

**Understanding Artist Development:
How Do Producers Support the Development of Artists through the Production
Process?**

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Abstract

This study seeks to identify how an artist develops through the production process using practice-led and ethnographic methods. I chose to explore artist development as it combines elements of both music and education, my two areas of study and professional experience. Furthermore, there is limited academic literature on artist development and the various aspects that contribute to it through the production process. As such, my research in the history and practice of artist development provides a broad platform for further study in this area. I based this study upon my creation of two separate EP recordings featuring two different artists who vary in age, ensemble size, and levels of recording experience. By situating myself in the project as a record producer, I was able to identify key elements in the emergent themes that relate to artists' development through the production process. The results of a thematic analysis suggested four key themes: expectation, collaboration, relationship, and experience. The skills, knowledge, and experimentation that were apparent in the studio were categorised according to these themes, which detail how each artist developed through the production process. These results were contrasted with the artists' experience of the production process, outlining broad notions of development through skills, knowledge, collaboration, and experimentation in the studio. These broad conclusions provide a basis for further study, possibly involving an increased sample size and use of semi-structured interviews alongside questionnaires in order to capture more comprehensive data on artist development.

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Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Signed: QUT Verified Signature

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Introduction

The past three decades have seen a fundamental shift in how record label-sponsored artist development shapes the careers of contemporary musicians. Following the commercial success of superstar artists in the 1980s, major labels restructured their business models, forming intercompany development programs with independent labels (Anderton, Dubber, & James, 2012, p. 38; LeBlanc, 2005, p. 13; Newman, 2004, p. 60). This change in infrastructure affected the role of record company artists and repertoire (A&R) representatives: they became talent scouts who signed artists and managed their career development, while producers became the primary catalysts for artistic development through the production process (Craig, 1999, p. 11; 'Is Canadian A&R worth anything?', 2002; McCullaugh, 1980, p. 10). This distinction between A&R representatives and producers is important for this study, as modern music producers now frequently undertake tasks traditionally associated with A&R representatives.

I further outline the modern music producer's various styles, roles, and functions in the literature review. I define different categories of producers, using the term 'role' to refer to the practical tasks of record production, and 'style' to describe the interpersonal creative aspects of the production process. The literature review details interpersonal producer–artist relationships, referring to well-known artists in order to investigate their development in the studio. I also draw on examples from producers who have experienced longstanding creative relationships with a particular artist, positioning such collaborations as forms of artist development achieved through the production process. These models of creative collaboration are important for understanding how young artists might also develop through the production process, and many of the issues identified in the literature review reveal a blueprint for production processes that foreground effective artist development.

Effective artist development provides young artists with foundational skills, in turn helping them establish a sustainable career. The benefit of a production team, including a music producer and an A&R representative, is that each member can offer support and expertise in a specific industry area. During the production process, the producer guides the artist through

decisions that aim to support the fulfilment of the artistic vision enacted through the songwriting process and the production of a record. This form of producer-led guidance is often subtle, involving suggestions about instrumentation or performance of a particular section. I discuss examples of producer guidance in the literature review; persons of note include George Martin, Jerry Wexler, Arif Mardin, and Quincy Jones. Experienced industry professionals understand the importance of a production team, while young local artists with little studio experience can question the relevance of these roles. In my search to define this thesis topic, I discussed preconceived notions around artist development, experience with A&R representatives, and the role of a music producer with young local artists. The conversations I had with young local artists led me conclude that there is uncertainty surrounding the importance of producers, A&R representatives and the concept of a production team. As change occurs swiftly and frequently in the music industry, the function of A&R representatives and producers is often unclear to these artists. They expressed similar feelings when asked about artist development and a producer's function or role, asking questions such as 'What really is artist development?', 'Aren't A&R just talent scouts?', and 'What do producers really do?'. This led to my practice-led research on artist development, which focuses on the producer–artist relationship in order to clarify the influence producers have throughout that development. To achieve this, I employed practice-led research methods.

The creative work presented here consists of two EP recordings by separate artists of differing experience levels and stages of artistic development. The first is a young singer–songwriter with no experience as a recording artist. The second is a band called Street Pieces—all of its members have completed a bachelor of music at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and have extensive experience as recording artists. I situated myself within each creative work as a producer, providing an auto-ethnographic perspective of artist development through the production process. Along with my own critical reflections, I gathered qualitative data via a series of questionnaires. These were completed by all participants across the three stages of the creative process: pre-production, during production, and post production. The questionnaires yielded reflective data around the themes of expectation, experience, communication, and relationship throughout the creative work. In addition, the artists and I kept reflective journals through the creative process, comprehensively documenting both sides of the producer–artist relationship. Finally, semi-

structured interviews were conducted by a fellow research student who had limited involvement in the creative process; this material supported the reflective writing and questionnaires. The interviews investigated the artists' expectations, experiences, communication, and relationship throughout the production process. Through data analysis collected by practice-led and ethnographic methods such as questionnaires, journals, and semi-structured interviews, four key themes emerged that affect artists' development throughout the production process: expectation, experience, communication, and relationship. The contrast between what inexperienced and experienced musicians had to say about these themes is particularly revealing, and variations in the development stages of the two artists reflect some of the issues identified in the literature review.

Positioning myself in the creative work allowed me to rely on my own experience as a producer, artist, and teacher. Throughout my undergraduate degree and masters coursework, I produced recorded works for many of my peers, including artists Dear Anonymous, Angharad Drake, Mad Warrior Violent Leader, Aimee Cavanagh (Avabree), and many more. In my capacity as a singer, songwriter, and guitarist, I have also been recorded as an artist by many of my peers. This experience has given me an understanding of the many common expectations artists might have of producers. In addition to this studio experience, I have worked as a high school teacher and music tutor for over five years. During this time, I have developed skills that I have also applied to my music production practice—for example, the ability to create a positive, encouraging, and supportive environment for creative activities. Such an environment helps ensure the best performance possible in both the studio and the classroom. Drawing on my experience as a producer, artist, and teacher, I was able to position myself within the research for this thesis to effectively develop both artists through the production process.

Music production is increasingly becoming the object of scholarly attention. Academic journals such as *The Art of Record Production* and the *Journal of Music, Technology & Education* have grown in popularity since their first issues were released in 2007. The proliferation of literature on music production has established a broad range of topics and areas of interest, such as virtual collaboration, music composition in video games, and defining the roles of audio engineers, producers, and artists in the current music industry

terrain. In addition to this, music production trade publications such as *Sound on Sound* and *Music Technology* offer production advice to producers and audio engineers and feature interviews with notable producers and examples of historically noteworthy recording sessions. I rely on both forms of literature to inform my creative work, particularly in the areas of mixing and collaboration.

Overall, this research defines the function and role of A&R representatives and producers through historical, literature and contextual review. I draw on examples of producers from the early years of record production to identify how their function and role has evolved. Additionally, this research provides insight into the production process by analysing four key themes of expectation, experience, communication, and relationship. The purpose of this analysis is to identify those key elements of the production process that support effective artist development. Lastly, this research opens up the discussion around artist development in the studio, laying a foundation for further study. To do this, the project asks the following questions:

- What do artists expect of producers during the production process?
- How do those expectations affect the artist's experience in the studio?
- How can producers support the development of artists through the production process?

Literature and Contextual Review

In this chapter, I examine literature and contextual works relevant to the practice and process of artist development in popular music. Firstly, I provide a historical overview of notable producers and A&R representatives, identifying key changes that have occurred in the music industry over the last century and highlighting their effects on artist development models. Next, I present a typology of record producers, describing the different styles, roles, and functions that help position my own work in the practice-led aspects of the research. I draw on examples of notable producers to examine the producer–artist relationship and identify the aspects of collaboration and experimentation that affect artist development in the studio. Lastly, I explore the growth of young artists focusing on artistic creativity, noting how songwriting and record production that has been associated with artistic development has emerged through collaboration with notable producers. Overall, the goal of this literature and contextual review is to offer an understanding of artist development in a historical and practical context, drawing on a range of scholarly and professional sources that help to define what is meant by the term ‘artist development’.

History and Context

The Pioneer of A&R and Production

The first A&R representative, and one of the most famous early producers, was Fredrick William Gaisberg (Burgess, 2014, p. 14). Burgess (2014, p. 3–14) identifies Gaisberg as one of the first producers alongside Thomas Edison and Edouard-Leon Scott de Martinville, the inventors of the phonograph:

Gaisberg explained his production process and other duties there: ‘To earn my \$10 a week I had to find the artists, load up each of the twenty units with the paper cylinders, set the recording horns, and play the accompaniments....’

Gaisberg was now performing what would become known as A&R (Artist and

Repertoire—some say Repertory), then referred to as talent scout duties.
(Gaisberg, 1948, p. 12)

This illustrates the how the role and function of talent scouts set the tone for what was to become A&R as we know it today. As Gaisberg (1948) stated, ‘My value to Berliner rested in the fact that I could collect quickly a variety of effective talent to make these demonstration records’ (p. 16–17). Gaisberg’s work was not isolated to these tasks; he assumed an amalgam of production roles in the early recording industry. For example, his part as musical accompanist suggests that he assumed a leading role throughout the creative aspects of recording sessions. As Burgess (2014) describes,

Gaisberg was both prolific and influential in the developing field of record production and the nascent music industry. He manifested a mix of musical, technical, and talent-spotting expertise along with administrative and business skills that laid a foundational formula for successful producers ever since. (p. 15)

The amalgamation of Gaisberg’s roles reflects a nascent stage of the music industry where individuals had to perform a variety of duties. This amalgamation of labour is also apparent in the work of two notable producers from the 1950s, Leonard Chess and Sam Phillips, who acted as both record producers and record label owners. Their roles appeared to include A&R, although this part of their function is mostly implied rather than explicitly described as A&R in several biographical sources (Broven, 2009, p. 116; Larkin, 2009; Lorre, 2013, p. 866 - 867). Chess bought into the Aristocrat Records label with his brother in 1947, renaming it Chess Records in 1950 (Larkin, 2009). Chess Records quickly became a highly regarded independent label primarily focused on the rhythm and blues (RnB) artists that Chess observed as an audience member at live performances. Producer Jerry Wexler describes Chess’ production style as that of a ‘documentarian’:

First there’s the documentarian, and that would be Leonard Chess. Let’s say he would hear Muddy Waters in a bar on a Thursday night with his band, well

he would bring him into the studio on the weekend and reproduce what he heard in that bar. ('Jerry Wexler: Atlantic adventure', 1999, p. 55)

This production style resulted in records that captured the energy of a live performance, reflecting Chess' experiences of RnB music in the clubs that he owned (Larkin, 2009), and demonstrating an overlap of multiple industrial roles.

Whereas Chess pursued new artists in order to produce and release new musicians, Sam Phillips combined this with a reputation as an innovative producer whose contribution involved developing a specific 'sound' across musical and social barriers. Phillips' productions featured his signature rockabilly sound, attributed in large part to his novel use of short or 'slapback' echo effects. As Lorre (2013) states,

Sun Records broke down barriers by placing no racial or genre labels on the artists he chose to record and promote. Phillips's new 'rockabilly' sound launched the careers of not only Presley but also Jerry Lee Lewis (1935–), Johnny Cash (1932–2003), and Roy Orbison (1936–1988). (p. 866-867)

In this way, Phillips' use of production techniques to create a new 'sound' had a direct effect on Sun Records' musicians and their development as recording artists. Despite differences in their production approaches, Chess and Phillips demonstrate the kinds of amalgamated roles that were common in the early record industry, and typify the blurring of roles between A&R representatives and producers. In this way, they extend the model in which A&R representatives identify exceptional talent with the intent of developing artists through the production process, while producers enact and achieve this development collaboratively with artists through the actual creative labour of making records.

The Fifth Beatle: Production Techniques and Successful Development in the Studio

For Gaisberg, Chess, and Phillips, the combination of exceptional talent, innovative production techniques, and experimentation or novelty in the production process resulted in successful commercial release. In this industry context, artist development was associated with or measured by the artist's commercial success, which is often in conflict with the way artists define growth as the fulfilment of an artistic vision, somewhat distinct from commercial concerns. The paradigm of artist development changed with a shift in production style associated with Sir George Martin and his work with The Beatles. Martin began his career as an A&R assistant to the head of Parlophone Records in 1950 ('George Martin', 2015; Womack, 2016, p. 2); following the departure of his mentor in 1955, Martin was promoted to head of Parlophone, resulting in the amalgamation of his roles as producer, CEO, and A&R executive (Burgess, 2014, p. 90; 'George Martin', 2015; 'George Martin', 1999; Womack, 2016, p. 2). In his early years in the record industry, Martin focused on classical and comedy recording, developing his ability to work very effectively with artists. As Womack (2016) describes,

The well-honed deference and gentlemanly nature that Martin accrued during his war years no doubt came in handy as he climbed the ranks at EMI and attempted to find his mettle as an A&R man-come-producer. In this way, he proved himself to be highly sophisticated in dealing with artists. He was truly the ultimate producer in the sense that he could make people feel relaxed by taking himself out of the equation and succeed in getting the performance from virtually anyone. That was his genius. (p. 2)

As Womack notes, Martin's ability to create a calm and supportive environment for the artists in the studio was significant, and indicates a shift in the nature of the producer–artist relationship. This shift can be best understood through Martin's own description of his relationship with The Beatles:

A two-way swing developed in our relationship. On the one hand, as the style emerged and the recording techniques developed, so my control—over what

the finished product sounded like—increased. Yet at the same time, my need for changing the pure music became less and less. As I could see their talent growing, I could recognize that an idea coming from them was better than an idea coming from me, though it would still be up to me to decide which was the better approach. In a sense, I made a sort of tactical withdrawal, recognizing that theirs was the greater talent. (Hornsby & Martin, 1994, p. 259)

This depiction of Martin's relationship with The Beatles succinctly describes a producer–artist relationship model that became significant in the recording industry and in terms of the organisational labour involved in making records. This model initially focused on developing songwriting skills through friendly competition. Clydesdale (2006, p.133) states that competition was at the core of Martin's working relationship with the Beatles; furthermore, this competition was essential in the development of Lennon and McCartney. Creative rivalry – both within the group and externally in groups such as The Beach Boys – led to an increase in quality of the songs produced by the Beatle and their rival artists (Clydesdale, 2006). Furthermore, Hornsby & Martin (1994, p. 259) identify three key elements that determine an artist's level of 'development': a clearly defined style; a reduced reliance on the producer as catalyst; and the modification of the producer's own style. According to this model, it is the artist's responsibility to experiment and to develop a 'sound' that defines their style. Consciously working and building upon this style often reduces reliance on the producer, which modifies the production style to one of subtle suggestion rather than overt direction (Hornsby & Martin, 1994, p. 259). Martin's approach typified this approach to artist development, at the same time as incorporating an amalgamation of roles in the same way that Gaisberg did. His example as a producer provides a blueprint for artist development, particularly through the production process, where much of the artist's creative labour and artistic vision is realised in popular music. In an overall sense, Martin's style as a producer illustrates the importance of collaboration and the producer–artist relationship, two themes of artist development that recur throughout this study.

The Face of A&R and Production Styles through the 60s, 70s, and 80s

Concurrent to Martin's success with The Beatles, Columbia Records and Atlantic Records both became known for their success in developing successful recording artists. From 1960 to 1980, Columbia Records was home to A&R executive and producer Sir John Hammond, who was foremost an A&R executive. Hammond's ability to recognise talent—particularly that of songwriters—was well noted, since he had signed Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, Clinton Brewer, Aretha Franklin, Stevie Ray Vaughn, and Bruce Springsteen (Berger, 2000; Cohen, 2006; Hinkley, 1999; Kehe, 2006). Hammond was known to rebel against what he called 'bland' or 'mainstream' artists, instead choosing to identify talented recording artists and attempting to develop them through the production process (Cohen, 2006; Kehe, 2006). While Hammond was exceptional at identifying such artists, he was not consistently successful at developing them: his attempts to establish and develop these artists have been characterised as 'hit-and-miss', resulting in development for some artists, but the need to defer to alternative producers for others (Clarke, 2006; Cohen, 2006).

These alternative producers included Arif Mardin, Jerry Wexler, and Tom Dowd; each was employed by Atlantic Records and known for creating the 'Atlantic sound' (Cohen, 2006; Holden, 2006). Mardin, Wexler, and Dowd demonstrated the practical aspects of artist development through the production process, particularly through collaboration and experimentation with artists in the studio. Mardin was known for his gentlemanly nature, similar to Martin. His style served the artist by guiding them in a 'gentle yet firm' manner, providing ideas that induced experimentation in order to develop the artist's sound (Cromelin, 2006). Mardin was always conscious of developing a 'sound', which he relates to Phil Spector's Wall of Sound:

'I try to have certain desires when I start a record', he explains. 'What I'm always trying to do is to have the elements in a record in the background that can create depth to the sound. I put the sound together in layers, and they can be made up of instruments or things like reverb.' ... 'There are string or synth pads in the background. There's a small percussion instrument that has reverb and repeats on it that is mixed in very softly but which gives the illusion of

depth to the panorama, of three-dimensionality to the record. Most of my pop records have elements like that in them. It's not a sound, but a technique. But you still want to produce for the song and the artist—if it's a rhythm-driven, dry-sounding thing, then that's what it is.' (Daley, 1998, p. 57)

Mardin's pursuit of a 'sound' was evident in his sessions with Bette Midler and the Bee Gees (Daley, 1998; Cromelin, 2006). Through his sessions for the Bee Gees' *Main Course*, Mardin suggested a rhythm-based sound along with the iconic falsetto that reignited their career (Cromelin, 2006; Holden, 2006; Schlager, 2006). His pursuit of creating a sound appears to have permeated his sessions, affecting each artist differently as he served their artistic vision (Cromelin, 2006). Wexler also identified himself as a producer who served the artist, guiding and motivating them in the studio ('Jerry Wexler: Atlantic adventure', 1999; Spencer, 2008). Working closely with Dowd (then an engineer at Atlantic Records), Wexler focused primarily on guiding and motivating the artist (Spencer, 2008). As an avid record collector and with a background in jazz, Wexler had a lick, riff, or rhythm idea to suit any form of music, from RnB to rock 'n' roll ('Jerry Wexler: Atlantic adventure', 1999). Wexler describes the elements of a solid song in the following way:

The basic elements have to be there, comprising rhythm and intonation. Those are the two things; it's got to be in time and it's got to be in tune, whether it's 'How Much is that Doggie in the Window?' or 'Got My Mojo Workin''. Whatever it is, it's got to have those qualities, and then there's the general quality that people never talk about; it's called sonority, and that is the way the sound leaps off the record and goes into your ear. As [jazz guitarist] Eddie Condon once said, 'Do you want music pouring into your ear like honey or do you want it to come in like broken glass?'. So, intelligible lyrics, a good hook, a good rhythm pattern, a good melody—that works. ('Jerry Wexler: Atlantic adventure', 1999)

Wexler's understanding of the elements required in a strong performance can be identified in many of the artists he recorded, including Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin, Dire Straits, and Bob Dylan ('Obituaries: Jerry Wexler', 2008; Spencer, 2008; Tatangelo, 2013). Furthermore, the

idea that sound must ‘leap off the record’ lends itself to a more hands-on method of producing (‘Jerry Wexler: Atlantic adventure’, 1999) that requires active listening and suggestions intended to elevate particular sections of the song through lyrical or melodic hooks. Dowd (as cited in McCullaugh, 1980) describes his production style, adding some points regarding the studio environment:

I like to think of myself ... as a catalyst who gets the best out of the artist that they have to offer without catering to the technology that goes with recording. I am more inclined to think that the spirit that things are recorded with is more important than how precisely they are recorded. I accept those two or three days in the studio that are dismal where energy isn’t correct. There are other days in the studio when everything rolls with the first song and the artist may never play it better than that day. I am always aware that today might be ‘the’ day. (p. 10)

As a catalyst, the producer inspires and motivates the artist, providing a ‘spark’; the producer pushes the artist further with the aim of developing their ‘sound’ through experimentation or subtle changes. Dowd’s view of the production process understands the quality of musical performance as more significant than the manner in which it is recorded. Dowd also recognises that some days appear easier, and others seem difficult. His suggestion is to be aware of these days in order to capture each performance adequately. The studio environment might appear sterile and uncompromising to the artist, yet can also offer a warmth and sense of creative flow: in this incarnation of the producer–artist relationship, the producer must recognise factors that could result in unproductive periods, and be prepared for the times when creativity is at its peak.

Hammond’s, Mardin’s, Wexler’s, and Dowd’s work demonstrates subtle shifts in the practice of artist development in the music industry, away from earlier models of creative labour associated with Gaisberg, Chess, Phillips, and Martin. The amalgamated roles of earlier eras have become more defined, illustrated by both Hammond and Wexler, who were each focused in one primary area of the industry. This departure from more amalgamated roles contributes to the clear delineation of both the A&R representative and the producer as

independent positions within the record industry. Through this shift, the A&R representative's role becomes increasingly managerial, while the producer's is associated more with the artist's development and the project's creative vision or direction (Craig, 1999, p. 11). As a creative catalyst, the producer becomes a primary guide for artist development at the same time that this development must emerge from an 'authentic' aspect of the artist's life and practice. In each of these various historical contexts, the producer remains an important part of artist development through the production process, although the tasks and responsibilities of artists, A&R representatives, and producers are usually blurred by the varied processes and expectations of artist development.

A&R in the Current Industry Climate

As outlined above, A&R's role has evolved since the music industry's beginnings. Peterson and Berger (1971) outline the producer's entrepreneurial function, describing the producer and A&R representative as interchangeable:

In the record industry, this is the producer—sometimes called an artist and repertoire man or A and R man. The isolation of entrepreneurship into this one job category can be demonstrated by describing the producer's range of tasks, which are related to tasks of technical specialists with whom he interacts in creating that mix of novelty and sameness which is a hit recording. The activities of a typical company producer can be described as a single sequence, although he is usually engaged in several sequences simultaneously. Although sometimes a producer is assigned to an artist who is already under contract to the company because it is believed that the producer can best bring out the artist's commercial appeal, the producer spends much of his time searching for new performers. He listens to the demonstration tapes sent to him by aspiring groups and also seeks out groups in live performances. (p. 99)

Peterson and Berger's description reflects the combined role of the producer and A&R representative associated with producers such as Gaisberg, Chess, Phillips, Martin, Hammond, Mardin, and Wexler. This concept of the producer and A&R hybrid is not as

pronounced now as it was up until the 1970s: as Niles (as cited in Bouwman, 2007) writes, ‘up until the 80s, A&R executives were people who were musicians—usually arrangers [producers]. These included highly successful A&R representatives like George Martin, Quincy Jones, and Arif Mardin’ (para. 33). Up until the digital age, A&R was part of a linear career trajectory meaning that the artist would find a manager and that manager would have contacts in A&R, record label executives, and producers acting like a gatekeeper. Linear career development required A&R executives to be proactive in identifying and developing talent. In the digital age career development has become increasingly non-linear or ‘circular’, as described by Hughes, Evans, Morrow, Keith (2016, p. 28); this means that artists are able to directly interact with fans and build their own career. Hughes et al. outlines how major labels operate in the new industry climate: ‘Major labels can thus become more reactive by waiting to see which artists demonstrate signs of effective strategies and exponential growth before assisting in subsequent career development’ (2016, p. 26).

