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MA Commercial Music Producer

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Final Project Proposal 2019

Rhythm and Blues Project Proposal 2019

INTRODUCTION

The goal of the proposed project is to create a new R&B music album with a 90's element and feel in the production style, while the aim is to create strong songs that will stand the test of time. The album will be comprised of 6 to 8 tracks of music and will be composed, written and produced in a style that is contemporary with a 90's twist. The overall concept is an album that features different vocalists and a rapper while paying particular attention to the chorus harmonie; this will be very important as 90's R&B is synonymous for the lush sound of the vocals.

Having Listened to the latest R&B on Spotify, I notice that some of the songs that do have a 90's influence have been sampled from the recordings of that era. For example, Ncredible Gangs, Nobody Else is directly (Ncredible Gang et al., 2019) from Brenda Russel's and Little Bit of Love, (Russell, 2018) and YFN Lucci's Purple Emoji (Cole and \$ign, 2019) has a direct sample from Case's Missing You. (Case, 2001) Although it sounds fantastic, using my experience and expertise, I will be composing original music in order to get the same feel and sentiment.

BACKGROUND

In 2017 "for the first time ever, R&B/Hip-Hop became the most dominant genre, with seven of the top 10 most - consumed albums coming from that genre. The popularity of R&B/Hip-Hop was powered by a 72% increase in on-demand audio streaming". (nielsen 2018) In 2019, R&B/Hip-Hop shows no signs of slowing down with artists such as Ella Mai winning a Grammy Award for best R&B song. Both Ella Mai and newcomers like H.E.R. are finding great pop success, "their styles are now capitalising on the hip-hop soul, birthed by the likes of Mary J Blidge in the 90s." (Smith 2019)

This is indeed the most favorable time to make an album like this as studies show that, "For the past three years, Urban songs (Hip-Hop/Rap and R&B) were the most streamed songs among all genres. In 2018 they accounted for 36% of all on-demand streams, up from 32% in 2017. 19.3% were from Pop titles, up from 15.6% in 2017." (Buzzangle, 2018) However, while the growth in song sales had gone down in 2018, on-demand audio streams showed a growth of 41.8 %.

RESEARCH

Is there a listening audience that still appreciates 1990's R&B inspired music in 2019? To discover the answer to this question, this survey was employed to determine how the public perceived, consume, and purchased contemporary R&B music amongst my peers in the UK.

METHODOLOGY

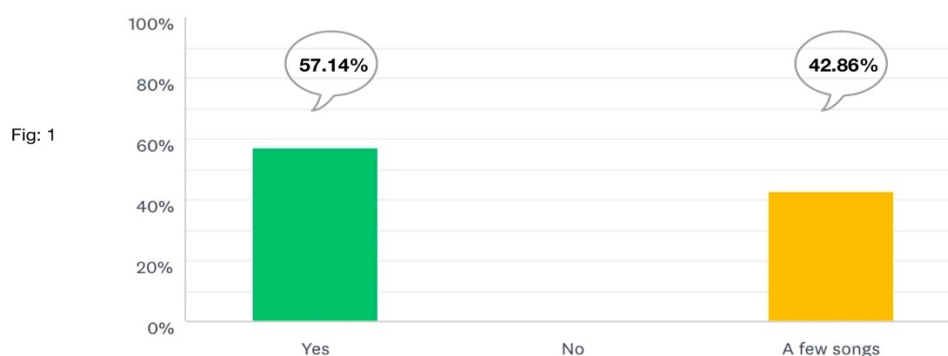
Using quantitative research as a technique to construct an empirical questionnaire, Survey Monkey (Gayle, 2019) is used here as a tool to collect the data. The target group for this particular survey was social media users on Facebook. This platform was chosen because a more extensive and diverse demographic could be reached at that particular time; there were also issues with time constraints. The information gathered from this research will be used to shed light on the viability of a 90's R&B recording project.

FINDINGS

The figures below have been rounded off to the nearest point. 28 respondents participated in this study, of which 60% were male and 40% female with age groups ranging from 22 to 81.

