

Creative Music Production

Professional Project

Thesis

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Exploring the balance between artist  
and producer traits in the making of a  
collaborative EP

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## Abstract

The aim of this project is to record and produce a collaborative EP as a duo while exploring the various roles and skills involved in collaborative work by analysing the creation process of the five tracks.

The research will also address how the role of the producer has become more multifaceted over time and what it means to be an artist-producer in today's music industry. It will also investigate different creative techniques and discuss the different skills and roles involved from songwriting to producing. Ultimately, it aims to understand if a larger set of distinctions and roles beyond artist and producer is necessary and the creative reasoning behind this.

## Introduction

The aim of the practical project is to write, record and produce a collaborative EP; The research pertains to what different roles and skills are utilised during the creation of collaborative work. The focus of this is to find a more in depth way to discuss the spectrum that lies between what we consider to be what an Artist does and what a Producer does and how they appear to have merged in recent times. This will be achieved by analysing and comparing the creation process of the five tracks on the EP. The project is a collaboration with singer/songwriter and Creative Music Production student Ciara Adamson. The genre of the EP is mostly alternative pop with folk, jazz, electronic and R&B influences.

Other sides of the process include investigating the process of developing demos into a listen-ready mix of the final arrangement and discussing the different roles that the producer may fill depending on the collaboration or a specific song's needs. Exploring different creative techniques such as using "demo-based" composition and production to progress the tracks. Finding clear ways to discuss the skills/roles such as songwriting, performing, rearranging, producing and how they apply to the "Artist" and the "Producer" roles.

Can the skills and roles be solely labelled as producer or artist related or is there a need for a larger set of distinctions and roles?

## Literature Review

### *On the Historical and Future Role of the Music Producer by Tyler Harrison*

Harrison, Tyler. "On the Historical and Future Role of the Music Producer." *Journal of Music Production*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2021, pp. 45-59.

The producer figure is constantly changing and the roles and responsibilities taken on by producers nowadays are rather different than they once were.

This journal article researches many influential figures in the world of music production with a focus on what a producer's role would have been at the time. This resource gives insight into how the balance of creative contributions sways between the artist and producer and what artist-type skills the producer has begun to take on through the evolution of the role.

In his research, Harrison provides a historical recounting of the producer's role through the biographical analysis of famous music producers. From its origins in the 1950s as a technical position, in which producers served mainly as sound engineers, to its current status as a creative collaborator and artist in their own right.

It serves as a clarification of how the function of music producers has changed as well as how they contribute to the making of music by doing this. Specifically, he seeks to examine the ways in which music producers shape and influence a project, and how this can impact the creative input of the artists.

As it investigates the influence of music producers on the creative process and offers a perspective on how the meaning of producer has changed and what may fall under the role, this research resource is pertinent to the current project. To create a project that accurately represents the creative efforts of both sides, the author emphasises the significance of communication and collaboration between artists and producers. This is pertinent to the current project since it offers a framework for analysing the

collaborative process in its subtleties and helps steer towards producing a more effective result.

*Producing Music, Producing Myth? Creativity in Recording Studios*

Thompson, Paul A., and Lashua, Brett D. "Producing Music, Producing Myth? Creativity in Recording Studios." *Journal of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music*, vol. 6, no. 2, Dec. 2016, pp. 70–90. <https://doi.org/10.5429/2079-3871>.

In this research journal, Thompson and Lashua discuss how the subdivision of the traditional music production roles oversimplifies the nuances of the modern collaborative process. Through the analysis of two case studies, they argue that being a producer requires a combination of technical skills and creative input. This aspect of the article is particularly relevant to the current project.

Although the article has a broader scope of breaking down common beliefs and myths and how they influence the recording process, through their research, Thompson and Lashua also gain a deeper understanding of the fluidity of roles in music production. Thompson and Lashua's arguments are well-supported and persuasive, drawing on interviews with music producers to provide real-world examples of the complexity of the recording process. Furthermore, the creative process within a collaboration is analysed from a more general and almost sceptical perspective as a means to discuss the main research point. "...contemporary methods of collaboration within record production can see roles of the songwriter, engineer and producer overlap, sometimes within a single individual. In contemporary record production the artist can be viewed as embedded within the creative team, often with simultaneous duties such as cowriter, performer and producer." (Thompson and Lashua 71)

The authors argue that the lines between roles in music production are often unclear, and that successful production necessitates individuals who possess both technical and creative skills. They also emphasize the significance of collaboration between producers,

musicians, and industry professionals which is particularly relevant to the current project.

