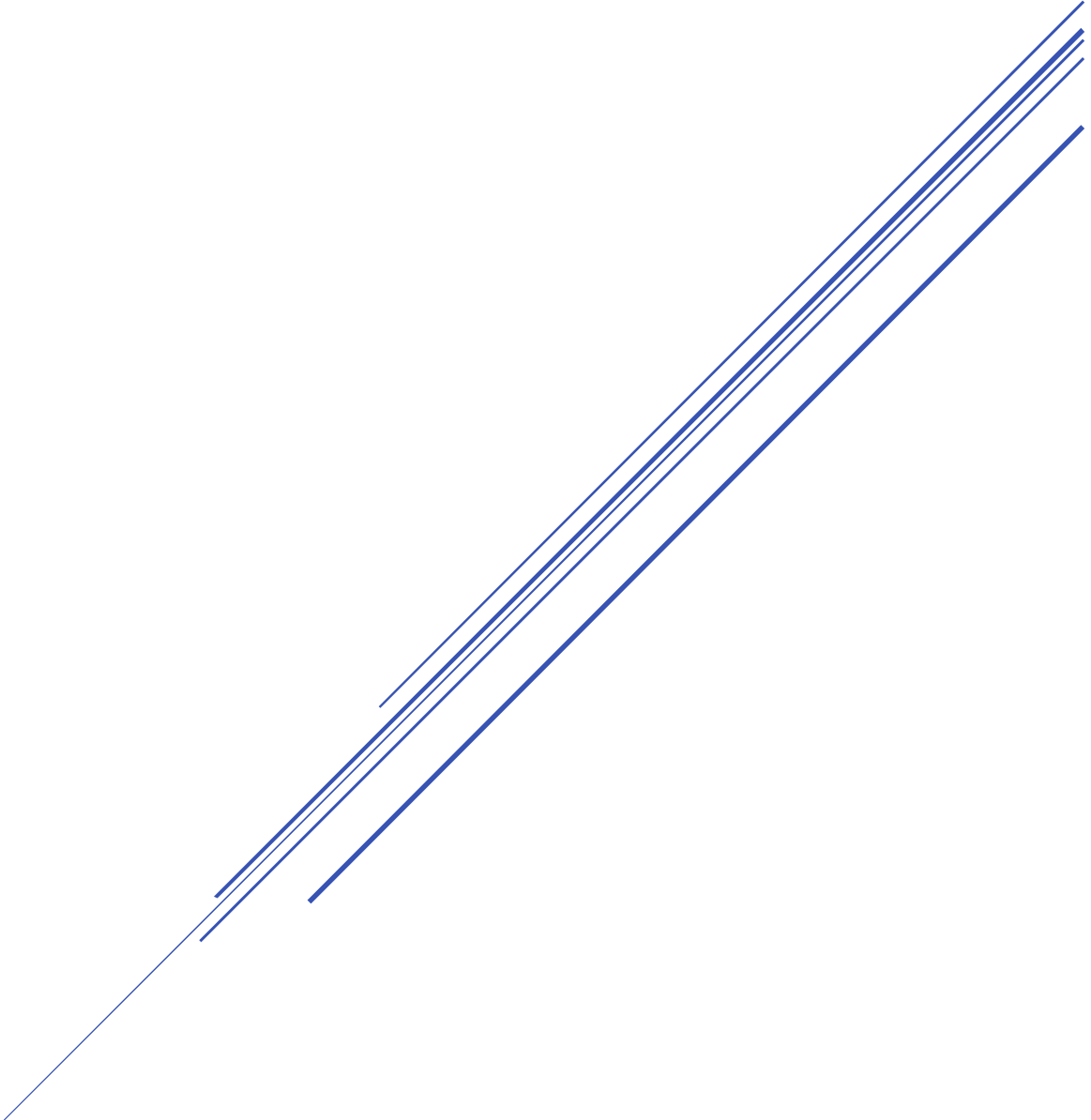


CHRISTOPHER SMITH

Reflective Commentary



University of Wales Trinity St David / Tileyard Education
Masters in Commercial Music Producer

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Final Song Choice

I originally chose to write and produce 10 songs for this project, however during this process for various reasons which will be discussed, I dropped a few songs from the list. Here is my final song list.

My Final project is 'A Portfolio of original songs which showcases my songwriting skills and production sound as a Commercial R&B, Hip-Hop Songwriter/Producer.'

1. Incredible (Album version and radio version) – Written and Produced by Me.
2. Real One - Co Produced by Filip Music, and co-written with 3 other songwriters (Stockholm Writing Camp)
3. One in a Million (formerly Cliché) – Written and Produced by Me
4. Heartbeat – Written and Co Produced with Kris Erice
5. One Day at a Time – Co Written and Co Produced Femi (Songwriting MA) 50/50 Split
6. Marvellous – Written by me and Co Produced with Turreek Beatz 50/50 Split
7. 10 Feet Tall – Written by Me, and Co Produced by Turreek Beatz 50/50 Split

All songs were mixed by me.

Why I chose these songs

In my final project, I wanted to showcase myself as a multi-faceted artist.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, an Artist is someone who creates things with great skill and imagination (*Dictionary, 2019*)

This portfolio showcases my songwriting skills, and my improved production and mixing skills. I wrote each song with the purpose of being pitched to relevant music publishers, managers, record labels and artists. This is with the view of securing a publishing contract and/or hiring a manager. The career path I've chosen to pursue, is one of a Songwriter/Producer who writes and/or produces songs for signed artists to release. This portfolio will also lead on to more writing and producing opportunities.

