For the benefit of the song:
Exploring the role of preproduction in recorded popular music

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Statement of Original Authorship

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.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate preproduction processes and the perceived value of a formalised preproduction process to its participants. In order to do this, an interdisciplinary investigation of preproduction in other creative industries is undertaken, developing a preproduction process that is more formalised than that usually associated with music production, although one that is more common in disciplines such as film and television, animation, microdocumentary and short film production. With limited scholarly attention focused on specific, repeatable preproduction frameworks for popular music production, this research provides an opportunity to develop a process for collaborative songwriting and music production for singer-songwriter solo artists that may be broadly applicable the field. Through practice-led research methods along with interview and questionnaire data, participants identified a number of common preproduction factors that could be categorised in three main areas: musical and song development; environmental elements; and the producer-artist relationship, with the most compelling data highlighting the importance and benefit of having the story idea as a considered and formalised step in the preproduction process, emphasizing story telling aspects of the lyric and emotion of the song. All participants affirmed the importance of preproduction during the course of the research, regardless of whether it followed a formalised process specific for music or not. For participants, the formalised music preproduction framework presented a more complete process, with perceived benefits for the songs and participants in areas such as improved musical outcomes and workflow efficiency. Overall, these broad results contribute to our understanding of preproduction in commercial popular music, and illustrate some possible avenues for further development in record production and creative practice.

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Acknowledgements

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Chapter One – Introduction

The creation of popular music recordings has historically involved many specialised processes that contribute to the realisation of a songwriter's initial artistic and musical intentions and the subsequent development of melodic or lyrical ideas into a complete, produced, mixed and mastered format. Collaborative labour is often at the core of this process, with creative roles performed by many different actors all working together for the benefit of the recorded song. The collaboration between artist (who is often also the original songwriter) and the producer can shape and rework musical, lyrical, arrangement and structural elements to refine the song. While different genres of music have associated workflows or productions processes, more often than not collaboration remains a significant part of the overall creative processes. In mainstream pop music, the songwriting process alone will regularly contain multiple collaborators, with recent examples Rihanna and Drake's, "Work" (Braithwaite, Samuels, Ritter, Thomas, Graham, Fenty, Moir, 2016), and Beyoncé's, "Hold Up" (Pentz, Koenig, Knowles, Haynie, Tillman, Emenike, Rhoden, Pomus, Shuman, Way, Randolph, McConnell, Orzolek, Chase, Zinner, 2016) listing 7 and 15 different writers respectively.

Preproduction, and collaboration with producers during this process, offers the songwriting team an expert, objective voice from an individual that was traditionally not involved in the initial songwriting process, and is a main contributing factor as to why the producer was hired (Sonier, 2012, p. 59). Depending on the working arrangements of the production and songwriting teams, preproduction sessions often vary significantly from song to song, from producer to producer and the repeatability of the preproduction process is not industry standard. This is not to suggest that it should be standardised across all forms of contemporary music, however for pop related streams, and specifically for singer songwriter based artists as this research investigates, a formalised framework will be investigated. This research is focused specifically on preproduction models where the commencement of the collaborative preproduction process between the songwriter and producer occurs after the song has been composed by the creator or writing team. The research will aim to discover if a more formalised preproduction process – adapted from other creative disciplines such as animation, film and television, microdocumentary and short film production that have strict and considered processes – can be used to achieve desired outcomes as perceived by the participants. Moreover, this study aims to discover if there are any common factors in the

preproduction process of making recorded contemporary music with solo, singer-songwriter type artists that result in desired outcomes for musicians, producers and song writing teams before they enter the recording studio.

What is Preproduction?

In a traditional model (see figure 2), preproduction is the process that occurs after the composition process and before production begins. The term is commonly used in industries such as film, animation, advertising, theatre and manufacturing, where clear pre-production frameworks exist. Producers can plan, test and perfect their product so that when production does begin, it is more time and cost efficient. Regardless of the industry or product, preproduction acts as creative exploration and workflow planning for the overall project. As Selby stated regarding preproduction in animation, "preparing a tangible framework for this stage is essential, as it governs the budget, the scheduling of the technical pipeline arrangements, and the managing of the workflow arrangements of the crew in the studio" (2013, p. 37). Preproduction as a process has evolved considerably in the recording industry, in parallel to technological advancements in the recording studio and subsequent changes in the roles of the sound recordist and producer. As Jackson writes, prior to the release of *Pet Sounds* (Wilson, 1966) and *Revolver* (Beatles, 1966), "preproduction was a fairly well-defined process" (Jackson, 2006, p. 26). Sourcing and selecting the artist's material, hiring session musicians and then rehearsing and preparing the material for recording was the primary function of preproduction at that time (Jackson, 2006, p. 26). This early process was akin to an artists and repertoire (A&R) model of discovering songs for artists to add their vocal to, rather than a collaboration between artist, songwriter, and producer. Innovators such as George Martin, Geoff Emerick and Brian Eno transformed the role of the record producer "by their ability to provide techno-musical artistry on par with the artists' musical vision" (Shepherd, 2011, p. 258). This collective musical collaboration between the artist and producer heralded a progression in the preproduction and production processes where the producer held both strong artistic and technical responsibilities. The popularity of acquiring a producer as an expert collaborator became standard where a producer's entrepreneurial acumen, a knowledge of demographic and target market as well as an expert understanding of musical and cultural trends became employable attributes.

Although the role of the producer in the preproduction process became standard, the process itself has remained unstandardised. Unlike preproduction in other creative industries, music

preproduction has a distinct lack of a 'tangible framework' and the process and applied techniques vary significantly. Sometimes, it may not occur at all. As Murphy describes, preproduction can become an integral part of the record-making process when prioritised as such:

> Preproduction is the single most cost effective, 'bang for your buck' stage of producing a record, and critically important to making the best use of time, energy and budget in the studio. I would prefer a short amount of time in the studio to record an album, plus sufficient time for preproduction than twice that recording time and no preproduction. Quite often people will compliment my production by commenting on the sound of particular instruments, voice or elements of a mix. While I am always flattered that people enjoy elements of my work, I usually consider my most important contributions to a record to be those that I made before we walked into the studio. (Murphy R. C., 2001)

The importance of preproduction in the creative industries more broadly has been well documented (Caldwell, 2001; Harrison & Loveland, 2009; Jetnikoff, 2008; Milic & McConville, 2006; Selby, 2013; Vincie, 2013), and preproduction processes in music have been subjected to the same amount of scholarly attention (Hepworth-Sawyer & Golding, 2010; Jackson, 2006; Linderman, 2005; Marshall, 2014; Owsinski, 2016; Rogers N. , 2017; Sonier, 2012), however specific formailsed preproduction process for music have seen little scrutiny. As such, this practice-led research will investigate the preproduction processes from multiple disciplines – film, television, animation, microdocumentary and short film production, to discover if more stringent or formalised preproduction processes, borrowed from these disciplines and contextualised for music, result in greater efficiencies and overall effectiveness as perceived by the participants. Working from this context, this research will also will aim to discover if there are any common factors that appear in preproduction sessions that tend to achieve positive outcomes according to the participants. In these contexts, every decision in the overall production is evaluated according to whether or not it functions 'for the benefit of the song'; that is, the focus of preproduction is on the participant's perception of song improvement.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

In this chapter, existing literature on music preproduction, the record making process, and preproduction processes from other creative arts practice is reviewed. Firstly, the record making process and how preproduction resides and functions within traditional and integrated production models is examined. Further to this, the collaborative relationship of the artist and the record producer is explored, unpacking producer typographies and roles and the subsequent artist and producer binary. Finally, an investigation into preproduction processes in other creative arts disciplines such as film and television, animation, short film production and microdocumentary is conducted (Caldwell, 2001; Harrison & Loveland, 2009; Jetnikoff, 2008; Perkins, 2016). Overall, this literature examines some of the formalised and systematic preproduction processes from other creative industries to identify if and/or how they might be developed and applied in music preproduction.

The Record Making Process

In the post-Napster era of the music industry - when music became downloadable and consumable for free, the processes and economics of music production transformed, from writing and creating music to distribution and public consumption (Katz, 2010, pp. 178-185). These changes in economic and financial contexts both highlight and reinforce the importance of preproduction. As Jackson notes, "Now, more than ever before, it's essential that artists - and the producers who work with them - keep an eye on the bottom line when they're recording, and that often means devoting more time and energy to pre-production" (Jackson, 2006, p. 26). Hepworth-Sawyer and Golding reinforce this when they write,

> Financial advances are far less than they once were, if they exist at all in
> some extreme instances. For this reason, managers and their artists are
> beginning to think much more frugally and business-like about how records
> can be made. As a result, pre-production has renewed importance and value
> in that the production process can and should be carried out to maximum
> effect. (Hepworth-Sawyer & Golding, 2010, p. 145)

As Palmer describes, preproduction objectives are unique to each project (Palmer cited in Jackson, 2006). Whether it is perfecting arrangements for a live rock band or experimenting

with loops and synth patches for an electronic band, financial resources can be preserved by completing these tasks during preproduction, whereby artists are "less likely to have to use any technology to fix it later" (Palmer cited in Jackson, 2006). Not only does this involve saving time and money once artists and producers enter the studio; the use of sufficient preproduction also allows for greater focus on capturing and giving effective performances and meeting the desired outcomes of an improved and well-rehearsed song.

As the roles of the producer and artist have adapted over the years in response to industry and musical trends (Burgess R. J., 2013, pp. 7-9), so too have recording formats and processes been transformed: from monaural recording and playback to the advent of magnetic tape, multitrack recording and digital recording, unlimited track counts and non-destructive digital editing. With that in mind, the modern production process has emerged with a sense of fluidity whereby the preproduction, production and post production processes may blur into each other in ways that would not have been common in previous historical settings. Both Ojanen (2015) and Hepworth-Sawyer and Golding (2010) define a "traditional", linear model for music production as that in which the composition, arrangement and preproduction of the song occur as separate stages in advance of the recording process. Shepherd also describes this model as one in which collaboration in the recording studio "can be conceptualised as working to a four stage *modus operandi*: preproduction; techno-musical arrangement (the first two which are intertwined); tracking; and mixing" (Shepherd, 2011, p. 258). In contrast, modern production processes tend to exhibit greater fluidity from the early stages of the overall production through to the recording of the track, even including mixing tasks in this fluid model, as illustrated in figures 1 and 2 below (Ojanen, 2015; Hepworth-Sawyer & Golding, 2010, p. 143).
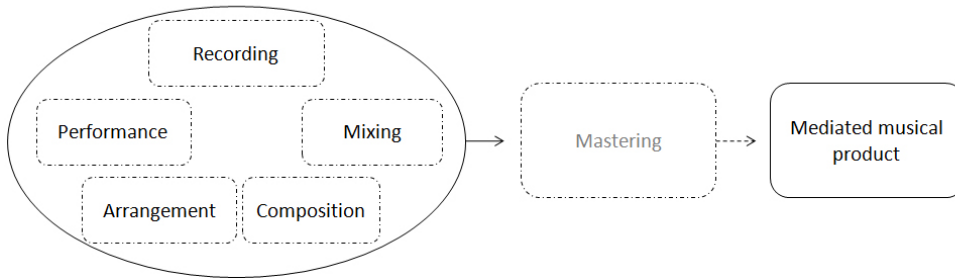
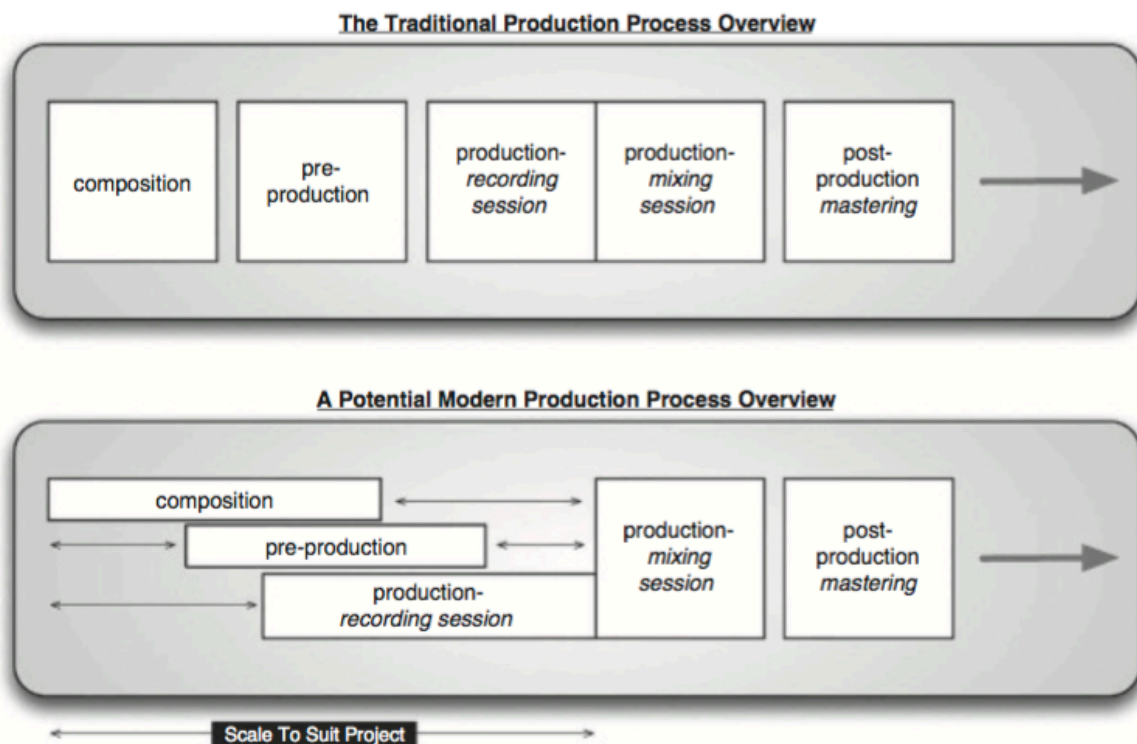Figure 1. The traditional linear and integrated models of music production (Ojanen, 2015)