Do you listen to R&B?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0

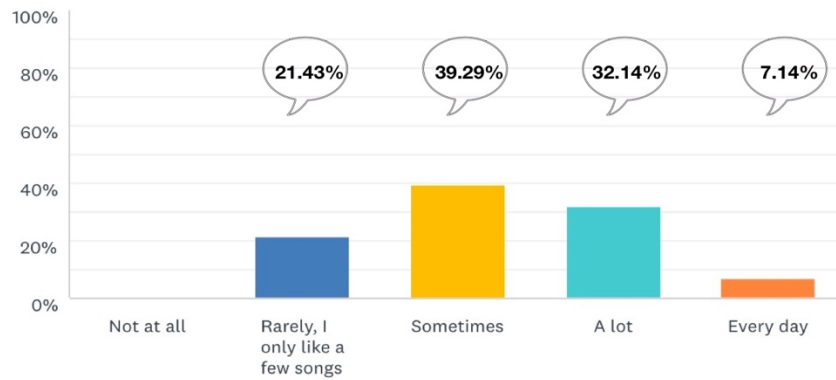


57% of the respondents said that they listen to R&B, whilst 43% listened to a few songs.

How much do you listen to R&B?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0

Fig: 2

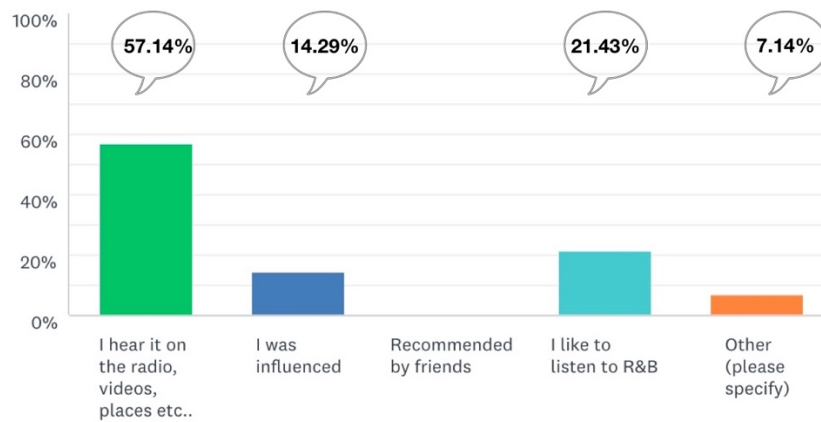


32% listened to R&B a lot of the time while 32% listened sometimes, 7% listened every day.

In what ways are you exposed to R&B?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0

Fig: 3

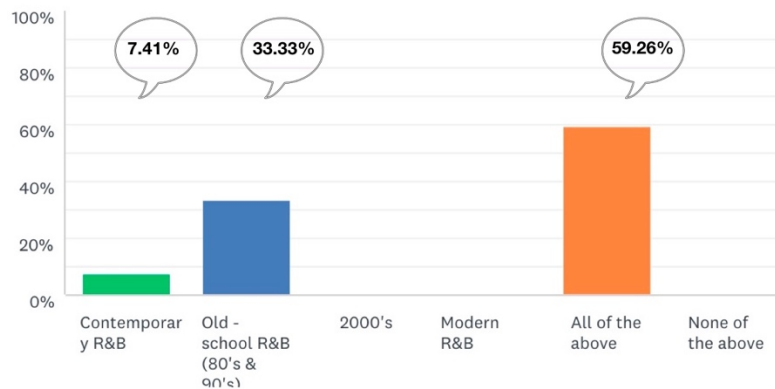


57% listened to R&B on the radio, vide, and other places.

Do you like:

Answered: 27 Skipped: 1

Fig: 4

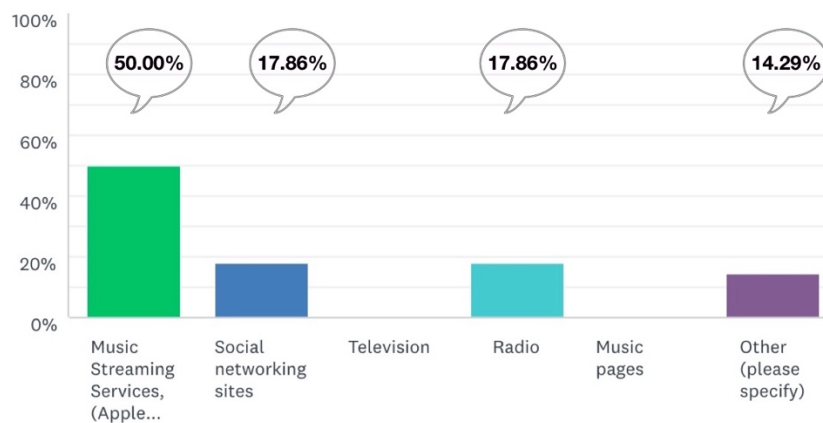


59% enjoyed all sub-genres of R&B, 33% specifically liked 80's and 90's R&B.

