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Independent Study & Mentorship

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Starting From Scratch: Composing

Research Assessment #3

Date: September 22, 2017

Subject: Music Composition and Theory

Works Cited:

Williamson, Richard. "Demystifying composition: {success with Standard 4}: give students ideas to build

on, and soon they'll be writing original works." *Teaching Music*, Dec. 2007, p. 26+.

Research in

Context

go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?p=MSIC&sw=w&u=j043905010&v=2.1&id=GALE%7

A17220965&it=r&asid=b7cf5a25e2b27d29349127be7c0e2872. Accessed 22 Sept. 2017.

After assessing music production and the tools that are available today to create the best quality music, it was time to begin research on the second component of the Independent Study and Mentorship topic: music composition. Music composition serves as the starting point to all musical creations. Composition is a key skill to gain in order to successfully write and produce songs, but it is not a simple feat to tackle. Music composition delves deep into music theory and

the fundamentals of music arrangement that altogether create a coherent piece that is (or should be) pleasant to the ears. As a beginner in the art of music composition, it may be difficult to grasp certain concepts or finding where to begin on this compositional journey could pose as a challenge and bring frustration. However, there are certain ways to begin exploring one's artistic capabilities - and it may not start with your own idea.

According to Juanita Navarro's music theory composition class, she often finds her own students being limited in their compositional assignments due to the reason that they are still new to the subject, often needing some guidance. As a way to jumpstart their creativity, Navarro cited how providing musical ideas to begin with greatly enhances the up and coming producers' abilities to arrange and manipulate music into their own creativity. From previous knowledge, this process was connected to the music industry in which artists are often using sample tunes and jingles and introducing them into a pop musical piece in a completely different manner than how it was originally. Sampling allows to take one repeating tune and using it various ways that expresses the artist's own style. Therefore, providing musical ideas, in turn, increased the productivity and skill of the music theory students who are just beginning. In many ways, this will be applied to my own ISM original work and product where samples could be used as a base for my own musical creations before slowly transitioning into creating completely original music without the use of samples. The role of a composer is someone who "puts musical ideas together" (Williamson), and practice with sampling will be effective in the development of tuning and the creation of new musical ideas in the long run.

Students begin to practice creating music through the base of a sample or music idea. Once the outline of the song is done, the student can further manipulate and create melodies of

their own. Adding additional instrumentation takes a musical piece to another level of musical expression. Music is a way of communicating whether this communication takes place in the lyrics or in the instruments that tune into the music. In the following article, Navarro often takes the placement of different musical instruments to serve a specific purpose. Never should “I like it” (Williamson) be the answer to an musical artistic choice. The placement of instruments and different sound bites that serve a specific purpose is often seen in today’s current music. A high bass, for example, would bring an aura of coolness that hip hop culture exudes. Or an arrangement of strings can convey an emotional message. In any situation, there should be a reason why one would choose to make such composition decisions. To apply this to my own music, if there are messages that I am wanting to imbue with the audience, details should be accounted to the arrangement of sounds that are added to piece.

Beginning my own compositional journey, I am often overwhelmed on where to begin. To start out your own compositions and develop one’s own musical identity, sometimes practicing with unoriginal musical ideas may serve as a gateway to elevated musical thinking and creation. As shown by Navarro’s music theory class, constant feedback and practice opens the doors to finding one’s own likings and compositional ineptness. In this sense, constant feedback with a mentor and practice will allow me to develop my own musical sound and compositions.