The current industry climate requires A&R executives to be reactive to artists that have demonstrated signs of development rather than the linear model of identifying and developing talent. Recently, A&R has become a more distinct area, with representatives focused on signing new talented artists and overseeing development of those artists throughout their recording careers (Craig, 1999, p. 11). An A&R representative must be capable of identifying an artist’s commercial potential (Hannan, 2003, p. 157). Gaisberg personified this concept of the talent scout, Chess developed the role by identifying talented artists and recording their live versions of appropriate songs, and Hammond was known as a producer while primarily operating as an A&R executive. Each of them was required to perform some A&R representative functions, although this role was not clearly defined at the time, since music industry models and infrastructure were still developing. After the 1970s, the A&R role tended to shift away from producers, with A&R involving a more managerial set of responsibilities (Craig, 1999, p. 11; Peterson & Berger, 1971, p. 99). An A&R manager’s job in the late 1990s consisted of travel, sound checks, rehearsals, studio recording, and mastering alongside attending networking lunches, live music performances, and company meetings, and doing paperwork (Craig, 1999, p. 11). Anderton et al. (2012) provide insight into the reasons for this change:

Falling revenues since the turn of the millennium have led many companies to change their A&R strategies and cut back on the numbers of new artists signed each year. Rather than seeking, nurturing and developing new talent, it is more cost-effective to seek out artists who are already ‘developed’: in other words, those with a strong image, distinctive sound, good songs and a growing fan base. In consequence, traditional A&R roles within the majors have reduced in number, while production companies, management companies and smaller independents have increasingly taken on the function. (p. 40)

In this new industry climate, major record labels sign fewer artists than they did up until the 1980s, when pop stars such as Michael Jackson were selling millions of records (Anderton et al., 2012, p. 38). To continue developing artists, major record labels began investing in smaller independent labels, which provided a reformed infrastructure supporting intercompany development programs (LeBlanc, 2005, p. 13; Newman, 2004, p. 60). This shift saw major labels focus their efforts on ‘developed’ artists with an existing fanbase, high numbers of YouTube views, and strong independent CD, iTunes, and grassroots merchandise sales (Anderton et al., 2012, p. 40). At the same time, independent record labels began providing a nurturing environment for developing artists through collaborative songwriting and production (Sutherland, 2015, p. 21). Today, independent labels’ aim to create unique artists with sustainable careers, providing revenue-generating ventures, an increased fanbase, and touring opportunities (LeBlanc, 2005, p. 13; Mitchell, 2013, p. 5). By contrast, YouTube and talent shows such as *X Factor* and *American Idol* now create a platform for artists to showcase their talent and build a fanbase through consistent exposure (Anderton et al., 2012, p. 40–41). These new avenues for signings create opportunities that were not available until the turn of the millennium. Major labels starting to sign ‘developed’ artists is often pinpointed as a reason for the lack of major label-sponsored artist development, although the situation is more complex than this (Mitchell, 2013, p. 5). One of the main disruptions in industry-based artist development has been the rise of independent record labels, although they generally sign and develop artists with more niche audiences in mind. As the A&R department

in many of these labels is considerably smaller, signings are primarily focused on artists whose potential is already well developed (Anderton et al., 2012, p. 40).

The role and function of A&R representatives and producers can only be understood through the broad historical overview provided above. In certain contexts, these roles are blurred, while in others, they could be quite distinct. In the most differentiated model, producers contribute to artist development by focusing on collaboration and experimentation during the production process, while A&R representatives act as talent scouts who determine in part which artists will receive support from record labels, and advise artists on their career trajectory in order to maximise their returns from their initial investment ('Is Canadian A&R worth anything?', 2002; Stratton, 2008, p. 90). The key record producers discussed throughout this historical overview represent some of the main eras in the evolution of A&R, illustrating the importance of the producer–artist relationship for artist development, an issue explored in more detail below.

Producers: Developing Artists through the Production Process

Producer Styles, Roles, and Types

In many circumstances the history of producers and their role in A&R is written based on the significant auteur figures discussed in this thesis. The idea of the auteur is an important part of how the music industry presents key historical figures as loci around which the production process has evolved. From a more critical position, these auteur figures represent strong structural, underlying cultural and social discourses that have influenced the development of artists through the production process, and the evolution of their own role within the context of A&R. By presenting producers in this critical way, it can be seen that it is much more than the role of an individual in shaping history, but also the ways that history is shaping the individual.

As a short preface to the remaining chapters of this context review, I will draw upon Negus and Caldwell to discuss notions of mediation within the collaborative process, and how those involved in the process create value in everyday creative practices. Negus (1996, p. 58) touches upon some commercial issues surrounding collaborative creation, explaining that the processes involved in writing, recording, publishing, and marketing all run through a number of specialists that coordinate the product image. At every stage and every decision in the production process – not only in the studio but through management – the product is altered to create a strategic and commercially viable product for consumption. This means that not everyone has to share the same artistic vision, have the same background, or same understanding of the particular genre, but through every decision there is the same objective – a commercially successful product (Negus, 1996, p. 58, Hennion, 1989, p. 417). As mentioned, collaboration often sees active changes to both the sounds and image of the product (Negus, 1996, p. 59). Similarly, Caldwell (2008) describes the production of a commercially successful product from the point of view of a film producer:

Another producer likens producing to dangerous “high-stakes gambling” based on intuitive “hunches” and then goes on to define the multimillion dollar producing process in the most simplistic, *Forrest Gump*– like terms possible: “You’re the guy who turns on the lights at the beginning of the project. And turns the lights off at the end.” (p. 318)

In contrast to the film industry, a music producer is just one collaborator in a long chain decision-makers through upper management. Due to this limited ‘power’ as a decision-maker, any lyrical or musical elements that do not sit within the product image for that particular artist may be altered by management. Despite this, there are a differing producer styles, roles and functions, each with differing levels of ‘power’ within upper management. Some auteur figures that have been discussed such as John Hammond or George Martin were not only producers but also record company executives or even label CEO’s.

Academic literature and trade publications have provided numerous categorisations for the producer (Burgess, 2005, p. 1–14; Howlett, 2009, p. 14; Jackson, 2013, p. 41–43; Muikku, 1990, p. 30–32). In his seminal work *‘The Musicology of Record Production’* Zagorski-

Thomas (2014, p. 244) introduces a typology with eight categories that aid in studying the ‘way people work in record production, rather than studying the way technology works.’ In chapter 9 Zagorski-Thomas (2014, p.176) discusses category six: ‘performance in the studio.’ Here he unpacks the conflict between what an artist thinks is conducive to a successful performance and what a sound engineer feels is necessary for a to meet the standards of recording practice today (Zagorski-Thomas, 2014, p. 176). This conflict regarding exactly how to record the artist’s performance effectively is resolved through a number of factors; including but not limited to the social and economic outcomes of the recording. Zagorski-Thomas (2014) States:

If the theory of ecological perception is concerned with how an animal and its environment act as a perceptual system that incorporates both stimulus and action, the theoretical basis I’m using for how musicians and other participants work together in the creative practices of music-making is also an interactive system involving information transfer and activity. (p.14)

This study of musicians and other participants, such as producers, arrangers, sound engineers and producers working together creatively to write or record a song can be thought of as a creative system (Zagorski-Thomas, 2014, p. 246). Zagorski-Thomas (2014) states:

Historical musicology has, notwithstanding its concentrated focus on a particular canon of composers, engaged with the question of how particular pieces of music came to be produced by particular people in particular circumstances at particular times. (p. 246)

This chapter takes an approach similar to that of historical musicology in providing examples of the social and cultural contexts and creative systems that have resulted in commercial success for an artist and producer collaboration, often referred to as the production process. Using Burgess and Watson as a foundation for the terminology, I combine and build upon the literature in order to encapsulate the producer’s style, role, and function. Burgess (2005) provides two categorisations: the practical-based portion of the role dictating the producer’s function, and the interpersonal portion of the role dictating the producer’s working style (p.

1–14). While Watson (2014, p. 33) adapts four modes of popular music production, adapted from Kealy (1979, p. 7-19). These modes are: craft, entrepreneurial, art, and composition; and have developed over a number of years through the experimentation and evolution of production technology. It is important to understand the differences between these categorisations, as producers often change their role, function, or style to best suit the artist with whom they are working (Burgess, 2005, p. 1–14). To begin, Burgess describes four practical categories: ‘songwriter/ producer’, ‘music lover producer’, ‘arranger-producer’, and ‘engineer producer’ (p. 1–14; Howlett, 2009, p. 14; Jackson, 2013, p. 41–43). As these practical functions are well documented, I will simply describe the roles and provide examples outlining the difference between these roles and functions. I will also refer to Watson’s (2014) adaption of the modes of popular music production to further explore the increased collaboration within the studio setting.

The songwriter/producer is often a team that collaboratively writes songs with or for the artists (Burgess, 2005, p. 13). Glen Ballard is a songwriter/producer best known for his work with Alanis Morissette on her breakthrough album *Jagged Little Pill*, which he co-wrote and produced (Hillburn, 2001; Rule, 1999, p. 48). A modern example of the songwriting/producer is the three-person production team ‘The Matrix’ that write collaboratively for artists (Burgess, 2005, p. 2–3). The music lover is a producer with no musical training, but a strong sense of song, structure, lyrical ideas, and analytical skills that assist throughout the production process (Burgess, 2005, p. 1–14). Wexler demonstrated his strong sense of song in the production of *Slow Train Coming*, where the potential of Bob Dylan’s songwriting shone through on the Grammy Award-winning release (‘Jerry Wexler: Atlantic adventure’, 1999; Spencer, 2008). Chess and Hammond also exemplified the music lover category with their wealth of knowledge, attributable to their vast record collections (Burgess, 2005, p. 13; ‘Jerry Wexler: Atlantic adventure’, 1999; Kehe, 2006). The arranger-producer has a highly musical background coupled with formal arranging skills that aid in developing the artist and song through the production process (Burgess, 2005, p. 13). Martin demonstrated the role of an arranger-producer throughout his work with The Beatles (Hornsby & Martin, 1994, p. 259; Jackson, 2013, p. 41–43; Womack, 2016, p. 2). Similarly, Jones exemplified the arranger producer with his work on Michael Jackson’s iconic albums *Off The Wall*, *Thriller*, and *Bad* (Jones & Gibson, 2010, p. 108, 118–125, 125–127). The engineer producer supports each

session by developing its ‘sound’ throughout (Burgess, 2005, p. 14; Howlett, 2009, p. 14). Engineer producers provide technical support and lower the production costs, as they combine two functions. Dowd demonstrated the epitome of an engineer producer through his flexibility—he often operated as an engineer for Wexler and Mardin, later becoming a producer in his own right (Daley, 1998; ‘Jerry Wexler: Atlantic adventure’, 1999). Modern examples of engineer producers would be Steve Albini, Butch Vig, Joey Sturgis, and John Congleton. Congleton (as cited in Frost, 2014) states,

If you hire me to produce your record, I’m engineering it, I’m sitting at the console and I’m doing everything. I can’t delineate the idea of being a producer and being an engineer, because it’s always about the way it sounds. What else is it, if it isn’t about the way it sounds? Being behind the board engineering keeps me in a situation where I’m there with the band. I’m equal with the band and we’re doing this together. I’m moving the microphones, I’m talking to the guitar player about his guitar tone and I’m talking to them about the nuances of what they do that makes them special or different. I have, obviously, engineered projects with other producers, but they can miss a lot of the important stuff because they’re just sort of somewhere else. They’re missing that bond, which I think is crucial. It’s all about trust. (para. 8)

Congleton asserts that producing is ‘all about the way it sounds’, which corroborates with Mardin’s idea of consciously pursuing a ‘sound’ (Daley, 1998). This dual role develops a trust that the producer will provide support for the artist and their artistic vision. Furthermore, Congleton touches upon the relationship between band and artist, directly leading to the interpersonal role that refers to producer style. The style, otherwise referred to as ‘approach’, of a producer is often affected by the calibre of artist with whom they work. Burgess defines four producer styles: ‘all-singing-all-dancing-king-of-the-hill’, ‘sidekick’, ‘collaborator’, and ‘Merlin the magician’, and suggests other ways of categorising producers (Burgess, 2005, p. 1–14). These producer styles provide a theoretical framework that can be used to determine the best approach for each artist.

Producers often work in one style, which allows A&R representatives to connect a suitable producer to their artist. The ‘all-singing’ producer demonstrates a broad range of skills—often an artist in their own right, the ‘all-singing’ producer is highly effective for a young artist who needs development through collaboration and experimentation (Burgess, 2005, p. 1–6; Jackson, 2013, p. 41–42). Burgess (2005) notes that ‘Their style is usually very distinctive and can become a genre or, at least, a sub-genre in itself’ (p. 2). Wexler describes this type of producer as a songwriter-musician-engineer, citing Phil Spector, the mastermind behind the Wall of Sound, as an example (Jerry Wexler: Atlantic adventure’, 1999, para. 5). A modern example of an ‘all-singing’ producer is Joey Sturgis, a well-known metal producer particularly favoured in the ‘metal-core’ sub-genre. Sturgis is heavily involved in all aspects of recording, including writing and recording new parts, programming drums, perfecting the tone of each instrument, and often ensuring the drums are tuned to the song’s key (Flint, 2014). The ‘all-dancing’ producer fulfils the role of engineer, producer, songwriter, and collaborator, providing a solid foundation upon which young artists can develop their style (Burgess, 2005, p. 1–6).

The ‘sidekick’ is a co-producer, perfect for a self-directed, confident artist who needs a second opinion (Burgess, 2005, p. 6). This type of producer is often very hands-on, operating as an engineer and fitting in with the artist’s way of working, rather than forcing their own way (Burgess, 2005, p. 6; Jackson, 2013, p. 43). The ‘sidekick’ or co-producer encourages a supportive environment for artist, acting as a soundboard and engineer—one example is Josh Gudwin, producer of Justin Bieber’s album *Purpose* (Tingen, 2016). As this production method focuses primarily on the artist’s confidence in the studio, ‘sidekick’ producers are often accomplished engineers, negotiating the gap between the artist’s vision and the world of production. Steve Albini cultivates a ‘sidekick’ attitude, supporting artists with his organic approach as an engineer (Tingen, 2005). Albini’s approach is that of a studio veteran able to work efficiently towards the realisation of an artistic vision, serving the artist rather than forcing an opinion on them.

The ‘collaborator’ is the preferred style of many producers, as it allows them flexibility in catering to the artist’s needs (Burgess, 2005, p. 8; Muikku, 1990, p. 30–32). Burgess (2005) describes the ‘collaborator’ as a soundboard who often suggests alternative ideas to those

proposed by the artist (p. 8; Jackson, 2013, p. 42). Martin demonstrated this style throughout his time with The Beatles, stating, ‘There were no clear lines of demarcation. It was more a question of being a good team than isolating individuals as being producer, arranger or songwriter’ (Hornsby & Martin, 1994, p. 259). Similarly, both Jones and Mardin characterised the ‘collaborator’ style, as their formal musical training provided a foundation for them to aid the artist effectively with either subtle suggestion or clear direction. The ‘collaborator’ provides flexibility and an alternative point of view for experienced artists.

‘Merlin the magician’ is a mysterious, almost guru-like style of producer whose profound remarks guide the artist’s concept and energy (Burgess, 2005, p. 9). ‘Merlin’ often keeps a distance from recording sessions, entering sporadically to offer insight philosophically, specifically, or generally (Burgess, 2005, p. 10). Rick Rubin and Brian Eno demonstrated this style with their enigmatic personas, cultivated through philosophical perspective and ‘big-picture’ ideology (Larkin, 2009). Engineer David Ferguson (as cited in Tingen, 2010) describes one of Rubin’s sessions with Johnny Cash: ‘Rick came in for one of those sessions, and that really lightened Johnny’s spirit. There was a great mutual respect between them’ (para. 6). Descriptions of Rubin by engineers and artists alike capture a sense of warm respect mixed with awe (Burgess, 2005, p. 11–12; Tingen, 2010), characterising Rubin as a ‘Merlin’ style of producer.

Burgess’ terminology thus provides a foundational understanding of producer styles, roles, and functions in relation to young and inexperienced artists. These terms offer a basis for further examination of the producer’s additional job aspects.

Producer and Artist Relationships: Forming Trust within the Studio

The relationship between producer and artist is critical, establishing a dynamic for the production process. Mutual respect and trust form the basis of the producer–artist relationship, allowing development to occur freely throughout production. Developing the relationship early on in this process provides a supportive environment for the artist, allowing them the freedom to experiment and develop during songwriting or pre-production. As Jones & Gibson (2010) state,

The love between a performer and a producer has to be so absolute and unquestioned. That's where the power is—that's the key to getting top results. When that love is established and understood, the producer can be very honest and sincere about everything it takes to record the best possible performance. It also works the other way. The artist and the producer have to share mutual respect and love to make the best possible music. (p. 130)

Establishing such 'love' through trust and mutual respect allows honest communication to occur between artist and producer; honesty that acknowledges vulnerability while encouraging experimentation allows artists to develop over the course of the production process. It is important to note that producers are often driven by the quality of the final product (Watson, 2014, p. 35). Watson states (2014) "... producers ... are caught in a tension between the creative inspirations of artists and the commercial aspirations of record companies." In a commercial context, this task-based conflict is able to foster creativity through creative solution or break-down the rapport between the artist and the producer. Despite this, longstanding producer–artist relationships demonstrate the producer's style, role, and function, alongside the trust and mutual respect formed via honest communication in the studio.

These qualities are evident in the relationships between Taylor Swift and Nathan Chapman, David Bowie and Tony Visconti, and Ed Sheeran and Jake Gosling. The producer–artist relationship between Nathan Chapman and Taylor Swift began in 2005 when they were introduced by a mutual friend (Tingen, 2011). As Chapman is both a songwriter and an 'all-singing' producer, mutual respect and trust appear to have formed during the initial demos that Chapman produced for Swift's self-titled debut album (Tingen, 2011). These initial demos led to Chapman's producing Swift's first three albums: *Taylor Swift*, *Fearless*, and *Speak Now* (Tingen, 2011; 'Universal Music Publishing Group', 2012). In recent years, as Swift has begun to develop a distinct style, her reliance on Chapman appears to have diminished; he is now included on fewer tracks. Having exchanged Chapman's 'all-singing' production for the work of 'collaborator' producers Max Martin and Shellback (Ellis, 2014), Swift appears to have further developed her musical style, leaving behind her country roots

(Yahr, 2014). Following the release of *Speak Now*, Chapman and his current standing with Swift have received minimal press attention. Despite working extensively with Max Martin on *1989*, it is clear that Swift maintains her relationship with Chapman, and she employed him for one song on the album (Caramanica, 2014).

David Bowie and his producer Tony Visconti had a long-term producer–artist relationship, and knew each other for 50 years. The pair met early in Visconti’s career, when Bowie was still living with his parents and had not found his sound (Kot, 2016). Following what Visconti recalls as ‘a long sort of date’, their friendship both in and out of the studio was solidified (Kot, 2016). Visconti (as cited in Brown, 2006) states,

If I have one talent as a producer it’s that I have a way of capturing someone’s essence.... David has worked with other producers, illustrious producers, but they gave him their sound. My philosophy is always to defer to the alpha male: David, what do you want? So I think on the records I’ve co-produced with David, people are going to get a more real Bowie. (para. 9)

Visconti also points out that ‘One of the reasons why he worked with me was because I was an old friend and he could just take all the time he wanted in the studio’ (McLean, 2016). Visconti’s approach categorises him as a ‘collaborator’ and an engineer producer—this style, coupled with his longstanding friendship with Bowie, appears to have created a supportive environment that allowed Bowie to flourish in his later years. Despite their rivalry following Bowie’s albums *The Man Who Sold the World* and *Space Oddity*, Bowie and Visconti patched up their friendship and began to discuss working together again (Brown, 2006). Visconti (as cited in Sexton, 2007) notes that ‘Friendship inevitably evolves. I just got an e-mail from Bowie. We e-mail all the time, we send each other clips from YouTube and discuss the finer points of growing old’ (Sexton, 2007). Visconti’s friendship and collaborative approach allowed Bowie to experiment through the production process (Kot, 2016), and this collaborative experimentation was evident on Bowie’s final release, *Blackstar*, which allowed him to push the boundaries of pop music one last time and that Visconti produced (Rindskopf, 2016).

The relationship between Ed Sheeran and Jake Gosling illustrates how a producer can aid in developing a young artist through collaboration. As a songwriter engineer and ‘collaborator’, Gosling developed Sheeran through consistent collaborative experiences with other artists, often experimenting with RnB and hip hop and enabling Sheeran to explore the rhythmic style for which he is now known (Doyle, 2012). Gosling (as cited in Doyle, 2012) comments,

At the beginning of each session, if Sheeran and Gosling are starting work on a track from scratch, the latter will encourage the former to chat about his everyday life, hoping to mine his personal experiences and emotions for a song idea. ‘As a producer and songwriter, it’s my job to be almost like a psychiatrist’, he laughs. ‘Tell me your problems, Ed, what’s going on with your life?’ The beginning of that process will come from stories and things that are going on, mainly in his life. (para. 21)

As a young artist, Sheeran had many preconceived notions of what could be said in a song, and Gosling often encouraged him to push past those notions in order to develop songs that stemmed from his current circumstances (Nolan, 2014, p. 58). Despite pioneering Sheeran’s sound and exclusively producing his debut album, +, it appears that Gosling had a minor role in Sheeran’s recent album, X, much like Swift and Chapman’s relationship (Allan, Fordham, Robinson, & Clements, 2014; Butah & Sheeran, 2014, p. 82). Despite this, on X, Sheeran delves further into RnB, forming a singer–songwriter hybrid with a range of different producers (Murphy, 2014).

The producer–artist relationships discussed here demonstrate the styles, roles, and functions in relation to well-known artists. Collaborative experiences and experimentation in the studio allow producers to guide artists and develop their ‘sound’ through the production process. These elements have effectively developed the artists discussed above, who are now established in the pop genre. Using collaborative experiences and experimentation as key elements, this next section unpacks the development of young artists through the production process.

Developing Young Artists in the Studio

Working collaboratively with producers and songwriters is one way that A&R develops young artists; this was illustrated in the relationship between the Beatles and George Martin. Drawing upon a number of sources, Kurtzberg (2005, p. 53) states that it is a common perception that creative ideas are brainstormed within teams or groups. Further, when faced with a complex problem, a group that has a variety of skills, backgrounds and education fares much better (Kurtzberg 2005, p. 53). Kurtzberg and Amabile (2000, p. 288) warn that while there are benefits when working in groups, there are many conditions that must be met before these positive by-products are seen. Kurtzberg and Mueller's (2005, p. 337) study of daily conflict and creativity suggests that 'some forms of conflict may allow an individual to winnow through possible creative solutions.' Conflict is often a part of group activity, especially within a recording studio. It should be clarified that I will be discussing only one type of conflict that can be called 'task-based' conflict (Kurtzberg and Amabile, 2000, p. 290; Jehn, 1995, p. 259). Task-based conflict could be considered a by-product of working in a creative team in a recording studio settings, identified as the only form of conflict that is able to have a positive effect on creative outcomes, but only in small amounts (Kurtzberg and Amabile, 2000, p. 290; Jehn, 1995, p. 261). Through this creative solution it may be possible that the feeling of being creative is able to inspire positive emotions (Kurtzberg 2005, p. 60). Kurtzberg (2005) further states:

Beyond precise definitions, the word creative is used colloquially in many other ways as well: as a job description, as a description of positive affect, of praise, of pride, of recognition of the abilities of the self or another. When people tell you that they feel they have done creative work, it is a likely indication of satisfaction with their performance. (p. 51)

Working in a creative partnership or a collaborative environment is often seen positively by A&R executives. The task-based conflict that may arise has the potential to develop different avenues of thinking, reasoning and problem solving in the artist (Kurtzberg and Mueller, 2005, p. 337; James, 1995, p. 286). In some ways thinking critically while remaining

positive – critical positivity – allows any conflict to remain task-based without escalating to personal or process-based conflict.

Identifying and developing young artists is a cornerstone of modern A&R. By signing artists who are in their early teens, an A&R representative can direct and develop a sustainable career for that artist. Development from an early age allows for extensive experimentation in the studio, songwriting, and collaborating with other artists, songwriters, and producers prior to making a commercial release. In the past two decades, A&R representatives have signed and developed the following notable artists from a young age: Alicia Keys at 15, Usher at 14, Lorde at 13, Ed Sheeran at 16, and Taylor Swift at 14 (Doyle, 2012; McLean, 2014; Marshall, 2007; Spera, 2004; Yahr, 2016). Early development provides artists with skills and knowledge of the studio, songwriting, and stagecraft, which are instrumental in securing a sustainable career. Swift and Sheeran exemplify young artist development through their collaboration and experimentation in the studio—for example, collaborative songwriting and recording with other artists, songwriters, and producers appears to have been instrumental in developing Sheeran’s RnB ‘sound’. Gosling (as cited in Doyle, 2012) notes,

One characteristic feature of Sheeran’s music is his blurring of acoustic balladry and hip-hop, which finds him switching between sensitive singer-songwriter and adept rapper. Gosling says that this cross-pollination of styles was something he encouraged from the moment the pair first started working together. ‘He loves urban music ... he loved Wiley and all the rappers I’d worked with’, he says. ‘But I also love folk, so we connected on a musical level straight away. It was a perfect fusion of the two together, really. We were trying to create something new.’ (para. 7)

These early collaborations appear to have strongly affected Sheeran and his writing style early in his development, moving him away from the folk style of Damien Rice towards an RnB hybrid. Similarly, Swift’s early collaborations with songwriter Liz Rose on her albums *Taylor Swift* and *Fearless* appear to have honed her songwriting skills, allowing her to prove herself as a songwriter on *Speak Now* (Cisneros, 2013). Rose (as cited in Yahr, 2016) recalls her sessions with a young Swift: ‘The first time we wrote, I walked out and said, “I don’t

know what I was doing there ... She really didn't need me.'"(para. 7) Despite this, Rose provided structure for Swift, acting as a sounding board for ideas while editing and suggesting lyrics (Yahr, 2016).