Where do you hear about the latest music?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0

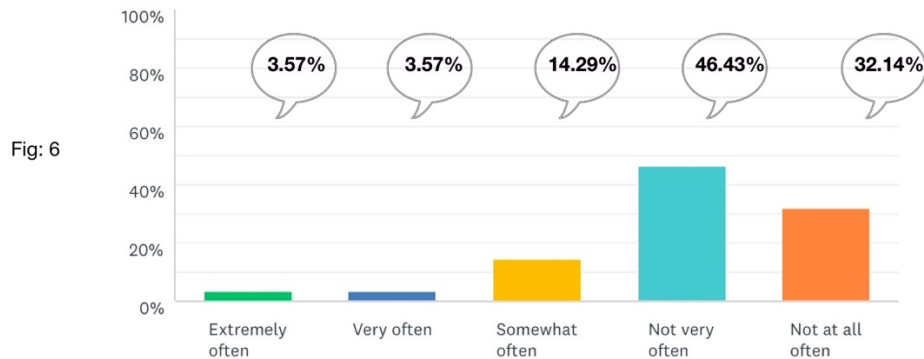
Fig: 5



50% of all participants listened to R&B music through on-demand streaming services, both social networking sites and radio are the second primary source of where the respondents listened to music.

How often do you purchase music after listening to it on music streaming websites?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0



46% do not buy music very often, 32% do not buy music at all.

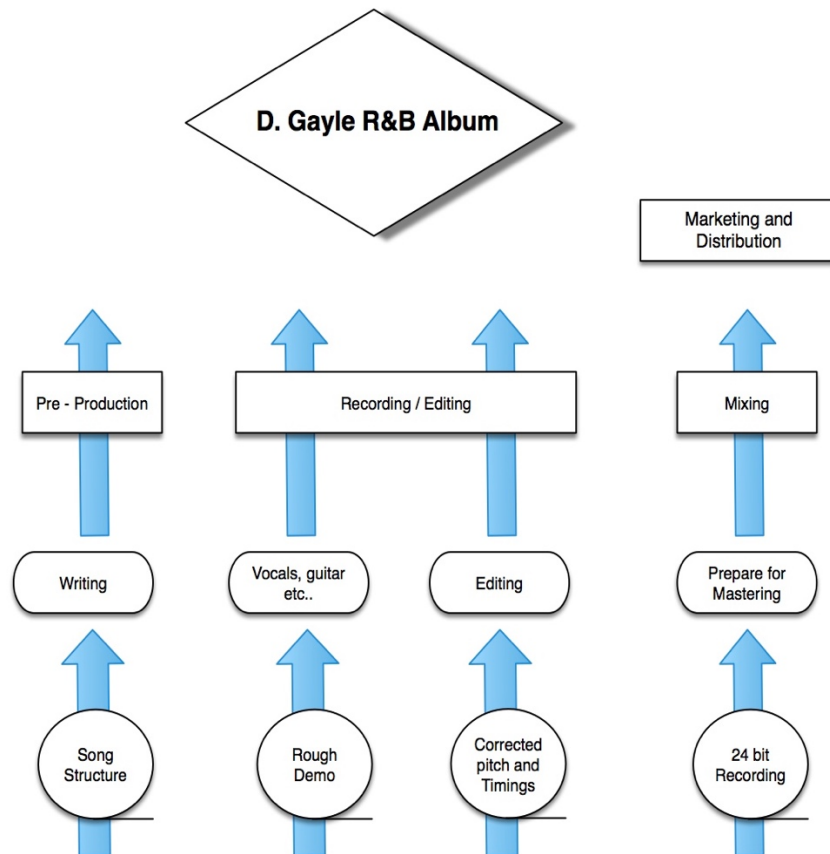
CONCLUSION

This study is a basic preliminary survey; these results have informed me that the best way to move forward is to:

- a) Go ahead with the recording of the album as I intended, and this is because many people from all backgrounds enjoy R&B.
- b) Employ a marketing strategy that culminates with the album being playlisted on Spotify and all the other major on-demand streaming services such as iTunes Music and Amazon.

PROJECT PLANS

Fig: 7



In order to produce a successful recording project, I have identified the time and space that is needed to make these singles. I have devised a plan of execution. Below is a plan of the time frames and cost:

The first phase of this project will begin with pre-production.