Figure 2. Traditional and modern production processes (Hepworth-Sawyer & Golding, 2010, p. 143)

Prior to 1940 and the invention of multitrack recording (Schoenherr, n.d.), a production team did not have the luxury of extensive post production, editing, review and even mixing in the

case of monaural recordings. As AEA describe, the recording process of this period had a simple purpose, "to document a live performance for consumer playback" (AEA, 2017). The production team had to commit much earlier in the production process to ideas, sounds, tones and timbres, and the song was required to be well rehearsed, prepared and arranged with all musicians prior to the commencement of recording. "The sound, balance, dynamics and stereo image is decided upon at the moment of creation, not in post-production" (AEA, 2017). Any sonic experimentation, song development or rehearsal had to precede the recording process. Furthermore, to avoid substantial studio fees, much more inexpensive or free locations such as rehearsal spaces were used to host these sessions (Toft, 2010, p. 272). In theory, this meant that the primary focus of the studio recording time was capturing performances rather than song development. With track and editing limitations and large ensembles requiring audio to be recorded from minimal microphones, having a professional, well-rehearsed band or ensemble was paramount to ensuring time and economic efficiency of the recording (Burgess R. , 2014, p. 17).

With more recent workflow models where "preproduction can blur backwards into the composition stage, and equally draw back from some of the traditional roles from the recording stage" (Hepworth-Sawyer & Golding, 2010, p. 143), producers can currently employ an increasingly collaborative and creative role in the song creation process. This allows for an extended period of review and experimentation when it comes to the overall composition, lengthening this well into the production process, with some suggesting "the creative writing process of the song through to the point at which the material is mixed can become one big preproduction session incorporating the writing of the material, and the development and intricate programming and production" (Hepworth-Sawyer & Golding, 2010, p. 147). While this elongation might combine multiple elements in a single step, the repeatability of the preproduction process specifically can become unclear and difficult to disseminate from other production or creation tasks. Furthermore, as the integrated model would be scaled to suit each individual project, the production process lacks the industrial uniformity that tended to define previous models of record production. It is the lack of clear and repeatable preproduction processes that this research is aiming to investigate, along with the question of if or how a more repeatable or formalised preproduction process might be utilised by producers and artists.

The record producer and artist collaborative relationship

The roles of the music producer have played out in many different ways in the context of popular music production. As Shepherd describes, "some of the first seeds of the reconceptualization of sound and the transformation of the studio recordist from entrepreneur and technician to artistic collaborator can be identified in the emergence of rock and roll" (2011, p. 257). This period saw the realisation of the producer as an artistic collaborator involved in song craft, arranging and recording alongside the musical artists themselves (Shepherd, 2011, p. 257). Record producers come from diverse professional backgrounds and possess contrasting proficiencies and therefore each producer brings a unique sense of functionality to the role. "No two producers or production teams have identical skill sets or ways of working, but commonalities do exist" (Burgess, 2013, p. 8).

Burgess categorises these commonalities into six functional typologies: artist producer; auteur producer; facilitative producer; collaborative producer; enablative producer; and consultative producer (2013, p. 9-19). Each typology involves a unique collaborative relationship with the artist and distinct approaches to preproduction and the production processes. *Facilitative producer*s, whose "role is to support, facilitate and maximize the recording of the artist's ideas" where "the artist is the primary creative force in the recording" (Burgess R. J., 2013, p. 14), and *collaborative producers*, who "do not attempt to control every detail of a recording; they bring an extra band member mentality to their productions" (Burgess R. J., 2013, p. 14), present clear similarities in terms of support, reinforcement, guidance and facilitation. They work closely with artists to achieve musical outcomes, unlike the *consultative producer* who spends far less time in the studio with the artist, collaborating in a mentor-like capacity. "Their [consultative producers] primary considerations are conceptual issues of direction, material, mood, energy, appropriateness, and other intangibles, as well as larger considerations that drive an artist's career forward" (Burgess R. J., 2013, p. 19). Though not technically driven, an *enablative producer's* skill exists in their ability to build strong teams of people to enable artists to thrive in an environment that is most conducive to creativity, proficiency and efficiency. *Artist producers* are unique in the fact that the stereotypical artist and producer roles are performed by the same individual. Although collaboration from this producer type is not always apparent, the preproduction process and other types of quality control measures are still present. The *auteur producer* is

someone that controls all aspects of a creative work. While this producer is not the performing artist, they exercise a significant amount of creative input and control over the work, co-writing large portions of songs with artists and having command over the creation, preproduction and production phases. Auteur producers make up a large percentage of current chart hits, with the most recent example of Max Martin and colleagues Dr Luke and Benny Blanco (Burgess R. J., 2013, p. 13; Tingen, 2012). By 2011, auteur producers made up more than 90 percent of the top 10 tracks on the Billboard Top 100, contrasting from 0 percent in 1960 (Burgess R. J., 2013, p. 33), as shown in Figure 3.
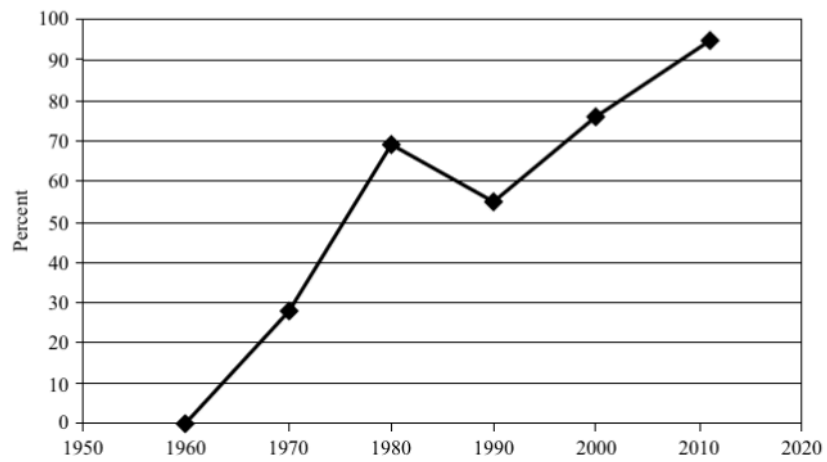
Figure 3. Percentage of Producer/Writers in the Top 10 of the Billboard Hot 100, First Week of September each decade since 1960. (Burgess R. J., 2013)

A much broader approach is taken by Hepworth-Sawyer and Golding (2010) when highlighting the 'traditional' and 'current' models of production and the roles of the producer in which the 'traditional' producer is described as "someone who has been allowed creative control of a recording process" and one who "would be the soundboard for the artist: someone to bounce ideas off and someone to receive objective opinions from" (p. 4). Pras and Guastivino (2011) also take this less specifically defined broad approach in relation to the producer roles stating "the role of record producers is to bring creative ideas while respecting the socio-cultural references of the music" (p. 75). This concept of the 'traditional producer' emphasises roles of support, review, collaboration, reinforcement, expert musical skill and knowledge, organisation, consultation, realisation and the ability to bring the best out in an artist's performance and creativity. However, the traditional producer's role has been challenged as the abilities of artists themselves have expanded into technical and

professional skillsets beyond that of performing musicians. Artist producers, auteur producers and collaborative producers make up a large percentage of today's modern producer workforce, as illustrated in Figure 3 (Burgess R. J., 2013), as each of these producer types is often an active songwriter and artist. Having a collaborator to approve ideas in a creative context increases the chance of that idea being 'good' and manages the risk of subjectivity of the creator (Bennett, 2011, p. 6). Bennett states, "this instant-audience effect, combined with the fact that more ideas can presumably be generated in a collaborative environment, may increase the song's chances of success compared to a solo-written work" (Bennett, 2011, p. 6). As Burgess states, "The line between writing and producing has blurred within recent years", demonstrating how the producer and artist's roles have become increasingly co-dependent in comparison to previous producer-artist relationships and models (Burgess R. J., 2013, p. 32). Hepworth-Sawyer and Golding suggest that "Using the traditional model, an artist would have been the writer/performer and the producer would be the producer. Nowadays, artists can blur those lines, becoming co-producers, and the producer can take some part in the songwriting and performance" (Hepworth-Sawyer & Golding, 2010, p. 11).

With more expansive skill sets and the dynamic nature of the artist and producer collaborative relationship, role definitions may also become blurred. Pras and Guastavino (2011) offer a simple interpretation in which the producer – regardless of their technical skills, philosophical toolkit or production approach – is one whose "primary mission is to guide the musicians as an artistic director of the project" (p. 84). Sonier presents a related idea of the "objective voice" (Sonier, 2012, p. 59) that the producer displays in preproduction. The producer plays a varied and dynamic role in the production process, often showcasing numerous interdisicplinary attributes, not only localised to producing. When talking about legendary producer Joe Meek, Levine comments that Meek did not have any musical knowledge, and it was his ability to extract unique performances out of his musicians that was one of his great qualities. "If he (Meek) wasn't in the room, those performances wouldn't have happened, and as great as those players were, you needed a catalyst. So Joe Meek, like many producers since, was a catalyst to stimulate ideas, and that is in my view, as valid as a producer that writes all of the notes out and says 'play this'" (Levine cited in Law, Whatley, Cocker, Privitera, Stanton, Walsh, 2016). As described by Pras and Gustavino, "the producer provides an objective and critical point of view according to the aethstetic context of the music being recorded" (p.84). With that in mind, a mutual understanding of the artist's

vision becomes of great importance to the working relationship and also to the creative output. As Murphy describes,

> For an artist and a producer to define a vision for an album, there is certainly no fancy studio equipment required. This can take place in a café, in a restaurant over dinner, in the bands practice space or even in cyberspace via Email or Internet chat (Murphy R. C., 2001).

It is also important to note that with recent advances in digital recording technology and relatively cheap digital emulation of expensive analogue gear, the traditional roles of the artist, songwriter and producer can also start to blur.

> Not all musicians and songwriters have or want the technical skills to record themselves, but those who do have relatively free access to the appropriate technology to undertake this. Recording technology provides songwriters with the tools to potentially impact on the traditional role of the auteur producer (O'Grady, 2013, p. 133).