Signed at 13, New Zealand's Lorde took four years to develop her craft as a songwriter alongside producer Joel Little (McLean, 2014). This collaboration began by Little capturing what Lorde was trying to say using melody and music (Oliver, 2014). Through experimentation with various music styles and genres, Little and Lorde settled upon a sparse, beat-driven 'sound' that emphasises lyrical content (Oliver, 2014; Pareles, 2013):

Lorde's lyrics touch on suburban boredom, peer pressure, drinking, getting snubbed and how 'maybe the Internet raised us'. It has no simple love songs, a deliberate choice: 'Some people love writing about that, and that's fine. But I personally haven't found a way to do it yet which is innovative and feels new to me.' (Pareles, 2013, para. 4)

Lorde explored her own experiences through songwriting, and her collaboration with Little resulted in a 'sound' that accentuates the lyrical content of her songs. By exploring the melodic aspects of songwriting with Little, Lorde demonstrates that development through the production process varies between artists. Similar to Swift, Lorde was a gifted songwriter from a young age, but engaged in collaboration to develop her song structure skills and knowledge (Kemp, 2016). Additionally, Lorde's and Swift's collaborations with 'all-singing' songwriter producers developed their distinct 'sounds' through studio experimentation. As accomplished songwriters, Swift and Lorde both required one other collaborator to experiment melodically. To act as an interface between the songwriter and the artistic vision, the producer operates collaboratively by experimenting with sounds that provide the artist with melodic direction. In Swift's case, Chapman performed all instruments on her demos, creating an organic process, while for Lorde, Little formed sparse electronic tracks to generate a platform for the lyrics (Kemp, 2016; Oliver, 2014; Tingen, 2011).

Lorde's and Swift's case studies establish collaboration and experimentation in the studio as essential elements in the development of young artists through the production process—their

potential as artists was developed through collaboration and experimentation with songwriting producers in the studio. Forming a ‘sound’ in the studio provides a foundation for the artist’s lyrical content; therefore, an artist relies on collaboration and experimentation within a studio setting.

Building an environment in which artists can create music can be linked directly with processes involved in education. As Robinson states, “All students have different interests and learning styles. What and how they are taught has to engage their energies, imaginations and their different ways of learning” (2011, p. 251). The same can be said of artists in the studio, as discussed above in relation to creative partnerships between three notable artists in popular music. Robinson suggests that ‘what and how’ students are taught has to ‘engage their energies’ (2011, p. 251). Education is a system, similar to the creative system discussed through the lens of historical musicology earlier in this chapter. Robinson and Aronica (2015, p.64) state that “All living systems have a tendency to develop new characteristics in response to changing circumstances.” Robinson and Aronica make it clear that education is constantly developing and evolving (as demonstrated through the balanced curriculum utilised in Finnish schools) (2015, p. 60-61) .

Similarly, Zagorski-Thomas (2014) discusses the effect recordings have had in the extension and expansion of musicianship:

The analysis of recordings has had a similar effect on performance practice to that the analysis of scores had on composition, particularly in jazz and popular music styles. Practitioners have used the detail of their heroes’ recorded performances as a starting point for learning to play and improvise, and this has led to a similar extension, alteration and expansion of the rules of performance practice. (p. 6)

This form of self-education through the study of other artists is one way that musicians develop prior to any collaborative involvement. Traditionally the way that artists develop is through collaboration with other producers, as discussed throughout this chapter. Creative collaboration often follows the creative system set down by past producers, artists, A&R executives, and record companies. The creative system may vary between practitioners in the

same way that schools vary between states. Robinson and Aronica discuss three choices in regards to educating the next generation: ‘you can make changes in the system, press for changes to the system, or take initiatives outside the system’ (2015, p. 60-61). While Robinson’s critique of the insides and outsides of a system emerges from the education sector, there are some parallels with artist development. For example, creative collaboration in the studio creates understanding of the creative system that guides those who are new in the recording environment, and stability to those who work in it. Further, an experienced artist may require collaboration in the studio rather than during songwriting and pre-production. Similarly, an inexperienced or young artist may require guidance in the studio and during the songwriting process to further develop them holistically, as determined by the level of development an artist has received.

The subject of developing artists through the production process is a gap in academic literature. This review provides a historical overview, exploring and forming a distinction between the producer and A&R representative and drawing on examples of notable producers. In addition, creating terminology that describes producer styles, roles, and functions acts as a foundation for discussions about the collaboration and experimentation involved in the producer–artist relationship and about the development of young artists in the studio. This foundational understanding of producer styles, roles, and functions in experienced and inexperienced artist development through the production process forms the basis for this research.

Methodology

This thesis combines practice-led creative work, qualitative questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, ethnography, and critical reflections. The practice-led research component was the production of two EPs by two separate artists. These EPs were rehearsed, recorded, and mixed using QUT's studio facilities, which created no financial burden for students. The first artist is a young country singer-songwriter, Caitlyn Wessels, who required a producer's assistance to develop her as an artist through collaboration and experimentation in the studio, in addition to developing her songs, 'sound', and understanding of the production process. The second artist is an Australian rock band, Street Pieces, each of whom holds a bachelor of music from QUT. Street Pieces had a thorough understanding of the production process and what it entails. These two contrasting artists required different approaches to their development, which resulted in varying development levels. All participants, including myself (as producer), undertook a qualitative research component in the form of questionnaires. As producer, I also interviewed and shared reflections with Caitlyn Wessels through a semi-structured interview; I did not do the same with Street Pieces due to the limited timeframe available to record and mix their EP.

The aim of this project was to research artist development through the production process by focusing on the producer-artist relationship and the experience of recording in the studio. The project focuses on artistic creativity while acknowledging that business creativity and managerial creativity are two other important areas of artist development. Recording two EPs with separate artists gave me the opportunity to study two contrasting levels of development. Due to the project's time restraints, I assumed the role of producer in order to provide detailed reflections on the production process and interactions between participants. At the beginning of the EP production, I gave all participants questionnaires in order to allow them to consider their answers throughout the production process. This method was particularly effective, as it allowed participants to work through the questionnaire during sessions. Caitlyn and I endeavoured to take notes throughout the production process in order to reflect during that time, but this became difficult during guitar overdubs, where our attention was on writing and recording the appropriate parts. The aim of these notes was to inform our reflections

following the project. I wrote regular journal entries after each rehearsal and studio session, which allowed me to create one document exploring the reflections documented during the making of the entire EP.

The interview with Caitlyn was conducted during the mixing stage by my postgraduate colleague, musician and researcher Sarah Collyer. It lasted approximately an hour and a half. The initial questions were general; subsequent questions focused on each song and emphasised the artist's vision of each piece. This was to provide insight into the producer–artist relationship by contrasting or aligning each individual's vision for the song. Despite the importance of these ethnographic elements, the interviews played less of a role in the data collection and analysis than my own critical reflections as participant observer. Due to my position as producer, engineer, and musician in the creative work, I relied on retrospective critical reflections more than field notes. Critical reflections allowed me to view the creative works retrospectively, cross referencing my experiences with the questionnaires of the participants and the semi-structured interviews. Any ethnographic field notes were used to reflect critically upon the creative work, and to inform the critical reflections used throughout.

Methodology

I chose practice-led research as it allowed me to operate as the producer within the creative work. Situating myself within the research provided an opportunity to experience artist development through the production process firsthand. By experiencing artist development through the producer role, I hoped to form an understanding of the key elements required to develop an artist. Haseman and Mafe (as cited in Smith & Dean, 2009) describe what practice means in an academic context:

Practice needs to be understood in its wider sense as all the activity an artist/creative practitioner undertakes. Practitioners think, read and write as well as look, listen and make. In order to understand all activity the artist undertakes to develop through the production process, I chose to look, listen, and create through a practice-led approach in the recording studio. The research will be accompanied by a written component that will provide

background information through a literature review, the methods, methodology and analysis of the data. (p. 214)

I used a questionnaire to gather data from all participants, as this method provides the easiest way to gather reflective-style data in a clear, qualitative way. The questionnaire format allowed for the comparison and contrast of both EPs in order to provide further evidence of artist development. The questionnaire's reflective content can be defined as embodying an ethnographic method. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) describe ethnography as follows:

Involve[ing] the ethnographer participating ... in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions—in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on issues that are the focus of the research. (p. 3)

This method allowed me to identify the reflections that supported my own experiences about the process. The results then offered insight into the expectations, experiences, relationship, and communication between the artists and the participants. Prior to semi-structured interviews, Pras, Cance, and Guastavino (2013, p. 381–385) employed questionnaires to determine traditional and current studio practices through different perspectives in their study. Craig (1999, pp. 4–7) also used questionnaires prior to semi-structured interviews in his research to determine the difference between traditional and current A&R. Further, Persson (2006, p. 27–37) conducted a questionnaire among producers discussing changes in the music industry for the past 30 years. The standardised structure of the production process is familiar to me, as I have studied the production of music for over six years. Due to this familiarity, I situated myself as a producer within a practice-led approach to research. This allowed me to utilise critical reflection as the primary data source. As noted by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 3), this ethnographic view provides insight into artist development from the producer's perspective, resulting in critical reflections that offer a holistic understanding of artist development through the production process. Guillaumier (2016) describes critical reflection in students of the creative industries:

Reflection is considered essential for the growth and personal development of an artist, and indispensable in helping students plan their artistic trajectory. It enables them to map their development within an ever-shifting landscape. Without observation and critical thought, no creative endeavour, process or project can be both successful and sustainable. (p. 354)

In this same way, I situated myself within the research in order to further understand artist development. This required me to reflect extensively on the production process, to gain insight into artist development by observing, and to reflecting critically upon the themes that emerged: expectation of roles, experience throughout the process, collaboration, and relationships between all participants. To complement the critical reflection data, I facilitated semi-structured interviews with artists to ensure that sufficient reflective data was gathered. The semi-structured interviews were conducted by one of my academic peers who is known to the artist, in order to make the dialogue natural and comfortable. Galetta and Cross (2013) state that

Semi-structured interview[s] incorporate both open-ended and more theoretically driven questions, eliciting data grounded in the experience of the participant as well as data guided by existing constructs in the particular discipline within which one is conducting research. (p. 45)

Open-ended questions provided a platform for the artist and producer to reflect on their experiences of the production process. Similarly, Pras et al. (2013, p. 383–385) conducted semi-structured interviews for their study of producer interactions in the studio. Additionally, Zwaan and ter Bogt (2009, p. 91–92) conducted semi-structured interviews with Dutch A&R representatives to discuss important factors for signing potential artists. These studies outline the success of semi-structured interviews for collecting qualitative data on popular music. This method allowed me to draw upon one artist's experiences throughout the production process and elicit responses regarding the general themes that I had begun to formulate.

The Caitlyn Wessels EP

The project began immediately following ethics approval, and due to time restraints, was sped up as the music faculty relocated. Following ethics clearance, I was contacted by another postgraduate student, Sarah Collyer, with a candidate for my research, Caitlyn Wessels. I contacted Caitlyn via email to discuss her interest and outline her requirements as an artist. This discussion was to ensure that Caitlyn would be an appropriate artist for the project and enabled me to give her a basic overview of what was needed. We then conducted regular weekly meetings for approximately one month to discuss Caitlyn's vision for the project. During these meetings, we discussed rehearsal structure, the recording process, the recording method of various instruments, and our requirements and expectations of each other within the producer–artist relationship. This was to ensure that we both shared the same vision before heading into the studio. During our regular meetings, it was decided that the EP would consist of six songs, one an acoustic-focused piece, in order to contrast with the backing band and the solo acoustic style with which Caitlyn is familiar.

As Caitlyn was young and inexperienced in the production process, I assumed an 'all-dancing' producer style and functioned as a songwriter, arranger, and producer, which enabled me to influence all facets of production. This presented an opportunity to create detailed data necessary to monitor artist development throughout the production process.

Caitlyn and I proceeded to record acoustic demos of the pieces we had chosen in order to provide rehearsal tracks for the backing band that would be accompanying her. It was during this session that she and I wrote a song for the EP: 'Dinner for Two'. This was unplanned, and allowed us to connect and solidify our producer–artist relationship. The songwriting was a moment that is difficult to replicate, but did have a large effect on the production process, as it allowed us to serve a shared vision. This created a sense of trust between artist and producer that might not otherwise have been present.

Following the demo recording and regular meetings, Caitlyn and I began recruiting the musicians who would accompany Caitlyn on the EP. We contacted a series of musicians from within our own personal networks via email. These individuals were then interviewed in

person to discuss their participation in the project. I assumed the role of electric guitarist, which enabled me to provide guidance as both a musician and producer, giving me greater control over the rhythm and feel of the songs. Finalising the rhythm section was difficult, as we had a number of musicians from which to choose. In the final meeting, we decided on the drummer and organised our preliminary rehearsal. This rehearsal involved two potential bassists, and was an opportunity for Caitlyn and I to determine who would be more appropriate for the project. We subsequently discussed the candidates and confirmed a bassist for the project. Weekly rehearsals began immediately, and moved to a twice-weekly rehearsal schedule three weeks prior to recording. During a supervisory meeting two weeks before recording, my supervisor suggested that I source another electric guitarist in order to focus on the EP production process. I therefore replaced myself with the Street Pieces guitarist in order to focus on producing, engineering, and arranging. One of the tracks, 'I See You', was acoustic, with light piano and strings backing a raw vocal and acoustic guitar. This song required more time to secure the backing band, which pushed rehearsals back to the last two weeks before recording. This was due to the difficulty of finding string players available for the project.

Once we had locked in a cellist and a piano player, we held a rehearsal. The possible arrangements discussed in this rehearsal gave me the idea that we should source a violinist to accompany the acoustic guitar throughout the song. We recruited one, the cellist's sister, who then joined us for the last rehearsal before entering the studio. This was not an ideal situation, but could not be avoided due to the QUT faculty move requiring the studios to be offline for several months. Despite minimal rehearsal time, we confirmed the instrumentation and created a basic arrangement. This made me confident that the song would be recorded successfully with minimal issues.

After six weeks of rehearsals, three weeks of single rehearsals and three weeks of twice-weekly rehearsals, we entered the studio. Studio time was distributed over a series of sessions to ensure the longevity of the musicians, the artist, and myself, as I was both the producer, tracking, and mixing engineer. This studio time consisted of five days in total, with one day off between days two and three. The day-long sessions ran from 2 pm to 2 am for both days of bed tracks with the bassist and drummer. The three days of overdubs ran from 9:30 am to 1

am the following morning for each of the three days, with one of these running until 2:30 am. This schedule was full and exhausting, but everything was recorded to a high quality in regards to both production and performance. Subsequent to recording, I collected the questionnaires, which allowed each participant two weeks to finalise their thoughts on the production process. Sarah interviewed Caitlyn in January 2016 to confirm the completion of the recording process. Following the interview, I ensured that all reflections were finalised and that I had access to Caitlyn's reflections in order to compare and contrast our thoughts. The project was then mixed in the Z9 facilities when the studios became available again in April 2016.

The Street Pieces EP

The second EP was initiated through discussion with my academic supervisors, Yanto Browning, Gavin Carfoot, and Phil Graham, regarding the weight of my practice-led research. Following the meeting, it was confirmed that a second EP would be recorded and produced. This meeting occurred in late April, and it was therefore imperative that the second artist be at a higher level of development than Caitlyn to ensure a rapid and effective recording process. I first contacted Alex Miller of Street Pieces, who was the guitarist on Caitlyn's EP. After discussion with his fellow band members, it was decided that the band would record a four-track EP during May for three intensive sessions. During the three weeks following the initial discussion with Alex, Street Pieces, and I confirmed the four tracks that would feature on the EP. I also attended one rehearsal to ensure that the band played as I had hoped, in a well-rehearsed and professional manner. Due to the considerable schedule restraints, we discussed various changes via email and phone calls, these changes were then made during regular band rehearsals. This was to notify the band of any possible adjustments prior to recording.

The first day at the studio was used to lay the bed tracks for all four songs. This included all instruments: drums, bass, guitar, and a scratch vocal. That evening, we tracked vocals for two songs. Two days later, we tracked vocals and some percussion overdubs. This allowed us to focus on any remaining percussion along with guitar overdubs during the last day of recording. As I had done with the Caitlyn Wessels EP, I made the questionnaire available to

all Street Pieces members at the commencement of our time in the studio. It was problematic for the band to write during sessions, as they were all playing together for the duration of the bed tracks. This meant that the most appropriate period for reflections was during overdub time. For this reason and our considerable time restraints, reflections in the form of journals and interviews were not undertaken for the Street Pieces EP.

Synthesising the Two EPs

The varying methods used for the two sessions was due to time limitations and the artists' differing levels of prior studio experience. I elected to simplify data collection for Street Pieces, as each member held a bachelor of music and therefore had the skills required to reflect effectively in a questionnaire. This differed to the approach I used with Caitlyn Wessels, whom I had not worked with prior to this study. Because of this, I used a more comprehensive approach, ensuring that detailed reflections would be the result of one or more of the methods used. Due to the difference between the EPs, my intention was to compare and contrast the two artists' production processes. Taking notes and reflecting each day provided additional data that correlated with the questionnaires and interviews. Through these questionnaires, interviews, and reflections, I established that the differences in experience level impacted the two EPs in unique ways. Caitlyn began to develop knowledge of the studio environment, gaining confidence throughout the production process, while Street Pieces refined their studio performances by critically analysing their own performances and constantly re-recording. These differences, particularly in relation to experienced and inexperienced musicians, are further discussed in the data analysis section.

The Project Structure

This thesis focuses on practice-led research in the form of two EPs, each created by a different artist. One EP was recorded by a solo artist with a full three-piece backing band, and the other by a four-piece rock band. The production process used is an industry standard approach to recording that entails rehearsing, pre-production demos, recording, and mixing. Within my study, this process created an opportunity to contrast the two EPs and provide a greater understanding of artist development throughout the production process. Rehearsals

required each artist to establish their artistic vision alongside the producer, who supported the development of their music. This support was created by experimentation and collaboration in order to secure song arrangement and instrumentation. Pre-production required the artists to record ‘scratch tracks’: guide tracks for drums and bass. This guidance provided me, as producer, a basis from which to develop production ideas. These ideas can typically include an outboard compressor on the vocal, a natural reverb created within the spaces being used, using an artificial reverb, or suggesting a different tone of voice. Recording requires the artist to perform to the best of their ability and the producer to guide the artist through the creative process of giving a strong performance in a studio environment. The mixing stage requires a mixing engineer—who might be the artist’s producer, the recording engineer for their sessions, or a third party—to mix the song. Mixing is a process whereby audio is manipulated dynamically and panoramically, and often effected in order to create an appealing version for listeners. The final stage of the production process is called mastering, which requires another third party to prepare the EP for mass consumption. This mastering includes an overall equalization (EQ) and compression, which are required for both radio and online distribution. I did not perform mastering as a producer and have not analysed it in this thesis.

Different Groups: The Two Creative Projects

The project began with one EP to fulfil the practice-led portion of the research. The first artist studied, Caitlyn Wessels, was a country singer–songwriter with no professional-level recordings and little recorded or live performance experience with accompaniments or other members. I anticipated that her young age and limited recording experience would offer an opportunity to understand artist development at a base level. This study therefore assisted me in identifying key skills and what basic production knowledge an artist would require prior to undertaking a professional recording. Caitlyn’s lack of experience working with a backing band gave me the opportunity to develop her collaborative and arrangement skills. One notable point is that the backing musicians consisted of individuals that Caitlyn had not met prior to the project. Furthermore, the band was a mix of experienced and inexperienced musicians with no studio experience.

The project also involved an Australian rock band, Street Pieces, in order to provide a contrast between two different artists with varying levels of experience. Street Pieces had previously released an EP and a number of singles. The band members range in age from 23 to 30 years, and each has extensive performing and recording experience. This suggests that each band member had played in multiple bands and ensembles prior to forming Street Pieces. Due to their higher levels of experience, it was less challenging to discuss production matters with these musicians in comparison with Caitlyn. Contrasting the experience levels of the two artists illustrated the differences in their development through the production process.

Variables

As previously identified, the primary difference between the two recording artists was their level of previous experience. Aspects in which they differed considerably included collaboration and knowledge of the production process. Lack of studio experience is likely to affect an artist's confidence, and therefore their performance in the studio. This performance could be measured by the amount of takes required to secure a strong performance as well as the overall quality of the final performances on the EP. Lack of experience in this area can lead to difficulties in communicating, which affected the arrangement and instrumentation ideas on the Caitlyn Wessels EP. This was in clear contrast to Street Pieces, who had experience working together through the production process both as Street Pieces and in other ensembles. Their experiences allowed them to develop a stronger level of collaboration with each other, leading to clear communication throughout the production process. These variables—knowledge of the production process and collaboration in the studio environment—can be described as 'experience'. This provides a measurable variable that allowed me to compare and contrast the two groups through the data collected in questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and ethnographic and auto-ethnographic reflections. By analysing the data, I aim to identify what is needed to develop inexperienced artists through the production process in four key areas: expectation, experience, relationship, and communication.

Conditions

The primary condition of this practice-led research was the production process. As described earlier, the production process is a standardised way of producing a song. There might be minor alterations to this process, such as the way different instruments are recorded or the amount of rehearsals undertaken, but the general process remains the same. This broadly consistent industry standard approach called ‘the production process’ is flexible, catering to all levels of development. Firstly, there are rehearsals, followed by pre-production demos, then recording and mixing, and finally mastering. Using this standardised process meant that each artist or participant could confidently take part in the project.

The constant that was measurably different throughout the production process was the studio. The studio was unlike the rehearsal room in that the environment was unfamiliar. The artist and musicians were often performing in a way that might seem unnatural, such as while wearing headphones or in different rooms. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the EPs were recorded in two different studios: Caitlyn Wessels was recorded at Gasworks Studio in Newstead, while Street Pieces was recorded in the new Z9 facility at Kelvin Grove. The major variations between the two studios were the number of rooms, the design of each room, the isolation between each room, and the patching system. These elements affected the level of visual communication available, and determined the level of comfort that could be given to musicians during recording. Few windows and minimal patching options made it difficult to emulate a rehearsal setting for the Caitlyn Wessels EP. The Z9 facility, however, which has windows between each room and patching options that allow for all musicians to easily be in the same room simultaneously, was quite different. Therefore, the Z9 facility made it easier to emulate a comfortable rehearsal-like setting for the artists. Understanding that the unnatural studio environment would present a difficulty, I provided other ways for the musicians to observe each other. This allowed visual communication to occur throughout the sessions, and I achieved it primarily by patching each musician into the live room, where they could interact in a natural way. Visual communication created support and comfort similar to that felt in the rehearsal rooms we used in preparation for the recording. In this way, a positive impact was created throughout the tracking stage, resulting in a higher-quality performance by the musicians.

Limitations

I found that the combination of practice-led research alongside questionnaires, reflections, and semi-structured interviews gave me a well-rounded view of the artists' and participants' thoughts regarding development and the production process. One particular limitation was the lack of rehearsal time for the guitarist, Alex, on the Caitlyn Wessels EP. A minor issue, this was resolved through instrument-specific rehearsals in order to ensure that Alex learned the necessary musical elements. Due to Alex's experience in performing and recording, the time restraints did not affect his ability to perform well in the studio.

A major limitation was the considerable time restrictions on both creative works caused by the QUT Music and Sound Faculty moving into the new Z9 creative facility. The building opening date was pushed back, resulting in over four months of inactivity due to the decommissioning of all QUT studios during this period. This restricted the amount of time available for the second creative work, limiting data collection and the time I could take to develop *Street Pieces* through the production process. These limitations made establishing contrasts between the two creative works more difficult, as the data collected from the *Street Pieces* EP was limited to the questionnaires each band member completed. The quantity of this data is in stark contrast to the questionnaires, interview, and reflective writing undertaken for the Caitlyn Wessels EP. Despite this setback, the members of *Street Pieces* all provided comprehensive data offering insight into their experience of the production process.

Conclusion

I chose a practice-led approach in order to explore artist development through the production process. This practical approach allowed me to situate myself within the research to provide unique commentary on the production process. This firsthand experience also allowed me to interact with the artists, developing their skills and knowledge of the production process, while also yielding time for experimentation. The creative work was supported by questionnaires, a semi-structured interview, and auto-ethnographic reflections that made the thematic analysis and comprehensive reflective data possible. These methods provided qualitative data in support of the emergent themes: expectation, experience, relationship, and

communication. These themes facilitated my identifying the key elements of artist development. One issue I observed following the completion of the first EP was the time-consuming nature of the reflections. I had to complete the reflections myself as well as follow up with all artists to ensure that they finished their reflections in a timely manner. I suggest a revised method for further study, involving the artists in short semi-structured interviews at the end of, or during, the recording each day. This could mitigate any time restrictions by involving another individual, possibly a postgraduate peer, to conduct these at every session.

