this project that some parts were taking longer than expected, mainly the songwriting parts. As it is an artist project, I focused on the songwriting a lot, as I wanted this part to be perfect for when I would release the tracks. I write personal lyrics that I like to be connected to, and during the writing process I struggled with writers block a lot, especially in the beginning, as I couldn't tap into my emotions in a detached enough way to write what I wanted to. Therefore the writing process took longer than initially intended, and I had to organise my schedule differently. I had to adapt to these changes and did so accordingly. For example, I decided to produce more of the tracks in advance, whereas usually I would write to a beat from the internet, and then produce my own tracks around the full topline I had written.

One of the soft skills I developed and honed during the process was finding people to help me with specific aspects when needed. Although I initially intended on collaborating a lot as I stated in my proposal, this was also one of the elements that changed over time, as I was finding my new way of working and producing enjoyable on my own and the need to collaborate as a means of finding my own voice minimized. Rather, I decided to use collaboration as and when I was stuck or when I needed help with specific things. For example, with 'Moses', I enlisted the skills of my friend Josh, for the main string/brass loop in the track. I had written the song atop a royalty free Splice sample, but wanted it reproduced for a more organic feel, but I struggled with figuring out the chords and playing them. Josh then helped me with this, with sample selection and with the drums. Additionally, he helped me rewrite the lyrics and melody, which elevated the overall song.

For another song I worked on I enlisted the help of a guitarist, to record a 4-bar loop of 4 chords. We communicated via our mutual friend, and it was an easy process, however, during production I couldn't get the guitars to sound the way I wanted them to, so I scrapped the track. This was initially one of the main songs I intended to finish, but again I had to adapt and make some changes to my plans. Evaluating on this now, perhaps I could have enlisted the help of another producer who is more skilled or experienced at processing guitars, but I am

also glad I moved on and focused my energy on other tracks, as this showed my flexibility and allowed me to work more efficiently.

For ‘Saudade’ I had chosen to build the lyrical theme around a Portuguese word, so I enlisted a contact who I met to help me with the correct pronunciation. She recorded a voice note for me to take home so I could match her in the recording. This was a lovely, easy personal interaction, and I am glad I got her help, as now I am a lot more confident about my performance and the result (Gravia-Lund, 2021).

Evaluation of the process and results, the future, and my personal development plan

In this section, I will compare my work to that of other industry practitioners and will discuss the future of this project. I will refer to my personal development plan that is attached. A personal analysis SWOT is available in Appendix A, a SWOT related to this project in Appendix B, and my PDP in Appendix C.

Evaluation

When I evaluate my work against that of other industry practitioners, I note that I mainly fall short on the mixing and mastering side of the process. When writing and producing I feel like I can get my creativity across and channel this into interesting productions, but my mixing lets down the potential of the track as I think it can’t fully compete yet with what is on the charts. The technique I use is mainly to mix whilst producing. I do a lot of volume balancing, equalizing, compression, panning, and adding effects whilst I’m creating. The biggest challenge was always mixing the vocals into the production. Most of my mixing skills are a natural build-up of knowledge from the years I have been producing, but when learning new techniques my energy has always gone to production techniques and creative tools, focusing on flow, sound design and the earlier stages of a product, rather than mixing techniques that work towards finishing the product. They are a different set of skills. I again learned this the hard way with this project, and this caused me to feel moderately disappointed at times with my lack of skill and with the results. I watched tutorials on YouTube, mainly a video by the

‘Musician on Mission’ channel, as they also provide you with handy PDF cheat sheets you can refer to during the process (Musician on a Mission, 2018). Another useful source was the channel ‘Make Pop Music’, a good reference for vocal production (Make Pop Music, 2019). Evaluating on this I note that one of the most useful techniques was to switch between listening devices during singular mixing sessions. I used my built in MacBook speakers, a pair of Audio-Technica ATH-M50X (which are closed back, mainly used for recording), my Apple in-ear headphones and a pair of KRK monitors. This especially helped with controlling and balancing the frequencies, as for example, higher frequencies will sound a lot louder and intrusive in the in-ear headphones then on the laptop speakers. However, I note that I can still easily achieve better mixing results on my instrumentals then with vocals, so mixing remains an area of development I added to my personal development plan (Appendix C).