This implies a shift from historical models where labour was divided according to role in the production process; in more recent digital and post-digital contexts, songwriters and artists with the technical knowledge can act as the songwriter, the recording engineer and the producer, making decisions in these areas simultaneously. This model of studio-based songwriting relies on many simultaneous creative decisions, and although some individuals may be proficient at undertaking multiple roles concurrently, it may not allow one to be critical of each process individually. Nonetheless, Jackson explains that "At the end of the day, there's no right or wrong way to do it, and the line between preproduction and actual tracking is blurring more each day" (Jackson, 2006). Lauzon takes this point a step further by suggesting that even mixing decisions – typically considered a post-production step – start to be made in preproduction, further blurring traditional or historical processes of labour in record production (Lauzon, 2016, p. 114). In this sense, "It can be argued that musicians are making production and mix decisions at every stage of the creation process" (Lauzon, 2016, p. 115). As Murphy explains,

> Without proper preproduction it is impossible to truly establish the needs of a record and make the best use of the time in the studio. Preproduction is a 2-way education for the producer and the artists. It is a time to share ideas, to

grow as musicians and develop the trust and skills that will be necessary

when it is time to bring your best into the studio (Murphy R. C., 2001).

With the decrease in recording budgets (Kirby, 2015, p. 302), the increase in importance of preproduction (Murphy, 2001) and the blurring of what constitutes the preproduction process (Hepworth-Sawyer & Golding, 2010, p. 143), a critical examination of the role of preproduction is important. The following review of preproduction processes from other creative industries is drawn upon as a way of better understanding the nature and potential role of preproduction within such a changing and challenging context.

Preproduction in Other Creative Arts

Creative arts such as animation, film, television, advertising and photography have sometimes drawn parallels to music making: "Record producers compare themselves to photographers who aim to capture the most meaningful moments and then bring them together" (Cance, Pras, & Guastavino, 2013, p. 382). Modern popular musical recording can be compared with filmmaking, wherein both cases "the intended version of *reality* is pieced together through a process of repeated takes and editing" (Patmore & Clarke, 2007). Furthermore, similarities can be observed in the way that the products of both industries are subject to scrutiny, with overall success often measured according to metrics of popularity and commercial worth: as Marade, Gibbons, & Brinthaup (2007) note, "successful creators produce novel quality products that are highly regarded by their intended audience" (p. 126). As is the case with other creative arts, record producers need to be sensitive to not only the artist's vision, but also with factors that may impact on the potential popularity of the work with its intended audience. Patmore & Clarke's notion of 'repeated takes and editing' draws a direct parallel to the recording and production phase in musical terms, although the creative processes tend to differ markedly in preproduction stages. For example, in the preproduction process for creating a short film, Perkins lists his preproduction steps in chronological order, as: script breakdown; creating the shot list; creating the schedule; creating the budget; getting a crew; art and production design; wardrobe; locations; preparing the production; and finally, preparing for postproduction (Perkins, 2016). Each of these steps has its own set of substeps and has been developed to be a stringent and repeatable process. In reference to preproduction in animation, Selby notes that "preparing a tangible framework for this phase is essential as this governs the budget, the scheduling of the technical pipeline arrangements,

and the managing of the workflow arrangements by the crew in the studio" (Selby, 2013). This preproduction phase involves "the exploration of scripts, visual and sound concepts, and their ideas, and their testing through research in order to prepare material before filming and recording" (Selby, 2013). Music preproduction is built on similar attributes to Selby's animation preproduction elements of exploration of lyric, sound, sonic and technical concepts, participant ideas and experimentation and testing in order to prepare the song before recording. A highly explicit framework is vital in animation and other creative industries however due to differing personal working habits from producers, and the use of more fluid production models (as seen in figure 1 and 2), repeatable and formalised processes for music preproduction have seen little scrutiny.

Much of the scholarly attention in music preproduction (Hepworth-Sawyer & Golding, 2010; Jackson, 2006; Linderman, 2005; Marshall, 2014; Owsinski, 2016; Rogers N. , 2017; Sonier, 2012), focus on technical aspects of a song that may require refinement. These include elements such as song arrangement, lyric, instrumentation, sonic choices, tempo, time signature, groove and performance qualities or rehearsal or demo recording considerations; however a tangible, repeatable, chronological process is not presented as clearly as it is in other disciplines. Key texts in animation (Caldwell, 2001), film and television (Harrison & Loveland, 2009), microdocumentary (Jetnikoff, 2008) and short film production (Perkins, 2016) all provide methodical preproduction process for their own creative discipline, sharing distinct similarities and some differences (as illustrated in Figure 4, below). These differences, can be attributed in part to certain individual discipline specific processes for their own field although there are some elements that appear in the frameworks of the visual mediums that do not appear in music preproduction texts surrounding process. Although the visual mediums may differ from music, parallels can be drawn between Harrison and Loveland's (2009) and Caldwell's (2001) storyboarding steps, Perkins' (2016) 'creating the shot list' and 'art and production design' steps and Jetnikoff's (2008) 'planning and sequencing the story step' (see Figure 4) and the demoing process in music preproduction. All of these steps involve the realisation of research or objectives and refinement of story design steps that took place prior. Another distinct difference between disciplines is the place of preproduction within the production timeline. In film and television, animation and documentary making, the conception of the project begins at the start of the preproduction process with tasks such as problem analysis, modelling and providing a context, and the story idea (see figure 4). In contrast, short film preproduction begins with the implication of an

already completed script with the script breakdown step. This displays some similarity to traditional or linear music production models (see figure 1 and 2), where preproduction would often begin with an already completed or semi-completed work. As previously stated, preproduction could be either the original step of song conception with collaborative composition from the artist and producer, or the first point of collaborative review as per traditional models. In music preproduction, the song may experience numerous changes throughout the preproduction process and in some cases may be totally rewritten.

Step	Harrison and Loveland's Process	Jetnikoff's Process	Perkins Process	Caldwell's Process
1	Problem Analysis	Modelling and providing a context	Script Breakdown	Story Idea
2	Audience Analysis	Brainstorming the character and concept	Creating the shot list	Story Structure
3	Setting Objectives	Preproduction research	Creating the schedule	Storyboards
4	Basic Research	Designing the story	Creating the budget	Story Reel
5	Treatment	The hook 'framing the central problem'	Getting a crew	Start Over
6	Content Outline	The central character	Art and Production design	
7	Script	Assigning production roles	Wardrobe	
8	Storyboards	Planning and sequencing your documentary story	Locations	
9	Camera and Lighting Blocking	Shooting schedule	Preparing the production	
10	Budget Development	Designing the soundtrack	Preparing for Post production	
11	Crew Size	Style		
12	Production Schedule	Planning the interview		

13		The pitch		

Figure 4. Harrison and Loveland, Jetnikoff, Perkins and Caldwell's Preproduction steps
(Harrison & Loveland, 2009, p. 18; Jetnikoff, 2008, pp. 2-16; Perkins, 2016; Caldwell, 2001,
p. 30)

Music preproduction often centers around improvement, experimentation and making the
song the best it possibly can be, as defined by its creators and collaborators: as Toft writes,
"The art of crafting successful pop singles can be a hit-and-miss affair, and for many people
in the recording industry the most important component of a commercially viable record is a
great song" (Toft, 2010, p. 267). Pixar and Disney Animation president Catmull has
described it as such: "if you have a good story, animation will only make it better, however if
you don't have a good story, animation can't fix it." (Catmull cited in Caldwell, 2001, p. 31).
This draws parallels to songwriting and song production and the notion that 'the song is king'
(Bennett, 2011, p . 5; MacPhee, 2011, p. 27; Pakinkis, 2016, p. 16; Pomeroy, 1998, p. 69;
Taylor, 2004, p. 27) meaning that "a great song can hold up in its simplest form" (Pomeroy,
1998, p. 69). Toft elaborates, stating that "a great song cannot become a hit without the
'right' arrangement" (Toft, 2010, p. 268). As he also writes,

> The arrangement is everything that makes a hit record', suggests Richard
> Carpenter, 'you can have the best singer on the planet and the best song, but
> if you don't have the right arrangement for that song and singer, the singer's
> going nowhere and so is the song' (Olsen et al. 1999, p. 115). Burt
> Bacharach phrases the notion somewhat differently. 'You can have a hell of
> a song,' he says, 'and have it spoiled by a bad arrangement or production . . .
> you need the right showcase' (Saal 1970, p. 51) (cited in Toft, 2010, p. 267).

In order to have a good song 'spoiled' by an underachieving arrangement (as described by
Toft), you must first have a good song; a well-developed preproduction framework provides
a vehicle for the song, not only in terms of narrative and lyric, but also in technical and
musical aspects, such as the arrangements and production. If we consider the preproduction
frameworks developed by Harrison and Loveland, Perkins, Jetnikoff, Caldwell and the
fundamentals of preproduction put forward by Thomas, some possibilities to develop a
methodical process for music preproduction become evident.

Disney animator Frank Thomas claims that in animation preproduction, "all of our training

and study really boiled down to just three points. (1) Do you have an idea? (2) Are you communicating it clearly? (3) Is it done in an entertaining way?" (Thomas, 1984). These three general points serve as foundational concepts for preproduction in many creative arts. Alongside Thomas' three concepts, Caldwell also offers five 'Preproduction Steps' in animation: story idea, story structure, storyboards, story reel and finally, start over (Caldwell, 2001, pp. 30-31). Harrison and Loveland stipulate a twelve-step process from the film, television and advertising industries, initially intended to inform technology students of the professional practices typical of those industries. It incorporates similar elements to those identified by Caldwell, with Harrison and Loveland identifying further and more detailed steps (see Figure 4). They describe this model as an "authentic design tool in television, film and advertising production technology that does not hinder [students] creativity, but rather logically sequences ideas into a purposeful and working form" (Harrison & Loveland, 2009, p. 18).

Jetnikoff provides a framework for preproduction in low budget, micro documentary film making (Figure 4). This framework is also aimed at students and low budget productions nevertheless the process provides a systematic view at the preproduction process for this medium. Although both Jetnikoff's, Harrison and Loveland's and Perkins' processes contain some discipline specific elements, there are clear similarities between them in terms of research, story design, scheduling, sequencing and storyboarding, roles and crew. Both Jetnikoff and Harrison and Loveland have elements of research and analysis embedded into their frameworks where the documentary process contains research into the background of the documentary's central character and documentary content, and the film and television framework displays research into target demographic and audience and also content research into the subject matter. Having a dedicated process step committed to the purpose of revisiting, reviewing and collaborating with the artist and producer on content research and story design might be beneficial in the development and refinement of the song for music preproduction.

Thomas' three fundamentals for preproduction form a broad hierarchy of the creative disciplines in the same way that they do for animation, functioning as quality control criteria that ensures preproduction is serving its intended purpose. All four of the abovementioned processes contain different and discrete steps, and the merging of some of these steps may prove beneficial when trying to understand common aspects of preproduction (see Figure 5).

Harrison and Loveland	Caldwell	Jetnikoff	Perkins
Problem Analysis Audience Analysis Setting Objectives Basic Research	Story Idea	Modelling and providing a context Brainstorming the character and concept Preproduction research Designing the story	Script Breakdown
Treatment Content Outline Script	Story Structure	The hook 'framing the central problem' The central character	Creating the shot list
Storyboards Camera and Lighting Blocking	Storyboards & Story Reel	Planning and sequencing your documentary story Style Planning the interview Designing the soundtrack	Art and Production design Wardrobe Locations
Budget Development Crew Size		Assigning production roles	Creating the budget Getting a crew
Production Schedule		Shooting schedule	Creating the schedule Preparing the production Preparing for Post production
	Start Over	The pitch	

Figure 5. Merging of preproduction steps.