*The Role of the Music Producer: A Critical and Comparative Account of Two Eras – 1950's and 2000's'*

Rae, Andrew S. "The Role of the Music Producer: A Critical and Comparative Account of Two Eras – 1950's and 2000's' - Rae, A. (2017)." University of Glasgow (2017): 1–27. Print.

This paper discusses the definitions of producer through important eras in music, the 1950's and the 2000's. Rae selects different descriptions and accounts of what it means to be a producer and includes case studies on the rock and roll producer Sam Philips and the R&B producer Noah Shebib. Defining and discovering the different and possible iterations of the producer figure is an essential part of the current project.

The author is attempting to outline a template for what a producer is and what variations of the role there are.

He cites Richard Burgess and Peter O'Hare when defining the producer typologies. The former details the "Humble Servant" and the "Collaborator", while the latter gives five separate skill set models for producers: "Visionary, Musical, Technical, Commercial and Managerial". These nomenclatures are a very insightful way to start creating an outline of a producer's traits and methodology.

There are many astute perspectives present in the paper, there is a distinct categorisation of what a producer is and what tends to make them successful.

Understanding the most effective descriptors of these terms is beneficial to the current work. However, it is necessary to find ways to distinguish how the role of the producer changes from project to project.

### *Clairo and Jack Antonoff Break Down Clairo's New Song 'Amoeba'*

Rolling Stone. "Clairo and Jack Antonoff Break Down Clairo's New Song 'Amoeba.'" YouTube, 5 Aug. 2021, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWUxDjP8gUQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWUxDjP8gUQ).

This video breakdown/interview is a clear example of one of the types of collaboration that the current project strives for. A deep dive into creative exploration and song realisation through free experimentation to hone into a track's potential.

Cottrill and Antonoff explain the process of creating their hit *Amoeba* and the audience is able to get a glimpse into the raw creativity that brought it together.

The way they detail the writing and production process from a creative and collaborative standpoint is quite effective in displaying a type of collaboration where the producer is distinctly a producer while heavily participating in the writing and recording process. This is the main type of collaboration explored within the current project.

The video is rather informative and reveals a concise but detailed behind the scenes of the production of such a multi-layered song.

The video shows a good example of how an initial idea stemming from a few instruments can be developed into a fully realised arrangement.

It also is a fitting case study of a type of producer-artist relationship to be analysed and attributed to a certain kind of musical outcome. This provides insight and is a valid comparison to the execution of the project at hand.

### *FINNEAS Explains How He Builds Songs for Billie Eilish*

Pitchfork. "FINNEAS Explains How He Builds Songs for Billie Eilish | Critical Breakthroughs | Pitchfork." YouTube, 22 Apr. 2020, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=FsSkRjgJFvU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FsSkRjgJFvU).

In this interview, Grammy Award winning producer Finneas explains the process behind many Billie Eilish songs, songs of his own and other collaborations. The most noteworthy

aspect that is showcased in this video is the attention to detail when it comes to reflecting the emotional intent and direction of a song in the production.

This is a staple of how producing for artists should be in terms of fulfilling the song's vision without getting caught up in only striving for interesting sound design without any meaning to back it.

From the detailed explanations about production techniques and precise references that he readily recalls, it is clear that there is a very high standard of music production to be expected from anything he produces regardless of the artist he is collaborating with. He also underlines the importance of shaping demos and how crucial it is not to overproduce or overthink certain decisions.

A decisive takeaway from this video is the attention to detail and the intent required to masterfully execute the production of a song. Understanding the emotions behind the track and being able to mirror and aid these through sound design is a clear goal for all kinds of collaborations and certainly applies to the scope of the current project.