In my previous development plan, I was in two minds about whether I wanted to be a performing artist as well as a songwriter/producer or focus on being a songwriter / producer. Even though, have the ability to do either, this project has given me time to focus on the song's creation and production process, and has helped to solidify my decision of being songwriter/producer/engineer as my career of choice.

I will actively be pitching my songs to relevant industry people and thought of a few other places I can promote, network and pitch my songs.

I chose to focus on my genre of specialism which is R&B, Hip-Hop and Pop, and write singles to pitch as opposed to creating an album of songs for an artist, because singles are what artists need and want at the moment, and with social media and streaming platforms, consumers prefer singles, they can add to a playlist and shuffle.

Pop, R&B and Hip Hop

Generally, these are areas of music where the power of the single is still paramount. In this highly competitive market, the production of the single for radio, with alternative club mixes, will almost invariably have to be at the highest standard (and cost) to compete. (Music, 2014)

Attending and networking at Music Expo's & conferences like Midemⁱ in Cannes , France, The Great Escape in Brightonⁱⁱ , Liverpool Sound Cityⁱⁱⁱ , Reeperbahn^{iv} and SXSW^v in Austin Texas, USA, are great opportunities to meet new industry friends and pitch.

For networking purposes, I think it may also be beneficial for me to visit conferences from other industries e.g. Cannes Lions Conference^{vi}, because someone may need music for film, or a song in the style I make. Through my course I also discovered Music Tech and Making/Hacking conferences which I plan to attend in 2020; Music Tech Fest^{vii} and Beatvyne^{viii} in Dublin

These songs also represent me as a Songwriter / Producer, and shows that I have a signature niche sound and writing/production style which is fresh to the UK.

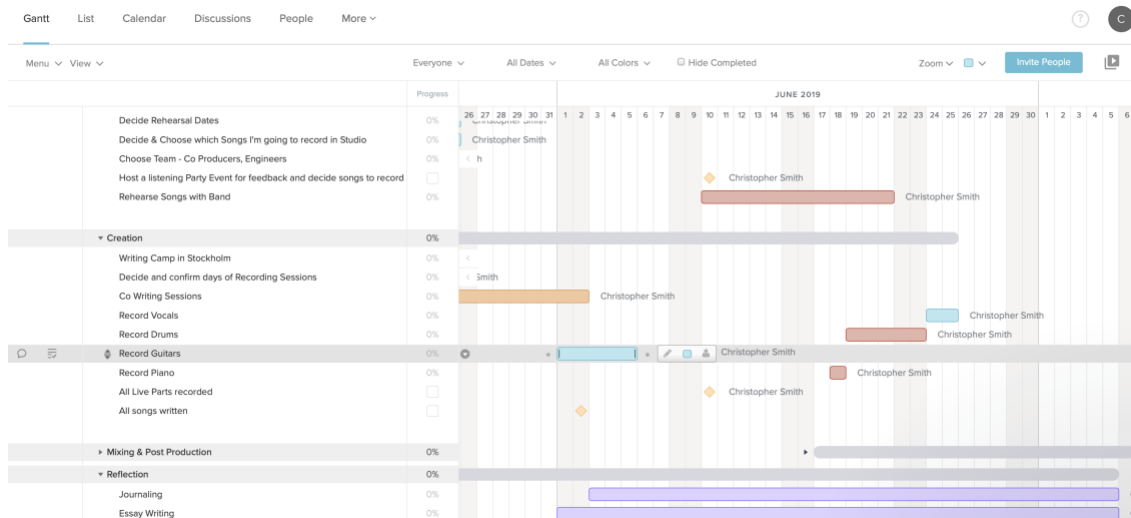
In the next section, I will talk about my process week by week and also go deeper into my technical creative decisions made during this project and my future career plan and development.

Week One and Two – Planning & Logistics

The first week was all about project planning, logistics and time management.

I created a Gantt Chart, and broke down each task into sub tasks, with times and deadlines attached to each.

I also created milestones so I could measure success and kept an honest account of how the project was going, e.g. if I missed a deadline, I'd extend it to another day.



(Smith, 2019)

Gantt charts give you Clarity. *“One of the biggest benefits of a Gantt chart is the tool's ability to boil down multiple tasks and timelines into a single document.”* (Jr., 2019)

I found this to be a very useful tool and something I will continue to use for big projects. It would be useful if I was running a team e.g. executive producing a project for a major label. All of the engineers, session musicians, and artists I’m working with can know when and where everything’s taking place, and also their role and responsibility.

To best maximize my time, I decided to book some time off work. I felt that working while doing this project would take up too much valuable time, luckily, I was able to do so.

I sought session musicians as early as I could and asked around for recommendations. Unfortunately it didn’t all go to plan in the way I wanted it to, which I’ll explain more in my final reflection.

During the first few weeks the Gantt chart was a great idea, but as pressure amounted, and things started to not go to plan, I got less reliant on the Gantt chart and hardly referred to it.

[Week 2 - Songwriting / Programming](#)

Week two was all about writing and programming the songs and also receiving valuable critique and feedback. In this week I chose collaborators, started writing the songs, decided what parts of the songs needed live instrumentation and when synths and vst’s were appropriate to use.

I sat down with my mentors and played them snippets of the songs I wanted to work on and sought their critique and advice for my project and plan.