Caldwell's first step, the story idea, focusses simply on the idea for the story. The story idea

outlines the brief for the work in one sentence, giving the creative team boundaries to work within and some focus to work towards. Having creative confines in a project, "whether or not they're created by an outside client or you yourself, a set of limitations is often the catalyst that sets creativity free" (McDowell cited in Porter, 2014). Caldwell also suggests that in this step one should try to "collect as much information as possible, pick out the key points, illustrate them simply, get feedback and repeat the process" (Caldwell, 2001, p. 30). In the animation process, this step would be the first task taken by the creative team. In music production the story idea step may occur prior to preproduction, focussing specifically on the song's backstory, emothion or meaning, and the perceived success of the lyric in communicating those aspects. Similarly, in film, television and documentary making the first steps function as analysis and research of demographic, psychographic, sociological impact, and communicative aspects, including an analysis of how video production might solve a problem; all steps that precede the actual composition of the script and storyboards. In an overall sense, these examples demostrate how cross-discipline perspectives on preproduction prompts a critical investigation of workflow and how creative tasks are clustered: something that is subject to further investigation in this thesis.

Caldwell's story structure step, Harrison and Loveland's content outline step, Perkins' creating the shot list step, and Jetnikoff's 'framing the central problem' step display distinct similarities in their respective models of preproduction processes. They all provide insight into the structure of the narrative gained from extrapolation of the initial song idea and from "research that supports the chosen objectives" (Harrison & Loveland, 2009, p. 20). As Caldwell writes, "In any story, there is a beginning (setup), middle (development) and an end (resolution)" (Caldwell, 2001, p. 31), and songwriting narrative is often also beholden to this kind of narrative structure. Murphy also suggests that in song narratives, "a song is not just a song, it should function as a linear lyrical conversation between two people" (Murphy R. , 2013, p. 81). As suggested by the examples from film and television preproduction, the adoption of a dedicated step that deals with narrative structure may prove useful in music preproduction. A strong preliminary focus on the story idea, narrative and the communication of the story prior to musical or technical aspects of preproduction may function to magnify the function of the story and give it a heightened importance in the final artistic outcomes.

While Caldwell's story reel step and Harrison and Loveland's script step are similar, it is Caldwell's step 5 and Harrison and Loveland's steps 9-12 where these preproduction models

suggest unique and relevant points for preproduction in music. Each of the different preproduction processes contain discipline specific processes relevant to their own field, such as camera and lighting blocking or wardrobe. Some of these elements may seem irrelevant for music, but by adapting this terminology to parallel tasks across disciplines then similarities can be drawn. Camera and lighting blocking could include microphone, instrument, amplifier, preamp, and sonic choices to represent a corresponding process across disciplines. Another similarity apparent in Jetnikoff's, Harrison and Loveland's and Perkins' frameworks are the steps dedicated to personnel and crew development and recruitment. This step can dictate other elements of the production such as budget and scheduling, and can also have significant impact on artistic and commercial outcomes. This step would solidify band member duties, session musician requirements and identify the need for participants with skillsets outside of the collaborative group. Postproduction considerations would also be considered at this stage regarding mixing and mastering personnel. These steps do not directly focus on the technical side of production, although they can play a role in determining many aspects of the creative process; the location, the talent, the time to be able to spend on production and post production (and further aspects related to dissemination such as distribution and promotion).

Perkins, Loveland, Jetnikoff and Harrison present dedicated steps for production scheduling. This was not a consideration in Caldwell's framework although the applicability for use in a music preproduction process is evident. As previously mentioned, the production schedule, the budget development and crew procurement steps rely on each other, and are areas of consideration that may benefit a music preproduction framework. Caldwell's final "start over" step is quite a unique but potentially useful phase of preproduction, allowing the production team to be critical and reevaluate the work, before beginning the production process. In this way, it plays a similar role to Jetnikoff's 'pitch' step. Both steps enable the preproduction models to function in a cyclical manner, embedding processes of continuous improvement, review and refinement. As Caldwell writes,

> At this point you often abandon what has been done and begin again. If you still feel positive about what you see (after lots of feedback, or the client has given you a deadline), you can finally start the staging/layouts, the rough animation and the countless other tasks that lie ahead (Caldwell, 2001, p. 31).

This study primarily aims to fill an identified gap for a formalised music preproduction framework. These possibilities are explored in more detail in the methodology chapter and case studies that follow.

Chapter Three – Methodology

While much of the scholarly study of record production has focused on the production and recording process itself, less attention has been given to the creative and practical tasks that precede this process, known collectively as preproduction. This study aims to discover if a more formalised preproduction process – adapted from other disciplines such as film and animation that have strict and considered processes – can be used to achieve desired outcomes as perceived by the participants. Moreover, the study also aims to discover if there are any common factors in the preproduction process of making recorded contemporary music that result in desired outcomes for musicians, producers and song writing teams before they enter the recording studio. To achieve this, my research has drawn on practice-led and action research methods during preproduction sessions, including the development of a preproduction model that I have assessed and analysed using semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire with research participants. The practice-led portion of the research occurred through my role as record producer during preproduction cycles with four artists, and I have also drawn on insights from two external producers who were engaged in preproduction with one artist each during the research period.

Developing a Formalised Preproduction Model

By investigating formalised preproduction processes from similar creative disciplines, the use of a more reliable or repeatable preproduction process when applied to music preproduction will be explored. By studying the preproduction steps identified by Caldwell, Harrison and Loveland, Perkins, Jetnikoff and Thomas in the literature review, similar steps were merged to create a six step process targeted for music preproduction to be used in creative practice. Figure 6 illustrates the merging of the interdisciplinary preproduction processes, resulting in process for music preproduction as detailed in column five. I have adopted Caldwell's (2001) naming conventions in large part, as they encompass a broad cross section of sub-elements; along with the steps of budget development (Harrison and Loveland 2009; Perkins 2016) and production schedule (Jetnikoff 2008; Perkins 2016; Harrison and Loveland 2009).

Harrison and Loveland's Process	Caldwell's Process	Jetnikoff's Process	Perkins' Process	FINAL PROCESS
Problem Analysis Audience Analysis Setting Objectives Basic Research	Story Idea	Modelling and providing a context Brainstorming the character and concept Preproduction research Designing the story	Script Breakdown	**STEP 1** – STORY IDEA
Treatment Content Outline Script	Story Structure	The hook 'framing the central problem' The central character	Creating the shot list	**STEP 2** – STORY STRUCTURE
Storyboards Camera and Lighting Blocking	Storyboards & Story Reel	Planning and sequencing your documentary story Style Planning the interview Designing the soundtrack	Art and Production design Wardrobe Locations	**STEP 3** - STORYBOARDS
Budget Development Crew Size	░░░░░	Assigning production roles	Creating the budget Getting a crew	**STEP 4** – BUDGET DEVELOPMENT
Production Schedule	░░░░░	Shooting schedule	Creating the schedule Preparing the production Preparing for Post production	**STEP 5** – PRODUCTION SCHEDULE
░░░░░	Start Over	The Pitch	░░░░░	**STEP 6** – START OVER

Figure 6. The merging of interdisciplinary preproduction processes.

Harrison and Loveland's and Jetnikoff's first four steps draw parallels to Caldwell and Perkins' first step. In this step Caldwell asks "is this [the story idea] something that will interest people and will find it entertaining" (Caldwell, 2001, p. 30). The producer should contemplate whether the target audience will find concept or idea behind the song will be entertaining, which is why Harrison and Loveland's steps of problem analysis, audience analysis, and basic research align with Caldwell's story idea. Although Harrison and Loveland view step 3 (setting objectives) as a direct way to "design and use instruments [questionnaires] to gather data" (Harrison & Loveland, 2009, p. 18) about an audience, gathering direct data or peer-to-peer feedback from an intended audience is not often a conscious step from a songwriter when developing story ideas. The use of this step to gather data offers the possibility for songwriters and producers to gain a firmer understanding for their creative practice to follow. Setting objectives and concept brainstorming are both centered around creating a brief and focusing intentions for the overall work. This is an important step not only for music, but for all creative arts practice. Whether the story idea is the primary step in a whole creative process, or the first opportunity for collaborative review, this step affords participants the opportunity to focus the intent, content and delivery of the intended message by solidifying, reviewing, reworking and refining the actual story idea and creative brief for the project before creative work commences on writing or reworking the script.

Harrison and Loveland's treatment step "is used to sequence researched information in the proposed video" (Harrison & Loveland, 2009, p. 20). It is similar to Perkins' 'creating the shot list' step, Jetnikoff's 'framing the central character' step and Caldwell's 'story structure' step. When describing his second step, Caldwell explains that "creating a structure is an essential skill that is often overlooked, even among professionals. In any story, there is a beginning (setup), middle (development) and an end (resolution)" (Caldwell, 2001, p. 31). This narrative approach draws on research into the story idea, the content outline and also the process of scripting, writing, reviewing and re-writing, informing what I have described as step 2 in music preproduction, 'story structure' (Figure 6).

Harrison and Loveland's storyboards step, Caldwell's storyboards step, as well as the planning and sequencing the documentary story step from Jetnikoff's framework and Perkins' art and production design step provide obvious similarities between the disciplines of physical story structuring, development and the creation of a tangible work. Caldwell

describes this stage where "rough story sketches are created and presented for feedback" (Caldwell, 2001, p. 31). Though not strictly identical, parallels can be drawn in music preproduction when compiling reviewed information and feedback from the earlier steps and building new workable demos or performable versions of the songs. In this stage, experimentation is key where lyric, structure, melodies, harmony and instrumentation should all be scrutinised.

> Flexibility is the key here: everything can and should be moved and rearranged during this storyboard process. It is here you play with the different variations on a dilemma; doing it just once doesn't ensure that you have the "best" solution. (Caldwell, 2001, p. 31)

The story reel step from Caldwell's process is the transfer of the completed story board into a moving picture format. This step is akin to creating workable demos or performable versions of the songs, thus the storyboards and story reel steps can be merged in the case of music preproduction. Camera and Lighting Blocking also displays similarities to that of music preproduction where instead of visual choices, sonic and musical decisions and experimentation can take place. Creative selections such as tonal assessments from amplifier and pedal choices, instrumentation, microphone choices, tempi, key and recording formats would all form comparable actions to camera and lighting blocking and wardrobe and location considerations from Perkins' framework. These sonic and musical decisions play a key role in developing the workable demo, and amalgamating Caldwell's storyboard and story reel steps provides an accurate model of how these processes tend to occur in music production.

Developing a project's budget and managing the procurement of the crew and other professional personnel often draw close correlation. The hiring of session musicians and choice of mastering engineer, or further with practitioners once the song is completed, all need to be considered by the production and creative team at the onset of the project - aggregators, publicists, pluggers, graphic designers, photographers, website developers and even into touring expenses and personnel to promote the song or record. By formalizing the budget as a specific step in music preproduction it becomes a forced addition to the thought process for the production and creative team. For this reason, processes involving budget development and procurement of personnel or crew have been merged to create step four for music preproduction (Figure 6).

The final steps in the preproduction models outlined in Figure 6 provide motivation for the creative team to think beyond the creative work in the preproduction process and towards logical and organisational procedures, although as Harrison and Loveland write, "The production schedule is affected by many factors beyond a student's [creative team's] control" (Harrison & Loveland, 2009, p. 22). These final steps will be used in the case studies below in attempt to promote project completion. Caldwell's final step, start over, and Jetnikoff's "pitch" step provides an opportunity to review and reflect on the process as a whole, to make sure that the creative work is meeting all the required intentions of the artist, creative team and demographic; yet most importantly, to verify that throughout this process, the creative work still meets Thomas' three overarching questions; that is, "Do you have an idea? Are you communicating it clearly? And is it done in an entertaining way?" (Thomas, 1984). This step forces the preproduction process as a whole to be cyclical in nature, encouraging continuous improvement through review and refinement. Once the creative team is satisfied that the song, the story, the technical aspects of the work and planning for the project is sound, then the production process can begin. As Caldwell notes,

> At this point you often abandon what you have done and start again. If you still feel positive about what you see (after lots of feedback, or the client has given you a deadline), you can finally start the staging/layouts, the rough animation and the countless other tasks that lie ahead (Caldwell, 2001, p. 31).