TIMEFRAME

Phase	Start Date	End Date	Duration
Pre - Production	3/6/2019	21/6/2019	3 weeks
Recording	23/6/2019	8/7/2019	2 weeks
Post - Production	8/7/2019	14/7/2019	1 week
Mixing	15/7/2019	19/7/2019	4 days

Pre – Production

During the pre-production phase I will start to compose 6 – 8 songs that when finished, will result in rough demos with solid beats, melody, and chord structures. This will be completed at home, keeping production costs down to a minimum. I will be liaising with the songwriter(s) as I go along to ensure that by the end of the process there are solid songs that I can work with. Also, throughout this time I will be sending out rough guides to the artist, so they have an idea as to where the project is going. I plan to work on at least two a day until the process is finished, the timeframe for this is approximately 3 weeks.

Recording

Throughout the recording phase I plan to use Sean Hargreaves' studio to record vocals and a guitar. I will be doing the vocal production as well as liaising with the guitar player. This process will involve fleshing out the rough demos and finally making them into songs. This activity should not take longer than two weeks as everyone will have had a demo to work and practice with. We will now have songs that are ready for post-production.

Post - Production

In the post-production phase of this project I will start to edit the audio and make corrections to pitch errors using sound design tools via software on the

vocals. I will also fix timing problems if applicable. I will start with the vocals first and then look at any instrumentation that has an issue that may need to be addressed. I will also be taking this time to prepare a rough mix in the box in order to be ready and prepared for the next phase. Post-production should take approximately 1 week.

Mixing

During the mixing stage I will be utilising Sean Hargreaves' studio again. I will be using his outboard equipment to ensure that I have that warm analogue sound that is critical to an authentic sounding 90's R&B composition. I plan to mix at least two songs a day that in the end, will be converted into 24bit stereo Wav files. This should not take longer than 4 days.

BUDGET (COSTS)

The costings below are based on musician union rates and studio hire costs at the Strongrooms Studios in London. Studio costings also includes an assistant.

Resources	Sessions: 4-hour slots	Duration	Cost per Hour	Total	
Recording Studio	8	4 hours each	£125.00	£4000.00	
Rap vocalist	1	4 hours	£191.40	£191.40	
Vocalist(s)	4	4 hours each	£191.40	£765.00	
Guitarist	1	4 hours	191.40	£191.40	
					£5147.00

The costs are only a basic estimate of the real studio costs and expenses that might be incurred as the project progresses.

RISKS & ISSUES

There could be a risk that one of the musicians that I am utilising for my project becomes ill or otherwise cannot make it to the arranged recording session. I will beforehand try to ensure I have people on standby so the project can continue to progress with little or no disruption.

Studio time may be hard to obtain whenever it is convenient for the musicians involved. I will try to ensure that I make other arrangements, just in case, to avoid disappointment.

The songwriter may not be able to finish the songs within the allotted time given. I will try to make sure I have at least four songs written and fully recorded. At least this way I will have an EP to present.

BENEFITS

The benefits of making an album like this is valuable, at this present time the genre of R&B is very popular and is infused in many popular records at this time, whether it is straight up 1990's retro style music or the sub-genre of neo soul elements there are many examples that fit into this category.

Vision and Goals

- To have a finished product by 21/7/2019
- To implement a website and social media accounts. 01/09/2019
- To Market and release the product by 01/12/2019

Marketing

Once the tracks are mixed and mastered, and the artwork for the album is designed. My vision is to find suitable methods to release music. In today's new music market, it makes perfect sense to release your first single yourself. Distribution companies like AWAL who are under the umbrella of Kobalt, offer a one-stop shop, offering a range of services from helping to put you submit songs on a playlist with all the major streaming platforms, to helping someone submit a video to YouTube. There are plenty of distribution companies out

there that are worthy of consideration, the incentive been that you do not have to give away any of your publishing rights, they are 100% yours. (Music, 2019)

Streaming Sites

The Music Consumer Insight Report of 2018 IFPI shows details that globally, consumers spend 17.8 hours a week listening to music, and 75% use their smartphones to do it. (IFPI, 2019) Spotify is by far one of the biggest and most popular streaming audio sites in 2019, and the way forward is to grow your fanbase and place all musical content onto a playlist.

Matt Pincus – one of the most successful entrepreneurs in the music industry gives us a little insight into future trends and states “The playlist business at the streaming services looks to me a little bit more like retail marketing. [Playlists] are displaying songs, rather than creating organic demand.” He then goes on to say that, “As time goes on, I think the audience around music will become more stratified and more organised around channels; you will start to see audience creation move back down the curve towards where music is being created”. (Ingham, 2018)

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