Overall, the methods chosen offered data that informed an understanding of artist development through the production process in relation to artist experience and expectation. The research methods could be improved upon by conducting semi-structured interviews during each session, or keeping a video journal—these methods could have provided more comprehensive results through constant reflection. A practice-led approach was a good start to researching artist development, but restricted the amount of projects I could experience. The small sample size led me to reach broad conclusions, as I chose two artists with considerably different levels of experience. Despite these restrictions, I found that the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were successful due to the reflections that they produced. In this way, my research offers a starting point for further studies in the area of artist development, specifically addressing the various levels of artist experience.

Data Analysis

Throughout this study, I have combined the literature review findings with the data collected by thematic analysis. The four themes—expectation, relationship, communication, and experience—seek to identify key areas of artist development within the production process of rehearsal, recording, and mixing. The first theme discussed in this analysis is expectation, which aims to identify any preconceived ideas that can create a positive or negative effect on the production process. The second theme, relationship, explores how the interactions and collaborations between artist, musicians, and the producer aid in the development of both songs and individuals. The theme of communication outlines the importance of honesty, positivity, and direction throughout the production process. This begins with producer and artist and filters down to all other musicians and participants. The theme of experience identifies different areas in which development occurred throughout the making of the two EPs. Experience also suggests distinct points of differentiation between each participant, which contributes to understanding the overall development of each artist and their EP.

Many of these themes are linked, creating some crossover throughout the analysis. This blurring of themes and boundaries reoccurs throughout the recording of the two EPs, due to the variant nature of these experiences throughout different stages of the production process. These themes are not exhaustive, but provide a broad overview of artist development throughout that process. And due to the reflective nature of this data analysis, the length of time between the project and the completion of the thesis introduces complexities, as my participants may recall their experiences differently. These reflections are not intended to impact positively or negatively on the participants, but rather illustrate the complex issues that arise during the production process.

Expectation

In the studio, expectation affects performance, attitude, and communication, resulting in either a positive or negative experience. Experience is attained by recording in a studio environment numerous times; this informs a basic understanding of the process and allows the artist to form realistic expectations. Some participants did not have this experience, so I attempted to manage their expectation by verbally providing an overview of the production process during rehearsals and again before, and throughout recording. Caitlyn's expectations were managed appropriately, as she required pre-production demos. Pre-production recording provides a foundational understanding of the studio environment through a basic recording session, which allows inexperienced musicians to development their skills and knowledge. Due to the project's time restraints, it was not possible to provide pre-production recording for all musicians. Due to these time restrictions and inexperienced participants, the data reflects both positive and negative experiences due to artists' unmet expectations. By contrast, Street Pieces are an experienced band who rehearsed extensively prior to their pre-production. These rehearsals and studio experience created positive expectations prior to the recording and led to a supportive studio environment.

Expectation within music has primarily been studied in relation to the expectation of the listener, rather than the expectation of the music practitioner (Tillmann, B., Poulin-Charronnat, B. and Bigand, E. 2014, p. 105-113). Despite this, Huron (2008) defines expectation as it is used in this analysis:

One definition of expectation might classify it as a form of mental or corporeal “belief” that some event or class of events is likely to happen in the future. Such “beliefs” are evident in a person’s “action-readiness”—that is, changes of posture, metabolism, or conscious thought that prepare the individual for certain possible outcomes but not for others. Such expectations can differ in strength of conviction. (p. 41)

This definition is able to encapsulate not only how a listener expects, but how an artist may expect during a creative process, such as an EP recording. Huron's (2008) description that the

'beliefs' are evident by a person's 'action-readiness' are evident throughout the expectation chapter, particularly the ways that different expectations are held by causal and experienced musicians involved in the study.

'Seasoned' Musicians v. 'Casual' Musicians in the Caitlyn Wessels EP

For the purposes of this study, I divided participants into two groups: seasoned musicians and casual musicians. Seasoned musicians are 'experienced'—as music industry professionals, they perform and record regularly in multiple ensembles; these also often teach music, or have had teaching experience. Casual musicians are 'inexperienced'—these individuals perform either as a hobby or have learned an instrument in order to support their church or community. Categorising the musicians involved in the two projects yields insight into their different stages of personal development and reveals differences between the two EPs. Expectations regarding time management and organisation, for example, shows a contrast between the seasoned and casual musicians, particularly those involved in the Caitlyn Wessels EP. The data indicates that the seasoned musicians were positive, and found each session productive and with clear direction and organisation. Quotations regarding expectation from the seasoned musicians before the process include the following:

- 'Producer—musical direction—same for solo artist' (A. Miller, personal communication, November 20, 2015)
- 'Encouragement and clear communication' (S. Collyer, personal communication, November 20, 2015)
- 'Clear communication in all areas of the project' (J. Morrisson, personal communication, November 20, 2015).

The seasoned musicians all expected clear communication and organisation during the recording of the Caitlyn Wessels EP. Quotations from the seasoned musicians during and after the process include the following:

- 'Positive attitudes in rehearsal and recording studio from all involved. This made it enjoyable and relaxed—whilst we were still productive and focused' (S. Collyer, personal communication, November 20, 2015)
- 'The producer and artist were thoroughly clear with what they wanted for me as a drummer in this project' (J. Morrisson, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

- ‘Communication was easy. Rehearsals and recording times and place were clear and efficient—both the process of and the communication of when, where, etc.’ (S. Collyer, personal communication, November 20, 2015)
- ‘They helped with creative suggestions and encouragement’ (A. Miller, personal communication, November 20, 2015).

This feedback depicts a decisive, clear, encouraging, and organised producer who clearly communicates their intentions and expectations for each session. These notes also suggest that the seasoned musicians from the Caitlyn Wessels EP have experienced organisation and time management that was not to the same standard they experienced during the sessions for Caitlyn Wessels. Therefore, the more a musician records or performs in the studio, the greater their understanding of that environment, allowing their production process expectations to be met due to their previous studio experience.

The notable point of difference between seasoned musicians and casual musicians is time management, and this is evident in the data collected from the casual musicians. The casual musicians, particularly the string players—Ashleigh and Victoria Holm—found there to be a lack of direction, organisation, and time management, often describing the process in a negative way. Some quotations from the casual players include the following:

- ‘Recording itself was lots of fun made bittersweet by poor time planning, organisation, and communication. I was not pleased with the amount of time Ashleigh and I sat around for. I understand how it can be difficult to manage time when recording but felt that it could be improved on to some extent’ (V. Holm, personal communication, November 20, 2015)
- ‘Yes everyone was encouraging, enthusiastic; however, there was no real leadership or direction from the artist and producer’ (A. Holm, personal communication, November 20, 2015)
- ‘I do feel that communication and organisation have been lacking. I’m not sure that everyone has the same “picture” of what the song should sound like’ (V. Holm, personal communication, November 20, 2015).

The negative experience could possibly be due to the musician’s expectation that recording would take a certain amount of time; or, possibly, that a song only takes three minutes to play, so it should only take three minutes to record. Based on this negative feedback, it appears that

expectations were not met, which suggests that verbal discussions to outline the production process is not an effective way to prepare casual musicians for the studio environment. This understanding of the production process heavily affected the casual musicians' expectation. Caitlyn says of this initial naiveté,

Just how long it [recording] can take. I didn't realise it took so much effort on how ... and what things have to go into a song. Like, even just working out where you're going to have riffs. Or you know, do you have... the drums to go all the way through... Like that could take so long so I didn't realise that would yeah... Take a long time. (C. Wessels, personal communication, February 29, 2016)

The length of time it can take to record a song is determined by many factors, including the time it takes to record a solid take, discuss and implement arrangement changes, or even describe a different way to play a section or part to the musicians. These factors played a large part in recording the Caitlyn Wessels EP, as Caitlyn had limited studio experience, which led to lengthy discussions regarding different arrangement changes, or descriptions of new parts. Despite constant warnings that recording could take a considerable amount of time, I feel that seasoned musicians, producers, and engineers take the understanding of 'studio time' for granted. This was clearly a point of contention for some of the casual musicians. Therefore, one major distinction between seasoned musicians and casual musicians is the level of expectation regarding time management and organisation. This could have been mitigated in a number of ways, particularly through pre-production recordings. These would have provided a basic understanding of the studio environment, developing the artist and musicians in the two areas of contention: time management and organisation.

Caitlyn Wessels EP and Time Management—Touching upon 'Studio Time'

I feel that throughout the production process, Caitlyn developed an understanding of 'studio time' and learned that there could never be too much organisation. The discussion throughout Caitlyn's semi-structured interview revolved around the idea that we could have planned, prepared, and discussed more ideas prior to rehearsals and recording:

And even if we had more time during the week to actually catch up and go what are the things that we can change about these rehearsals? Like what you know say 'Crawling Away', what can we change? What's good here? What's not? Rather than coming to the rehearsal and using that as a place to talk about what we could do. (J. Laube, personal communication, February 29, 2016)

Everything takes so much longer, that's one of the things I learned. You think something's going to take like an hour and it will take seven rehearsals. (C. Wessels, personal communication, February 29, 2016)

It is clear from the data that Caitlyn and some of the casual musicians quickly learned that despite the organisation and time management skills of the producer, the production process can always be improved upon. I had not produced an EP to this level before, which was yet another limiting factor in regards to organisation. I feel that this EP developed the artist, producer, and musicians alike due to the commitment and professionalism needed throughout. Despite delays in studio time and ethics approval, Caitlyn's backing band rehearsed and recorded with minimal issues. The issue of time management refers to minor frustrations experienced by the casual musicians. This affected their experience, as they had never recorded before and seem to have expected a different situation. The data also suggests that as a producer, I should have described the length of time it takes to record in greater detail, and allowed time for pre-production recording in order to simulate the recording process. I am referring again to creating a foundational understanding of the studio environment. Caitlyn describes how having less recording experience affected her in the studio:

Yes, on gaining more experience and handling long and stressful situations, and no because some things I don't really have time to do, just kinda do it and more or without properly learning. (C. Wessels, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

Understanding the studio as an environment along with all the necessary techniques required to create a convincing performance can be extremely difficult. This became clear both during the recording and through the data collected. The more experience in performing and recording the musicians had, the greater their chance of performing to the best of their abilities within the studio. One casual musician describes his first day in the studio:

Felt rather out of place on the first day of recording. Studio's professional vibe feels slightly intimidating, but not to the point where my abilities are affected.

(C. Klein, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

The studio's unnatural environment appears to have initially affected the casual musician's ability to perform comfortably. This was reinforced by the time taken to track the first song on the first day. Furthermore, as the producer, it was noticeable to me that the casual musicians struggled to get comfortable in the new environment, as they might have expected a similar experience to that of rehearsals. To overcome this issue, I decided to record some practice takes of the song and bring the musicians into the studio control room to listen back to their takes. By providing feedback on how different parts were played and suggesting that the musicians could look to each other for support or cues similar to the way they did in rehearsals, I found that the casual musicians quickly appeared more comfortable and confident in the studio. This process took varying lengths of time depending on how inexperienced the musicians were, both in the studio and in regards to performing in general. Time taken to settle into a track typically took between three to five takes, but this would depend on the track and the musicians required. As there were no pre-production recordings, the Caitlyn Wessels EP was a steep learning curve for casual musicians. I would have liked to follow up with another recording to see if I received the same feedback from the artist and casual musicians if we applied the necessary changes.

By assessing foundational knowledge of the studio environment and the production process through the questionnaires, I conclude that expectation plays a critical role in the experience of the artist and participants. This is discussed further in the Street Pieces EP analysis.

Street Pieces: Expectations of 'Seasoned' Musicians

Street Pieces are a tight-knit band of seasoned musicians, and their questionnaire responses suggest a different perspective to that expressed by those involved in the Caitlyn Wessels EP. The Caitlyn Wessels musicians discussed expectations regarding time management, communication, direction, and the studio environment. Street Pieces focused on pushing their performance abilities, refining their production skills, and keeping communication positive and open. These expectations indicate a level of studio experience that was absent from the Caitlyn Wessels EP recording, instead suggesting musicians who are comfortable in the studio. Furthermore, it depicts Street Pieces as band members who are open and honest with each other, which is clear from their questionnaire responses. Here, the band members state their expectations:

I expect to develop my overall vocal performance, my skills as a song writer/producer, my knowledge of recording techniques, and my collaboration skills. (B. Tilney, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

I expect open discussion of song ideas from the whole team and I expect everyone to trust in each other's ability to perform at the highest standard. (B. Tilney, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

I expect to develop my performance skills, my ability to musically 'think fast' when new ideas are suggested and tested, and my ability to develop my interpersonal skills and relations in this project... (J. Mengede, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

I expect to be supported via my colleagues giving me their honest opinion on my playing and what needs to be improved or what parts I need to put more in the spotlight. I expect Jacob to do the same, basically 'say it as it is' so we can all be on the same page and reach a satisfactory sound that all parties involved are happy with. (J. Mengede, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

I expect general, critical positivity. The studio can be quite daunting and exposing, since your performance is under very close scrutiny, so I hope that my band mates and Jacob as producer can guide me to achieve my best without making me feel artistically inferior. (M. McLachlan, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

These quotations are in clear contrast to the expectations of the casual musicians from the Caitlyn Wessels EP, who focused on time management, organisation, and the studio environment. The Street Pieces quotations illustrate an expectation that their time in the studio will push their abilities, and that working in a challenging environment requires clear, honest communication, in addition to creating an encouraging and supportive environment. Their expectations regarding production skills were met, as each band member had prior studio experience. This shaped a supportive environment that encouraged the development of skills and clear communication through knowledge exchange. In this way, the band developed themselves by fostering an environment that allowed each member to share their knowledge and skills as required. Their understanding of the studio environment gave me the opportunity to discuss ideas and teach production skills to some of the members with little production knowledge. In this way, fulfilling their expectations of skills development. With clear expectations and a high level of musicianship, Street Pieces could have been a difficult band to develop through the studio process. Despite their level of experience, my aim was to refine their abilities by expanding their knowledge and skills, which fulfilled the expectations outlined in the questionnaires. Understanding the band's expectations allowed me to slightly alter my production style from that of an 'all-dancing' producer to that of a 'collaborator' in order to better suit their requirements. This meant that I supported the band as an equal, occasionally operating Pro Tools as an engineer and critiquing their performances in a detailed manner. My aim was to capture the energy of their live performance. To do so, I pushed the band further than they expected, providing feedback on each take and detailing changes that focused on the 'feel' of each song. The band members then discussed these points before their next take.

Overall, the theme of expectation played a crucial role in the musicians' experience, particularly Ashleigh and Victoria, casual musicians on the Caitlyn Wessels EP. Based primarily upon the questionnaire data, it seems evident that the seasoned musicians' expectations were met, whereas the casual musicians' expectations were not, resulting in varied levels of enjoyment. The casual musicians' expectations were particularly not met in the areas of organisation and time management. These points of contention should have been addressed during pre-production recording, but only Caitlyn herself recorded initial demos due to time limitations. To improve the process for the casual musicians, I would have taken time to pre-record a minimum of two songs to prepare the backing band for recording. Undertaking pre-production demos could have provided them with further understanding of the studio environment and allowed me to improve my organisational skills as a producer and researcher. Additional solutions include greater communication and involvement in the project's planning stages, and more thorough references for each song—meaning that each song would have a few songs or ideas that the artist could incorporate in their vision for it. Findings from the Street Pieces EP project indicate that expectations were met effectively, which created a positive environment and a well-recorded EP.

I conclude that through the production process, the participants each developed an understanding of the studio environment, including the organisation and time management associated with recording. Caitlyn developed an understanding of time management in the studio through her experience tracking the EP, while Street Pieces refined their performance ability through the initial tracking stage, confirming their expectations.

Relationship

The producer–artist relationship is often essential in developing the artist and fulfilling their artistic vision. Through trust and mutual respect, collaborative experiences support the development of both the artist and their supporting musicians. Academic literature and trade publications evidence the importance of the producer-artist relationship through illustrations of successful collaborations (as discussed throughout the literature review above). Doyle (2011) reveals that behind any successful artist and album is a 'shrewd' facilitator, citing a number of producer/ managers – notably John Hammond (p. 167). Doyle (2011) further

states that ‘...under different circumstances [the producer] might perform any or all of those functions’ (p. 167). These functions include ‘...agent, manager, A&R person, engineer, producer, or “indie” label boss’ (p. 167). The various roles each participant played to ensure the success of the recordings is evident in the data, which highlights that collaborative experiences and working as a team formed the basis for close relationships and positive experiences in the production of the two EPs.

Gender roles are also significant in these settings, as Djupvik (2017) explores in regard to the producer-artist relationship, specifically focusing on the images and video of the artist's work. Gender roles as expressed through the artist’s visual image are out of the scope of this project, although it should be noted that gender did emerge once in the data, during discussions about the relationships and dynamic of participants within the studio. This data was isolated to one question during the semi-structured interview and therefore could not be expanded within the study. Despite the lack of data here, combining a studio based EP recording with the study of gender roles in the artist producer relationship could be a compelling future study.

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The Caitlyn Wessels EP

The emphasis on relationship in the data provides insight into the musicians’ experience of collaboration and teamwork throughout the project. According to the bassist, Caleb Klein,

While I’m sure the final tracks will sound great, and that’s kind of the whole point, the thing I’m taking away from this is the time spent together playing original music with an awesome group of people. (C. Klein, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

The drummer, James Morrisson, agrees:

I absolutely loved the rehearsals where Caitlyn brought in chocolate and lollies, also the rehearsal [where] we had pizza. I think I just really enjoyed hanging out and playing music with some really cool people. (J. Morrisson, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

The cellist, Victoria, also mentions support and encouragement:

I was extremely nervous for the first meet up as the whole experience was new and I had only ever read sheet music before. My nerves were mostly quelled after meeting everyone and seeing how kind and supportive they were (even after my dreadful first takes). (V. Holm, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

Caleb's assertion corroborates with that of seasoned musician and drummer James—both identify that the fellow musicians and producer made the process enjoyable. I also found that when the band got into the studio, they were focused, yet also enjoying themselves. During the interview, I mentioned one of the highlights of the tracking stage 'when we nailed stuff just seeing the other guys involved and get really excited when we were like—this is the song, we've nailed it' (J. Laube, personal communication, February 29, 2016). These relationships were not just for fun, however—the enjoyment was a by-product of some lengthy rehearsals and considerable effort that went into ensuring that each musician would perform each song to the best of their ability. Once we had the songs rehearsed to a solid standard, everyone began to enjoy the process more, occasionally improvising various parts or trying something that had not been attempted before. Often, this made Caitlyn and I think of different arrangements that could include the new part. This was particularly the case with the James and Caleb, who, after settling in, began to play more consistently together over our weeks of rehearsal.

Overcoming Struggles: Relationship as Support

Some musicians required more support than others in terms of encouragement and direction. This did not bring the team down; rather, it was simply something I needed to recognise and act on. Neither the drummer, James, nor the cellist, Victoria, were confident enough in their skills and required additional support during the rehearsal and recording of their parts. Victoria had never really improvised before or played with anything apart from sheet music, while James simply needed constant encouragement in order to feel confident that what he was playing was solid. Caitlyn and I are friends with both these musicians, which allowed us to encourage and support them in the way they required. As I have performed with James extensively over the past five or six years, I was aware of his needs, and our existing relationship helped me provide him with feedback, encouragement, and support throughout the process, particularly when the arrangement was discussed and the part he was working on needed to be changed. According to James, there was

Heaps of encouragement. I find it difficult sometimes to work through ideas and different genres, so encouragement and clear direction would aid my development and allow me to be more creative. (J. Morrisson, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

During the tracking stage, for example, James' understanding that even mistakes can turn into magic moments led to some very creative fills and builds, which produced interesting parts in each song. Due to my strong relationship with James, I was able to foster his ideas and spark the creativity that led him to produce the different fills and builds required throughout tracking. I found that while James took direction well, he had to feel appreciated and supported and be given constant encouragement to remain creative. I have adopted this approach to interacting with musicians over the years, especially in terms of encouraging them throughout the tracking stage. I find that working in this manner not only builds a musician's confidence, but establishes a trust-based relationship with the producer—trust that they will always be supported, even if they make constant mistakes during a take or session. This tracking stage was no different—alongside James and Victoria were musicians of different musical backgrounds and experience levels coming together to record an EP. This

required constant encouragement from Caitlyn and me to ensure that each musician was playing to the best of their ability. We often did this in a light-hearted or humorous way, making jokes and trying to lift the mood, as the studio can become a highly critical place. Caitlyn and I remained constructively critical while still being collaborative and allowing the musicians to voice their opinions. This created an environment in which the musicians felt supported, encouraged, and valued.

Songwriting: Forming Stronger Relationships in the Studio

One song from the Caitlyn Wessels EP, 'Dinner for Two', was co-written by Caitlyn and me. She discussed this during her interview:

So I was just sitting down in the studio. And one of the mics wasn't working for like the guitar or something. So I was just sitting there playing around some chords on guitar and I can't remember what song we were doing... must've been 'scared of my life' because we had the capo on two. Anyway, and I was just playing like this chord pattern and then Jacob was like oh yeah that's really cool I like that let's do something with that. And so like... we did. We just sat down and like had a little bit of a D&M and kinda just wrote this song. (C. Wessels, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

To expand on this, the songwriting began by the two of us discussing a few themes and ideas, such as a blind date or boy-meets-girl situation, before proceeding to what our initial lyric meant. We talked about a few different scenarios where a couple was on a date and the boy was falling for the girl without her understanding why. After discussing this for some time, Caitlyn began writing lyrics based on our conversation, including the various ideas we had worked through. I simply played the chords while Caitlyn sung some melodic ideas; we wrote most of the song that day. She went home, excited, and wrote the rest of the song that night. This co-writing experience set a foundation for our professional relationship from then on. We became a team rather than two strangers working towards a shared goal. This informed the rest of our rehearsals and recording. Similarly, Sheeran and Gosling began collaborations by discussing their lives, a process that can lead to lyrical and melodic ideas

(Doyle, 2012). This method of working creates trust by encouraging and supporting a collective experience that seeks to achieve a shared artistic vision. In this way, Caitlyn and I found that after the co-write, we were more likely to work cooperatively, trusting each other regarding the decisions that needed to be made throughout rehearsals and tracking.

Street Pieces: Relationship Ties Us Together

Having known each other six years and played together as a band for four years, the Street Pieces members have strong relationships with one another. These relationships have established a solid foundation for their music and their ability to ‘play off each other’, meaning that they are able to follow each other seamlessly while tracking. This was particularly evident in some songs where the drummer, Marcus McLachlan, played off the click, as this felt more natural, and then swung back in time for the following section. This could throw casual musicians, but in this instance, the guitarist and bassist simply followed the drummer, which led to some strong takes and gave the tracks a unique feel. This was often preceded by some careful discussion intended to challenge the band, stretching their capabilities, and reduce the ‘off-click’ sections to a bare minimum, which retained a natural feel and made overdub recording easier. Marcus comments on being pushed further in the studio:

Jacob has been good at balancing when to push us to work harder and when to let us be a bit silly to blow off some ‘studio steam’. Having a good team that get along well and respect each other has also aided the success of the sessions.

(M. McLachlan, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

Here, Marcus indicates that there was a balance between work and fun in the studio, touching upon two important elements: having a good team and being respectful of each other. It is clear that the relationships between the Street Pieces members continued to grow and develop through their consistent rehearsal and demoing process. Developing those relationships and that sense of collaboration continued in the studio, as the band strived to improve individually and together. As the project producer, it was important for me to foster my pre-existing

relationship with the band. One distinction between the Caitlyn Wessels EP and the Street Pieces EP was that I had known the members of Street Pieces for six years, since we graduated from our QUT Bachelor of Music course together. This longstanding relationship provided a solid foundation for producing the EP, allowing me to operate as both friend and producer. I found that my opinion was valued as a friend and professional, as I had already earned the band's trust through our previous professional interactions within a studio setting. Similarly, Bowie and Visconti became close friends after working together, often emailing each other, and finally collaborating again on Bowie's final albums (Brown, 2006; McLean, 2016; Sexton, 2007). Working alongside a friend on a creative project provided a positive and encouraging experience for Street Pieces, as evident in comments from lead vocalist Ben Tilney:

So far this experience has been fantastic, Jacob has been my friend for several years so we already had that rapport before entering the studio. He is also a vocalist so he can approach our songs from the same angle as me. All of these factors combined with my past singing experience has made it very comfortable to perform. I think the whole team has had quite a successful session so far. (B. Tilney, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

Ben touches upon our friendship while discussing the specific support he received. I found working with Ben during the vocal sessions easy, since he took direction well and applied any feedback efficiently. As we were friends, I found that I was able to offer feedback in a way that I knew he would be receptive to. I also found that my experience with the various instruments, such as guitar, drums, and vocals, combined with our existing relationship, gave me ideas, including harmonies or double tracking different guitar parts, which further developed the songs.