Critical Feedback

Throughout this project, I chose a mixture of top producers, industry friends, peers and family to periodically give me critical feedback on the songs. So I could keep the quality high and know if any parts stand out in particular.

I had meetings with Sean Hargreaves & my mentor Martyn Ware. Receiving feedback from Sean and Martyn, helped shape my song direction, and gave me the space and confidence to remove songs from the list.

My mum, a friend from my previous BA course, and various friends from my current course I also sought for feedback.

A lesson that I've learned in my career is to not ask industry people for feedback. I've learned that this is actually a disadvantage and shows you to not be confident in your songs. From experience I know that it's also a disadvantage to be too broad about who the song is for and song genre you're pitching to industry. Instead songs need to be pitched with purpose to a particular person and targeted to a particular artist. The relationship you have with a publisher or a record label is also paramount and can be easily tarnished, because you only have one opportunity to make a good impression.

Week 3 – Booking studio time and Songwriting/Production

I decided that I would only book the studio time once the songs were completed to a good enough standard that they were ready to be tracked. However, I struggled to book session players and confirm dates they were available. I found that even my friends were busy and people I was sure I could depend on did not respond to me in time, so I had to find a plan B and a plan C. This led me to re working some of the songs so they need less live instruments. By the time I booked studio time, there was only two days of availability left because the rest had been pre booked. In hindsight, I should have pre booked the studio in advance and then planned everything around the booking.

Because I was unable to secure a guitarist for the majority of songs, I programmed most of the guitar parts using 'Native Instruments – *Scarbee Funk Guitarist and Session Guitarist Strummed Acoustic*'. For my song 'Heartbeat' I asked my friend Leo to record a solo for me which is now in the final song as well as a guitar part on the song 'One in a million', by James Newhook.

From my previous proposal and plan, my budget reduced from £200 to £100 because of un planned for living expenses. This made me have to move things around and decide who I can pay and who I can ask a favor from to play for free.

Week 4 – Recording Bass Guitar and Production

The first live instrument I recorded was Bass. This was plugged directly into my audio interface, so that I could add an amp model and mix it within logic Pro X.

I sent my bass player 2 versions of the songs, the first with programmed bass so he could hear an example of how I wanted the bass to sound. The second version was without any bass, so he could practice his part. When he came to the studio we went over several ideas and recorded them onto each song. We then went away to mull it over and listen with fresh ears, so we could have a final bass recording day the following week.

There is live bass on three of my songs.

I referred to the 6 steps to mixing bass from 'musicianonamission.com' which I found very helpful and improved my mixes substantially.

The six steps are

Step 1) Tweak the arrangement so that other parts aren't taking up space in the low end.

Step 2) Get your tone right before recording.

Step 3) Balance the bass volume with the rest of your song. Use gain automation for extra consistency.

Step 4) Use reference tracks to make sure your low end sounds like the pros.

Step 5) Heavily compress the bass with a slow attack and a timed release or auto-release. Use serial compression if necessary.

Step 6) Use EQ to create a pocket for the bass and kick to live in.

Step 7) Use saturation if necessary to "fill the bass out" or make it pop in smaller speakers.

(Mayzes, 2019)

Week 5 – Recording Saxophone and Production

As a fan of R&B, Soul and Funk music, I love the sound of brass on songs. When I was planning my project, I knew I wanted to record a saxophone as a priority.

I also wanted to record a trumpeter and trombone player, so I have a brass section, but unfortunately, I couldn't find players who were available or could commit to the days I had booked the studio. My 'Plan B' was to pay a session musician but unfortunately my budget ran out for this too.

According to the BPI Musicians Union agreement, the fee for a standard three hour session musicians is £130.00 (Agreement, 2019)

However, because of my budget and level of success, I could only paid my Saxophone player, and Pianist £50 each.

Saxophone

Recording saxophone was a new experience for me because it was my first time recording a brass instrument.

I chose to use an ‘*Aston Stealth*’ microphone because it’s character and quality, and also because it was highly recommended by Ciaran, a lecturer of mine who lent me his personal microphone to record with. I recorded the sax on the ‘Dark’ voicing, because this produced the best sound in my opinion, when I tested each voicing mode.

Here is how astonmics.com describes their Dark Voicing. *D (Dark): A vintage sound, reminiscent of classic ribbon mics.* (Astonmics.com, 2019)

The Stealth is a broadcast quality microphone that’s designed not only for studio use, but for live too. It has 4 switchable voices to ensure that it suits any application – they are as follows: Male vocals, Female vocals, Guitars, & Dark (www.andertons.co.uk, 2019)

Before I had the option to use the stealth, I was going to record using an Electro-Voice RE20 Dynamic Cardioid Microphone. This Mic is commonly used in radio, podcasts and voiceovers, but also sounds great with brass because of its frequency range and dynamics and polar pattern.

The Electro-Voice RE20 is a professional-quality dynamic cardioid microphone created especially for recording, broadcast and sound-reinforcement applications requiring essentially flat response over a very wide frequency range. The wide frequency response, coupled with excellent transient response, make the RE20 easily comparable to the finest condenser cardioid microphones. (Electrovoice.com, 2010)

For mic placement, I used a technique I found in The Recording Engineer’s Handbook

A Large-diaphragm condenser directly in front of the sax at a distance of 12 to 16 inches captures a sound that’s very authentic. (Owsinski, 2009)

As with other woodwinds, the mic should be placed roughly in the middle of the instrument at the desired distance and pointed slightly toward the bell. (David Miles Huber, 2010)

Because of the studio time available, I recorded the Saxophone in Soho Sound Kitchen which is located in Tileyard Studios^{ix}. My signal flow for recording was through a Neve 1073DPD Two Channel Mic Pre-Amp, which was then fed into an Empirical Labs EL8 Distressor.