### *Hailaker - Holding*

Hailaker. *Holding*. BDi Music, 2020.

Although they are essentially a duo, Hailaker describe themselves as “less of an artist or band than a fluid, open-ended project”, a rather captivating set of collaborators intersecting to create a very refined sound.

In both of their albums, the close collaboration between the two main members Lowswimmer (Ed Tullet) and Jemima Coulter is apparent through tightly knitted songwriting and production. This is an interesting type of collaboration and a point of reference for both the approach and the intended sound aesthetic for the current project.

Finding a way to cohesively collaborate as a duo in both writing and production aspects is another side of exploration that is rather pertinent to the project.

## Dijon - Absolutely

Dijon. *Absolutely*. Dark Green, 2021.

As much as Dijon may seem like a solo artist at first glance, his latest effort “Absolutely” is the product of a band focused around Dijon himself and Michael Gordon, better known as *mk.gee*, his solo moniker. Their close collaboration on most tracks from this album has brought together a very intentionally raw-sounding, emotion-driven LP. Their collaboration is more in service of Dijon’s writing, with Gordon as the producer other than on almost all electric guitar parts and other instrumentation. Either way, the sound combination is evident from prior knowledge of their respective solo projects and their collaboration has been met widely with praise and critical acclaim.

The interesting dynamic of the sound design blend between them as artists on one side and their distinct roles as artist and producer on the other is a strong point of inspiration for the current project. The implications from the production side of things make it a rather useful source to reflect on the contextualisation of artist/producer crossover and boundaries.

## Remi Wolf - Juno

Remi Wolf. *Juno*. Island Records, 2021.

Remi Wolf has grown vastly in popularity since the release of her first two EPs, culminating in her debut LP *Juno* which has seen her on a headline US and EU tour. What is not as obvious to fans is that all the music she has released so far is almost entirely co-written and produced by her long time collaborator Jared Solomon (Solomonophonic) who is responsible for curating their signature Electro-Funk-Pop sound.

This type of collaboration, where most of the music and sound design is left to the producer while the artist can concentrate on creative direction and the character of the music is quite unique. For the project, it is a dynamic that is present in songs in the current EP, so this serves as a crucial reference if not in terms of sound, in its artist-producer dynamic.

## Methodology

As mentioned in the introduction, the aim was to write and produce an EP in the alternative pop genre, mixed with other genres of personal influence stemming from folk to jazz.

The music is centred around vocals, acoustic and electric guitars, sampled drums, bass guitar, synths.

Writing and demo development took place in home setups and once the final arrangements had been determined and pre-production had been completed four out of five songs were tracked almost entirely in Sun Studios. Online collaboration and project discussion also took place, as well as the use of a series of online tools for project management.

The aim of the practical project is not necessarily focused on the technical aspects of the process, so engineering, mixing and mastering although they are skills that were still implemented to produce a higher quality result. The main focus is the creative and collaborative elements brought to light by making the EP. The project and the research tackle the creative hurdles, tactics and dynamics that emerge from this sort of collaboration.

These were the main steps and organisation in approaching the practical project:

- Writing sessions (writing basic music and lyric ideas)
- Demo developing
- Song rearrangement and restructuring (where necessary)
- Preproduction for studio sessions
- Studio Recording
- Production (Editing and Final touches)
- Post-Production (Client Listen-Ready Mix)

All five tracks were written and recorded as demos using DAWs Ableton and Logic Pro X. They were then taken through a phase of progression and development to finalise the structure, arrangement, instrumentation, sound aesthetic and lyrical content of the songs.

The EP tracklist consists of:

1. Open Up
2. Gone
3. Aywa
4. Addiction
5. Dawn

The collaborative process to complete these tracks involved a constant back-and-forth of ideas between what were primarily the roles attributed during the majority of the collaboration, which saw Adamson mainly as the artist but with occasional production input. Each collaborator brought their own unique strengths to the table. In terms of artistic input, Adamson brought her songwriting skills, melodic sensibilities, production knowledge and direction to the collaboration. She had a clear vision for what the songs should express, having written the majority of the songs and lyrics basing them on personal topics and experiences.