Relationship: A Key Factor in Artist Development

Relationship is a major factor in supporting artist development through the production process; this is evident in the team-working skills, collaborative problem-solving, and friendships formed and strengthened by this process. All participants on both EPs commented

on their enjoyment of the process due to newfound or further developed friendships. Collaboration with other musicians can make others feel vulnerable, particularly when it comes to receiving feedback. As the producer, I fostered an environment that allowed for constructive criticism offered in a respectful manner. On occasion, feedback needed a positive or light-hearted twist to ensure that a sensitive individual, such as Caitlyn Wessels drummer James, could accept the suggestions without feeling attacked. On the subject of criticism in the studio, Street Pieces drummer Marcus remarks,

I guess I expect general, critical positivity. The studio can be quite daunting and exposing, since your performance is under very close scrutiny, so I hope that my band mates and Jacob as producer can guide me to achieve my best without making me feel artistically inferior. (M. McLachlan, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

Marcus goes on to confirm that this was in fact the case:

My colleagues were very professional and for the most part surprised me with their work ethic and drive. We did well to manage our interpersonal relationships while still being able to critically analyse each other's performances. (M. McLachlan, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

The phrase 'critical positivity' refers to constructive criticism delivered in a respectful, often positive manner (Kurtzberg and Mueller, 2005, p. 337; James, 1995, p. 286). These types of discussions were common throughout the tracking of the Street Pieces EP. The Caitlyn Wessels musicians required sensitivity when I was providing feedback, as producer, in order to maintain a sense of positivity and encouragement. This could be my own assessment of the situation as producer—I wanted to create a safe and supportive environment, so I chose to remain positive and sensitive in all my communications with the artist and musicians. Tracking the Street Pieces EP was a much more diplomatic process than that of the Caitlyn Wessels EP—in the former instance, I often considered the opinions of more than one individual, which provided opportunities to develop songs, performances, and relationships.

Time restraints limited the length of discussions, but all band members voiced their opinions when necessary. Similarly, collaboration and co-songwriting appears to have developed Caitlyn as an artist through trust and mutual respect. The discussions between Caitlyn and I helped build the direction of each song throughout recording. Serving the artistic aim through collaborative ideas created a shared vision that Caitlyn and I worked towards throughout the sessions. Caitlyn says this about her songs:

It's interesting. Cuz ... it's almost like you have ... original songs ... they're like little children or like little pieces of my soul and I'm like here Jacob take my children and produce them and record them and make them into wonderful things and that's kinda really scary. Because it's like all my trust is on you to take my songs and make them great. (C. Wessels, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

This level of trust would not have been possible without a professional relationship between Caitlyn and myself. This relationship developed over a number of meetings, pre-production demo sessions, and songwriting. I found that songwriting with Caitlyn allowed her to open herself up as a writer and musician in a way that discussions and rehearsals had not. This allowed me to understand how she develops her vision for a song and the level of responsibility she assumes for the outcome of her songs. As Caitlyn is a young artist, it was clear that her songs and artistic vision remained very personal, resulting in stubbornness when I approached with changes or ideas. Here, Caitlyn states that it was the combination of communication and relationship that made the production process run smoothly:

I have to trust that you understand like I was saying about communication. Which is so important because if we didn't like automatically if we didn't click or we didn't get along even as people it would've been really hard, really hard. Like you gotta have that professional relationship as well as that kind of friendship thing as well cuz otherwise it's just no fun yeah. (C. Wessels, personal communication, February 29, 2016)

In this quotation, Caitlyn also references friendship and having fun, which supports what the other musicians on her EP had mentioned. It seems that enjoying the process creates a positive atmosphere within the studio, which is often infectious and uplifting, creating a strong sense of unity. Street Pieces lead vocalist Ben supports this proposition:

I would arrive at the studio and immediately feel positive and excited within the space. Everyone was on the same wavelength and egos were left at the door. (B. Tilney, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

As I sung in the outer corridor of the studio, I watched the rest of the guys in the band room capture a powerful live energy, which I thrived off. This was a highlight. (B. Tilney, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

It is clear that once a positive atmosphere is present, musicians find it much easier to work together to record. This enjoyment could be attributed to a number of factors, including studio banter, constant encouragement, and even snack breaks. During these moments, relationships became stronger through further encouragement and mutual respect.

Overall, the understanding of relationship heavily relies on a foundation of trust and mutual respect in the studio. Through positive relationships, the musicians were able to collaborate throughout the production process, which provided new ideas to support fulfilling the artistic vision. The building blocks of these relationships were extensive rehearsal, experimentation, and collaborative experiences. These elements were evident in the formation of the backing band and the rehearsal and recording of the Caitlyn Wessels EP, all of which allowed the musicians to form close relationships that boosted their confidence in the studio. Similarly, due to the Street Pieces members' existing friendships, their experiences of relationship provided insight into long-term development through extensive recording. I conclude that a positive atmosphere in the studio provides enjoyable collaborative experiences that develop relationships in the studio. Both EP recordings forged strong healthy producer–artist relationships that supported the development of the artists through the production process. This development occurred through experimentation and collaboration on the part of the

producer and musicians. The musicians from the Caitlyn Wessels EP developed supportive relationships within the studio to perform to the best of their abilities; Street Pieces used their existing relationships to create a professional and respectful environment that supported honest communication.

Communication

Effective communication is essential to collaboration and experimentation in the studio. In order to experiment and collaborate effectively, clear communication is highly valued by musicians, artists and producers. Scholarly literature provides limited studies regarding communication in a studio setting between a producer and an artist, however there are examples within the area of music business. Allen (2014) touches upon the various forms of communication a manager must use providing examples such as email or voice message (p. 9), further stating that each method of communication has a different protocol (p.9). In the same way, a producer communicates with the artist differently than a fellow musician might. The change in role or function often alters how the individual may discuss a certain issue, and these complexities are evident throughout the data, particularly in relation to my own role as producer, and participant Alex Miller who operated in various capacities throughout both EP recordings. In regards to the way communication was achieved, the data indicates that all participants in this research sought clear and respectful communication; the open and honest environment this formed fostered development through collaboration and experimentation.

Communication in the Caitlyn Wessels EP

Honest and respectful communication provided a foundation for relationships between the producer, artist, and musicians throughout the production process of the Caitlyn Wessels EP. As the producer, I chose to be positive and sensitive in all communications with the artist and musicians. This style of communication was not effective with some of the casual musicians, while the seasoned musicians and Caitlyn herself welcomed the diplomatic approach. Examples of successful communication between the seasoned musicians and the producer include the following:

Easy—role was clearly defined! Communication was easy. Rehearsals and recording times and place were clear and efficient—both the process of and the communication of when, where, etc. (S. Collyer, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

The rehearsals and recording went smoothly, and Jacob directed the team well. (A. Miller, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

The producer and artist were thoroughly clear with what they wanted for me as a drummer in this project. (J. Morrisson, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

Good communication of rehearsal times and recording times with plenty of notice and accommodation of people's schedules, that made it easy to plan, time management was awesome. (S. Collyer, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

The data indicates that a diplomatic approach was successful with the seasoned musicians who worked on the Caitlyn Wessels EP. As mentioned during the 'relationship' section, certain individuals were more sensitive to criticism than others. As a producer, I remained as diplomatic as possible with James and Victoria in order to tactfully articulate changes in a positive and encouraging manner. I am naturally diplomatic when communicating, but was particularly tactful with these two musicians and Caitlyn. It is clear from the quotations above that this communication method was highly successful, offering musicians simple directions that were easy to follow. I found it very easy to lead the sessions, as all musicians were open to giving and receiving various ideas or changes for their parts. This made some musicians mildly frustrated:

They sometimes lacked direction, but that's to be expected. The songwriter and producer never really seemed to know what they wanted, again normal. I

just went along with whatever they said and everything went OK. (C. Klein, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

Caitlyn and I had many different arrangement ideas that we experimented with during rehearsals. This experimentation aided in solidifying the arrangements of many songs.

Despite the long rehearsals, arduous decision-making, and late-night recordings, the musicians continued to take direction well throughout the process. It is clear from the data collected that Caitlyn particularly required a diplomatic approach, as she had never entered a studio in this capacity before. Stating her expectations, she characterises herself as ‘sensitive and understanding of my protectiveness over my songs, and trying my ideas’ (C. Wessels, personal communication, November 20, 2015). My aim was to communicate in a diplomatic manner during experimentation with musicians and the artist. One of the seasoned musicians, pianist Sarah Collyer, described the success of the clear yet diplomatic communication I used: ‘Yes. I would play something and ask for feedback, which was given positively—whether or not the idea was useful or if it wasn’t—no mixed messages’ (personal communication, November 20, 2015). I found that most musicians enjoyed this method of communicating, as it was not invasive, but a gentle approach that aimed to form trust between myself, the artist, and the musicians. This allowed me to offer changes and suggestions for different arrangements with very little resistance, as they knew I would be seeking their contributions. This was the case during the creative process as represented in the data, although due to the length of time between project and completed thesis, my participants may recall their experiences differently or in a more nuanced manner if given the opportunity for retrospective reflection.

Despite most musicians expressing a positive view of the communication and direction from both the artist and producer, some critiqued the leadership style. Interestingly, these critical remarks regarding how a session should be led were from those who felt their time was wasted during recording: casual musicians Victoria and Ashleigh. This blurs the lines between expectation, experience, and communication. The misunderstanding was due to the expectation that everything would be running exactly to time. When this expectation failed and I failed to communicate the length of time it might take, the experience of recording was

negatively affected—Ashleigh states that ‘I felt that everyone was just agreeing with each other because they were worried about offending anyone instead of giving constructive criticism’ (A. Holm, personal communication, November 20, 2015), and Victoria remarks,

My only critique is that you need to be more assertive with your ideas. I felt like a lot of the time you had a clear idea of what you wanted and had things to say but didn’t? Don’t be afraid to take control. (V. Holm, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

It should be noted that Ashleigh and Victoria, who desired stronger leadership, are string players likely used to an orchestral arrangement with a firm conductor. This is a tactic I purposely avoided, as I was aware that this would not work well for most of the musicians. I found that all other musicians, some casual and others seasoned, enjoyed the diplomatic approach I adopted. It is now evident that I could have made the effort to communicate in a firmer manner with Ashleigh and Victoria; however, I did not realise this at the time. My diplomatic approach meant that I needed to consider how I described things and articulate my opinions in a way that came across as positive towards all the musicians. Taking the time to consider the different options available while recording the strings on ‘I See You’ by Caitlyn Wessels could have given Ashleigh and Victoria a poor impression of my leadership capabilities. I found myself, in moments, lacking the creativity needed to guide the string players in their improvisation. However, I did find that offering suggestions helped guide them; I simply could not offer them clear scores for their performances, as I had no experience notating a string section. This appears to have affected them, particularly Victoria, the cellist, who had not improvised much before. Despite this, both Ashleigh and Victoria remained positive about the overall experience despite their unmet expectations and my method of communication.

Producer and Artist Communication: The Caitlyn Wessels EP

Caitlyn made it clear throughout her questionnaire, journals, and interview that communication was very important to her throughout the production process, particularly in relation to her own ideas and vision for her songs:

Sensitive and understanding of my protectiveness over my songs, and trying my ideas. Acceptance and respect. If I have an idea, to share it I need to know that my opinion will be listened to.

Yes, sensitivity and understanding plus caring about the quality.

Mainly just working out how I want my songs to sound, and communicating that. (C. Wessels, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

As a young artist, Caitlyn had very firm opinions about her songs, including arrangement, quality, and effects; especially those used on her voice and guitar. Caitlyn twice mentions requiring a sensitive and understanding approach, and my aim as producer was to communicate in a diplomatic manner, making suggestions rather than forcing an idea. Caitlyn mentions in both her questionnaire and interview that she was impressed by our communication:

One of the best parts of this experience was Jacob being able to interpret and understand my weird and random thought and transfer it to a riff or drum beat. It makes it a lot less stressful for me when we can get what I hear in my head out loud without much struggle. (C. Wessels, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

Understanding and interpreting Caitlyn in a concise manner took time. I found that my ability to discern what Caitlyn was asking and translate that into a part or melody became easier through collaboration and clear communication. Caitlyn became more confident in my ability to translate her ideas during rehearsals. This led to a greater level of trust that I would guide each song to fulfil her artistic vision. It appears that cultivating trust between the two of us fostered a strong and healthy professional relationship that allowed Caitlyn to flourish in unfamiliar surroundings. She further comments on our communication,

I think, which was really good, that we were both on the same page musically. It's like communication-wise was great. I was like I want this and this and you were like yeah I'm on it. So that was good. That we, that I didn't have to spend years explaining to him what I heard in my head. (C. Wessels, personal communication, February 29, 2016)

Honest and clear communication with Caitlyn allowed me to provide direction and comfort while remaining positive about any experimental changes. In addition, I found that we had few disagreements throughout the process. Our only disagreements were related to the effects on her vocals, particularly reverb and delay. These effects are used on most vocals, especially in the country/pop genre in which we were recording. During our discussions about effects, Caitlyn would ask for a 'raw' or 'stripped-back' sound. She would then cite songs by country and pop superstars Carrie Underwood and Taylor Swift, referencing tracks such as 'Blown Away' (Carrie Underwood) or 'Love Story' (Taylor Swift). 'Blown Away' features a slapback delay throughout, which can be heard during the song's verses, while 'Love Story' has very light reverb throughout. Both tracks feature the effects that we had disagreed over, which led to further discussion. I attempted to explain and provide examples of the effects being used, but Caitlyn found this difficult, as she might not have known what to listen for. To conclude these conversations, I suggested that I attempt to mix the songs further to achieve a better vocal mix. I then lowered the amount of reverb and delay slightly and asked for Caitlyn's opinion, which was positive. It appears that Caitlyn enjoys a processed vocal if it is lightly and tastefully mixed. I personally enjoy a considerable amount of reverb, but in this instance, it was not appropriate and did not enhance the songs or serve the artistic vision. I found that by giving examples and explaining thoroughly why I sought to try a different technique or effect level, we could move forward and reach an agreement.

During the vocal recording, I became particularly diplomatic, as I was aware of the pressure that Caitlyn might have felt in the studio. Throughout the recording, I found myself increasingly irritable the longer the nights became, which did not aid my attempts at diplomacy. The final two nights of recording the Caitlyn Wessels EP were long, as we had to complete vocals and electric guitar in a short period. During this time, I found that communication began to break down slightly as I became exhausted, Caitlyn became restless,

and the guitarist, Alex, attempted to write his final guitar parts. This breakdown in communication led to some minor frustrations during recording that made Caitlyn and me irritable. Over the last two days of recording, Caitlyn and I took frequent breaks to keep ourselves from becoming over-stressed. During the final night of recording, when Caitlyn was tracking her harmonies, a friend and QUT graduate, Julia Kourtidis, came in to help guide Caitlyn's vocals. Julia took on the role of vocal coach and co-producer for the harmonies to give me a break. Caitlyn mentioned her experience with Julia during her interview:

C: And I think it was much better working with a girl at that point. The whole recording process except for 'I See You' in that one night was just males. And it was great to have a soft female.

S: I think that was a really interesting point that you made, it's not in the script but, that you made about having another female in the studio.

C: But yeah it's a different level of communication too. But generally biologically speaking females are generally more nursing and kind. (C. Wessels & S. Collyer, personal communication, 2016)

Until this point, there was little to no data illustrating that Caitlyn was the only female during most of the recording sessions. These short quotations provide insight into communication from the artist's perspective as the sole female for most of the recordings. I did not realise this would be a concern or issue throughout the recording sessions. It became clear to me, as Julia took over for a short time, that Caitlyn responded well when receiving communication from another female. If I had understood this need prior to recording, I could have suggested to Caitlyn that her vocal teacher or Julia aid in tracking with her. Despite being unaware of this level of communication that Caitlyn required, it is clear that I was respectful and diplomatic in my interactions with her. Successful communication developed trust between the two of us, allowing me to effectively guide the production process.

Street Pieces: Honesty and Openness within the Studio

The Street Pieces sessions yielded the most open and honest communication I have experienced within a studio setting. Communication is very important to all members of Street Pieces, and each band member values the ability to express opinions in a respectful manner. This was evident during every aspect of the recording, from pre-production through to tracking and mixing. At times, discussions were lengthy, but it was evident that each band member felt passionately about the sound they were seeking to achieve as a band. The lead vocalist, Ben, describes his feelings about communication in the studio: 'It was a safe creative space where everyone was always exchanging ideas so I was never afraid to throw my own in the mix' (B. Tilney, personal communication, May 14, 2016) The drummer, Marcus, supports this assertion:

I think openness to discussion is important for my creativity. I'm usually happy to not necessarily get my way on every creative decision as long as there is some democratic thought put into it. I expect my colleagues to be professional and aspire to the same quality outcome as I am. (M. McLachlan, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

All members expected this level of communication, which allowed the band to work more effectively together, respecting each other when making suggestions or comments. This gave each member confidence in what they were playing and allowed them to remain critical in discussions. I found that this open and honest communication, coupled with their longstanding relationships with one another, allowed for freedom of expression within the studio that aided in pushing the band musically. According to Marcus,

From tempo choices and drum parts to backing vocal choices I was able to provide creative ideas that were taken on board. Since we are a fairly democratic group I certainly felt a part of most creative discussions as well. (M. McLachlan, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

This is encouraging, as it was difficult to work with so many opinions. Alex notes that ‘there was a risk of having “too many cooks in the kitchen”, but somehow this problem never materialised’ (A. Miller, personal communication, May 14, 2016). As producer, I agree with this statement, although there were a number of times when we needed to discuss or workshop different ideas extensively due to the constant stream of input from various band members. The openness of communication made it easier to talk through any issues and provide direct feedback in a respectful way. This was very helpful to me as producer, as it can often be difficult to navigate the stern alternative opinions or egos that can accompany creative individuals in an uncompromising setting such as the studio. The bassist, Jonathan Mengede, comments on communication in the studio:

I was particularly impressed with how Jacob gave direct feedback, which would give us that perspective that we can’t really see ourselves as the musicians. Jacob’s advice and direction gave us the right sound. (J. Mengede, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

As mentioned, the aim was to give clear, direct feedback, which was initiated from the outset. This gave me confidence in myself and the team that communication would continue to be open and honest while remaining direct, critical, and positive.

Difficulties Despite Openness

Alongside the general ease of communication, there were occasional difficulties, particularly in relation to the harmonies on ‘Mouth of a Lion’ (see Appendix, p.133). The harmonies all sounded solid, but each band member had differing suggestions and opinions. The discussion took an extended amount of time—so long that it felt best to simply workshop the ideas rather than continue a back-and-forth. The lead vocalist, Ben, explains this:

The biggest difficulty I faced was workshopping harmonies for the chorus tail in ‘Mouth of a Lion’. I think the team was a tad burnt out and communication wasn’t at its strongest, leading to some frustration. We eventually used the

original harmony line from before we went into studio and it felt natural and suited the song. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. (B. Tilney, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

As Ben mentions, the team was exhausted from the first day of tracking, which had included all four bed tracks in four hours. This led to a breakdown of communication, which did not descend into any disrespectful or negative comments, but did create tension within the studio, as we were on a tight schedule. According to Marcus,

As I mentioned earlier, a few times the critical feedback I received was a little confronting, but to overcome that I just remembered that it wasn't really a personal attack and everyone was trying to achieve the best result for the recording. (M. McLachlan, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

With so many opinions, it was difficult to navigate and guide the team through to a diplomatic solution. Instead, the discussions continued until we realised that the best option would be to try the initial harmony and idea. The lengthy and unfruitful discussions were likely due to the band's exhaustion. Ultimately, our communication breakdown helped develop certain band members who wanted to further their production skills and vocabulary. Ben and bassist Jonathan had both expressed interest in gaining further production skills. Our lengthy conversations regarding arrangement, though mildly tense, did result in development for both these musicians. As Jonathan is a newer member of Street Pieces, having only joined four months prior to this project, it was clear that he was still finding his feet in the band, often only discussing his own contribution. Ben remarks, 'I think I developed my production skills more than I thought. I have become better at communicating my ideas to the rest of the band and therefore bringing ideas to life' (B. Tilney, personal communication, May 14, 2016).

This development and positive feedback emerged from the tense conversations that took place throughout the recording of harmonies for 'Mouth of a Lion'. This development

assisted in refining the lead singer's communication skills, allowing him to articulate arrangement and production ideas in a clear and concise manner.

Overall, communication affects all aspects of the production process, particularly the producer–artist relationship, as illustrated by interactions with Caitlyn. Effective communication is developed through consistent rehearsal and collaborative experiences. Communication levels were different for each EP recording, and each required a diplomatic approach in order to acknowledge all suggestions while providing direction. For the Caitlyn Wessels EP, communication developed during rehearsals and the recording itself. By contrast, Street Pieces had worked together extensively over a four-year period, which brought ease to their communication in the studio. I conclude that communication in the studio supports experimentation and collaboration through the respectful exchange of ideas. Both Street Pieces and Caitlyn Wessels developed their communication skills during this project, particularly when discussing arrangements.

Experience

Most scholarly research discussing ‘experience’ in music refers to listener experience, although here I draw upon literature primarily discussing songwriting and collaboration in order to illustrate musical experience within the studio; particularly the difference between experienced musicians and inexperienced musicians. Bennett (2011) comments on typical collaborative practice:

Mainstream songwriters who work with a variety of other collaborators may have an implicit understanding of the norms of songwriting, and write songs that adhere to most of these norms, breaking occasional constraints according to taste. (Para 7.)

Implicit understanding of the norms within a studio setting are understood by all experienced musicians. These norms are often outside the experience of musicians who have not entered a professional studio. This chapter will explore the differences between the inexperienced and experienced musicians, particularly focusing upon the development of the artist's skills in

songwriting, production, and tacit knowledge – referred to by Bennett (2011, Para .7) as implied norms.

Caitlyn Wessels' Development as an Artist

Caitlyn's expectation played a crucial role in her experiences, particularly in terms of working collaboratively with the other musicians. Before the process, she stated, 'I expect to gain more confidence recording, and in my songs from hearing them fully produced, and learning how to work creatively with other musicians' (C. Wessels, personal communication, November 20, 2015). These expectations illustrate Caitlyn's desire to develop in confidence and collaboration. The feedback following the production process confirms that her expectations were fulfilled successfully: 'Definitely learning how to collaboratively create with musicians, gaining more confidence in my songs, but kinda getting sick of them'; 'Yes, everyone was very committed and worked well creatively together, no complaints!' (C. Wessels, personal communication, November 20, 2015). Despite this, the production process was rushed due to the QUT Creative Industry Faculty's move to the new Z9 creative hub. More time in the studio and longer pre-production could have facilitated further skills development when recording in the studio. Caitlyn reinforces this, saying, 'some things I don't really have time to do, just kinda do it and more or without properly learning' (C. Wessels, personal communication, November 20, 2015). If there had been more time to develop skills and techniques useful for recording with the casual musicians, including Caitlyn, the production process could have been smoother; as Caitlyn mentions, we did not have the time to equip her appropriately due to the music faculty's move. In order to equip Caitlyn appropriately to record, I would have prepared a series of extensive pre-production recording sessions, taking the time to detail different vocal techniques and ways to cope when recording in the studio.

Three Key Areas in the Development of Caitlyn Wessels

The data reveals that three key experiences aided Caitlyn's overall development in the studio: her understanding of 'studio time', confidence in her songs, and collaboration with other musicians. These three areas gave her a foundational understanding of the studio environment,

particularly ‘studio time’, which refers to the very different sense of time experienced in a studio environment. This could be due to various factors, including lack of natural light, unexpected technical issues, and preconceived notions of the time it takes to capture a convincing rendition of a song. Studio time affects all activities that take place in that environment, from how long it takes to troubleshoot technical issues to rearranging sections and handling other unexpected issues. Throughout the recording of the Caitlyn Wessels EP, some musicians were more comfortable in the studio than others. This allowed some to work effectively from the outset, while others needed to settle into the new environment. Caitlyn’s experience of the studio environment required her to settle in, as she was singing and playing on every scratch track to ensure that each take would feel natural for the bassist and drummer. This constant playing of the same song for up to 10 takes for the first song and roughly five or six for each song thereafter made the process longer than most recording stages.

This was Caitlyn’s first experience of ‘studio time’, and she describes her prior experience thus:

Well ... I did... really basic recording of demos at a studio at a guy’s house once and he called himself like a producer and recording person but he just was not with it at all, I was running the recording sessions so yeah... it was kind of different to have Jacob actually know things and how to do them properly and telling me what to do. (C. Wessels, personal communication, February 29, 2016)

This prior experience, or lack thereof, allowed Caitlyn to considerably develop her confidence, collaboration, and experimentation in the studio. Further, her lack of experience in this environment provided many ways for her to develop her knowledge of it and the production process. Here, she describes her experiences recording the EP for this research:

Main challenge is long hours and re-recording so many times, difficult to keep motivation going, especially so late at night...

And everything takes so much longer, that's one of the things I learned. You think something's going to take like an hour and it will take seven rehearsals... And it gets really frustrating especially when you're doing the same thing over and over again.