Through an investigation of these interdisciplinary preproduction processes and the merging of comparable and related preproduction steps, a repeatable preproduction process for use in music preproduction has been developed. I have deployed this six step process through my role as the producer of a number of artist-participants, while also following a less structured and free-flowing, informal model in other settings with the same artist-participants. The artistic results and data analysis talk to the perceived effectiveness of a more formalised preproduction model in music.

Action Research Projects

Action research was chosen as a methodology for this project to reflect the ways that analysis, refinement and informed actions could contribute to our understanding of preproduction models *in situ* (Sagor, 2000, p. 4). Gray and Malins explain that the aim of

action research is to "ultimately improve practice in some way" (2004, p. 74) and as Sagor notes, "the primary reason for engaging in action research is to assist the 'actor' in improving and/or refining his or her actions" (Sagor, 2000, p. 3). Stringer extrapolates this further explaining that "action research is a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives" (Stringer, 2007, p. 1). Having a methodology that allows for review, refinement and making informed action for artists and producers can offer one way to improve professional practice in context.

Action research has commonly been used in educational research because of "its practical, problem solving emphasis" (Bell cited in Costello, 2003, p. 4) however its application is much further reaching. Denscombe simplifies action research by providing four defining characteristics: its practical nature – aimed at dealing with real world problems and issues; its focus on change as an integral part of the research; the involvement of a cyclical process; and its concern with active participation from its participants (Denscombe, 2010, p. 126). Gray and Malins agree that active participation from participants, a cyclic process and a focus on change is important, explaining that action research "requires the co-operation from the 'inhabitants'/participants of the potential action context, and is self-evaluative with modifications going on, where the application of the results is part of the methodology" (Gray & Malins, 2004, p. 74). In reference to the action research cycle, Dick (cited in Costello, 2002) has argued that "the action research cycle can be characterised by action leading to critical reflection and then perhaps, to further action" (Dick cited in Costello, 2003, p. 8), as illustrated in Figure 7.
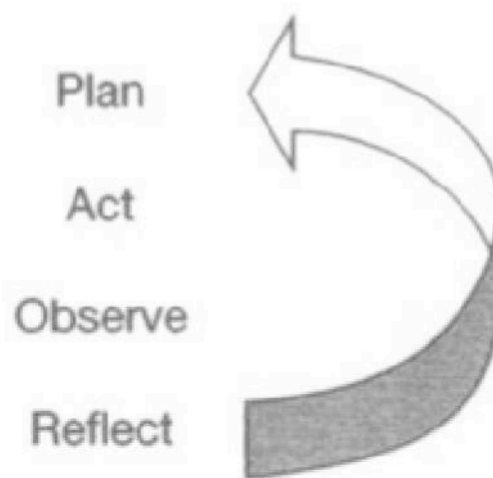

Figure 7. A basic action research model (Costello, 2003, p. 7)

The above figure displays a basic cyclical action research model where observation and reflection upon the research action delivers an opportunity for review, change and refinement. Denscombe extrapolates this model in his own cyclic action research framework, which containing five elements as seen in Figure 8.
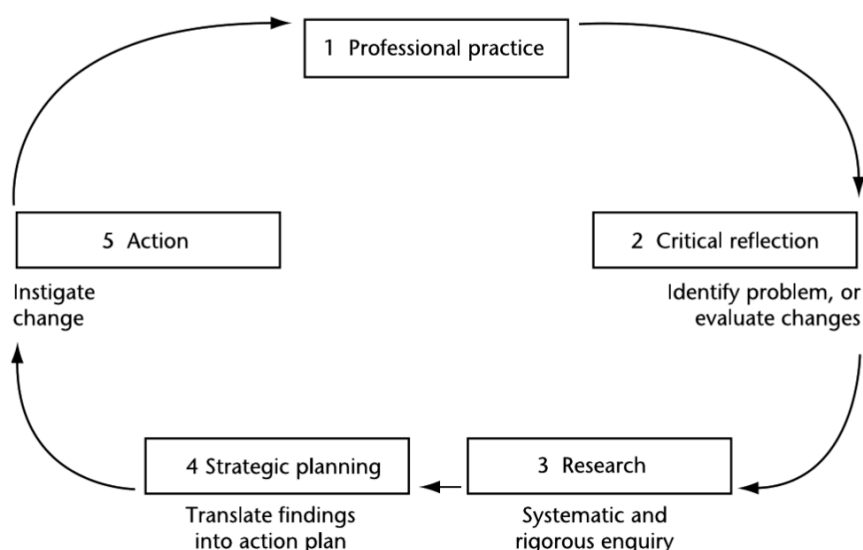

Figure 8. Denscombe's cyclic process in action research (Denscombe, 2010, p. 129).

Denscombe elaborates on his model explaining that "the purpose of research, though it might be prompted by a specific problem, is seen as part of a broader enterprise in which the aim is to improve practice through a rolling programme of research (Denscombe, 2010, pp. 128-9). What remains crucial to action research is that the research feeds back into practice, and that the process is ongoing (Denscombe, 2010, p. 129). As such, Denscombe's model of action research provided an excellent framework within which to conceptualise the ways that my research both emanates from but also feed back into practice according to this cyclical model.

The creative practice and preproduction sessions for this research followed Denscombe's action research model. Step 1 – Professional Practice: this step signifies the first round of preproduction sessions that the creative teams will undertake. The collaborators will not follow any formalised processes and will work following their own professional practice behaviours and working habits. Step 2 – Critical Reflection: this step is the first instance where participants will evaluate their own and collaborative work from the preproduction

session. Using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as data collection sources, feedback will be given from each participant. Step 3 – Research: this step indicates the research into the preproduction processes from other creative industries – film and television, animation, microdocumentary and short film production. Step 4 – Strategic Planning: this step represents the development of the formalised preproduction process derived from the interdisciplinary study for use in the final step. Step 5 – Action: this step represents the second round of preproduction sessions using the formalised process. Following this step, all participants provide feedback on the Action step, but also on the overall process as a whole, to identify any improvements, limitations, or differences between the two approaches to preproduction. The developed formalised preproduction process itself has a cyclical nature to it suggestive of an action research cycle. The instance of the final step 'start over' allows participants an opportunity to critically reflect on their work, research new data, strategically plan changes and then action them.

Creative Practice

The creative practice element of my research was carried out in two parts (Part I and Part II). Each part involved preproduction sessions with a total of six artists and three record producers, including myself as one of the producers, and an active participant in the sessions. The artists were all singer-songwriter artists writing heavily rooted in pop. Some with a folk slant, others with a country slant, but still very much under an overarching pop umbrella. I worked with four artists in total, three projects in which I was the producer for the preproduction sessions and the subsequent recording, and one where I led the preproduction stage of the process, but did not go on to produce the final record. The final two artists worked with two additional producers other than myself. For these sessions I was not an active participant, but was present as an observer during the practice. The Part I process offered participants the opportunity to conduct their preproduction session in any manner, following their own natural working habits. At the completion of each Part I preproduction session, feedback data was collected in the form of a semi-structured interview and/or a questionnaire (as seen later in this chapter). Part II differed from Part I in that it involved applying the six step preproduction process that was derived from my interdisciplinary review and investigation (as detailed previously in this thesis). Feedback data from all participants was collected at the completion of each session, with a focus on issues such as percieved efficiencies and effectiveness of the preproduction sessions, and perceived

differences between Part I and Part II. The following table represents the breakdown of the preproduction sessions and the track titles of the creative works created during each part of the research. For the purpose of this research and according to the research ethics procedures approved by the Queensland University of Technology, all participants other than myself have been identified using initials only (Figure 9).

Producer	Artist	Part I Song	Part II Song
Brad Hosking	KH	Centerpiece	Run Boy
Brad Hosking	RS	Crowd Pleaser	Paperweight
Brad Hosking	DC	Into Tomorrow	Answer Me
Brad Hosking	AP	Paradise is Free	Anywhere
BC	MS	Shut Down	Said That
DL	AT	Amigos	Freedom

Figure 9. Preproduction Project Breakdown

Part I

Part I for each project saw a preproduction session where the working team was able to follow their own natural working habits. The producer was able to direct the session in any way that they saw necessary to improve the song, experiment with elements and work with the artist to better understand the song and its direction. Each producer has performed and been actively involved in innumerable preproduction sessions with many artists over their careers, so they inherently brought their own approach and process to this part of the research. Having knowledge of the impending Part II process in my own sessions for Part I, I aimed to let the collaborative nature and conversation lead the direction of the sessions as opposed to following a formalised, chronological process. I allowed each session to organically develop, relative to the song and the participants. Furthermore, I was conscious to treat and operate the session comparably to how I have historically conducted preproduction sessions in my typical professional setting. Similar content was covered in these sessions, although the structure, number of steps, and preproduction approach was seldom consistent.

Part II

Part II utilised the six step preproduction process derived from the 'developing a preproduction model' section of the research (above). This consisted of the story idea, story structure, storyboard, budget development, production schedule and start over steps. These steps were enacted chronologically, requiring completion, consultation and review before moving on to the next step. The producer and artists in the two external projects were not informed of the Part II process until Part 1 was complete. This helped to account for any bias, pre-determined understanding or manipulation of participant behaviours and actions during Part I. For Part II, each producer and artist-participant was given a verbal overview of the overall procedure derived from the literature review, and asked to follow a series of dot points that guided their preproduction sessions. The dot points provided a quick reference guide for each step of the model, as illustrated in Figure 10.

Step 1 – The Story Idea
• Understanding the story with the artist,
• Solidifying the idea of the story,
• Get feedback and repeat,
• Research of demographic,
• Understanding of the market you're aiming for,
• Radio Markets,
• Getting inside the songwriter's head to think of musical ideas that can help tell the story of the song.
Step 2 – The Story Structure
• Setup, development, resolution.
• Narrative,
• Lyric,
• Content outline,
• "Conversation between two people",
• Song arrangement,
• Does it all make sense?

Step 3 – Storyboard Step
• Melodies,
• Lyric meter and rhythm,
• Song changes,
• Mic, instrument, amp, production and sonic choices,
• Planning of how it all goes together,
• Experimentation with song structures
Step 4 – Budget Development
• Session musicians and arrangers if needed,
• Tape and recording formats,
• Mastering,
• Time,
• $$$,
• Can we do what we need from the previous step in this budget
Step 5 – Production Schedule
• How it all comes together and when,
• Does it meet steps 3 and 4 in the schedule?
• Availability of studios, members, band, production team, mastering, session players, mix engineer.
• Time needed to mix
• Time needed to master
Step 6 – Start Over –
• Once happy with the song, go back and start again and see if it all still makes sense and if we still love it.
• Does the song meet Thomas' 3 hierarchical principals?

Figure 10. Part II Preproduction quick reference guide

Having an understanding of the Part II process and drawing from this quick reference guide, each producer (including myself) was able to conduct the preproduction session with a

structured and repeatable method. On completion of Part II, each project had resulted in two recorded songs that were deemed to be "ready for studio production" by the participants.

Participants

The participants in this creative practice were varied in terms of age, gender, personal and professional relationship, musical style, musical proficiency and also in two cases, in geographical location. The first artist, KH, was a new client of my studio. We had not met prior to working on her songs and there was no preexisting artist and producer relationship; this was developed throughout the first session. KH is a young solo artist who has had notable prior success in the Australian country music scene. She came to me as a direct referral from a previous client with her main objective to move away from country and have more of a pop/indie edge in the vein of artists such as Vera Blue and Maggie Rogers. Pop with undertows of folk. She sent three rough song demos that she was contemplating recording and I suggested we use two of them as part of this research. We completed the preproduction on the initial two songs and after those sessions, she wrote two new songs which culminated in a four track EP release. It was discovered early in the session that KH and I both grew up in North Queensland which was a positive finding as this helped to break down some social and cultural barriers and a natural rapport and feeling of comfortability for the working relationship was formed. KH's previous producer and artist relationships "didn't allow for a lot of collaboration" (KH, personal communication, 2017). "I'd play them the song and then the producer would go and do the rest, even play all of the parts. We didn't do any preproduction." (KH, personal communication, 2017). This became important to the project.