For vocal production and mixing, an interesting tutorial was by Josh Gudwin, on mixing Dua Lipa’s vocals. As this is the level of commercial quality I want to achieve, this proved to be a good lesson. The key takeaway from this was splitting the lead vocal into different channels so they can be equalised, compressed, and processed differently. This was very useful, and I did this on all my tracks, as I found that certain parts that were sung differently, such as belted, nasal, or soft tones required different processing, and this was also dependant on the surrounding production (Mix with the Masters, 2021).

Vocal production was one of the biggest challenges of this project. At the root of some of the issues was the fact that I am not the most controlled singer, and my voice can be quite pitchy, so a lot of tuning had to happen. This often sounded overly tuned, so for many parts I preferred to use Antares Auto-Tune as it would regularly have a more natural feel than the notes I had been changing using the software Melodyne. I have used Melodyne for several years now and have watched many tutorials on it from their official YouTube channel, but I still often don’t like the results of my tuning work. Using that software is difficult for me and it requires a lot of skill. However, when evaluating my work against that of my inspirations for this project, I must note that they often use Auto-Tune as a stylistic choice in their songs, and this inspired me to do the same in this project. Whereas usually I would have used pitch correcting technology as a means of minimizing ‘faults’, this time I used it as a way of elevating some of the tracks and bringing them into a more experimental spectrum of the pop field,

inspired by the likes of Rosalia, Charli XCX, and Sevdaliza. I have added vocal production as a continuing area of development in my personal development plan (Appendix C).

Much like my reference artists, I was able to be very experimental with the vocals, not just within the tracks where the vocals were part of the rhythm, but also in the topline where I was able to use effects a lot more freely than in conventional pop productions. I especially like how the vocals in 'Haunted' sound, where I decided to sing many of the vocal parts 2 semitones higher and then pitch them down for an effect inspired by Frank Ocean's 'Nights' (Frank Ocean, 2016).

I really enjoyed playing with the effects and used a lot of the plugins from the Soundtoys bundle, such as Decapitator, Tremolator, Little Alterboy and Echoboy, to add distortion and other effects. Using these plugins this way also moves my tracks more in to that desired genre spectrum of slightly more experimental pop/R&B which was one of the goals of this project. I found that experimenting with the vocals and using non-conventional effects on them was an eye-opening way of quickly and effectively bringing songs outside of the commercial genre spectrum, as these often have traditional vocal productions meant to sound natural and glossy, rather than experimental. 'San Diego', 'Moses' and 'Saudade' have the most 'natural' feel to its vocal productions, making them more suited to the mainstream market and radio play, whilst 'Haunted' 'Haunted: remix', and 'Habibi' have a lot more unconventional effects on their vocals, so they would fit well into a more experimental category on streaming services, a nice combination that I desired as stated in my proposal.

The future

Looking at the future of this project, I must note that I feel like none of the songs are fully release ready. This is due to my feelings towards the mixes, as I believe at this stage, they cannot compete with what is being released by successful artists or even my peers. I would like to go ahead with this project and release these songs, but first I will outsource the mixing to another professional with more experience. I will likely use a platform like SoundBetter, as they have a range of industry professionals offering their mixing services and communication with them is clear and simple. Perhaps, through networking I find a mixing engineer who's work I really like and is based in London, which would give me a chance to sit in on the mixing

session, to guide them on my vision and learn from them at the same time, but more realistically it will be online or digital interactions.

I will also outsource the mastering. Ideally, I will use the services of Stuart Hawkes through Metropolis studios, as they offer a reasonable rate and a quick turnaround, and he has mastered tracks for some of the reference artists of this project, so I believe it would be a great fit for my songs (Metropolis, 2018).