Just how long it can take. I didn't realise it took so much effort... (C. Wessels, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

Caitlyn quickly learned how long it takes to record a convincing performance for various instruments, and the above quotations illustrate that she gained an understanding of 'studio time'. Despite occasional lack of motivation, Caitlyn was present during all sessions, providing creative input into various decisions regarding the direction of each song and arrangement and the parts each musician played. Her level of dedication to the EP aided her development of production techniques through the considerable time she spent listening and offering suggestions throughout recording.

Caitlyn's confidence in her ability as a songwriter was one of her primary concerns. It was clear during the rehearsal stage that collaborating with a band boosted her confidence, as she began to see her artistic vision come to life. Caitlyn explains her delight in hearing her songs with a band for the first time: 'Rehearsals were probably the most fun as it was the first time I was hearing my songs with a band, and I probably get a little over excited' (C. Wessels, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

This excitement and confidence in the song quality grew until we entered the studio. It is evident that Caitlyn began the process out of her depth, but continued to develop throughout the tracking stages. Hearing her songs come to fruition, Caitlyn says, 'I had no idea of how good things can sound in a professional studio' (C. Wessels, personal communication, February 29, 2016). This could be due to her songs only having previously been recorded in small home settings and with no backing band. However, Caitlyn then adds a caveat to her previous excitement, stating that she is 'gaining more confidence in my songs, but kinda getting sick of them' (C. Wessels, personal communication, November 20, 2015). This is common for many musicians who have performed their songs extensively over a number of

years. It is an understandable feeling; Caitlyn had never rehearsed and then performed her songs so extensively before.

As an ‘all-dancing’ songwriting producer, I found it easy to collaborate and experiment with different arrangements with Caitlyn. Here, she discusses her desire to collaborate: ‘Definitely learning how to collaboratively create with musicians’ (C. Wessels, personal communication, November 20, 2015). Following the recording, she states, ‘I learned a lot about being a recording musician working with other musicians on a shared vision, collaboration, the effort and time...’ (C. Wessels, personal communication, November 20, 2015). Additionally, Caitlyn and I had the opportunity to write songs together, which resulted in one of the songs used on the EP. This willingness to collaborate and develop as a musician in the area of songwriting allowed Caitlyn to move past any egocentric thoughts she might have held and begin to see each song in a different way, suggesting more guitar or a bigger drum section. In this way, her development in collaboration directly fed into other areas such as songwriting, arranging, and confidence in her songs.

The Learning Curve: Seasoned Musicians Learn Faster than Casual Musicians

The project developed me as a producer—in retrospect, I now realise I could have called for more rehearsals or acknowledged earlier that we needed another guitarist. Had I realised these things earlier, it could have changed the entire experience of the rehearsal and recording stages. Notably, only one of the musicians commented on the amount of rehearsals we had—Alex, the guitarist, had only two weeks to rehearse: ‘So far the experience has been rehearsal—I have had comparatively little time to become familiar with the music’ (A. Miller, personal communication, November 20, 2015). As the project producer, I would have liked us to rehearse to the point where the band sounded natural playing together. This would have reduced the time it took to record each song and given Caitlyn and me a greater chance to focus on the arrangements of a few songs, namely ‘Walk Away’ and ‘Cinderella Moment’. It should also be noted that the seasoned musicians needed less rehearsal than the casual musicians, particularly in terms of their ability to blend their sound effectively with the other musicians. This is evident in Alex’s electric guitar tracks on the Caitlyn Wessels EP; as mentioned earlier, he had considerably less time to rehearse. Alex’s experience as a

performer, recording artist, recording engineer, and producer all aided his ability to write and record parts in a short amount of time. The pianist, Sarah, is also a performer and teacher, which gave her an experiential edge when it came to devising parts for the slow acoustic-style track 'I See You'. I found that Alex and Sarah, in particular, often changed their ideas, always striving for a perfect fit; they required little guidance to record their parts. These seasoned musicians did require a few suggestions, mostly in the form of adjectives (example: I want the song to feel or sound like this '...') or slight note changes. The seasoned musicians achieved a near-perfect sound with little guidance, which gave Caitlyn and me confidence in their abilities to track a riff or part that would lift a song. These riffs can be heard in the piano hook in 'I See You' and guitar solo in 'Crawling Away'.

While the seasoned musicians created confidence within the team, I found that the casual musicians needed to 'lean' on the seasoned musicians in the studio. This was especially noticeable during the early recording stages while they were getting used to the studio environment. Victoria, the cellist, states, 'Ashleigh was the biggest help. I relied on her a lot as I trust her musical talent and experience' (V. Holm, personal communication, November 20, 2015). Despite her fellow string player, Ashleigh the violinist, having little experience within the studio, she had performed extensively, and was thus able to provide support to Victoria throughout the recording sessions. I also found, in the earlier songs, that the bassist, Caleb, would rely on the drummer for various cues and hints as he got used to the new environment. He backs this up: 'Other than feeling a little lost at the start of the first recording, everything went well' (C. Klein, personal communication, November 20, 2015). It took up to six takes of the first song to make the casual musicians feel comfortable in the studio space. Their success during the tracking stage suggests their development through experience and experimentation in the studio environment. This development is evident in the level of comfort the casual musicians exhibited throughout the remaining sessions; they became visibly more comfortable with each session. The most notable development here was that of Caleb, who had never recorded in a studio before. His first day began with anxious playing for six takes (roughly 30 – 40 minutes), which then eased into a comfortable and relaxed performance. His newfound understanding within the studio environment appears to have given him confidence while he was tracking bass throughout the EP production process. Tracking in the same room appears to have given comfort to both the bassist and the

drummer, as it created a rehearsal-like scenario. To prepare the rhythm section for the studio, I asked them both to play to the artist alone during one of the last rehearsals. This experience carried over to the studio after some time getting used to the new environment. In the same way, both string players, Ashleigh and Victoria, connected through the experience of the new environment, which they took time to settle into. As we had each of them play individually for mixing purposes, it was encouraging to see the pair work together developing parts, checking tuning, and getting headphone sends right. Experience then began to blur into expectation, with both musicians expressing frustrations about their wait time:

My only disappointment with the experience was having to wait seven hours at the studio after our scheduled recording time. It was 2 am before we finally recorded and by this time I was exhausted and probably not at my creative peak. Hopefully the song still turns out OK considering how rushed and time-poor we were. I still enjoyed the experience and appreciate the opportunity I was given. (A. Holm, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

Clearly, the expectation to record at a specific time affected Ashleigh's experience, and this affects confidence and attitude towards the recording as a whole. I should thus have managed expectation more effectively in order to create a positive experience for all musicians. I could have achieved this with a simple explanation of 'studio time'. Using casual musicians or those who are less experienced in a studio setting developed me as a producer, as I now realise that I needed to explain what most would call tacit knowledge. This could have lessened the strain of waiting for an extended period of time. The tacit knowledge I would have discussed includes 'studio time', tracking variations, and technical requirements such as Pro Tools and outboard gear. This might seem extensive, but I feel that if there had been an understanding of what I was doing, there would have been a corresponding understanding of why things took time. In the song 'I See You', especially, I needed to edit the acoustic guitar, as it was the bed track to which all other musicians would record. I should have done this well before the others were needed, but overlooked it, as I was unsuccessfully juggling my role as producer and engineer. This is another example that supports the idea of pre-production. With extensive pre-production, the recording stage can be limited with pre-recorded bed tracks. It could also have allowed me to begin grasping my role as an engineer

producer in a better way, allowing me to further develop my own skills as an engineer. This would have provided more than enough time to teach the casual musicians the tacit knowledge and skills that could have elevated their confidence in the studio space. Despite these shortcomings, however, it is clear that the musicians did experience some positive development throughout the process:

Feeling more confident to ‘feel the music’ and play new things (try stuff out).
(V. Holm, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

How it all works! I’ve never been in a recording studio before so the whole thing was a learning experience. (V. Holm, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

I don’t think I learned anything specific other than how things I already knew worked in a studio setting. (C. Klein, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

Overall the process was very challenging but also very rewarding. As I am juggling the role of producer as well as being the researcher it can be hard being situated within the project; however, it does give unique insight into the thought process of a producer and allow me to guide the artist’s development in a way that I wanted to observe. (J. Laube, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

[The production process helped me] through giving me experience in unfamiliar style. (A. Miller, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

My highlight was overdubbing guitars in studio C, alternating between guitars and vocals. It was good playing in an unfamiliar style, and learning new techniques to suit that. (A. Miller, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

I loved hearing the layering coming together and understanding how production of music actually happens. (A. Holm, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

It was a fun experience in the fact that I got to play a style that I usually wouldn't play or necessarily listen to... (J. Morrisson, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

Positive attitudes in rehearsal and recording studio from all involved. This made it enjoyable and relaxed—whilst we were still productive and focused—that was really good. (S. Collyer, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

These positive experiences contributed to developing each musician, casual and seasoned—they all received some form of positive experience. The questionnaires provide reflective qualitative data detailing participants' experiences. I could have improved this reflective data by including short semi-structured interviews with all participants. Despite this, the musicians outlined their own development, and in most cases, the idea of 'having fun' is heavily entrenched in their overall experience. If there had been enough studio time to record the EP twice, I feel that both the positive feedback and experiences would have increased, as the musicians would have secured foundational knowledge and skills. Because of knowing the studio environment and learning recording techniques, the casual musicians are now confident in that environment and in their ability to perform together with other musicians. However, there could have been further growth within the band and within each individual. Data analysis reveals that for an artist to develop experientially, they should first possess an understanding the studio environment. Once this is achieved, the next step in development is to improve the artist's confidence in their ability to perform their songs within that environment, which helps to create a natural sound when recording.

Experience the Energy of a Live Performance in a Studio Setting

Street Pieces continue to push themselves in their rehearsals and live performances. Their experience allows them to make changes to their songs quickly and effectively and take little time to relearn a section. In addition, as mentioned in the expectation section, the aim of the production for the EP was to capture a live performance, and this could be undertaken successfully due to the band's experience. This allowed for smooth and relatively hassle-free recording:

It was more successful than I thought because we achieved such a good vibe and energy in the recordings. I would say preparedness was key to that success as well as our combined experience from previous sessions. The whole process was quite considered as well, we spent time thinking about each section, part, and sound, and that shows in the end result. (M. McLachlan, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

Street Pieces completed the recording sessions swiftly and effectively due to their experience in the studio and extensive rehearsal. As seasoned musicians, Street Pieces took their time throughout these sessions to discuss various arrangement ideas and continue to improve every song. Despite their experience, Street Pieces continued to develop as a band and as individual musicians during these sessions. Individually, lead vocalist Ben and bassist Jonathan developed their knowledge and production vocabulary, which allowed them to better communicate their ideas with the band. Additionally, I found that by pushing Street Pieces to achieve a natural-sounding recording, development occurred organically. Here, Jonathan shares his shock that the bed tracks were recorded simultaneously as it can be difficult to achieve with inexperienced musicians:

I thought we were going to end up having to record instrument by instrument but we're actually having a good level of success with Alex, Marcus, and I in the same room (isolated amplifiers) recording our drums, guitar, and bass at the same time. Which is giving us a good groove. The fact that we are tight

enough to do it this way is very impressive. (J. Mengede, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

With expectations exceeded, the experience within the studio was positive for all band members, allowing for creative freedom and experimentation that pushed the band further than they thought possible. Ben describes his experience thus:

The other highlight for me was being free to experiment within the vocal booth at the end of Monster. After 10 years of singing I pushed myself further than ever and learned there were new elements of my voice yet to be explored. This was a very invigorating moment for me. (B. Tilney, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

Jonathan agrees:

I feel a more proficient studio bass guitarist as a result of having done this recording experience. Mostly due to Jacob suggesting different parts etc. and us changing them on the fly then recording them. Being able to quickly manipulate one's own part is a good skill. (J. Mengede, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

Clearly, Street Pieces is a band dedicated to their sound, as evidenced by their work ethic. Pushing boundaries within rehearsal and the studio can be difficult without the right supporting personnel; it was encouraging that Jonathan found my suggestions as producer particularly supportive. It seems that not only was the band well-rehearsed and pushing themselves, but were also focused on a specific result. One term that all band members used consistently was the 'vibe' of each take. This refers to the feeling and energy of a performance rather than its technical precision. Marcus states, 'I would strongly say that VIBE [original emphasis] is really important in capturing a great and unique performance' (M. McLachlan, personal communication, May 14, 2016) Jonathan concurs: 'Yes, when I added the running notes in the chorus of "Mouth of a Lion" everyone agreed it added a vibe

to the song...’ (J. Mengede, personal communication, May 14, 2016). Ben uses ‘vibe’ in a slightly different way, referring to it as ‘character’: ‘[It is] more of a reinforcement to me that when it comes to production go with the take that has the most character, not necessarily the most technically proficient’ (B. Tilney, personal communication, May 14, 2016). Some characteristics of music can be difficult to articulate, particularly the elements needed to create a certain sound. Interestingly, each member of Street Pieces is familiar with what ‘vibe’ means, although they deploy different words to get the same point across. The bassist uses ‘groove’, the drummer ‘vibe’, and the singer ‘character’. This suggests a slightly different understanding of what many broadly call ‘feel’. The ‘feel’ of a song can be described as the way the instrument/s are played. This contributes to a feeling that each musician gets when they play, and cultivating a specific ‘feel’ can be challenging, as it often requires subtle changes to strumming, drum rhythms, or even the way certain words are sung. Initially when recording the bed tracks, it was difficult to pinpoint if there was a non-technical issue, as the band had extensively rehearsed leading to consistently strong performances within the studio. However, once I identified that some musicians were playing with a slightly different ‘feel’ to the others, I called the band into the control room for a discussion. After I asked what ‘feel’ the band was going for and providing different stimuli in the form of phrases or verbs (for example: The song needs to sound dirty, or seductive, etc.), Street Pieces began to operate in a very cohesive manner, taking on the feedback and performing in a way that was similar to their live show.

Throughout the recording of the Street Pieces EP, there were no clearly defined roles such as producer, engineer, and musician. As all band members had extensive recording experience as audio engineers, producers, and musicians, I found that I took on a co-producer role, offering support in the decision-making process. Marcus refers to this blurring of roles thus:

Going into this, our roles were already a little blurred. Alex has taken on some more engineering and not just guitar. We’ve all contributed to ‘producing’ and improving the songs. We have worked well motivating each other and I guess the different elements of the team have blurred a little. (M. McLachlan, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

This blurring made my own position as producer difficult at times, as I needed to navigate differing opinions. My personal aim was to foster open and honest discussions in order to reach decisions quickly and effectively. Alex reinforces that few issues arose from the co-producing arrangement:

The recording process went smoothly, and there was a great collaborative energy between all the members of the team. There was a risk of having ‘too many cooks in the kitchen’, but somehow this problem never materialised. (A. Miller, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

I found that the sessions operated smoothly with one exception: vocal tracking towards the end of the first day. As we had recorded all the bed tracks, the team was tired, which led to indecisive discussions during the harmony tracking. Ben recalls,

The biggest difficulty I faced was workshopping harmonies for the chorus tail in ‘Mouth of a Lion’. I think the team was a tad burnt out and communication wasn’t at its strongest, leading to some frustration. We eventually used the original harmony line from before we went into studio and it felt natural and suited the song. If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it. (B. Tilney, personal communication, May 14, 2016)

As all members of Street Pieces could produce, it became difficult to agree on a direction for the songs. This led to lengthy discussions that never culminated in a decision. During these discussions, I simply conducted myself as a ‘collaborator’ by suggesting ideas that could provide a solution. Working in this way gave me confidence in my ability to encourage, support, and produce for an experienced band. It also developed trust between me as producer and the band, who often know what they are looking to achieve. By adopting a different production style, I managed to navigate the blurred roles in order to provide clearer direction throughout the recording of the Street Pieces EP.

Overall, experiences of the production process in the studio environment developed the artists, musicians, and producer through collaboration and experimentation. The production process provided basic knowledge of the studio to casual musicians. The seasoned musicians further refined their ability to perform convincingly in the studio. These experiences create foundational knowledge or refinement for participants, paving the way for further development. I conclude that experience of the production process developed the artists, participants, and producer through forming and refining the skills and knowledge learned by recording in the studio. Caitlyn Wessels developed confidence in her songs through collaboration with others and gained an understanding of ‘studio time’, while Street Pieces developed through pushing themselves further as a band, collaborating with the producer, and refining the ‘feel’ of their songs.

This practice-led research focused on the development of two artists, each of whom recorded an EP. Situated as the producer in the project, I chose to emulate styles, roles, and functions of the notable producers discussed in the literature review to attempt to emulate the development of the artists in a similar manner. As Caitlyn was a young country artist, I chose to employ a similar ‘all-dancing’ approach to recording as that used by producers Joel Little and Nathan Chapman, who have worked with Lorde and Taylor Swift respectively. As songwriter producers, Little and Chapman both provided structure through experimentation and collaboration with their artists. Similarly, I focused on providing arrangement suggestions in order to form a trusting relationship with Caitlyn that was built upon mutual respect. To foster the producer–artist relationship, Caitlyn and I co-wrote a song, ‘Dinner for Two’. This ‘all-singing’ songwriting producer style allowed me to develop Caitlyn’s expectation in a positive way, enhance the producer–artist relationship through collaborative experience, and effectively communicate through consistent rehearsals. In a similar manner, I developed Street Pieces as a ‘collaborator’ and a producer arranger, aiming to suggest minor ideas to aid in song development. As seasoned musicians, Street Pieces primarily developed their relationships in the studio and their communicative skills following long days.

The thematic analysis reveals the four key themes that have been discussed here: expectation, relationship, communication, and experience. I conclude that expectation can influence a musician’s experience of the production process positively or negatively. This was evident in

responses from the two Caitlyn Wessels string players, Ashleigh and Victoria, who experienced a failure of expectations in the areas of time management and organisation. By contrast, all members of Street Pieces refined their performance skills in the studio, fulfilling their expectations and leading to a positive experience. I conclude that the producer–artist relationship is essential to creating a supportive environment through trust and mutual respect. Both Caitlyn and Street Pieces exhibited development through experimental and collaborative experiences with the producer. I conclude that communication is essential to developing an artist and their artistic vision. Communication supports the building of trust through collaboration and experimentation in the studio. Caitlyn Wessels is a developing artist who valued honest communication to fulfil her artistic vision, while Street Pieces sought honest communication during all aspects of the production process in order to realise their artistic vision. I conclude that experience of the studio environment aids in developing artists through basic and fundamental knowledge learned by consistent recording. The musicians involved in the Caitlyn Wessels EP all possessed differing levels of experience, which resulted in their differing levels of development. By contrast, the members of Street Pieces were all highly experienced in the studio to begin with, which brought an ease to their recording process. Overall, developing tacit knowledge occurred organically, while specific areas such as collaborations and experimentation required producer-led guidance. I found that all participants naturally worked on any weaker areas of knowledge or asked for the most effective way to operate in each setting. Regardless of their experience level, all musicians performed to the best of their ability, and most developed their performance skills through constant playing.

Conclusion

Changes in major record label infrastructure have blurred the role and function of A&R departments and producers, complicating and questioning the importance of record label-sponsored artist development. The A&R representative often operates as a manager in charge of an artist's career development in addition to their known function as talent scout. The producer continues to operate as catalyst, developing artists through collaboration and experimentation in the studio. Through the historical overview offered in this thesis, the distinction between the A&R representative's and producer's roles and functions has served to distinguish between the two positions and their involvement in artist development. Case studies of notable producers Nathan Chapman, Tony Visconti, and Joel Little have demonstrated stylistic differences in artist development while refining the producer's function. The distinction between the A&R representative and producer has established the producer as an agent of artistic development in the studio, and the A&R representative as an artist's career developer.

My practice-led approach to the research has allowed me to utilise ethnographic and auto-ethnographic insights into artistic development in the studio. The creative work comprises two EP recordings by two separate artists of differing experience levels, which has provided a contrast in artist development, particularly in the area of communication. I chose to situate myself within the creative work as producer in order to provide a targeted perspective throughout the production process. I collected qualitative data through questionnaires completed by all participants. The most effective question was, 'Please describe your experience in this project so far, any challenges, issues, and/or success' from the 'During the Process' section of the questionnaire. Answers from this question yielded insight into each participants' role- and experience-specific challenges. In addition, during the Caitlyn Wessels EP recording, the producer and artist each kept a reflective journal. I also conducted a semi-structured interview with the artist to ensure that sufficient reflective data was attained from her. Due to time constraints, I did not undertake a reflective journal and semi-structured interview with the members of Street Pieces.

The data analysis covers four key themes: expectation, experience, communication, and relationship. These themes reveal contrasts between the various levels of artist development in the studio, showcasing notable differences between experienced and inexperienced artists. Time in the studio indicated that prior expectations tended to dictate each musician's experience throughout the recording. During this project, unrealistic expectations often negatively affected certain musicians' experiences, and these expectations included producer/artist direction, time management, and producer style. By contrast, goal-based expectation, such as the desire to improve a specific skill in vocal performance or software operation, provided positive experiences through skill or knowledge-based development. Built upon trust and mutual respect, the producer–artist relationship demonstrated that collaboration and experimentation can lead to creative arrangements and a fulfilled artistic vision. Communication between artist, producer, and musicians throughout the production process is essential to creating a supportive environment for development. Studio experience also provided a basis for further development, particularly for the young or inexperienced musicians. Through experiences of expectation, relationship, and communication, the musicians developed an understanding of the studio environment.

Further research into this area could involve a larger sample size in order to encompass a wider range of artist experience, along with comparative, genre-based data collection and analysis. Adopting a practice-led approach within genre-based data collection could also be extended to a broader definition of the producers' role, including engineers, assistants, mixing engineers, and so on. In this way, an ethnographic approach could provide a researcher's third-party perspective of the artistic development that takes place throughout the production process. This would allow the researcher to document a larger quantity of projects from an outsider perspective, sourcing a wider and potentially more nuanced or detailed level of reflective data.

In this project, I have focused on artist development through the production process while detailing and defining the roles of both producers and A&R representatives. I suggest that further research into artist development should centre on A&R representatives, as their role and function has changed significantly. These changes to A&R provide a useful basis for research, particularly in terms of the role of the artist career developer. Currently in the music

industry, the producer focuses on the artistic development of the artist through the production process, whereas an A&R representative manages the development of an artist's career, overseeing songwriting, image, and the production of music on a 'big-picture' scale.

Research in this area could lead to a comprehensive understanding of artist development inside and outside the studio. This research builds upon industry knowledge and the academic study of artist development by identifying four key areas in artist development through the production process: expectation, communication, relationship, and experience. Identifying these key areas of development in the studio helps deepen the pool of knowledge in the realm of popular music and artist development, paving the way for further study.

Appendices

Caitlyn Wessels Questionnaire

Before the Process

1. Have you recorded in a studio setting before?

Jacob Laube—Producer	Yes	No
Alex Miller—Guitarist	Yes	No
Ashleigh Holm—Violinist	Yes	No
Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)	Yes	No
Caleb Klein—Bassist	Yes	No
James Morrisson—Drummer	Yes	No
Sarah Collyer—Piano	Yes	No
Victoria Holm—Cellist	Yes	No

2. Do you find recording a comfortable?

Jacob Laube—Producer	Yes	No
Alex Miller—Guitarist	Yes	No
Ashleigh Holm—Violinist	Yes	No
Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)	Yes	No
Caleb Klein—Bassist	Yes (Middle)	No
James Morrisson—Drummer	Yes	No
Sarah Collyer—Piano	Yes	No
Victoria Holm—Cellist	Yes	No

3. What is your role in this project?

Jacob Laube—Producer	Producer/ Researcher.
Alex Miller—Guitarist	Guitarist
Ashleigh Holm—Violinist	Violin
Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)	I am the recording artist, it's all

about me! Haha

Caleb Klein—Bassist

Bass Guitar Player

James Morrisson—Drummer

Drummer

Sarah Collyer—Piano

Piano on one track

Victoria Holm—Cellist

Cello

4. Do you feel that you are equipped for this project? Why?

Example: ‘I feel that I am equipped for the role of drummer in this project because I have 20 years’ experience as a live and studio drummer.’

Jacob Laube—Producer

Yes—I have been studying music for almost 10 years holding two diplomas and a bachelor in music. I have recorded countless tracks throughout my university degree and continued to do so outside this. I have also produced my own songs along with my peers and more recently a handful of artists at the QUT Indie 100 project.

Alex Miller—Guitarist

Yes—I have approx. 12 years’ experience as a guitarist, hold a BMus (bachelor of music), and have studio experience as a guitarist/engineer/producer.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

I am equipped for the project as I have 10 years’ experience playing in ensembles as a violinist.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

Partly. I have the experience singing and writing songs, but not experience recording.