The second artist, RS, and I had an existing professional relationship. This was a new working dynamic, different to that of artist one, KH. RS and I had worked together on an EP project where he was the drummer and not the artist or songwriter. In those sessions, and from other social exchanges, we had conversed about our love for similar artists (Ryan Adams, Wilco) and that he had been working on a suite of songs as a solo artist in a similar vein to those artists. I proposed that we could use two of the songs for this Masters project and he jumped at the chance. We then went onto produce a five track EP. RS and I are of similar ages, have similar musical interests and had even had vocations in similar fields. These elements all attributed a positive rapport and professional, respectful working

relationship. RS's project was a solo project however the songs were conducive to a band sound. Being a multi-instrumentalist RS was insistent on recording as much of the record himself, which provided some barriers as sections required a band approach, but they were far outweighed by the unique musical and economic benefits provided by the one person recording the majority of the parts. Being Canadian, the Canadian market was a major goal for the project and this was an ongoing consideration throughout the preproduction and production phases of the project in terms of reference material, lyrical content and overall aesthetic, using artists such as Wilco and Local Natives as reference points.

DC, the third artist, I have worked together on many occasions previous to this exchange as fellow band members, as artist and producer and socially as friends. A prolific songwriter, DC kindly obliged to use two newer works for this project. His musical style sits in the singer/songwriter space reminiscent of artists such as Foy Vance, Gabe Dixon and Amos Lee. Typically, in preproduction, DC would present complete songs with melody and lyric simply accompanied by an acoustic guitar and played live. The rest of the song development, composition and preproduction would then transpire in a rehearsal environment with the rest of the band. On this occasion however, the songs were presented as rough phone demo recordings. This was a new working dynamic for DC and I, and in these sessions, no instruments were touched, unlike every other session with DC in the past. This allowed us to magnify the content of the song, specifically the background and the subsequent stories, with a specific focus on "less is more, to let the song be front and centre" (DC, personal communication, 2017).

The sessions with AP, artist four, were slightly different to the previous three artists I worked with as I did not go onto produce the record. The producer was a colleague of mine who I had worked with many times before where I was producing records where he was used as a session musician. For this project, he was producing the record but had expressed interest in having me run the preproduction for the songs with a major focus on song development, which provided a new social and cultural context for the research, and for this project. The producer and the artist were then able to take those ideas on board, choose whether or not to use them and produce the rest of the record. The preproduction session itself was also unique as the session occurred over Facebook Video Chat and not face to face. The artist was in Sydney and the producer and I were on the Gold Coast. This yielded some genuinely positive

results, with some quite unexpected, which I will discuss later in the research. AP's musical style sits in the surf pop genre reminiscent of artists such as Jack Johnson and Colbie Caillat.

The session with artist MS, and producer BC, was the first of the sessions where I was not an active participant in the preproduction. MS and BC have been long time collaborators playing in bands together and working on records since the early 2000's, however this is the first project they have worked on together in over a decade. Both have a history in rock related styles but recently, MS has taken to writing and performing more acoustic driven works. Being such close personal friends and working collaborators meant the two participants already had a very high preconceived level of trust and input was highly regarded from each member. The importance of the working relationship is expanded upon in the following chapter. MS's music is influenced by artists such as Dave Matthews,Bernard Fanning and the Stone Temple Pilots.

Finally, artist AT and producer DL were the final pairing. AT and DL have worked together in bands and in performance contexts previously, but this was the first time the pair had worked in an artist and producer relationship. DL is a very talented but fairly inexperienced producer. He has been involved in many preproduction sessions as a performer, but far less sessions as a lead producer, yet his experience in preproduction as an active participant has extended his skillset. AT is an experienced live performer yet does not have an extensive recorded discography, and as such has not participated in a lot of studio preproduction. AT's music style resides in soul, RnB and funk and she largely performs as a solo artist. Coming into the sessions, AT did not have a band and relied on session musicians and the performance skills of the producer.

Overall, with all participant pairings, the levels of preproduction experience, professional and personal relationships, gender, musical style, target demographics and geographical location provides a varied cross section for investigation and was a major contributing factor as to why each participant and participant pairing was chosen. The musical styles and singer-songwriter nature of all of the participants however remained quite similar. Primarily, this research is aiming to find if a formalised preproduction process borrowed from other creative disciplines can be used to achieve desired outcomes as perceived by the participants and having varied, social, professional and cultural contexts for each session removed bias towards any working proclivity.

Semi-structured Interviews and Questionnaire

Once the creative portion of each project was complete, each participant took part in semi-structured interviews, and completed a questionnaire relating to the preproduction processes they were involved in, to better understand the personal experiences of participants and their feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, moral dispositions and the outward existential conditions (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, pp. 403-12). The questions were designed to directly address the research questions; (1) can a more formalised preproduction process, borrowed from other disciplines such as film, TV, advertising and animation that have strict and considered processes, be used to achieve perceived desired outcomes more efficiently, and (2) are there any common factors in the preproduction process of making recorded contemporary music that result in perceived desired outcomes for musicians, producers and song writing teams before they enter the recording studio. (See Appendix 1 for questionnaire)

The choice of using a questionnaire as a supplement to face to face interviews provided hard copy written evidence from all participants to a standardised set of developed questions. This allowed me the ability to compare responses across all participants quite clearly in a systematic fashion. Although the questionnaire did not display a great amount of flexibility as follow up questions could not be asked, the semi-structured interviews offered a means to do this. Wilson (2013) lists a potential weakness of using questionnaires whereby having "many open-ended questions that can generate large amounts of data that take significant effort to analyze and more time to interpret" (p. 35). This was the case with this research, however it did allow participants an opportunity to explain their thoughts in great detail without the pressure and possible vetting of feedback that can occur in face to face interview situations.

The questionairres were emailed to the participants so they could complete them at home without the added time inconvenience and pressure of completing them in the studio environment after each session. The semi-structured interviews were either filmed on an iPad, or screen captured in the case of the online sessions, so the content could be stored and referred back to at any time. The interviews were conducted on the same day, in the same rooms as the preproduction session. The questionnaire and interview data was predominently thematically analysed and the themes and findings are unpacked in the following chapter. A master questionairre document was created to clearly discern commonalities or differences from each participant's experience for the same questions. Further autoethnographic data from the semi-structered interviews and preproduction sessions was added to this document

to give an overall picture of the data set.

Conclusion

This practice-led action research based study involved unstructured preproduction cycles that followed the natural working habits of preproduction participants (Part I), the development of a formalised music preproduction model derived from an interdisciplinary investigation of preproduction processes, and a secondary cycle of structured preproduction that included gathering of participant feedback data in the form of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews (Part II). The data collected through this process offers insight into the research question about how preproduction practices might move from other creative disciplines into the recorded music production. In particular, the data has presented a number of key themes about how a more formalised preproduction process is perceived by artists and producers. These themes and insights are explored in the following chapter.

Chapter Four – Data Analysis

This chapter investigates the use and effectiveness of a formalised preproduction process for music derived from preproduction processes of other creative disciplines. This process, used in Part II is outlined in Figure 6 and further in figure 10. In this chapter, I start by outlining the preproduction sessions with each artist in further detail, divided into Part I and Part II (as described in Chapter Three). Following this, I examine the data from the Part II formalised process, looking at the differences between the data from the Part I and Part II processes. Following this, I draw on the data collected from participants to find if any factors from the Part I preproduction sessions resulted in the perception of positive outcomes for participants. Finally, I identify and discuss some of the common factors that emerged from the data across Part II and at the end of the creative practice aspects of the project.

Preproduction Sessions:
Sessions with KH

Track 1 – Part I – Centerpiece
Centrepiece – Initial Demo
Centrepiece – Final

The preproduction session for this song began with artist KH and I, as the producer, listening to the rough demo recordings in my studio. We had a previous email exchange concerning KH's intentions for the EP and what she wanted to achieve musically and philosophically with the release. She felt she was stuck in a country mould that she wanted to break free from and focus more on an indie/pop direction. Upon listening to the demo, the artist Maggie Rogers became a reference point in terms of production style. Specifically her song "Alaska" (Rogers M. & Schadt, Alaska, 2016) and the chorus for "Dog Years" (Rogers M. , Dog Years, 2016). Vera Blue was also another artistic and musical reference who had a similar move from folk to indie pop and also fitted the project trajectory.

Technical aspects such as tempo, drum groove - using hip hop inspired samples, instrumentation changes and experimentation were the next aspects to be analysed. In the sections other than the chorus, we wanted to explore other rhythmic options for the song, rather than reverting back to using traditional drum sounds. Instead we decided to use body percussion and layer sounds of instrument cases and the back of an acoustic guitar being struck with our hands. This helped to form the rhythmic bed for the majority of the track.

Following this, to get a better understanding of the overall structure and to have the ability to cut up and move sections, we tracked a guide acoustic guitar part with the click track so KH could then sing over the top. The guitar was then removed.

With one of the main objectives to remove any country elements, we decided that using synths would move us closer to the songs new direction. I wanted KH's voice to not only be the primary focus for storytelling via the lyric, but I wanted her voice to make up a large part of the accompaniment, so we sampled her voice to create synth instruments. A melody was created and became the first melodic hook heard in the song, and a pad synth was built from vocal samples. A high proportion of this initial preproduction session was spent experimenting with sounds and creating new timbres, synths and keyboard based instruments for potential use in the final production.

The song already displayed a robust pop structure and the lyrics were also strong, emotive and told the story effectively so not a lot of time was allocated to the lyric in the session. This song was the product of a co-writing session with an experienced country songwriter and a level of review and quality control had already occurred in the collaborative writing session. The song therefore did not need a lot of structural adjustment, however we did spend some time arranging and experimenting with the length and placement of a rhythmic stop at the end of the chorus, to give the title of the song more impact and importance in the overall work. Where the stop appears in the final version is different to KH's initial demo.

As the artists did not have a band and with the change in musical direction, my role as the producer meandered between that of an auteur and collaborative producer (Burgess R. J., 2013, pp. 13-14). The Pro Tools session was used as a preproduction tool for review, sonic experimentation and gave us the opportunity to manipulate structures, tempos and sounds. A vast majority of the sounds and performances we captured in the preproduction session were maintained and used in the final production, negating the need to rerecord them later, increasing the perceived efficiency of the production phase of the recording. Therefore, the integrated model of record production was enacted in this session, where composition, preproduction and production overlapped throughout.

Track 2 –Part II - Run Boy
[Run Boy – Initial Demo](#)

[Run Boy - Final](#)

Story Idea and Story Structure

Run Boy was the first track in all of the preproduction sessions that followed the formalised preproduction process. After discussions with the artist, the musical and demographical targets for this song, and the rest of the EP were focused on Triple J demographics with commercial pop crossover potential, following artists such as Amy Shark, Jarryd James and Lorde. This meant the commercial pop sensibilities needed to have a strong representation – lyric content, use or non-use of explicit language, commercial radio formatting and song structure, song length and artistic sonic choices; whilst maintaining an indie edge. The story for the song is centered around a relationship where one party runs away from their responsibilities through fear rather than facing them head on. As the title of the song was Run Boy, the feeling of running and momentum was paramount, so the tempo and feel of the track needed to mirror this. This element still required investigation.

The major element from the demo that was not quite developed, in terms of story and story structure, was the fact that KH's demo chorus presented far more like a pre chorus than a pop chorus. Lyrically it posed a question or problem more so than a statement, and melodically it built as though it was leading into a bigger melodic movement but didn't quite reach its potential. I suggested that we write a new chorus and lyrically base it around the title, Run Boy, using minimal lyric and repetition to magnify the overarching story of the song. The full chorus melody lyric now read "Run boy, run boy / Be a man boy, a man boy / Run boy, run boy / So baby tell me when it's time to leave". We also came to the agreement that the chorus melody should also lift and display the highest vocal range of all of the musical sections. The chorus lyric was written very quickly and the full song structure came together very organically and now exhibited a much more typical pop structure. Intro, Verse, Pre-chorus, Chorus, Verse, Pre-chorus, Chorus, Bridge, Down Pre-chorus, Chorus, Outro. This structural change also helped the lyric to make more sense as it now placed a stronger importance on the story idea, it repeated the title strengthening that hook and the chorus melody was now the strongest hook and highest vocal range in the song.