When I had the sax player in the room, and I was testing the levels in Logic before recording, I noticed that the distressor was making the signal in logic's meter on the track distort. I made several attempts to change the settings on both the Neve and the distressor to fix it the signal. Using a trial an error approach I adjusted the levels while Chris played the saxophone. The meter level for me was important just as much as the sound of what was coming through. This was because I was wanted to allow space and headroom in my mix, by applying gain staging to my recording process. So, I was actively listening to how the sound was changing too. In the end, I managed to get a level and a sound I was happy with and stop it distorting in Logic. The sax player and I both agreed that the recording sounded better without the distressor, so I bypassed it for the recording.

I decided to record into Logic Pro X because this the DAW I'm most comfortable and advanced with.

Week 6 & 7 – Recording Grand Piano and Mixing

Recording Grand piano was a good experience, because it helped me grow as a producer/engineer and also for the sound I was able to get from it.

For 'Made A Wish', I thought it would be nice to record a piano ballad, to showcase the song lyrics and also my contrast of styles I can work in.

The piano can be recorded in a variety of ways, with different miking methods yielding markedly different results. Classical recordings often benefit from some degree of room ambience, achieved by placing the microphones outside of, or at a distance from, the piano. Pop and rock recordings often call for closer miking of the piano's soundboard to give a tighter, more immediate response.

(Labs, 2019)

To record I used 3 Cole 4038 microphones. A pair set up high above and to the left and right of the Piano, and one on the floor towards the end of the room to capture dark ambience and natural reverb of the room. Here is a photo of my microphone placement.

This technique was based on one I read in *The Recording Handbook*

Place a pair of small diaphragm condensers spaced about 4 feet apart and positioned about 6 feet away from the piano, and about 8 to 9 feet high. Angle them to aim at the edge of the lid.
(Owsinski, 2009)

I chose to use Cole microphones because of it being a ribbon microphone, it's able to pick up delicate sounds and details that other microphones may not be able to pick up.

All good studio ribbon mics provide more opportunity to EQ to taste because they “take” EQ well. Ribbon mics have their resonance peak at the bottom of their frequency range, which means that ribbon, just doesn't add any extra high frequency hype like condenser mics do. (Owsinski, 2009)

The sound we're trying to capture from an acoustic piano is far more nuanced and textural, so it's better to stick with condenser or ribbon microphones here. The more delicate diaphragms in these mics are much better suited to picking up the small details, whether it's from the instrument itself or from the room it's being played in. (Corfield, 2019)



1 – A Photo of Microphone Placement of Cole Microphone Pair on Grand Piano

(Smith, 2019)



(Smith, 2019)

2 A Photo of Cole 4038 Microphone placement of ambient room microphone

Mixing on The SSL Desk

I mixed *Incredible* in Goetz Studio (Soho Sound Kitchen^x), using his SSL E 4044 Mixing desk.

My first task for this to bounce stems from my session and send them to his computer. I then had to route each track in Logics mixer to a mono output E.g. Drums routed to mono 1. This made each track play on the mixer.

This was my first time mixing on an SSL Desk, because of this the session had to split into two sessions. The first half of my first session was to familiarise myself with the desk, and the second half was to record the saxophone player.

I chose to mix *Incredible* partly using the SSL mixing desk because I thought this song would benefit most from the SSL sound, I first spread the stems across the channels on the mixer.

Then I went through each stem and mixed it while soloed. Once all the stems were volume balanced and EQ'd, I think mixed them again unsoloed to balanced them within the mix.

I felt like I got a really good mix from my session which I'm happy with. However, I know that I've only tapped into a fraction of potential that can be achieved using an ssl desk.

Because I didn't have an engineer with me, I didn't use any reverb, delays or compression techniques like parallel compression. I chose to focus on EQ and volume.

When the session was finished, one by one I bounced each stem from the desk. The next day I continued mixing *Incredible* using Waves Plugins.

I made 2 mixes of *Incredible*, one radio edit that that finishes at and an extended single/album version which is slightly longer because of the extra saxophone solo at the end. This shows the versatility of songs which can be played on the radio or used in an album, context.

Blending the saxophone into the mix

I wanted the saxophone to be heard, but also sit behind the mix and be subtle, so first I soloed the track and mixed it, so it sounded clean, smooth but also punchy, then I once I was happy with it in isolation, I un-soloed, and adjusted the gain.

This was my final signal chain for the saxophone on Incredible



(Smith, 2019) I started with Kramer tape, on the ‘brass section’ preset. This added an analogue vibe to the saxophone and made it sound warmer. Next was a VEQ which brought out the highs, and crispiness of the brass, because it already had bass and mid frequencies, and sounded quite muddy without it. I like the character of this EQ, and it added colour to the brass, Next, I added a PS22 XSplit (s), to help spread the sax so it blended well with the other instruments in the mix.



(Smith, 2019)

I next added a standard Eq to accentuate the mid frequencies at 335hz by 5.5db. And the highs at 1200hz by 12db.