Caleb Klein—Bassist

Not entirely sure. Have been playing for five years, including a few years of live playing, but have never really received feedback. Everyone else seems happy though.

James Morrisson—Drummer

Yes—Because I've had experience recording for other musicians over my 20 years as a drummer.

Sarah Collyer—Piano

Yes, I have piano-playing experience.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

Semi-equipped? I've played cello for five years but only in live performances (not recorded).

5. What do you expect to develop working in this environment?

(Improved performance skills, new ideas, songwriting collaboration).

Jacob Laube—Producer

I hope to develop an understanding about how an artist develops within the studio, through the process of recording an EP.

Alex Miller—Guitarist

To develop skills in a genre I am unfamiliar with, and to develop my more general skills as a studio guitarist.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

Collaborative experience.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

I expect to gain more confidence recording, and in my songs from hearing them fully produced, and learning how to work creatively with other musicians.

Caleb Klein—Bassist

Improved skills and experience, knowledge of recording process, opportunity to play in a team.

James Morrisson—Drummer

Learning to adjust to the style of the artist or recording.

Sarah Collyer—Piano

Improved recording and collaboration skills.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

Confidence, and being able to play and give input to others. Problem-solving and making adjustments to what's being played.

6. What support do you expect from your colleagues? Please give examples. (Producer, artist, musician).

Jacob Laube—Producer

I expect communication to be clear, for all musicians to be understanding throughout the process, and for us all to work as a team to achieve the goal of a professionally recorded EP.

Alex Miller—Guitarist

Producer—musical direction—same for solo artist.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

Guidance from producer and artist.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

100% commitment! Producer—patience and understanding with my high standards.

Musicians—trying out my ideas and caring as much about the quality as I do.

Caleb Klein—Bassist

Producers/songwriters should quickly decide that something is wrong and change it, rather than deciding on recording that something practised for weeks isn't right.

James Morrisson—Drummer

To help me develop better ideas in terms of drumming feel and style for what is needed in the song that we are working on. Clear communication in all areas of the project.

Sarah Collyer—Piano

Encouragement and clear communication.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

Artist/producer to be clear about what they want and what their musical goal is (how they want it to sound).

7. What do you require of your colleagues in order to be creative in the studio?

Jacob Laube—Producer

I find that creativity often comes in unexpected moments when there was a mistake or some downtime. So, I think I simply require a moment to think, feel, or experience what is happening and I can then act or react to that.

Alex Miller—Guitarist

A certain level of competence so I can focus on my own parts without worrying over much about theirs.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

Encouragement and enthusiasm.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

Sensitive and understanding of my protectiveness over my songs, and trying my ideas.

Acceptance and respect. If I have an idea, to share it I need to know that my opinion will be listened to.

James Morrisson—Drummer

Heaps of encouragement. I find it difficult sometimes to work through ideas and different genres, so encouragement and clear direction would aid my development and allow me to be more creative.

Sarah Collyer—Piano

Friendliness and a positive attitude.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

Communication, honesty, openness, and a supportive environment (bounce ideas off each other).

8. How would you measure the success of the project?

Jacob Laube—Producer

If all participants feel fulfilled, the EP is recorded to a high standard, and the artist has developed both musically in her artistic vision and her identity as an artist.

Alex Miller—Guitarist

If the final product sounds like a professionally produced album that would be success.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

Not sure, haven't heard the final product.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

Well-produced songs that I love, as well as all musicians and people in the process being happy with it as well.

Caleb Klein—Bassist

Consistent progress and improvement, and a nice-sounding final track.

James Morrisson—Drummer

The success of the project to me would be coming out of all this with some new drumming skills in country/pop.

Sarah Collyer—Piano

I think it is going well—well coordinated and good communication.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

How enjoyable the experience was and what the final product sounds like.

9. Please describe your experience in this project so far, any challenges, issues, and/or success.

Jacob Laube—Producer

So far there have been a number of difficulties, such as the lack of a bass player initially and the sudden inclusion of a dedicated guitarist. Also the whole music faculty being moved with no ETA on the studios being online until mid-semester 2016.

Alex Miller—Guitarist

So far the experience has been rehearsal—I have had comparatively little time to become familiar with the music.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

Excited and looking forward to recording great music.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

Mainly just working out how I want my songs to sound, and communicating that.

Caleb Klein—Bassist

Integrated very well into the band. Slightly apprehensive of what the recording studio will be like.

James Morrisson—Drummer

The biggest challenge is trying to come up with the best ideas for the song at hand. As I've never recorded country before, I have found it difficult coming up with beats and fills in this genre.

Sarah Collyer—Piano

I have attended two rehearsals so far and listened to the rehearsal recordings—no big challenges so far.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

Both nervous and excited. Whole new experience and I want to perform well (a little worried about disappointing people).

During the Process

1. What are some difficulties that you have faced so far?

Jacob Laube—Producer

Getting the guitarist up to scratch with the songs: showing him my riffs and then aiding him in his creation of new parts. Guiding the bass player, who has had no studio experience, through the standards of a studio prior to entry—for example, getting him to play solo to a click track and then just as the rhythm section during rehearsals. Also organising the strings section for ‘I See You’, with little to no time at all to prepare them.

Alex Miller—Guitarist

Playing in a style I am unused to.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

Time management, not knowing exactly what was expected, key was unfriendly for string instruments.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

Late rehearsals, compromising, realising I can’t have exactly what I hear in my head for practical reasons ☹.

Caleb Klein—Bassist

Felt rather out of place on the first day of recording. Studio’s professional vibe feels slightly intimidating, but not to the point where my abilities are affected.

James Morrisson—Drummer

No real difficulties so far. The rehearsals were very thorough and helped me remember exactly what needed to be played in the tracks.

Sarah Collyer—Piano

Remembering what I played from one time to the next—so I started recording my ideas on my phone.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

The key is awful to play for a string instrument (unnatural) and hard to tune to.

2. **Have your expectations been correct? How?**

Jacob Laube—Producer

So far my expectations have been correct, I have continued in my role and Caitlyn in hers. As the guitarist, Alex, and I completed our BMus (bachelor of music) together, he has suggested some production ideas that have helped. Overall, my expectations regarding roles have stayed the same. I can also see musical and identity changes within Caitlyn that prove my expectations or observations to be correct. For example, her jumping on the ideas for certain riffs, how she talks about her image, and lastly how much she now understands about the studio process.

Alex Miller—Guitarist

Yes—I have been primarily a guitarist on this project—though I have offered help based on my own experience as a producer.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

Recording was highly enjoyable but difficult to listen to without prior experience.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

Definitely learning how to collaboratively create with musicians, gaining more confidence in my songs, but kinda getting sick of them.

Caleb Klein—Bassist

I was expecting recording sessions to be a very different atmosphere to band practices.

James Morrisson—Drummer

Yes—because the producer and artist were thoroughly clear with what they wanted for me as a drummer in this project.

Sarah Collyer—Piano

Yep! Gained more experience recording piano and refined collaboration skills.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

Recording is more fun than I thought it would be but recording the strings sound is hard, which I expected as it is a common occurrence.

3. **Have you stuck to your role or have the roles blurred? Please give an example.**

Jacob Laube—Producer

As I mentioned, the roles have blurred a little; however, I am still guiding the project. This being said, Caitlyn has taken more of a co-producing role at times, it seems without even realising it. She never directs the musicians, but her realistic and achievable ideas are often great and we try them at least once.

Alex Miller—Guitarist

I have helped where I can as a producer, but have predominately stayed within my role as a guitarist.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

Stuck to role.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

Yes, I've stuck to my role, although I think I took on a bit of Jacob's role sometimes and bossed people around haha.

Caleb Klein—Bassist

I have been able to provide some insight into the creative process from time to time, but overall my role is still the same, and is not in any way blurred.

James Morrisson—Drummer

Yes.

Sarah Collyer—Piano

Stuck to role.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

My role has been the same. Play cello.

4. Are you developing in the way that you thought you would? Explain.

Jacob Laube—Producer

I didn't think I would develop more as a producer, or as an engineer; however, I am certain that these sessions have been growing me in these areas. Particularly in the area of producing. Being the person that guides the musicians through the creative and recording process while being sure to get the absolute best performance out of them has been one particular thing I feel I've grown in.

Alex Miller—Guitarist

This project has given me an opportunity to develop in a different way to my usual musical experience.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

Enjoying the collaborative experience.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

Yes and no. Yes, on gaining more experience and handling long and stressful situations, and no because some things I don't really have time to do, just kinda do it and more or without properly learning.

Caleb Klein—Bassist

Yes, it's great learning how studio recording works and being able to play for someone's track.

James Morrisson—Drummer

Yes I have developed those skills, it is a style of music I haven't tapped into prior to this project.

Sarah Collyer—Piano

Yes—Listening skills, coming up with musical ideas, collaborating well with others. Maintaining focus during recording process.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

Feeling more confident to 'feel the music' and play new things (try stuff out).

5. Please describe your experience in this project so far, any challenges, issues, and/or success.

Jacob Laube—Producer

I have discussed some experiences and challenges over the past few questions, but my main challenge was and is the time restraints. Due to QUT shutting down the studios in preparation for the move, I won't have anywhere to mix or record overdubs if needed. This puts pressure on me, which I have tried not to put on the team to ensure that each take sounds great. On top of this, I won't know when I'll be able to mix this so that is also quite daunting.

Alex Miller—Guitarist

In the studio: Challenges—working out and accurately playing good parts.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

Enjoying the experience but feeling that there is a lack of direction and focus in the studio.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

Main challenge is long hours and re-recording so many times, difficult to keep motivation going, especially so late at night. Sometime compromising, not being able to have it sound exactly as I want for various reasons (time, doesn't work, etc.). But the incredible studio as well as being intimidating, can be inspiring, so it makes it easier to sound better.

Caleb Klein—Bassist

During the practise sessions the band always worked well together and listened to each other's input. It's possible that practices could have been more efficient, but not to the point where recording performance was affected. Jacob was very accommodating to the fact that I had never recorded before, and made sure I was prepared. Other than feeling a little lost at the start of the first recording, everything went well.

James Morrisson—Drummer

It was a very smooth process in the studio due to the rehearsals. However, one of the days we forgot a 'washy'-sounding cymbal for 'Cinderella Moment' and used a dark crash as a ride to recreate that wash sound we needed. The only other thing was standard drummer problems, breaking sticks!

Sarah Collyer—Piano

Easy—role was clearly defined! Communication was easy. Rehearsals and recording times and place were clear and efficient—both the process of and the communication of when, where, etc.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

The experience has been enjoyable but also rushed. I feel more confident to play and enjoy working with everyone. I do feel that communication and organisation have been lacking. I'm not sure that everyone has the same 'picture' of what the song should sound like. That being said I'm having a blast and the recording studio is so cool!

After the Process

1. What was one thing you learned from recording in the studio setting?

Jacob Laube—Producer

Just the amount of planning and thought that needs to go into it all. I knew it before but this time it all hinged on me in a larger capacity than I've ever attempted before.

Alex Miller—Guitarist

I broadened my musical vocabulary.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

How the recording process actually works.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

Everything is so complicated and takes so much time.

Caleb Klein—Bassist

I don't think I learned anything specific other than how things I already knew worked in a studio setting.

James Morrisson—Drummer

To always be professional, calm, and not so precious with ideas. Meaning that some of my ideas weren't used as other beats fit better, but I still found it difficult letting go of ideas I had worked on.

Sarah Collyer—Piano

Importance of remembering creative ideas, e.g. what I played from one time to the next.
Importance of positive mindset and focus.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

How it all works! I've never been in a recording studio before so the whole thing was a learning experience.

2. What did your role become? And how did the tasks you were assigned change throughout the project?

Jacob Laube—Producer

My roles stayed the same with some blurring from the artist and guitarist mainly in their opinions and suggestions.

Alex Miller—Guitarist

My role stayed the same mostly within the confines originally set out, but did blur slightly towards production.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

Role slightly changed during recording as we realised that the violin would suit the sound of the song more than the cello.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

My role didn't change, well at one stage I became Jacob's singing coach for D for T ('Dinner for Two').

Caleb Klein—Bassist

My role never really changed. I was always the bass player, and was always able to offer feedback and ideas as I wanted.

James Morrisson—Drummer

My role stayed the same and we completed all tracking smoothly and effectively.

Sarah Collyer—Piano

My role was the same throughout.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

My role didn't change much. The cello part was replaced with violin, which I was totally cool

with (sounded better that way).

3. Did your expectations of your colleagues match up with how they conducted themselves throughout the session/s?

Jacob Laube—Producer

Yes.

Alex Miller—Guitarist

Yes.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

Yes everyone was encouraging, enthusiastic. However, there was no real leadership or direction from the artist and producer.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

Yes, everyone was very committed and worked well creatively together, no complaints!

Caleb Klein—Bassist

Everyone performed well.

James Morrisson—Drummer

Yes.

Sarah Collyer—Piano

Yep, everyone was friendly and professional.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

My colleagues were fun to work with but also immature and unfocused at times. (everyone lapsed into unproductive moods at times, myself included).

4. Did your colleagues support you in the way that you expected? Why?

Jacob Laube—Producer

Yes. Everyone stuck relatively to their roles and grew in the areas they were in. They were also supportive in their roles.

Alex Miller—Guitarist

Yes. Everyone completed their assigned roles, and also offered assurances and ideas, which made the project a more positive experience.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

Yes, it was reassuring that everyone gave me a chance to get used to the sounds of the violin through the mics etc. This was very different to normal projection of string instrument sounds, which I am used to while playing in orchestra or solo.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

Yes, sensitivity and understanding plus caring about the quality.

Caleb Klein—Bassist

My input was always valued, even though I have the least recording experience.

James Morrisson—Drummer

Yes.

Sarah Collyer—Piano

See above.

And—Jacob and Caitlyn were both good with feedback.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

Everyone was supportive of the ideas I made and didn't complain when I made mistakes.

5. How did your colleagues help (or prevent) you from being creative in the studio?

Jacob Laube—Producer

They helped by allowing me moments to think when I asked, took direction well, and communicated clearly.

Alex Miller—Guitarist

They helped with creative suggestions and encouragement.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

I felt that everyone was just agreeing with each other because they were worried about offending anyone instead of giving constructive criticism.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

Helped by trying my ideas, and allowing me to sometimes literally run wild.

Caleb Klein—Bassist

They helped by generally being encouraging and open to any and all suggestions.

James Morrisson—Drummer

They helped me with certain parts that I may have forgotten from time to time during rehearsals.

Sarah Collyer—Piano

Good feedback, straight talking—positive, friendly environment.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

Ashleigh was the biggest help. I relied on her a lot as I trust her musical talent and experience.

6. Was there anything that challenged you? How did you overcome this?

Jacob Laube—Producer

The challenges in the studio were primarily taking on two roles as both engineer and producer. I feel that if I had an engineer I would have had more time to sit and think about any improvements and guide the process a little more smoothly. It also could have given me the appropriate time to organise the musicians while the engineer takes care of any small edits between takes. Though this was not the case.

Alex Miller—Guitarist

Playing in a different musical setting was challenging. We used reference tracks to get ideas for parts.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

Being responsible for the instrumental section of the song without any guidance. I felt like I had to improvise a lot, which was stressful. I overcame this by just doing my best.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

Tiredness and lack of motivation. Overcome by sugar high and hearing back great music we were making.

Caleb Klein—Bassist

Sometimes it's hard to get a perfect take on a song, as I'll explain in question 10. Other than that, not really.

James Morrisson—Drummer

The challenge was to play a style of music that was totally out of my musical comfort zone. The way I overcame it was by not being so caught up in my past ideas and allowing myself to be guided by the artist and producer.

Sarah Collyer—Piano

No—maybe tiredness and hunger haha. Had plenty of water and remained focused.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

Awkward tuning from the key (solved by Ashleigh with drop tuning).

7. How has this recording session developed your ability in the area you contributed?

Jacob Laube—Producer

I have grown as a producer and engineer, realising that I would love to record a session that I simply produced in order to further myself in that particular area.

Alex Miller—Guitarist

Through giving me experience in unfamiliar style.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

Experience in the world of recording.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

Definitely improving my creative collaboration and patience; long hours of singing improves vocal stamina!

Caleb Klein—Bassist

I definitely feel more experienced within studio recording and band playing in general.

James Morrisson—Drummer

It made me become more of an open-minded musician. Instead of pigeon-holing myself into one style I have gained confidence in styles outside my comfort zone.

Sarah Collyer—Piano

Confidence that I can do my part, fulfil expectations, take direction, and collaborate easily.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

Learned a new method of playing (vocal accompaniment).

8. Were your ideas valued and included? Please give an example.

Jacob Laube—Producer

Yes. As the producer, being valued and included were my jobs to facilitate, so I feel as though I was very valued and included throughout the process.

Alex Miller—Guitarist

Yes. Throughout the project most all of my parts were composed or co-composed by me.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

Yes, everyone valued and respected my contributions. Example would be what the cello and violin actually played in the song.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

Well my legit ideas were, sometimes I would have crazy ideas that were written off but occasionally I was serious.

Caleb Klein—Bassist

Suggestions for bass riffs were always considered, and feedback on others' ideas was accepted.

James Morrisson—Drummer

Yes they were. With a song like 'Walk Away', using the toms in the chorus to make the chorus sound a little different to what it could normally sound.

Sarah Collyer—Piano

Yes. I would play something and ask for feedback, which was given positively—whether or not the idea was a useful or if it wasn't—no mixed messages.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

Yes, small things I tried were approved of and added to the song.

9. Was the project successful in the way that you thought? Why?

Jacob Laube—Producer

Yes. Everyone seemed relatively happy following the recording, the EP sounds solid, and I did observe the artist's growth throughout the production process.

Alex Miller—Guitarist

Yes. I have not yet heard the finished product, but the tracking phase went smoothly and I think we got good results.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

Still unsure on the success of the song as I still have not heard it.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

More successful than I thought as the quality of musicians was better than I expected and I had no idea of how good things can sound in a professional studio.

Caleb Klein—Bassist

From the parts I heard, the project was a complete success. Everyone tracked their parts well, and recordings were high quality.

James Morrisson—Drummer

Yes. Because it is a style that I wouldn't necessarily listen to or play as a musician; and it allowed me to really get comfortable in a style that I thought would be very uncomfortable.

Sarah Collyer—Piano

Yes—recording done, collaboration successful.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

I've yet to hear the final product so I can't say for sure.

10. Detail your experiences overall, touching upon some of your personal highlights in the studio and during rehearsals.

Jacob Laube—Producer

Overall the process was very challenging, but also very rewarding. As I am juggling the role of producer as well as being the researcher, it can be hard being situated within the project; however, it does give unique insight into the thought process of a producer and allow me to guide the artist's development in a way that I wanted to observe.

My personal highlights were the full production of 'I See You' in a few hours, which gave me confidence that we can get anything done. It also allowed me to clearly hear and see my

vision for a song come together in the exact way I saw it.

I also enjoyed playing with such a diverse range of musicians in regards to skills and experience. It certainly grew me as a producer and engineer guiding these individuals through this process. Those with little experience I tried to prepare thoroughly while the experienced musicians knew the protocols and simply allowed themselves to be directed.

Again it was enjoyable to work with a team on original music that I personally have a hand in developing. It was very rewarding having finished tracking and listening back to the unmixed raw files as I felt each take and performance was to a high standard.

Each musician played their very best, which was amazing to see.

Lastly, I have thoroughly enjoyed seeing Caitlyn further understanding the process of taking her raw songs and fostering them into a full band setting and tweaking certain parts to make them work in a new setting. It has been great seeing Caitlyn also grow in her identity as an artist, beginning to think about her image and discuss it in a very thoughtful way.

Overall, this was an experience that has grown everyone involved and developed the sound of an artist, which is what we were all about!

Alex Miller—Guitarist

Overall I had a positive experience working with Jacob and the rest of the team. The rehearsals and recording went smoothly, and Jacob directed the team well. My highlight was overdubbing guitars in studio C, alternating between guitars and vocals. It was good playing in an unfamiliar style, and learning new techniques to suit that.

Ashleigh Holm—Violinist

Overall I highly enjoyed the recording process, it was an incredible and exciting journey with many highlights, including all those switches Jacob would not let me touch on the sound board. I loved hearing the layering coming together and understanding how production of music actually happens. My only disappointment with the experience was having to wait

seven hours at the studio after our scheduled recording time. It was 2 am before we finally recorded and by this time I was exhausted and probably not at my creative peak. Hopefully the song still turns out OK considering how rushed and time-poor we were. I still enjoyed the experience and appreciate the opportunity I was given.

Jacob, thank you for your humour, enthusiasm, and borrow of your jumper. All the best for future endeavours, I know you will be successful.

Researcher/producer's Note: Scheduled time for 'I See You' was 10:30 pm. Wait time hinged on the completion of the earlier two tracks and then the bed tracks of 'I See You'. Still, as discussed in the interview, time management was the biggest issue through the entire process.

Caitlyn Wessels—Artist (Singer–Songwriter)

Recording the EP has been so incredible, yet one of the most frustrating things I've done. I never realised how much recording is an art of its own, and how complex and time-consuming it can be. I learned a lot about being a recording musician working with other musicians on a shared vision, collaboration, the effort and time, and a hell of a lot of patience. Rehearsals were probably the most fun as it was the first time I was hearing my songs with a band, and I probably get a little over excited. Actually recording in the studio was such a difference, and one that I will not be doing again straight away if I want to retain my sanity. It's a long time singing and playing the same things over and over with the same people, but the 2 am finishes and feelings of wanting to strangle Jacob were all worth it because everything is going to sound incredible! It's a bit hard having to wait so long in the mixing process; because I'm not doing anything it feels the time has been stalled. It'll all get there eventually. One of the best parts of this experience was Jacob being able to interpret and understand my weird and random thought and transfer it to a riff or drum beat. It makes it a lot less stressful for me when we can get what I hear in my head out loud without much struggle. I also liked how we could all have fun and laugh together, because if we didn't laugh we'd probably cry!

Caleb Klein—Bassist

Practise sessions were good overall. They sometimes lacked direction, but that's to be expected. The songwriter and producer never really seemed to know what they wanted, again normal. I just went along with whatever they said and everything went OK.

Once we got to the recording stage things were subtly different, more professional. This was OK, just interesting to note the difference. This atmosphere was slightly more confronting for someone who had never recorded before, but Jacob had prepared me and everything was OK.

Once recording started it was surprisingly hard to get one perfect track. The first few tries always have minor errors, but one would expect this to improve. Actually, the song starts getting boring, making it harder to avoid lapses in concentration.

The overall highlight of this project was spending time working with the team. While I'm sure the final tracks will sound great, and that's kind of the whole point, the thing I'm taking away from this is the time spent together playing original music with an awesome group of people.

James Morrisson—Drummer

It was a fun experience in the fact that I got to play a style that I usually wouldn't play or necessarily listen to. I also got to meet and play with new musicians that I've never met or played with before. I regret getting frustrated from holding too close to my ideas for the songs during rehearsals. I feel that while my suggestions were valued we sometimes took a different direction, which was sometimes hard for me. I still struggled in the studio because despite the new ideas working very well, I even enjoyed them, I was still attached to some of my own parts. This was difficult for me as I thoroughly enjoyed recording, the songs, the team, and the new ideas. It was simply a lesson in letting go.

I absolutely loved the rehearsals where Caitlyn brought in chocolate and lollies, also the rehearsal [where] we had pizza. I think I just really enjoyed hanging out and playing music with some really cool people.

But one of the absolute best things was Caleb hitting the big gong that was in the studio following one of the takes on day one of recording.

Sarah Collyer—Piano

Good communication and I was emailed the song I needed to play on—so I could play with ideas. That made it easy to get used to the song in my own space and time.

Good communication of rehearsal times and recording times with plenty of notice and accommodation of people's schedules, that made it easy to plan, time management was awesome.

Positive attitudes in rehearsal and recording studio from all involved. This made it enjoyable and relaxed—whilst we were still productive and focused—that was really good. I never felt like my time was being wasted—which is unusual in a rehearsal and recording process!

Yay. It was good to be a part of it and I look forward to hearing the end product.

Victoria Holm—Cellist

The overall recording experience was very enjoyable for me. I was glad to be able to help a friend and had lots of fun at the same time. I was extremely nervous for the first meet up as the whole experience was new and I had only ever read sheet music before. My nerves were mostly quelled after meeting everyone and seeing how kind and supportive they were (even after my dreadful first takes). I'm also very glad that Ashleigh joined the project as she is more musically inclined than I am and I always feel more at ease with her around. Recording itself was lots of fun made bittersweet by poor time planning, organisation, and communication. I was not pleased with the amount of time Ashleigh and I sat around for. I understand how it can be difficult to manage time when recording but felt that it could be improved on to some extent. I haven't heard the final product and hope it sounds good. I feel like because everything was rushed that the song won't be as good as it potentially could've been but still felt like it went well considering the circumstances.