Storyboard Step

With Steps 1 and 2 in the process now solidified, we moved onto the Storyboard step. In this step we focused on the feel of the song. This is one element that we were yet to solidify that benefitted the song and was appropriate for the story idea. Two songs I had been referencing and presented to KH were an instrumental track from the Kill Bill Vol 1 Soundtrack, "Battle Without Honor or Humanity" (Hotei, 2004), and Elle King's "Ex's and Oh's" (King E. & Bassett, 2014). Hotei's track presents a single note guitar riff that I felt we could reference, and Elle King's track has a driving shuffled 8th note tom groove that would work well with the lyric delivery. We used these performance aspects as references to develop new parts for the drums and guitars. With the new chorus addition and the new feel solidified, we started to look at lyric meter and phrasing to fit the new feel. The line "so baby tell me when it's time to leave" required refinement. In the initial demo, KH was phrasing the word "when" as the goal and strongest word in the phrase, falling on beat 3 of the bar.

Figure 11. Demo phrasing, final line of chorus

I suggested there was an inner rhyme in the line that we could strengthen to make the line flow more, which also created a rhyme with the final part of the line. Baby, me and leave. So I suggested we phrase is like this.
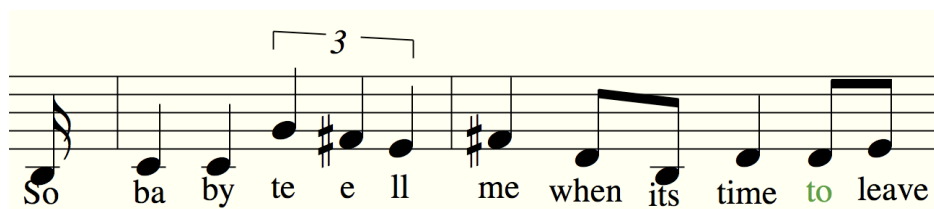

Figure 12. Suggested vocal phrasing, final line of chorus

From here, we recorded some rough guide guitars, guide vocals and a guide drum groove so we could see the composition in its new format, much like a storyboard. We discussed other

storyboard elements such as slap back delays on vocals and guitars to suit the track, guitar tone choices and vocal and drum sounds. This led to the next step, budget development.

Budget Development

With the nature of this project, my fee for production, studio hire and mixing had already been negotiated with KH prior to starting the project. What this step did allow us to focus on were external elements that came about from the preproduction. It was decided that we needed a session drummer to play the drum parts as this was not going to be a programmed beat. It was also decided that the drums would be recorded to ½ inch tape but luckily, I had enough tape so extra tape stock did not need to be purchased. We also spoke about some additional expenses that KH would have to consider and allow external budget for, once the mixes were complete. These included mastering, CD and Vinyl pressing and putting money aside for the release of the record with publicists (PR) and radio plugging. The budget for CD pressing, PR and plugging, were not going to impact the recording of the songs but was unquestionably important for KH to understand and consider to enable the release. As most production fees had already been negotiated, we moved onto the next step, production schedule.

Production Schedule

Unlike Centrepiece where the integrated model of preproduction was used, Run Boy followed more of a traditional preproduction model. The original composition, preproduction and production of the track were all separate events. This could also be a result of the traditional rock band style of track, and considering KH was a solo artist, all performances would need to be captured at a later date and ideally, with or after the drums have been tracked. This meant that the primary production scheduling event hinged around the availability of the drummer. The drummer was subsequently booked to play on all 4 songs of the EP with the aim to have the rest of the track built around the rhythm bed. It was planned that bass, electric guitars and acoustic guitars would be tracked in the session after the drums, leaving vocals to be completed after that. We had spoken about using some colour elements to give sonic interest in the track from synths and lead guitar parts, and they would be discussed again once we had all of the main elements tracked. Now, with the production schedule in place, we were able to move onto the final step of the preproduction process, start over.

Start Over

The start over step gave us the opportunity to review all of the decisions we had made, to ensure all of the intentions for the project were met and that each decision made was for the absolute benefit of the song. It also helped to solidify any changes in the client's mind and allowed producer and artist to align their ideas on the direction of the track. In this step we were able to make an amendment to the length of the final chorus, which wasn't initially addressed in the story structure step. It was decided that the final chorus needed to be doubled. This helped build the momentum at the end of the track and maintained the high energy that the track required. The track as a whole had now been reviewed and we were pleased with the new direction the song had taken. It was quite a distance away from the small amount of time we worked on it in the previous session but it met all of the song and project intentions and we were both excited about the song's future.

With preproduction for both songs now complete, and production scheduled for the rest of the EP, KH was presented with some interview questions to get her feedback on both sessions and the two different preproduction processes. She chose to take the questions home and sent back audio of her addressing them.

Sessions with RS

Track 1 – Part I - Crowd Pleaser
Crowd Pleaser – Initial Demo
Crowd Pleaser – Final Mix

This session began with artist and producer briefly discussing all of the intended songs for the 5 track EP. RS had provided some phone recording demos of the songs, four of them with acoustic guitar and his vocal, and one in the rehearsal space with his band. The recordings provided a reference point for preproduction as most of the demos displayed mostly completed lyric, melody and structure of the songs. We decided that the first song we would work on would be Crowd Pleaser.

We began initially by focusing on the song's structure. The sections alone were very strong, but the transitions between sections required finessing as major tempo changes occurred and the sections presented as separate songs. The transition between the verse and pre chorus felt natural and worked well, but between the pre chorus and chorus further decisions had to be

made. As this was a major transition going from a slow tempo to a much quicker one, we discussed multiple options such as having the drummer count or tap the new tempo in, having a straight cut to the new tempo, or having a drawn out rhythm played by the drummer. We highlighted this as a point that we may need to come back to in the production process and experiment with when the drums were later recorded.

The drums were a large discussion topic initially in this session, both around tones and performance. For the verses, I made reference to some neo-soul 12/8 grooves with tight sounding drums, notably Jose James' "Do You Feel" (James, 2013), and also drum sounds from other neo-soul records such as "Feel Like Makin' Love" (McDaniels, 2000) - D'Angelo's cover of Roberta Flack's original from his Voodoo Album. To further meet the sonic references, we decided that we would record the drums to tape.

From the outset, Crowd Pleaser had very strong lyric, melody and overall structure. The majority of what we discussed in preproduction was around production ideas, sounds and sonic interest for the record. Musically, one element that did require solidification was the overall tempo. RS's demo and his live performance of the track in the preproduction session presented slightly different tempi, so we spent some time finding perfect tempi for each section, resulting in builing a tempo map in Pro Tools.

With tempo and structures now realised, we turned our attention to guitar tones. Ryan Adams' reverb soaked Fender Deluxe Reverb tones off his Self-Titled record (Adams, Ryan Adams, 2014) were a strong reference for the whole EP. RS owned a mid-range Fender acoustic guitar and an Epiphone SG electric. We also hired a hollow body Peerless electric, a custom acoustic guitar, a Fender Stratocaster and a 5 String Ibanez Bass. Along with a Fender Hot Rod Deluxe amplifier and a collection of boutique pedals, we had the tools to match our sonic references. We also discussed the use of Organs and Melotron sounds in the pre chorus section. Following this, we decided to track a guide electric guitar part, along with the tempo map we had built so we could then sing a guide vocal and review the preproduction work. The process was now ready for the production phase to begin.

The preproduction process for this song aligned with the traditional model for production where the composition, preproduction and the production steps were all separated events.

Track 2 – Part II - Paper Weight
Paper Weight – Initial Demo
Paper Weight – Final Mix

Story Idea

Paper Weight contained a multilayered, underlying story. This song is one of RS's oldest songs to which he asserts he wrote over 5 years ago. In that time the song had gone under many iterations of lyric, structure and story but the one element that remained strong was the melody. The story idea behind the song is quite a personal one for RS. "It's very life advice-y. I'm basically talking to myself in it, but I feel like it's a story that you can share" (RS, personal communication, 2017). The origin of the story is based around RS's own life perspective and the differences between that of his father's. His father was a strict and structured military man.

> The story I see is about that person that's very structured. Go to uni, get your degree, get your good job, pay your bills, have a family, just structured. Tie shit down. On your resume, make sure they know exactly what you did this and then, always keep a log book of your car. Always hold shit down and remember it. (RS, personal communication, 2017)

Being adopted, RS had always seen life very differently. "We always butted heads, because I'm the opposite" (RS, personal communication, 2017). The story is fundamentally built around the juxtaposition of wanting to be a free spirit and a life of structure.

> It's the nature over nurture thing. I was so structured. I'd just finished 3 years of college. I was coming out here (to Australia) to do my last year of Uni and then go back home (to Canada) and find a job. All of a sudden, I realized that I really loved surfing and I have bare feet every day and my priorities in life were changing when I wrote this song. I was telling myself it's ok to be this way. My dad might be looking down on me that I'm not chasing that marketing manager dream at the hotel anymore, but it's ok. Don't stress. (RS, personal communication, 2017)

RS's lyric draws similarity to Hip Hop and rap from the lyric heavy nature of the track. "There are a lot of words to fit in one little bar" (RS, personal communication, 2017), so this was an element that I wanted to musically focus on; to leave space for the vocal with simple accompaniment parts. Overall the lyric "is just a guideline of simple easy living" and "the bridge is about owning it, it's fine to live that way" (RS, personal communication, 2017).

Another role of the story idea step is to gain an understanding of the demographic and market for the song. Paper Weight displays elements of folk rock and North American alternative indie rock, indicative of tracks such as Wilco's "Muzzle of Bees" (Tweedy, 2004) and Local Native's "Cubism Dream" (Ayer, Frazier, Hahn, Hamm, & Rice, 2009). RS saw the Canadian and North American Alternative and Indie radio market as strong targets for his music. He felt Australian commercial radio was certainly not a main focus, however ABC and to a lesser extent Triple J might provide suitable markets. This meant that commercial pop formats and structures were not as much of an issue and we could use a sonic palette that RS was far more familiar with.

Story Structure

RS had provided two phone recording demos of Paper Weight. One with just his vocal and a single clean electric guitar (demo 1), and one with his band in a rehearsal space (band demo). The demo 1 recording did not exhibit an intro, it began with guitar and vocal immediately, however the band demo did. It was decided an intro would not be damaging for the song, however the intro length needed to be economised. Both demos displayed vastly different tempi and this highlighted that the story, the lyrics and the lead vocal were of primary importance. We agreed upon the slower tempo. To further foreground the vocal we discussed the drummer using brushes instead of sticks in the first verse. This also supports the "simple easy living" and the "don't stress" story ideas. It also allows for immediate impact into the chorus when sticks are used for the first time. We agreed that Verse 2 should continue with sticks, however there needed to be a distinct dynamic contrast between the chorus and the second verse to make certain the story maintains the listeners main focus. Throughout the song, we decided the track should continue to build in dynamic, adding more elements and more "grit" from the guitar tones, culminating in the final chorus where the vocal is at the top of his range, almost yelling the lyric with big drums, driving crashes and gritty guitars pushing the track forward. To end, we decided that reprising the intro on a single guitar would provide a neat book end to the track and will allow for a natural come down from the climax of the track before leading into the next song on the EP.

Storyboard

The storyboard step afforded us an opportunity to delve further into tonal experimentation and discussion. It was decided that the guitar performance would be captured on electric

guitar, however capturing some acoustic flavours was a main goal. To achieve this, we planned on recording the electric guitar with spring reverb through an amp in an isolated room, but also capture the acoustic strumming of the plectrum on the strings with a microphone directly infront of the guitar, then blend the amp and acoustic sound together. We could further reinforce the acoustic guitar replication with the use of a hollow bodied guitar with an f-hole. Next, we revisited the verse and chorus transition that we started discussing in the story structure step. It was agreed that a transition should be repeatable so we mapped out a period from the last held chord ringing out to beat one of the chorus. We then pieced together the current structure for the track and talked through all of the decisions and notes we had made. At this stage we were very happy with the song's progression, so we moved onto the budget development step.