On the other hand, as more of a producer figure in the collaboration, the main goal was primarily that of directing the pre-production and song development to progress the tracks to a more complete stage and directing the studio recording sessions in search of suitable recording techniques to shape the sound aesthetic and musical content of the tracks also through part writing and performance (mostly electric guitar, acoustic piano and bass guitar). Another main focus was the sound design elements such as effects processing, synthesisers and audio manipulation techniques. This included selecting the appropriate use and introduction of samples and the use of effects to enhance the sonic characteristics of the music.

Overall, the tracks were a dynamic collaboration in which most things were subject to possible changes and adjustments. Tracks “Open Up” and “Addiction” were derivatives of some of Adamson’s original demos. They were then developed further collaboratively through processes of lyric rewriting, adding sections where needed and rearrangement. Both these tracks, in their original demos, were characterised by acoustic guitar, minimal electronic percussion (mainly 4-on-the-floor kick and drum-machine-like snares), prominent main vocals, constructed backing vocals and sparse use of synthesisers.

The EP's first track “Open Up” was the most developed of the original demos and other than changing the key of the track to better suit comfortable lead vocals, there were few changes or additions to the song.

“Addiction”, also stemming from a somewhat developed demo, was subject to many changes and transformations both through pre-production decisions and creative decisions made during the recording sessions in the studio that were dedicated to the track. It once also featured the 4-on-the-floor electronic kick and some electronic percussion and synths, while it has developed into a more natural live-captured style performance, improvisation-based parts and acoustic sounding recording.

Tracks “Gone” and “Aywa” were entirely written collaboratively from scratch and were co-written and co-produced.

“Aywa” serves as an interlude type of track as it has a shorter run time and it does not feature any lyrics, although it does still primarily feature vocals.

“Gone” is the most elaborately layered out of the five and is a distinct shift in the sound compared to the others. It features elements of distortion and heavy effects processing that the other songs make less use of. It also sees the use of loops in different instruments, more obviously the drums and guitars, whereas the other tracks aim towards a more performed feel.

The final track “Dawn” is the only previously written track that derives from a demo that Adamson was not involved in writing. As in its original demo, it featured male vocals, the

key was changed and some instrumental parts and chord voicings had to be modified to fit this change. It is also the only track that features live tracked drums.

The practical project was completed with the aid of several apps, websites and services which are worth mentioning due to their effectiveness within a collaborative setting. The tools in question are Discord, Google Calendar, Google Keep, Google Drive and SoundCloud.

Discord was used to set up a server for voice calls, video calls, screen sharing and using text channels to share links and annotate useful information mentioned during the calls. Discord was key to maintaining momentum and progressing through such an extensive project even when being in the same room was not possible.

All the apps in the Google Suite were valuable tools due to the ease of sharing and real-time editing. File sharing through Drive was essential in many cases when exchanging large audio and project files. The organisational aid provided by Keep and Calendar was more than adequate for project management, time management and note-taking. SoundCloud was availed of through the use of private links for each song of the EP and a playlist link that featured all five tracks. The most useful feature of this service was the file replacement feature available to premium users, meaning the file of an upload can be replaced without changing the links associated with them. This meant there was always a point of access from any device with an internet connection that made the current state of each track accessible and instantly reproducible. The feature was indispensable for auditing mixes on various playback devices, which is a necessary technique when mixing.

## Analysis

The project intent was successful in producing a five track EP derived from different demos and varying original sources. Although the content derived is not extensive enough to be able to make any general assumptions or conclusions as per the roles and interactions between collaborators, it serves as a useful case study or key incidents surrounding the key topics.

A limitation of this case is that it was the first body of work completed by the collaborators and hence saw a learning curve when considering collaboration communication and creative interaction. While this aspect is useful for the topic of research, the time restrictions of the project made it so that a larger proportion than ideal was likely spent on solidifying collaborative workflow and communication rather than exploring the different creative and technical balances to a deeper level when working on the music.