Jacob I believe you are a kind and talented individual. It was a pleasure to meet you and I had a lot of fun. My only critique is that you need to be more assertive with your ideas. I felt like a lot of the time you had a clear idea of what you wanted and had things to say but didn't? Don't be afraid to take control.

Best of luck for your future work!

Researcher/producer's Note:

Scheduled time for 'I See You' was 10:30pm. Wait time hinged on the completion of the earlier two tracks and then the bed tracks of 'I See You'. Still, as discussed in the interview, time management was the biggest issue through the entire process.

Also, the cello part was not cut from the song. The layering of the cello was scrapped when it didn't work as planned, and was instead replaced by violin.

Lastly, I was generally quiet as I was editing during takes. I feel that I said what needed to be said, as I am not in any way a reserved producer. I feel that the view here is because there were times when I was trying to think of a different melody, chord sequence, or microphone arrangement and had difficulty at times explaining exactly what I wanted.

Street Pieces Questionnaire

Before the Process

1. Have you recorded in a studio setting before?

Ben Tilney—Vocalist	Yes	No
Jonathan Mengede—Bassist	Yes	No
Marcus McLachlan—Drummer	Yes	No
Alex Miller—Lead Guitar	Yes	No

2. Do you find recording a comfortable?

Ben Tilney—Vocalist	Yes	No
Jonathan Mengede—Bassist	Yes	No
Marcus McLachlan—Drummer	Yes	No
Alex Miller—Lead Guitar	Yes	No

3. What is your role in this project?

Ben Tilney—Vocalist	Lead Singer
Jonathan Mengede—Bassist	Bass Guitarist
Marcus McLachlan—Drummer	Drummer, Backing Vocals
Alex Miller—Lead Guitar	Guitarist, Engineer

4. Do you feel that you are equipped for this project? Why?

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

I am equipped for the role because I have 10 years of experience singing live and in studio.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

I feel I am equipped for the role of bass guitarist in this project as I have been actively playing and learning my instrument for the past eight years, to the point where I have now competently recorded multiple projects in different styles ranging from as light as jazz to as heavy as metal and have played and toured in countless bands as a bass guitarist; my experience has prepared me well.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

I do feel reasonably well equipped. I have professional gear that I know and trust to get good sounds. As a band, we have spent a lot of time considering the songs and editing them as necessary and then rehearsing. Hopefully all that work will pay off when we get into the studio environment.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

I feel I am equipped for the role of guitarist/engineer because I have several years of experience in both fields.

5. What do you expect to develop working in this environment?

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

I expect to develop my overall vocal performance, my skills as a song writer/producer, my knowledge of recording techniques, and my collaboration skills.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

I expect to develop my performance skills, my ability to musically ‘think fast’ when new ideas are suggested and tested, and my ability to develop my interpersonal skills and relations in this project, as I’ve only been involved for four months and these guys have been together for four years.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

I think studio performance is something I can always improve and develop, as it is quite different to live performance. Capturing good feel along to a click track can be tricky and then also making sure the overall track feels good is something I would like to nail. I also expect we will develop our songs, since once we hear the progress of the recording we will come up with new ideas like adding sounds and new vocal parts.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

Improved performance skills, new ideas, songwriting collaboration, and importantly more experience in studio performance and mixing.

6. What support do you expect from your colleagues? Please give examples.

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

I expect open discussion of song ideas from the whole team and I expect everyone to trust in each other's ability to perform at the highest standard.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

I expect to be supported via my colleagues giving me their honest opinion on my playing and what needs to be improved or what parts I need to put more in the spotlight. I expect Jacob to do the same, basically 'say it as it is' so we can all be on the same page and reach a satisfactory sound that all parties involved are happy with.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

I guess I expect general, critical positivity. The studio can be quite daunting and exposing, since your performance is under very close scrutiny, so I hope that my band mates and Jacob as producer can guide me to achieve my best without making me feel artistically inferior. Generally, I hope when I'm performing that I'll be supported in getting a good sound, not having to move my own microphones, getting a break when I need it, and basic courtesies like that. I also expect that we'll all be supporting each other to get the very best outcome possible in our recording.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

I expect the other musicians to perform their parts without much hassle, and to provide feedback on my parts and our performance as a whole. I expect the producer to facilitate the session in such a way that it runs smoothly enough that we can focus wholeheartedly on our roles as musicians.

7. What do you require of your colleagues in order be creative in the studio?

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

I require patience from my colleagues if I experiment with different techniques and confidence from them that I will deliver my best vocal takes.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

I require them to be supportive as I described, and to have a bit of fun (not take a ‘perfect take’ too seriously over a take with a great feel) whilst still being professional and efficient.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

I think openness to discussion is important for my creativity. I’m usually happy to not necessarily get my way on every creative decision as long as there is some democratic thought put into it. I expect my colleagues to be professional and aspire to the same quality outcome as I am.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

I require them to handle their own responsibilities so that I can focus on my own.

8. How would you measure the success of the project?

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

I would compare these songs to our previous releases and see how much our songwriting has improved. I would also measure the success by comparing the sales of this new project to previous ones.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

I would measure it firstly by how it sounds, but then also by how we walk away after the process feeling.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

The main indicator for success on this project will be the quality of the recording. If we can get a radio-ready EP then that would be the very best outcome. Failing that, having well-tracked beds that we can finish and mix later would be a medium level of success. I am sure

that we will also grow as recording artists, which may present better opportunities for us in the future, which I would consider another indicator of success.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

I would measure success based on the outcome of the recording—both in the quality of our performances, the quality of the sounds we capture, and the quality of the mixing/mastering.

9. Please describe your experience in this project so far, any challenges, issues, and/or success.

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

My experience in this project so far has been enjoyable. This is by far the most fun I have had in the studio with Street Pieces. I feel like the band has developed a stronger musical style heading in a natural direction.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

I would say so far it has been generally successful, we have been doing a substantial amount of pre-production so I feel we'll be a well-oiled machine able to be fluid enough with the strong structures and our individual parts etc. to be articulate enough to quickly change things on the fly in the studio at Jacob's instruction to achieve the desired outcome.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

So far, working with Jacob has been an easy experience. One main challenge has been finding time in the studio that works for everybody, but we have overcome that. Our pre-production rehearsal was quite successful and I think it will enable us to have a smoother studio experience on the day. This is quite an important success because recording four songs in the proposed timeframe is quite ambitious.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

The challenge I generally find before commencing a recording project is choosing songs; I feel confident that we have chosen correctly.

During the Process

1. **What are some difficulties that you have faced so far?**

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

The biggest difficulty I faced was workshopping harmonies for the chorus tail in ‘Mouth of a Lion’. I think the team was a tad burnt out and communication wasn’t at its strongest, leading to some frustration. We eventually used the original harmony line from before we went into studio and it felt natural and suited the song. If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

I think the only real difficulty we have faced is getting the ‘vibe’ right; some songs we will get a perfect take but then receive the feedback that the take was technically fine but wasn’t really portraying the energy of our live show.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

So far the process has been about as smooth as expected. We were unsure if working in the new studio would be a disadvantage since things might not have been set up as we would expect, but we haven’t encountered any major issues. Capturing a great performance is a bit challenging, but after multiple takes we have managed to settle in to each song and get some really good recordings. Getting tired physically and creatively is also something that has been difficult but is to be expected.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

Any new studio takes a bit of getting used to. This studio has run very smoothly after initially working it out, and has not thrown any serious curveballs at us—e.g. gear not working as expected, computer crashes, etc.

2. **Have your expectations been correct? How?**

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

I expected Street Pieces to perform efficiently and to the highest standard and we definitely have done that. I did not expect to have as much fun as I did in the studio.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

No, I thought we were going to end up having to record instrument by instrument but we're actually having a good level of success with Alex, Marcus, and I in the same room (isolated amplifiers) recording our drums, guitar, and bass at the same time. Which is giving us a good groove. The fact that we are tight enough to do it this way is very impressive.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

Yes, I think my expectations have been correct, mostly because we have had some studio experience before. We were aware going in that it's not always a smooth experience and were prepared for a few hiccups. Overall though we've mitigated most problems and met our expectations.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

I was confident in the team of musicians and producer we have and was confident we would work well together. These expectations have been met.

3. **Have you stuck to your role or have the roles blurred? Please give an example.**

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

I have stuck to my role as lead singer. All members of the band trust each other in their ability so performance roles have not changed. If anything the production role of the whole band has jumped up a notch. We are more experienced in studio and were very familiar with the material—we all had more ideas for song production.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

I have stuck to my role, the only additional thing I am doing is providing my opinion when asked regarding takes, parts.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

Going into this, our roles were already a little blurred. Alex has taken on some more engineering and not just guitar. We've all contributed to 'producing' and improving the songs. We have worked well motivating each other and I guess the different elements of the team have blurred a little.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

I find that roles often blur slightly in studio settings, and they have, but we have mainly stuck to our roles.

4. Are you developing in the way that you thought you would? Explain.

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

I think I developed my production skills more than I thought. I have become better at communicating my ideas to the rest of the band and therefore bringing ideas to life. For example, I felt the counter melody of ‘Preacher’ wasn’t strong enough after a bit of experimentation and needed to sound more intimate. I then recorded through a dynamic microphone, which brought my idea to life.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

Yes, I am improving my performing ability and I feel am syncing in with the band well.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

Yes, I have developed in the way I expected. I actually think that we have done an even better job of our recording, but that is obviously a positive. I would say we have also developed our relationship as a working band in that we’re now more familiar with how we work together.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

My expectations were to develop my skills as a guitarist and get more studio experience in a new setting, which has been the case.

5. Please describe your experience in this project so far, any challenges, issues, and/ or success’

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

So far this experience has been fantastic, Jacob has been my friend for several years so we already had that rapport before entering the studio. He is also a vocalist so he can approach our songs from the same angle as me. All of these factors combined with my past singing experience has made it very comfortable to perform. I think the whole team has had quite a

successful session so far.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

I think so far we are achieving a successful result, the challenges of finding the right ‘feeling’ for a take were problematic, but we overcame them just by relaxing and listening more to each other.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

I’ve had a really positive experience so far. I’m really, really happy with how everything is sounding, and mostly happy with all my drum parts and recording. I think as the session continues through vocal recording and auxiliary parts the recording will develop and become even huger. Jacob has been good at balancing when to push us to work harder and when to let us be a bit silly to blow off some ‘studio steam’. Having a good team that gets along well and respect each other has also aided the success of the sessions.

Moving from the live room studio to the vocal booth studio presented a few technical difficulties but we resolved those with our combined experience and some valuable input from the QUT staff.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

Our first challenge was getting an understanding of the new studio environment, which was achieved quickly with help from tech staff. We had limited time, so setting up quickly and getting to work ASAP was another challenge. Everything has gone smoothly though with only minor problems, which we have solved quickly.

After the Process

1. What was one thing you learned from recording in the studio setting?

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

More of a reinforcement to me that when it comes to production, go with the take that has the most character, not necessarily the most technically proficient.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

I learned that having a good vibe and energy to a recording really makes a big difference; stepping away from the clinical every-note-must-be perfect approach and going for a more performance-style approach really brings out the human element in a recording.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

I would strongly say that VIBE is really important in capturing a great and unique performance. The excitement of being in the new QUT studios, the professional environment, and the fantastic surrounding views all helped to create a buzz about the recording. Being well rehearsed also led to a certain confidence, which contributed to the vibe and also gave us a clear expectation for the final recording.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

I did not so much learn clear-cut lessons but instead developed all my studio skills through my increased experience in that setting.

2. What did your role become? And how did the tasks you were assigned change throughout the project?

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

My role remained as singer and co-producer throughout the whole project, but if anything, I became more confident in my ability as a producer.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

My role personally remained much the same, giving my thoughts and input along the way of course.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

I definitely fulfilled my role as drummer as evidenced by the recording. I think in terms of helping with ‘producing’ I most often became the third or fourth opinion, just because I find it best if there aren’t too many people putting forth really strong opinions when they’re not required, but if I was asked I definitely had something to say.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

My role remained as a guitarist primarily and an engineer/producer secondarily. When I was not busy on my own guitar I would assist in facilitating a smooth recording process for the other musicians.

3. Did your expectations of your colleagues match up with how they conducted themselves throughout the session/s?

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

Absolutely. Everyone was professional and played to the highest standard and was very passionate about how the songs turned out.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

Very much so. I was particularly impressed with how Jacob gave direct feedback, which would give us that perspective that we can't really see ourselves as the musicians. Jacob's advice and direction gave us the right sound.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

My colleagues were very professional and for the most part surprised me with their work ethic and drive. We did well to manage our interpersonal relationships while still being able to critically analyse each other's performances.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

I have worked with all the personnel present at the sessions previously and my expectations were met.

4. Did your colleagues support you in the way that you expected? Why?

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

Yes they did. If I was performing well they would encourage my approach, but if they thought I had a better pass in me they would let me know as well.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

Yes, their feedback on my playing was direct and professional. We kept the vision of the best

sound for the band in mind and all played to that goal. I felt respected and a valued part of the team.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

I felt well supported and I think that helped me to perform as well as I did. Occasionally, the critiquing was more of a friendly ‘ribbing’, but because we’re such a close team I knew not to be offended. We were very supportive in planning and time management, which included taking breaks when needed and making sure we didn’t do too many vocal takes in a row that might burn Ben out.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

Yes, I was expecting support from our producer in facilitating a smooth recording process, and providing feedback, which was met. From the other musicians I was expecting a high level of professional skill and an ability to perform competently and quickly, as well as providing feedback on both the songs as a whole and individual parts of each musician.

5. How did your colleagues help (or prevent) you from being creative in the studio?

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

It was a safe creative space where everyone was always exchanging ideas, so I was never afraid to throw my own in the mix.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

They didn’t restrict or dictate my parts. This allowed me the creative freedom to feel the vibe and groove with it; this particularly comes to light in ‘Mouth of a Lion’ as I actually ended up adding quite a few extra moving notes in the choruses as I felt my bass line required it and it ended up really adding something to the song.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

Everyone was very supportive of each other and we were all happy to try different ideas. We’ve learned over time that it’s usually worth trying each idea and then collectively making a decision on which one is better.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

By completing their roles to such a level that I could focus primarily on my own role within the project.

6. Was there anything that challenged you? How did you overcome this?

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

In retrospect there wasn't really anything that challenged me. I don't even think the time restraints challenged me but instead brought the best out of me.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

At one point in the verse to 'Preacher' Alex realised he and I were playing different parts: E E G verse REST E G. We overcame issues such as these by listening to each other and amending such errors. Also, there was the challenge of keeping the vibe energetic like a live performance, which was not hard as we spurred each other on in the room together.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

Physical tiredness was definitely a factor towards the end of drum tracking, but I was motivated by everyone else in the studio to keep hitting hard to get great takes. As I mentioned earlier, a few times the critical feedback I received was a little confronting, but to overcome that I just remembered that it wasn't really a personal attack and everyone was trying to achieve the best result for the recording.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

Our main challenge was in getting used to the new studio, which we overcame with help from each other and James in tech.

7. How has this recording session developed your ability in the area you contributed?

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

This session has given me stronger conviction towards my vocal ability and production ideas. Not only because the creative process ran like clockwork, but because the end product is something I'm very proud of.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

I feel a more proficient studio bass guitarist as a result of having done this recording experience. Mostly due to Jacob suggesting different parts etc. and us changing them on the fly then recording them. Being able to quickly manipulate one's own part is a good skill.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

I honestly think this is one of the most satisfying recording experiences I've had on drums, which is quite surprising since we were a small and relatively inexperienced team. So if nothing else I'd say this recording session improved my confidence as a studio musician. Also, because the resulting recording is of an even higher quality than I was expecting, I would say that we all developed as co-producers and song arrangers to achieve that better result.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

Through giving me the opportunity to further develop my skills in studio performance and engineering/producing.

8. Were your ideas valued and included? Please give an example.

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

My ideas were definitely valued and included. In 'Monster', we discussed the outro vocals as being quite free form, and I decided to just go in the vocal booth and make it up on the spot. This produced a completely raw, untarnished vocal delivery that suited the outro instrumentation. Jacob approved and encouraged this approach, giving me confidence to push myself even further.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

Yes: when I added the running notes in the chorus of 'Mouth of a Lion' everyone agreed it added a vibe to the song, and Alex was inspired to therefore add an extra chord change in the chorus to complement the effect my extra notes created.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

Definitely. From tempo choices and drum parts to backing vocal choices, I was able to provide creative ideas that were taken on board. Since we are a fairly democratic group, I certainly felt a part of most creative discussions as well.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

Yes: a couple of examples would be adding an extended outro to ‘Monster’, which we had discussed several weeks before but not mentioned since, and using compression/distortion on backing vocals in ‘Preacher’ to get a specific sound.

9. Was the project successful in the way that you thought? Why?

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

I definitely achieved what I wanted from this project. It was a testament to the band’s chemistry and songwriting ability. Due to our familiarity with the material, we had time to throw around ideas without too much pressure. The end product is four dynamic, strong songs that showcase what Street Pieces is all about.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

I would say the project was indeed successful: the sound is great, capturing the energy.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

It was more successful than I thought because we achieved such a good vibe and energy in the recordings. I would say preparedness was key to that success as well as our combined experience from previous sessions. The whole process was quite considered as well, we spent time thinking about each section, part, and sound, and that shows in the end result.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

The project was successful because we have ended up with four high-quality recordings, and have each improved on our abilities in our individual roles.

10. Detail your experiences overall, touching upon some of your personal highlights in the studio and during rehearsals.

Ben Tilney—Vocalist

I would arrive at the studio and immediately feel positive and excited within the space. Everyone was on the same wavelength and egos were left at the door. As I sung in the outer corridor of the studio, I watched the rest of the guys in the band room capture a powerful live energy, which I thrived off. This was a highlight. The other highlight for me was being free to experiment within the vocal booth at the end of ‘Monster’. After 10 years of singing I pushed myself further than ever and learned there were new elements of my voice yet to be explored. This was a very invigorating moment for me.

Jonathan Mengede—Bassist

There were many highlights of the experience; being in a new environment framed the music in a new light, which added a sense of creativity to the experience. More tangibly, being able to ‘switch off’ the part of my thinking that self-critiques and just focusing on my playing and the songs was a great feeling. I was enabled to do this as Jacob was incredibly switched on the whole time, picking up everything from wrong notes/phrases to subtle tuning issues and timing wobbles. This meant I was free to give it my all and not be concerned with potential issues. A particular highlight for me was recording ‘Mouth of a Lion’. There was one take where no one was really feeling the vibe; we did another take under Jacob’s instruction ‘make it sexy’, and the entire feeling and groove of the song subtly shifted between us three musicians, and after the take everyone was impressed with how different the take felt. On my part at least, I used one finger to pluck the bass instead of two; Jacob’s feedback was, ‘I don’t know what you did but you were on it that time!’, which was a nice result and a positive reinforcer.

All in all, it was a productive yet relaxed session and I think Jacob achieved some solid tracks out of us. I personally left the sessions feeling successful.

Marcus McLachlan—Drummer

My experience overall was really positive. In rehearsals, we were already well practised, but Jacob’s input and suggestions were useful and we were able to polish them up before the

recording day. I think the fact that we were already on a similar page creatively to Jacob meant the rehearsal process was much smoother and the changes were minimal but effective.

Another highlight would definitely be using the new QUT Z9 studios. Great gear, nice views, and excellent-sounding rooms as well as that 'still new' smell really helped to bring an exciting vibe and a determination to bring our A-game.

Easily the biggest highlight and proudest part of the session was our ability to capture whole takes with a really great vibe. When we've become so used to comping drums and editing bits and pieces of every song, it was really satisfying to capture a real performance in one hit. This fact definitely contributed to the overall success of the session.

It definitely felt like a fairly magical combination of all the right elements on this recording. Having said that though, I think there's enough for us to take away and learn from so that we have a fair chance of replicating this process for another recording. Overall, a great success.

Alex Miller—Lead Guitar

I had a great time overall—during rehearsals, we had the experience of writing with a new bass player, which shaped the direction of our music into a new area. The recording process went smoothly, and there was a great collaborative energy between all the members of the team. There was a risk of having 'too many cooks in the kitchen', but somehow this problem never materialised. I am happy with the quality of work we have produced, and the process we went through to produce it.

Caitlyn Wessels Interview Questions

General Questions

1. In regards to pre-production, do you think time was spent wisely? What changes would you make if you were to record another EP?
2. What do you think you learned during ...
 - a. Pre-production
 - b. Production
 - c. Post-production
3. What was the most difficult song to work on? Why?
4. Were there any songs or parts of songs that just didn't work? OR were a struggle to make work?
5. What were some of the best and worst parts about ...
 - a. Pre-production (rehearsals)
 - b. Production (recording)
 - c. Post-production (mixing)
6. How was it working with a producer? What were some challenges? Also, what were some highlights?
7. How was it working as a producer guiding a young artist through the development of their first EP?
8. What are some things that could have made this entire process easier?

'Walk Away'

1. How did the guitar hook come about?
2. Was this song particularly difficult throughout rehearsal?
3. Were there any issues recording any other instruments? (Acoustic Guitar!!!!!!!!)
4. What was the overall vision for this song? Was it achieved?

'Scared of My Life'

1. How did the pitch harmonics come to be a part of the song?
2. What were the biggest issues with this song?

3. The intonation was out on the guitar that was used to initially track the lead part—was this difficult to fix? How?
4. What was the overall vision for this song? Was it achieved?

'Dinner for Two'

1. How did this song come about?
2. Who was the most involved in the songwriting?
3. Were there any issues or complications writing a song with your producer? (TO CAITLYN)
4. Was this a harder song to produce because you were so heavily involved with the writing stage? (TO JACOB)
5. Were there any difficulties recording vocals? Why?
6. What was the overall vision for this song? Was it achieved?

'Cinderella Moment'

1. What made the song so difficult?
2. Why did you settle on the current lead guitar parts? Are you happy with the result? (BOTH)
3. The key change before the last chorus is very effective—was it a change during any production or was this during the song writing stage?
4. What was the overall vision for this song? Was it achieved?

'Crawling Away'

1. What was most difficult to record on this track? Why?
2. What are your thoughts on the guitar parts?
3. The rhythm section works very effectively for this song—what were your thoughts coming into this song?
4. One of this biggest solos on the EP is featured in this song—was this just all chance or was this planned?
5. There are some amazing harmonies in this song—how did they come about?
6. What was the overall vision for this song? Was it achieved?

'I See You'

1. What were the complications that arose with this song?
2. How well was this song and the associated musicians organised? Why?
3. What arrangement ideas were there and what became doable by the end of the session?
4. What was the overall vision for this song? Was it achieved?

Caitlyn Wessels EP

Private link to Caitlyn Wessels EP (all uploaded in WAV format):

<https://soundcloud.com/jacoblaubemusic/sets/caitlyn-wessels-ep/s-0Wco9>

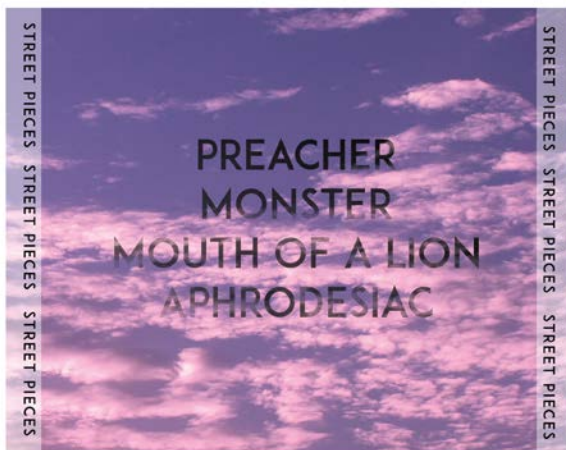
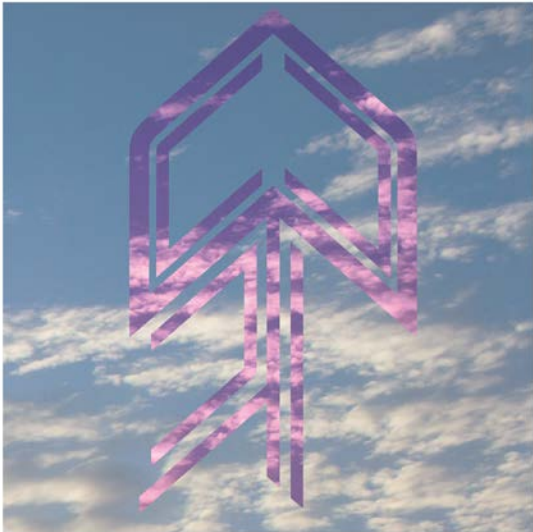




Street Pieces EP

Private link to Street Pieces EP (all uploaded in WAV format)

<https://soundcloud.com/jacoblaubemusic/sets/street-pieces-ep/s-6a5Vn>



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