To finish the project at the desired standard I want, I will also redo some of the vocal recording, and ask for more help from my peers with the vocal production, especially tuning. I spent most of my time during this project exploring new ways of producing the tracks and incorporating my vocals within those, but the vocal production of the topline, in my opinion, one of the most important aspects, hasn't been developed as much as I'd like. As noted in my personal development plan, I will take on some vocal lessons and continue to practice vocal exercise and do warmups, as better vocal takes will ensure less issues with tuning and easier vocal productions (Appendix C).

The initial aim for the EP has always been for it to sound as a cohesive body of work, which I believe it does, but when it comes to releasing and promoting the songs, this will be as singles. As I want to maximize my audience, and grow it exponentially, any opportunity for growth needs to be taken advantage of. If I released six songs at the same time as an EP, then I would only get one chance to promote it on blogs, get added on playlists or even advertise it properly on social media channels before people will lose interest. Especially on Spotify, you can only select one track to be submitted to the editorial team at a time. However, when releasing as singles, every song can be promoted on its own, grow my audience and so maximize my chances of success. By the time the last song gets promoted, my audience might be substantially larger than if I had only done one release. Choosing to release singles which form an EP will be beneficial for an upcoming artist, because of the impact of the reveal, a sustained release schedule and consistency, more chances of editorial and media coverage and the chance of getting plays on the final EP release day (Gomori, 2019).

I chose to make one of the tracks a remix, as this would be the final song released, on the day the EP gets released. 'Haunted: remix', does however have additional melodies and lyrics that aren't in the original, as to entice the listener to see this as a different song or at least another

chapter. Having the remix track will hopefully also incentivise listeners to stream the full body of work.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I note that through experimentation and exploration I have been able to achieve the main goal of this project on several levels: to find my own artistic voice within my productions, that is sonically more unique than before. By utilising knowledge and skills my sonic identity has evolved for the better. However, this doesn't end with this project and is a journey that continues for years to come, if not forever. I was able to take inspiration from the artists I like and combine this with inspiration from my personal life to form a new perspective and an original style of production. I was able to be inspired by artists such as Rosalia, Timbaland and 1010 Benja SL, and reference not just the structures, but also some of their techniques to create my desired sound.

The project came with a lot of challenges, such as vocal recording, vocal production, and mixing, but I was able to develop several hard and soft skills through these and grow as producer, a songwriter, and a vocalist. The project also allowed me to establish a personal development plan so I can continue to grow and advance my career going forward.

One of the main aims of this project was to find a cohesive sound across all songs and even though the songs explore different parts of the pop genre spectrum I was able to achieve this by using my vocals as part of the productions and utilising new production techniques in combination with my writing style, my voice and by using reference artists.

I am most excited about the growth this project brought about and look forward to continuing my journey of sonic exploration.

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APPENDIX A

SWOT: *PERSONAL ANALYSIS*

Strengths	Weaknesses/Areas for development
-Several years of experience producing on Ableton and Logic Pro X -Can deliver a standard pop/R&B/kpop production quickly -Several years of experience in songwriting (BA in songwriting) -Distinct topline style for melody and lyrics -In the progress of developing more distinct and unique production style, continuing from this project -Know my strengths and weaknesses	-Not good enough at mixing for releases -Not enough confidence around my own music and skillset -Not very skilled at networking yet -No big social media presence or following yet -Don't have any music that I worked on released yet, so people can't search for my music online or hear my stuff -Not the most controlled/steady singer
Opportunities	Threats
-I have a list of people who have reached out to me to work together that I can contact -Many contacts from kpop writing camps and university that I can contact to work together -Producers I can reach out to for help with my artist project -Take singing classes -Do vocal exercises at home -Watch online production and mixing tutorials, subscribe to platforms like Mix with the Masters -Attend networking events, contact people online	-Not having enough confidence or will to ask others for help -Not reviewing my development and feeling stuck