In fact, on conception of the practical project, a longer form album-length project was originally the intended goal. When finding progressing through the collaboration it became apparent that a necessary shift in the scope of the project was due. The selection process and continued work resulted in the five tracks at hand, although there were other possible tracks that were discarded within the process and progression of the project. This in itself was an insightful aspect of the creative decisions taken within the collaboration dynamic and was rather fruitful in honing in on the desired sound aesthetic of the final tracks and further consolidated the collective intent for the music.

In terms of the skills and roles that were the most deductible in the natural progression of the project, the notable ones include the following areas.

**Songwriting** is the core of any musical collaboration and has roots in the very essence of each creative, taken individually or considered within the group. This includes both music (often a simple chord progression as song foundation) and lyrics. It is apparent, at least through the collaboration in question, that this role consists of laying the skeleton

of the track to be worked on in collaboration. This is more likely to be the initial idea for a song, sometimes only consisting of a verse and a chorus, sometimes even only a single section. It is rarer that this would be a close-to-finished composition as most songs tend to go through various stages of transformation and reconsideration after the initial songwriting phase.

Although many would consider **writing lyrics** to fall under the songwriting set of skills. The current project helped make a distinction regarding this aspect. It is arguable that songwriting is the initial burst of inspiration-based creativity, in which music and lyrics come together and often quite naturally to the songwriter. On the other hand lyric writing can be a much more intent-driven and intellectual practice as it requires taking a step back from what might have come naturally when songwriting. It requires an understanding of the meaning of the song at hand and of what the desired intent is for its final stage in terms of its lyrical meaning. So in this phase, lyrics are less improvised and more dissected with a larger perspective in mind.

**Arrangement** and musical **part-writing** are other essential skills in the making of a song, even more so if the genre in question is meant to have catchy hooks and memorable rhythmic and melodic elements. Given the Pop foundation of the EP, the importance of this aspect is a crucial and fundamental side of the process. Taking the time to rewrite and contextualise musical lines and parts is essential for the presence of memorable hooks in a track and thus the effectiveness of the music produced. Regardless of how prominent these parts are in the final mix, they are the basis of all the genres of influence of the EP at hand.

**Music performance** and studio tracking is arguably the most important task when in the space of recorded music as the skill, execution and conviction of the performed parts are what will represent any creative work that has been brought forward to that point. Regardless of the time spent on being creative, writing and arrangement, the recorded performance is the only representative form of the work that has been put into a body of work. This also brings forwards several issues in the process such as limited time and possible unpredictable factors (such as technical and health issues). For most music

recording, especially in a recording studio setting, there is a very limited amount of time that is available to the artists and all the tracking needs to happen within that time. Any additional tracking required will have to happen outside of the studio, greatly reducing the quality of the recorded material.

**Technical skills and engineering**, are inseparable from what is required of the modern musician. For the execution of the project, it was necessary to have the technical knowledge required to lead a productive and organised studio session. In this specific case studio engineering knowledge of the 40 channel SSL 4000 G Series in Sun Studios was essential for the completion of the EP. Working with an engineer or producer would have slowed down the process as they would have had to be informed about the project and have attended pre-production meetings. This category of skills also applies to the skills needed to successfully produce home recordings of acceptable quality through gear such as audio interfaces, microphones and recording techniques to minimise audio spill and to improve recording quality.

**Digital Audio Workstation** (or DAWs) skills are non-equivocally required to produce any form of music of any complexity. Knowledge of Pro Tools (the industry standard used in most commercial recording studios) is mandatory for any results without hiring other audio professionals as there are many editing, mixing and software related techniques needed to run a studio session and to edit what was recorded during one. The EP was tracked within Pro Tools and after initial editing and comping, it was exported and produced in Ableton Live Suite for all effect processing, further editing, mixing and mastering. These are the kind of skills that being a music producer currently requires for collaboration and for general professional practice, thus confirming the research pertaining to all the changes observed in the role of the music producer through the years.

Knowledge of DAWs can be further subdivided into other roles of varying creative and technical demand such as editing, comping, warping, quantisation, syncing, sound design, effects processing, mixing and mastering.

