

Mazmu Islam

Mr. Speice

Independent Study & Mentorship

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### Interview Assessment #1

Name of Professional: Eddie Healy

Profession: Guitarist and Music Theory Professor

Business/Company Name: University of Texas at Dallas

Date of Interview: September 23, 2017

To begin this ISM journey, I had the great pleasure to interview Mr. Healy to jumpstart my studies into the composition aspect of my topic. Mr. Healy's skills had greatly interested me because not only does he specialize in music theory, but he also plays the guitar very well. Similarly, I play the guitar, and from this connection, we stemmed into a conversation about the dedication it takes to be a musician professionally and some of the inner workings of music theory and creating songs.

Mr. Healy found his love for music early on with his interest in the hard rock genre of music. From there, he picked up the guitar and taught himself how to play it, gaining note recognition skills and an intuitive sense to composition. When we began our conversation, I was quick to get my questions out, however, Mr. Healy asked *me* a few questions of his own to my surprise. We spoke about studying music and my own aspirations and reasons why for not pursuing music in college. This conversation really allowed me to reflect on myself and learn a little bit of why I chose this topic for ISM. My own low level of confidence has prevented me in

pursuing anything further in the future regarding music is something I had realized while conversing with Mr. Healy. Knowing this, I hope to grow as a person with confidence while studying this topic.

After conversing about some of his past students and their musical journeys, we went on to discuss composing music, which went in depth into the music theory aspect of songwriting. I made sure to let Mr. Healy know that I have very little knowledge in music theory. I have great gratitude towards Mr. Healy for explaining music theory mechanics in such a way that I would understand, often relating things to my background knowledge from choir and instrument playing. When we went into how a melody in a song is made, I always thought there was set technique musicians used to create the central sounds to a song. However, Mr. Healy demonstrated there is an infinite array of combinations of notes that could be used in a song. A song could have a set of notes that repeat every now and then called a “motif”, but that same motif could be inverted or use a chord with the same notes, but in different order. During our interview, we went through a plethora of strategies of creating melodies and what you can do with the 7 notes once you have a set key. Something that I found humorous, but very helpful was that if you are sitting with no idea about the melody, just take an empty staff paper and draw a random line. Then, begin filling that line with notes and test it out!

Music is all a trial and error process. One chord can sound good with another while another chord completely clashes with the harmony. There are infinite possibilities with what I can do with my music, and at first that felt overwhelming, but now it excites me very much. We spoke briefly about lyric writing as well as I believe this will be a challenge for me when writing a song in the future. Mr. Healy advised me to find a message I am trying to say and how would I

express that. A common theme that was in our interview is what the musician wants to express. I believe a song with good expression of the musician's idea serves as meaningful music - something I want to be able to make.

As our interview was coming to an end, Mr. Healy gave me a few tips on how to get started with learning music theory. It will be interesting to see how I use the resources that I have at my own school to apply to my ISM journey. I also had my first real experience with networking. Mr. Healy mentioned how it is very important for a musician to make connections wherever they go, so I asked if Mr. Healy knew anyone great with music production. Aside from giving me contact information of a friend of his that is producing his own album, he also recommended me to speak to the arts and technology departments at colleges and universities to aid me in my studies about the production side of music. I am looking forward to the connections I can make and the resources I will be able to use. I could not have asked for a better interview than I had with Mr. Healy!