To add more colour I added a vitamin plugin and adjusted the levels appropriately



(Smith, 2019)

Next on my channel strip was an RVox plugin, with a high note gate to cut out any unwanted noise and reduce the fingering you could hear from the player pressing the buttons, and lastly I added a gain plugin, for gain staging. I reduced the gain only by -1.6db because I wanted it to be a prominent part of the production.

My signal chain for the saxophone on One in a Million was very similar to the example above with a few subtle changes to the gain and the PS22 Xsplit plugin.

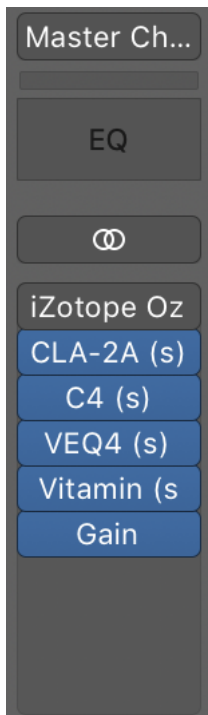
[Mix Busses](#)

My mixing strategy was based off a video tutorial I watched on groove3.com^{xi}

(Because Groove3.com is a paid subscription-based video content service you may not be able to view the link in the appendix)

Within Logic, I routed all tracks to a master bus.

Here is a photo of my master bus.



(Smith, 2019)

Then I separated each instrument into different groups.

- Drums
- Percussion
- Guitar
- Bass
- Strings
- Vocals
- Brass
- FX & Transitions

I started out following a guides and tutorials, but I found that they all had different approaches to mixing which was confusing. So I took the principles and similarities they spoke about I once I was familiar with the character and sound of the different plugins I had, I experimented and used a trial and error approach

with mixing. I saved plugin strips that worked well so I could use them again in other songs and speed up my workflow.

Each song is mixed slightly differently to what the song needed.

Technical Decisions & Creative Techniques Used

My Vocals were recorded between my home studio, and Sean's studio.

Guest vocalists recorded their own vocals in their home studio and sent me the stems.

At home I have a Rode NT1, this is my go-to microphone because of its flat frequency response. It's great for both male and female vocals and I can eq and mix it after the audio is recorded. For me I feel I have more control, than a mic that accentuates the highs or mids like the Rode NT1-A or the SM7B.

Because I was singing on some of the songs too, one of my my mentor '*Sean Hargreaves*' suggested that I have an engineer, in the session to record my vocals, so I could focus on the performance.

I had a 6 hour recording session and agree this helped my performance a great deal because I could rely on my engineer for feedback and if I was singing in key etc, and it allowed me to focus on the performance instad of multi tasking and wearing different hats.

I recorded my singing vocals through an Aston Spirit Microphone.

My signal chain for the vocal was through a Neve 1073 Pre-amp, then patched through to an 1176 compressor with a 4:1 ratio, medium attack and release, between 1.5 and 2 gain reduction. For EQ I used an API 550b boosting 12khz by 6db, 4db of 5k and 100k of 6db.

For my rap vocals, on Incredible, I went the Neve 1073 Pre-amp, into the, API 550b EQ, boosted high end around 10k by 4db, light high end, boosted 4db around 10k, cut out end around 240khz by 2db, boosted 9db of 100hz.

Then into a Distressor 4:1 ratio, fast attack and fast release, compressed between 4 and 6db.

My engineer for session, Jake, handled this setup and processing for me, so I could focus on my performance. I trusted the sound he was trying to produce, however I thought it was best to know exactly

what he did so I understood and could replicate it in the future in other studios and recording sessions etc. learning about his process made me a better engineer, and settings suited my voice well, so I will most likely use them again.

For each song, I had a reference song for two reasons. The first was for song structure, and the second for mix quality.

***“Referencing** is the process of identifying **one** recording that has a vibe, sound, and instrumentation that is close to the song that you are working on. By using a reference as a sonic target, you can make more informed mix decisions and learn a ton about your mix environment.” (Team, 2017)*

I wanted to replicate the sonics and mix of my reference tracks in my own song so that wherever it's played it still sounds great, and is powerful enough to catch the ears of A&R's who hear music on a daily basis. My song has to stand out, so when people hear it, they feel something. I know that this first comes from the song, the lyrics, and then the production.

I found it hard to find reference tracks for all of the songs on my list, so instead I based it on songs by a similar artist.

My reference tracks for each song were

- Incredible - Nothing on you – Bruno Mars & B.O.B
- One in a Million – What-Goes-Around...Comes Around by Justin Timberlake
- Real One – Trip & Boo'd Up by Ella Mai
- Heartbeat – Impossible and Suicide – James Arthur
- Made A Wish – All of Me by John Legend
- 10 Feet Tall – These Days – Jess Glynne, Ray Blk and Nadia Rose
- Marvellous – Jason Derulo, Usher

Chen said this is in an online blog about making your song stand out.

“Loudness is something to consider as well. If the person you sent your song to has listened to 10 songs before yours, and then yours comes on louder than the rest (within reason of course), that’s a good thing. I’ll let you in on a little secret; louder sounds better. That is way mix engineers are encouraged to mix at low levels. Otherwise, they might be fooled into thinking something is better just because it’s louder. But your best bet of standing out, in my opinion, is in the writing process itself. Write a unique song.” (Chen, 2018)

In a meeting with my mentor Martyn Ware he said, “I like the way you don’t rush into the song, but instead set the scene and create an environment for the listener.” (Ware, 2019)

“If you pay attention to the sound quality when listening to professionally mixed songs, you realize that there are differences even at this high level: Some songs are brilliantly mixed, other songs are well mixed.