The current project is a general overview of the roles that emerged as separate tasks even within a collaboration of this sort. However, it is important to note that these roles were not strictly defined or divided during the collaboration. As both collaborators shared most of these skills individually so the role attribution was fluid during the collaboration and many of the tasks were discussed and completed collectively often with shared intent or sometimes tackled in a more democratic way if any differences in direction were present.

For all tracks, the songwriting aspects like lyric writing, music composition and arrangement suggestions were generally discussed and modified among collaborators and there were also instances where Adamson would have more input in terms of production decisions depending on the song in question.

The song "Addiction" serves as the clearest example of how this kind of collaboration worked in practice and shaped the songs to new versions and sounds. Originally written by Adamson on acoustic guitar with minimal electronic percussion parts; It was collectively decided which sections needed expanding upon (such as adding additional verses) before recording vocals for both lead & backing parts. Specifically to this track, verse two was not present in the demo and was subsequently written collaboratively and the instrumental section after verse two was also a collective decision which was not present in the original song structure.

## Discussion

Most musical collaborations tend to stem from clearly defined roles. Usually when in a musical ensemble or band, the roles are well distinguished and immediately apparent. For example, depending on the instruments played by each member the options are narrowed down as to who will perform what. That is usually a more secure assumption when talking about music performance, but when we consider the dynamic of music writing and creativity it is less clear or initially intuitive to analyse how roles and skill subdivision may fall. Some famous examples make it seem easy for these creative positions to find a natural balance and for them to be easily discernable; such as knowing that The Beatles were driven by the Lennon-McCartney duo in most of the writing and also most of the musical direction. This can often be a much more complex subdivision, especially considering that nowadays it is much rarer for artists and writers to be exclusively performers as there is most likely some sort of production and engineering skills that they may have learnt due to technological availability or simply to stay competitive in the current music scene. In this day and age, it is unavoidably essential to be able to record and produce one's own music without paying for engineers, producers and studio time before being able to have releasable music. Even being able to self-produce and release demo-quality tracks is a crucial skill to have for a chance of success in the modern music industry.

Through analysing all these skills and roles that seem to be at the essence of how music is created in the present day, it is obvious that terms like Artist, Producer, Engineer, Writer, and Composer are far from what they used to be and the separation between them and the need for a different individual to fill each of them appears to be something of the past. It seems much more pertinent that the music professional is to be considered an all-encompassing figure as the majority of those in the music industry have honed most if not all of these roles and their expertise ranges past what was expected of an industry professional even a few decades ago. If we consider for example

George Martin as a historic example (Harrison 12-15) it is apparent that since the earliest stages of record production in popular music, many things have changed and keep changing continuously. At the beginning of his career as a record producer, Martin was mostly an engineer and is credited with pioneering various multitrack and overdubbing techniques, but he soon outgrew this role as fast as he saw The Beatles outgrow the boundaries of what music at the time was. He started implementing other, progressively more musical skills such as arrangement, scoring and performing. He also let the creativity past the musical side of production and started experimenting with 4-track recorders and overdubbing. All of these advanced what was expected or hailed from a good music producer and have kept evolving in this trajectory to a point where now music producers are unequivocally hands-on and involved in many different creative and technical aspects of music recording.

The current project explores how these necessary technical and creative skills naturally land and what happens behind the scenes of natural creative collaboration.

One important aspect that emerged from the project is how fluid the roles are and how they can change during the creative process regardless of whether the creatives realise the complexity of their inputs and interactions. The importance of communication in a successful music collaboration is also one of the most concrete findings to emerge from the process. The importance of being open to different ideas and perspectives is crucial and the project shows how that leads towards an outcome that equally represents all members of the collaboration, but one which everyone involved can confidently stand by. In fact, the cohesiveness of the music regardless of the influences and preferences of the collaborators shows that when the correct creative communication is put in place contrast in taste or opinion can be substituted with a merging of ideas and sounds. The result is a body of work that the individual collaborators would most likely not have reached by only following their personal creative intuition.