APPENDIX B

PROJECT SWOT: *6 TRACK EP*

Strengths	Weaknesses/Areas for development
-In the box productions and home setup allow me to work from home and experiment with new techniques in my room -In the box productions allow me to keep the budget for the project low -Being the singer and the songwriter on the project means more control and less threats with the timeline and the execution	-Mixing skills still need to be developed more -Not a mastering engineer -Not a controlled singer, pitchy
Opportunities	Threats
-I get to develop my voice -I can ask my musician roommates for help all the time (for example to listen to my mixes or give feedback on the tracks) -I get to develop a more unique sonic identity -My portfolio will grow for both production and songwriting	-Less control over the timeline of the project as experimentation might take a long time to produce desired results -Focusing on experimentation might turn out with bad results or stuff I am unhappy with

APPENDIX C

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Area for development + goals	How will I achieve this	Support and resources I need	How do I measure success	Target date for review
Mixing	-Watch mixing tutorials on YouTube -Sign up for Mix with the Masters -Set aside time every week to research/learn a new technique	-Internet connection for online tutorials -Tracks to practice with, for example from publishers or camps	-Compare future mixes with older ones -Compare mixes with those of top charting songs -Ask others if they hear improvement	1-2 years
Vocal production	-Watch YouTube tutorials such as by Mix with the Masters -Practice with every song -Use Antares' and Melodyne's official resources and tutorials -Make a practice schedule	-Internet connection for online tutorials -Tracks to practice with, for example from publishers or camps -Friends or professionals to guide me and give me feedback	-Compare future vocal productions with older ones -Compare vocal productions with those of top charting songs -Ask others if they hear improvement	1-2 years
Singing/vocal strength, control	-Take up vocal lessons -Practice vocal exercises/warmups daily -Use online interval training software to exercise such as Earmaster Pro 7 -Set up a weekly or daily routine and	-Singing teacher -Good online exercises, preferably free, as singing teacher might be costly -Have discipline to practice enough	-Compare videos of me singing and unprocessed takes from recordings between now and 2 years' time -By singing live and getting feedback	1-2 years

	reminder of simple and quick exercises			
Networking	-Reach out to people on Instagram to work together -Work with contacts from university -Reach out to publishers and ask for sessions or tracks to topline	-Confidence -Keep a list of who I've been talking too and who I want to talk to, to have a goal of where the networking is going	-Look at growth of online following -How many sessions I have been able to do -How many new opportunities for work have I received	Every 6 months
Release music	-Re-record some vocals -Send tracks off to mixing engineer -Get songs mastered -Sign up for Distrokid -Contact blogs and playlist editors -Set a date	-Budget for mixing and mastering -Possibly better microphone at home or record at a studio	-By listening on the online streaming platform -By being able to post about my release on social media	-22 September 2021 -22 October 2021 -22 November 2021 -22 December 2021
Play a gig	-Send audition tape for Sofar Sounds -Ask around bars/pubs/small venues for gigs -Sign up for open mic	-Find a guitarist to play and practice with -Have equipment for performance or make sure this is provided	-Have I played a gig in the timeframe of 1 year from now -How many places have I been asked to perform at/have I contacted myself, keep a list of opportunities -Play an online gig over Instagram/TikTok live as a solution	22 July 2022
Sign a management deal	-Contact managers -Release music and wait to be contacted	-Music needs to be released -Utilise past contacts such as publishers/	-Does this feel trustworthy -Am I successful enough to need a manager to do	1,5-2 years

	-Network through friends or music lawyers	writers/ university hub	the tasks I cannot do anymore	
Sign a publishing deal	-Contact publishers -Ask to be a part of songwriting camps -Write with others and network through them to get my name out there	-Research publishers online/ask around my contacts -Continue to update my portfolio with new songs and releases	-How many meetings have I had -How many publishers have I contacted with my portfolio -Did I receive any offers	1-2,5 years
Sign a record deal	-Have several songs released -Have consistent, high enough streaming numbers -Be unique -Have an active social media presence	-Have a music lawyer contact -Have enough knowledge of contracts -Have industry contacts I can trust to ask for advice	-Did I receive any offers -Am I working with the label I set out as my goal -Do I feel good about this	1-3 years