To close the gap between your mix and a professional mix, track reference (also called a mix reference) is a very good and effective approach.” (Producerspot.com, 2019)

One of the key mixing techniques I learned and used during mixing was ‘Gain Staging’. Making sure my levels and sounds were not peaking but also cut through in the mix.

I found many useful youtube links^{xii} which I got took advice from.

This mixing process has taught me about balance within a mix and leaving space for instruments frequencies and space for vocals.

PDP – Personal Development Plan

From my last PDP, I've grown more confident in my skills abilities.

Since then my skills have improved and my career goals have changed slightly. My vision has also matured.

I know that my goals are not in chronological order, and will overlap when trying to achieve them.

Here is my updated PDP.

I have colour coded the text in PDP sections in the following ways.

What = Black

How = Red

Why? = Blue

Here is my Personal Development plan

Tileyard Education

MA Personal Development Plan

Name:

Christopher Smith

Course:

MA Commercial Producer

Vision and Goals

My Vision

To be a successful Songwriter/Producer, who writes & Producing songs (timeless classics) that are successful Internationally.

Short/Medium Term Goals (next 6/12 months)

Have a cut with a Successful Artist.

- By pitching my songs to relevant open briefs given by Tileyard Education.
- Contacting and pitching to my friends who work for publishers and record labels.
- Contacting other people in my network who have links to artists, labels and publishers.

- Continue writing songs and co-writing (songwriting camps etc.)
- Signing up to pitching websites such as Musicgateway.com^{xiii}, Syncr^{xiv}, Sentric Music^{xv} and Audio Network^{xvi}.
- The first cut will open the door for the next one, and make it easier to generate publisher and manager interest. More people will want to collaborate, and I will attract more successful writers than me which may lead to more cuts.

Hire a Manager

- Sign up to MMF which costs £60 for under 30's^{xvii}, so I have access to their directory and entry to their events
- Network at Tileyard networking events and other industry events I attend e.g. Midem, The Great Escape
- Ask my network of contacts if they have any recommendations of friends who are looking for Songwriter/Producers to manage.
- Send my demos to Songwriter / Managers such as 365 Management^{xviii}, Z Management^{xix}, Covert Talent, Ferocious Talent etc.
- Utilize my subscription to the Unsigned Guide directory so I can research and approach the right manager.
- A Manager can help me to get into more co-writing sessions with more established writers/producers, and also have connections with publishers and labels, which
- A manager would also help with submitting material to publishers and labels who only accept 'solicited material'.

Sign a Publishing deal

- More opportunities will be available for me as a writer/producer, and they'll also help to promote and exploit my songs for a cut with an artist and/or a sync in film/tv/games.
- They will have access to live briefs which I can write and pitch to.
- They can arrange co-writing sessions for me and invite me to songwriting camps which some publishers put on.
- Financial Advance. Depending on the type of deal you sign, sometimes a publisher will give a writer an advance so they can focus on creating, this is recoupable from royalties.
- A Publisher would take care of administration for me.
- Signing to publisher would be a good opportunity for me because of the support I would get from a team with experience and international contacts.
- Financial rewards,
- They can support me with Administration, social media, marketing and anything else I need support with, so I have freedom to be creative and focus

Secure a Sync placement.

- Sign up and upload my music to sync pitching websites such as Music Gateway, Syncr,
- Contact music supervisors I've met in the past at networking events.
- Ask my list of contacts if they know of any opportunities.

- Pitch to artists who have a following and/or sponsorship or are signed.
- A sync would give me a bigger platform to showcase and market my music.
- My music will be heard by a wider audience
- It will generate substantial income from royalties and may include an upfront buyout fee.
- A successful sync would make me stand out more to a publisher and a manager.
- My first sync may open the door and lead to other syncs.

Book regular Co-writing sessions with artists, songwriters, and producers.

- Be proactive and contact other writers from my course
- Showcase my music on social media and utilize it to find and contact new artists.
- Meet new artists and writers at events and gigs.
- The more songs I write, and produce, the more songs I have in my repertoire for pitching.
- When I collaborate, I have a better chance of getting a cut or placement because of their contacts and if a collaborator has a deal already, their publisher or label will exploit the work.\

Learn Guitar & Piano to a confident level

- Sign up for evening classes for Piano
- Ask a friend who plays piano or guitar, if they can give me private lessons one night a week.
- Find songs on the piano and guitar which I like and want to learn how to play.
- As a Writer/Producer, both of these instruments will be an asset to me, as they will both help me to be more creative, when writing and/or producing new songs.
- It will help in co-writing sessions
- allow me to be more independent and self sufficient.

Buy or hire a saxophone and take lessons

- Utilizing my Student discount, or hiring one doesn't have to be expensive
- This would be a good instrument to learn so I can use it in my own productions
- I can do session work for others, which will generate income.

Make sustainable income from Music. (Min £20k by 12 Months time)

- Focus on my skills and strengths which are songwriting, producing, singing and rapping.
- Either work a full-time job or work part time & go freelance and have multiple streams of income. (Mixing, Session Vocals, voiceovers, producing for artists, etc)
- Teach Music workshops to young people of all ages. Primary school, secondary, and college level.
- Singing at weddings and private functions.

- It is important for me to make more money because this will have a positive effect on my creativity, mental health and overall wellbeing.