Another significant point is how technical skills have become an integral part of music production. In today's digital age, it is essential to have knowledge and understanding of recording equipment and DAWs if the goal is to produce high-quality music without relying on others. Although the EP was recorded in a recording studio, it is necessary to stress how the ability to record demos and independently post-produce at home has made it possible to reach a professional sounding standard even when doing the majority of the work from a home setup. This applies to the current project but it can also apply to any modern musician who may only need to pay for a brief studio session to get their songs to a professional standard as they would have been able to record demos and do pre-production from home with all the aforementioned skills that in the past would have been the role of a hired studio engineer. In fact, the advent of new technology is an essential explanation as to how the evolution of music industry professionals to this extent has been possible as it allows producers to experiment with sounds and audio effects that once were beyond what was previously possible or affordable.

Furthermore, while some may claim that technology has taken away from creativity in the music industry, this project demonstrates how technology can enhance creativity by providing limitless possibilities for high-quality music production and sound design.

Technology has also enhanced the way we interact with collaborators, there are endless apps, websites, devices and tools that boost or even revolutionise the ways we conceive collaborating with other creatives. As mentioned in the methodology, the use of various services and apps was crucial to collaborating on this EP. Discord was used the most for the project out of these apps, enabling voice and video calls with screen sharing with stereo audio. Although, as with any other similar communications platform, the latency of the calls does not allow for playing music with a collaborator in real time. It is still a vital tool for working in DAWs through screen sharing, perfect for editing, comping and previewing mixes when it is not possible to be in the same room. To a more practical

effect, it is a perfect conferencing tool to discuss progress, production plans and pre-production.

Another essential tool for collaboration is shared note-taking platforms such as Google Keep, which was used throughout the entire project to organise all the progress, store key information needed in or from studio sessions, plan ahead and keep track of the ongoing project for later reflection.

Also part of the Google suite is the effective Google calendar, with which one can create shared calendars for reminders, events and deadlines. These can be tracked and updated by multiple collaborators. Other Google apps are also essential tools to have at one's disposal especially considering that it is possible to collaborate in real time on Google Drive, Docs, Sheets and Slides.

One of the main tools used to ease collaboration in the project was the use of SoundCloud private uploads. The ease of use and access of SoundCloud as a means of sharing demos, bounces and mixes is unrivalled as it can be easily accessed from any device even without logging in; all that is necessary is the private link. This makes cross comparing high-quality mixes on different playback devices much more uncomplicated than any other service. Cross-comparing mixes is a highly valuable technique especially when mixing Pop songs as they tend to be played on a much larger variety of devices with many different kinds of speakers and quality of reproduction.

SoundCloud also does not apply compression or limiting to uploaded files like other platforms like YouTube, making it an accurate reference for the online streaming of a track. Another feature that is well suited to collaborative projects is the "replace file" feature, in which a user can simply replace the audio of an upload instead of requiring a new and separate upload, leaving all shared links intact while updating the audio to its current state of progression.

All these resources and their effective use within the current project show how technology can augment collaboration and lighten the organisational load from the collaborators to leave more space for creativity. Hence, technology should be seen as enhancing rather than detracting from creativity potentialities within collaborations.

Finally, this project highlights the importance of adaptability and fluidity between roles in modern music production where technical skills are just as important as creative ones. It also shows the value of embracing new technologies that facilitate effective creative output, expand communication and help achieve the desired results from a collaboration.

## Conclusion

Overall, the practical project was successfully executed despite the shorter than ideal time to complete a project of this calibre and the insights and conclusions regarding music collaboration are satisfactory. The exploration of a higher resolution of roles other than the classic labels of “Artist” and “Producer”, and how they can appear and be executed within a collaborative setting, has been an informative process. Although rather case-specific, there is value in reflecting on an extended project such as this one and explicitly analysing the steps of a natural and creative process such as this one is an enlightening process from a creative and academic standpoint.

In conclusion, the project emphasises the importance of having a diverse set of skills in music production and how they can be utilised to enhance creativity and productivity regardless if one tends more towards the artist or the producer type. It also emphasises the value of effective communication and creative teamwork between collaborators to ensure that the creative process is brought forward productively to both parties' satisfaction with the result.

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