Be accepted onto a business accelerator programme for my interactive touch flyer

- Apply to Abbey Road Red^{xx} as soon as possible, and hope for the best.
- Apply to other Accelerator programs
- I'm confident in my concept and that if designed and made right, it could be very lucrative and also a sustainable business which will last for years to come.
- This accelerator programme would be a good opportunity to take time out to focus on developing the product and making it into a profitable business. They also offer coaching and advice.
- An alternative to an Accelerator programme would be to launch a Kickstarter campaign.

Find an Internship or a good paying Full Time Job in the Music industry, which I can have evenings and weekends free.

- Only apply for jobs which are relevant to my industry and relevant to my experience and strengths/skillset.
- Ask my network of industry friends if they know of any vacancies.
- Email companies based at Tileyard and also contact mentors and lecturers about possible internships or job opportunities they know off.
- Having a work/life balance is important for my mental health and will also help me to be more creative and productive.

Sign up to freelancing websites like Fiverr^{xxi} and Upwork^{xxii} for paid work.

- Signing up is easy, will only take a few minutes, and can turn into continued, paid work.
- This work is flexible and adds extra income
- More songs completed, means more songs in my portfolio to showcase my work, get more work and pitch.

Long-Term Goals (2-3 years)

Regularly Collaborating with successful Songwriters, Producers and artists both in and outside of the UK.

To be financially stable from my music career.

To have a much better work/life balance

To have launched my business – World's First Interactive Flyer.

Have Multiple streams of income – (Have Passive income)

- Songwriting Royalties.
- Wedding Singing
- Commissions & Syncs
- Mixing Projects
- Interactive Flyer Business

SWOT - Personal Analysis

Strengths	Development Areas
Songwriting is my main strength. Singing - I enjoy singing and rapping and also find this to be a strength. I've spent many years singing and was also in my church worship team singing to over a 1000 people every Sunday for a year. • Networking is also a strength, I attend many events and conferences (Including Midem and Basca events, which have led on to opportunities) and have built a network of industry contacts, I feel like the right people (publishers) are starting to know my face and notice me. Meeting the right people. • Finding opportunities	• I need to learn at least one instrument, to a confident level, so I can use it to write songs efficiently. More than one would be a bonus. (Guitar and Piano, then Saxophone)
Opportunities	Threats
• Production – Putting, everything I've learnt from my studies into practice. • Marketing/Social Media/Branding.	• Work Life Balance. Making sure my mental health is healthy and I'm not putting too much pressure on myself to be perfect or successful. • Time Management - I Need more of a balance between music, work and Social life. I need to learn to enjoy the journey and schedule in time to have fun and see my friends, instead of going tunnel vision. • Find the fun in every day and every situation, every new song, and celebrate good things.

	Procrastination.
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What do I need to learn?	What do I have to do?	What support and resources will I need?	How will I measure success? - What does good look like?	Target date for review?
Piano	Sign up for Evening Classes – one night a week Practice 15 Mins a day at home	- Money to fund the lessons - A New job or higher income, more hours from my current job.	I will be able to play my song Made a Wish on the Piano. I will be able to play 3 popular love songs on the piano. I will be able to write a piano based song using chord progressions. (not the standard pop C)	December
Guitar	Find a private guitar tutor who can teach me one hour a week, or take evening classes one night a week at a college. Practice 15 Mins a day to be able to write using the guitar and also perform. Learn to write songs using the assistance of guitar	Time – Wake up Earlier or downtime after work or uni? Youtube or a guitar teacher, or guitar book.	I will be able to write a song using guitar. I will be able to play chord progressions on guitar when producing a song I will be able to do a guitar solo.	December
Recording & Mixing Techniques	Practice mixing stems from the internet of popular songs and try to re-create their mix.	Seek artists who I'd like to work with and ask them to send me songs they'd like me to mix. Cold Email, DM on Instagram & Twitter.	I will have satisfied clients and they will recommend their friends to me and will ask me to continue mixing other songs of theirs.	December

	Watch Youtube videos and tutorials on Groove3.com & MusicGurus.com	Upload some examples to soundcloud which I can send out. (Private links)	Successful demo pitches leading to cuts and/or sync placements of my songs.	
Production Skills	Produce Beats Find an artist I like to Write to briefs	Make at least one new beat a week Set a timer and Produce using a beat from	My output of Beats/Productions will improve. I will have minimum 2 new beats a week.	January
Social Media	Grow my fan base. Views, likes and shares. Build a loyal following. Which platforms are best for my music/genre.	Post everyday or a few days a week, create a plan for social posting. Have an hour set aside on Saturday or Sunday to think of and schedule tweets and posts. Be more open with my life, talk about reflect on my experiences, on social media. Take Pictures and interesting videos to keep my fans engaged and make new fans.	Reach 1500-3000 Followers	6 Months
Time management	Figure out a routine, and a workflow that fits into my lifestyle. Balance music and working and social life.	Use my Journal, calendar app and other tools to help.	Improved productivity more achieved in less time.	January
Improve my wellbeing and personal fitness	Allocate specific evenings during the week for fitness training and allocate time at weekends. Eat Healthier Sleep More	Gym and workout min twice a week. (or do in the house workouts) Drink more Water, prepare lunch for the week in advanced. Eat more fruit and Vegetables.	Improved fitness levels will be self-evident. Reduced stress levels and better-quality sleep. More creative because I'll happy more energy, and motivation.	Review in 6 months

Read More Often	Improve my reading skills; Academic/Course related Books	Read more Novels Continue researching and improving my music knowledge through books and online tutorials	More creativity, better written and produced songs.	March
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Final Reflection and what I would have done differently.

When looking back on the project, next time I'd like to be in a position where I'm less dependent on session musicians so when I have more funds, I plan to take private guitar and piano lessons. I would have like to start this project with more money to pay session musicians.

I would also have a list of back up musicians to use just in case the one I planned to use dropped out for whatever reason.

The hardest thing about this project was arranging sessions with musicians to play on my songs. Because I knew I wanted the sound and feel of live instruments on my songs, at certain times I felt that I couldn't move forward until I had those parts recorded.

Even though I asked people as far in advanced as I could, and also asked multiple people, I still was let down by people, who either didn't respond, wanted higher pay or requested royalties from me as well as payment.

Because of this I had to rule out certain songs and parts I wanted to record like 'Trumpet' for example and vocal parts.

I now appreciate and understand outboard gear more and the benefit big studios for some projects as opposed to only working in the box or in my own home studio.

Future Development & Career Goals

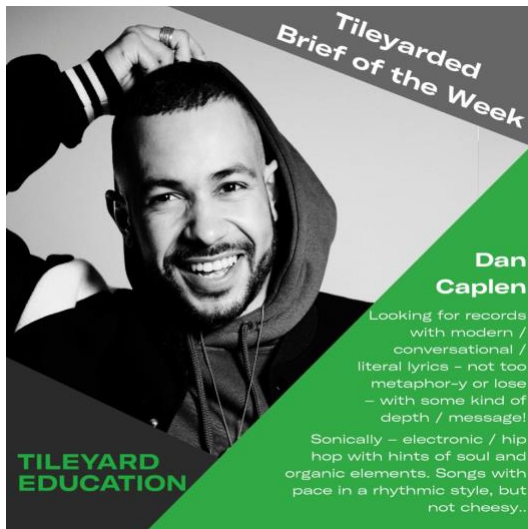
Pitching

Each song I wrote was written to a specific artist brief, given to me by Tileyard education, which I plan to pitch to each one after I submit this assignment.

- Heartbeat will be pitched to James Arthur
- Incredible will be pitched to John Legend and Dan Caplan



(Education, 2019)



(Education, 2019)

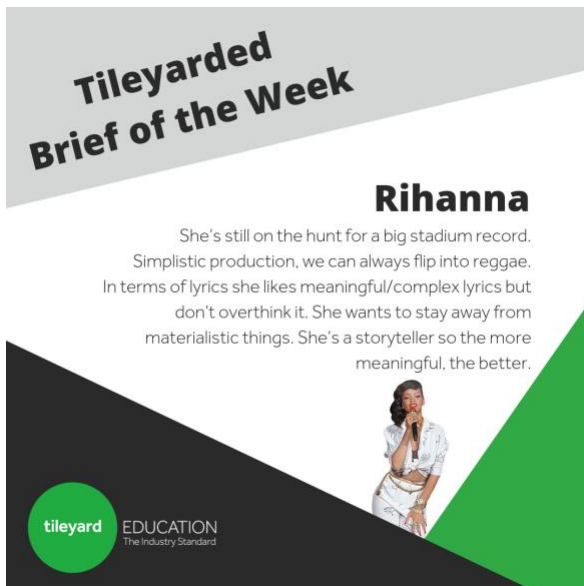
- Marvellous will be pitched to Jason Derulo and Dan Caplan.
- 10 Feet Tall will be pitched to Ray Blk, Nadia Rose and Jess Glynne

- Made a Wish will be pitched to John Legend



(Education, 2019)

- Real One Will be pitched to Franky, Rihanna, and similar R&B Artists like Mahalia, Jorja Smith and other Female R&B Artists. (Brief given at Stockholm, Sweden, Songwriting Camp)
- One in a Million will be pitched to Rihanna



(Education, 2019)

Career Support

A Songwriter/Producer Manager

The first key member of my team to hire is a manager to help me find and secure paid opportunities. They will support me in getting co-writing sessions with established songwriters and producers and also assist with pitching. Some labels and publishers only accept solicited material, meaning they will only accept songs from trusted sources, e.g. friends, lawyers, managers, publishers, who's quality and opinion they trust.

My manager will need to have a huge number of contacts and active strong relationships, both in the UK and on an international scale so that my collaborations and success can reach further than London and the UK.

A Publisher

The second addition to my professional team is a Music Publisher. There are many different deals and avenues a publisher can help me with including:

- Arranging Co-writing Sessions with established producers and songwriters
- Pitch my music
- Find Sync opportunities
- Have access to briefs which I can write to

Alternatively, I can take a DIY approach and contact companies like Sentric Music who can represent me as my publisher and allow me to apply and pitch for sync opportunities.

SYNCR is another platform I can take advantage of and use in the pursuit of getting a cut or sync placement. Audio Network and MusicGateway.com are both platforms I've used before and will continue to use in the future for collaborating and networking.

My next step after I finish this project and I graduate is to hire support for my career and to pitch to artists who are signed, or unsigned artists who already have a following and industry interest. I will follow my PDP and use it as business plan to help me navigate the industry, grow and achieve my career goals.

I'm optimistic about my career and feel I have a very good chance of being successful because of my technical and creative skills, perseverance, and resilience.

I feel more confident in myself as a Songwriter/Producer, and feel I have a good enough body of work to seek high profile collaborators and publishers, labels and managers. I also feel because of the progress I've made in the past few years; I stand a good chance of finding a good manager and signing a publishing deal soon.

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