Budget Development

The most pressing issue in terms of this project's budget was finding and hiring appropriate left handed guitars. Secondly, the purchase of brushes was paramount for the drum recording of Paper Weight, so it was accommodated into the budget. Similarly, with KH's project, RS's budget for recording and production had already been negotiated prior to the commencement of preproduction thus other considerations for his overall budget included mastering, disc pressing, publicity and promotion. RS was aware of fees for these services and was happy to move to the next step.

Production Schedule

The production schedule for this project had largely been allocated and booked in the initial quoting stage before the project began. Despite having his own band for live performance, RS decided that the majority of the parts would be played by himself, and any remaining elements would be performed by me. Consequently, there was no need to rely on availability of external parties. RS noted that due to a Repetitive Strain Injury in his right hand, his guitar fretting hand, we may need to be flexible around the times that we record guitar due to stamina and pain related issues from the injury. This was taken on board and shorter guitar sessions were subsequently allocated.

Start Over

The start over step allowed us to reflect on the whole song with the amended structure. It was also the first instance we had talked about tempo and track running time. RS performed the

song acoustically whilst I made notes. Upon reflection, vocal phrasing was an area we needed to address and solidify, particularly in the first chorus. More uniformity was required to allow the lyric to be best phrased and understood by the listener so this was improved at this point. We then turned our attention to the bridge to add some musical points of sonic interest. We discussed adding some hit points that the whole ensemble would follow. We rehearsed them and they became mainstays for the section. Following this, we were very happy with the song's progress so we tracked a guide electric guitar part through a digital amplifier simulator, followed by a guide vocal to capture the song's structure and changes that we had just made.

Overall, and similarly with Crowd Pleaser, the preproduction process for Paper Weight aligned with the traditional model for production.

Sessions with DC

Track 1 – Part I - Into Tomorrow
[Into Tomorrow – Final Mix](#)
[Into Tomorrow – Initial Demo](#)

This session began with DC presenting the song in a demo recording format, captured on his phone. We listened to the song whilst I took notes and then DC gave his own brief feedback on the song. He explained that the omission of a middle 8 section was a creative decision and that the length of the transition sections at the end of each chorus into each subsequent verse, was also a deliberate creative choice. We agreed that not having a middle 8 was one of the song's strengths as it presented a strong point of difference to his previous work. With the luxury of only one listen, I felt the transition between the choruses and the verses was too long and required economizing and we agreed that this would be an element we would experiment with and revisit. Structurally, the only other element we discussed was the final harmonic movement at the end of the song. The initial demo followed a diatonic harmonic movement of iv – V – IV before finishing on the I chord. I suggested that we could try not resolving to the I chord and allow the progression to hang on the IV chord to end. This was received positively and applied to the track. Discussion then moved onto production and sonic choices.

DC's writing style and musical influence is heavily inspired by artists like Ryan Adams. Into Tomorrow was no different, drawing similarity to Ryan Adams' stripped back, Glyn Johns produced album, "Ashes and Fire" (Adams, 2011). This record features very simple instrumentation, simple arrangements and beautiful yet understated production. "Its sitting in a room, in darkness. Just simple." (DC, personal communication, 2017). Another feature that we both adored from Ashes and Fire is the low tuned and rich sounding snare. This was an element we also wanted to feature in the track. DC is an experienced songwriter, constantly reviewing his own work, making self-assessment and performing quality control in the songwriting process. He understands his target audience and has a maturity in knowing what he wants from a recording. We wanted to change very little of the song as it was already at a very high standard. We discussed keeping the production simple, organic, earthy and allowing the vocal and lyric to be the main focus. This preproduction session succeeded in matching the artist's vision with the producer in a short timeframe. We had a very clear framework of what we wanted to achieve in the recording studio and how to achieve it. This preproduction session aligned with the traditional model model for production.

Track 2 – Part II - Answer Me
Answer Me – Initial Demo
This song is still in production, scheduled for release in 2019.

Story Idea

Regarding the story idea for this song, Answer Me is a very personal song for DC. With themes surrounding his late father, DC explains "it's about the process of having someone there, and they're no longer there, and then trying to connect" (DC, personal communication, 2017). With an album released in 2016 with similar lyrical themes, this song is a continuation of that album in lyric content and theme, musical style, target demographic and commercial markets. Understanding this, we moved onto the story structure and analysed the lyric.

Story Structure

The lyric presents as a diary entry or rhetorical letter, somewhat in frustration, to his late father not being here in that moment. With the fragility and personal story-telling nature of the lyric, we wanted capture the subtlety and nuance of the lyric and delicate vocal performance by keeping the accompaniment very stripped back and bare, to keep the focus of the listener firmly grasped on the vocal and the story. We discussed using no drums and bass in the track at all and concentrating sonic interest in ethereal and atmospheric textures using

tape delays, feedback, reverbs and pads as opposed to actual instrumental accompaniment. One such example comes from a particular lyric that makes mention of DC's father singing and knowing every word to Marc Cohn's "Walking in Memphis" (Cohn, 1991), DC hearing it on the radio and feeling his presence. DC went on to explain in relation to the lyric, "that's actually true. I actually get into my car and I reckon it's happened probably 4 or 5 times, when I get in my car, I turn the car on and the first thing that plays is that song, and it immediately gets me. So that line is a connector" (DC, personal communication, 2017). Following this, we listened to the recorded demo to examine the structure further. Upon first listen we did not want to alter the structure at all. It presented the story accurately without losing itself to unnecessary sections of typical song formats. The song followed a simple verse - chorus format. Although we didn't want to modify the song's structure, I felt that we could rework the song's harmonic structure, modulating the entry of the 3rd verse, after the 2nd chorus. After some experimentation with modulation we settled on lowering the first half of the 3rd verse down a tone. It is at this point where the Walking in Memphis line occurs in the song. The upward modulation word paints the presence of a higher being and we decide to strip all current instrumentation back to a single element. As homage to Marc Cohn's track and to highlight the importance it plays to the story idea of this song, it was suggested that we adapt the iconic opening piano progression of Walking in Memphis, slow it down, transpose it into the same key and replay it on a very distant, heavily reverbed piano. "Beautifully Subtle" (DC, personal communication, 2017). The story structure was now solidified, so we moved onto the story board step.

Storyboard

The storyboard step came together quite organically. Sonic choices and production decisions were discussed a length throughout each step and we had a very strong, unified idea of the overall song quite early in the session. This step afforded us the opportunity to hear the song, acoustically in the room with all of the alterations whilst talking through production decisions concurrently.

Budget Development and Production Schedule

Budget development was also a brief step. We had already negotiated production fees prior to the commencement of the preproduction session and given that this song was minimal in instrumentation and therefore personnel, the budget did not have to extend to other session musicians. All the available technology at the studio was ample for this project. The

recording sessions were booked and added to the production schedule. It was agreed that minimal sessions would be needed, but quality time should be allocated to achieving the right sounds for the song and experimenting with recording techniques, room sounds and echo chambers to create the desired sonic interest.

Start Over

The start over step was less of a practical step and more of a discussion about the production process. We both agreed that the alterations had definitely improved the song, gave it more impact emotionally and allowed us to add more colours to the palette that may not have been present before. The harmonic changes also added natural variation to engage the listener throughout the duration of the song. It was agreed that any extra sonic interest that we do add to the song, needs to be subtle enough that it does not detract from the lyric, the vocal and the story behind the lyric. This helped to form a solid framework for us to head into the studio to begin the production process. This preproduction session also aligned with the traditional model for production.

Sessions with AP

Track 1 – Part I - Paradise is Free
Paradise is Free – Initial Demo
The artist and producer decided not to complete the recording, focusing on other tracks for the EP release.

AP had provided a pre-recorded phone demo as a reference. The song had some strong elements but the track was quite long and required some economizing. We discussed some sonic references and target markets for her own music and she was quite enamored with acoustic based surf surf pop artists artists such as Jack Johnson and Colbie Caillat, and to a lesser extent Jason Mraz. This gave us a strong idea where to head both sonically and also what radio markets she would be targeting, thus we had to ensure the song was meeting those pop driven radio formats. The track running time of the demo was elapsing 5 minutes, so reducing it to around 3 and a half minutes was a priority. Initial notes on the demo addressed arrangement - building of the ensemble, instrumentation, entries and introduction of melodic motif; structure – halving the first chorus, adding new instrumental hook section, economizing final chorus and outro sections; and production – use of layered roomy group vocal sounds in the build section, performance techniques for drums and guitars to add colour

and variety to the track. We turned our attention to structure. Taking on board the notes and looking closely at the lyric and the sentiment behind the lyric, we built a new structure.
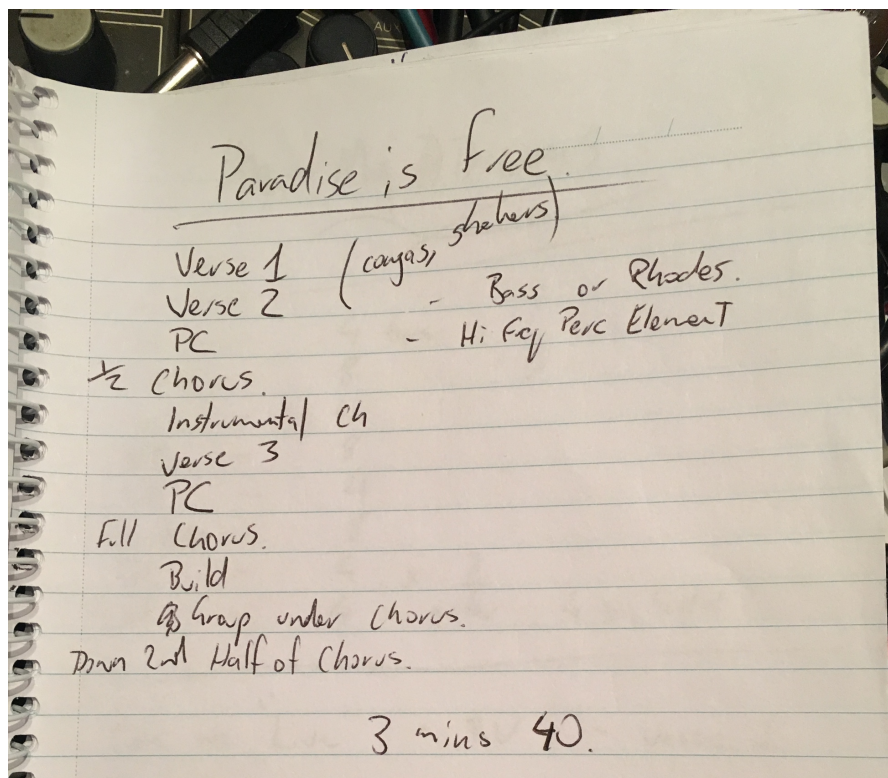

Figure 13. New structure for AP's Paradise if Free

With some of the amendments to the structure, our attention turned back to the lyric to ensure that it still made sense. It was agreed that due to halving the first chorus, that we should validate the title of the song in this section. It was initially mentioned in the second half of the 1st chorus, but as we were removing it, the title would not have appeared until much later in the track. We amended the lyric to ensure its use earlier. With these changes now solidified, AP played through the new structure acoustically whilst we timed the new duration. It timed out to 3 minutes and 40 seconds and was now meeting the format intentions for the track. Now with the structure solidified, we discussed the sonic choices and instrumental parts for each section. The ideas were agreed upon and the team was excited by the song's direction.

Despite the session occurring online, this preproduction session aligned with the traditional model of production.

Track 2 – Part II – Anywhere
[Anywhere – Final](#)

Anywhere was one of 5 tracks presented for preproduction and was the most commercial track out of the suite of demos and would benefit from a perspective other than the artist and producers. After an introductory listen to the track as a whole, we discussed some preliminary ideas that immediately came to mind. These included increasing the tempo and raising the key. We decided we would revisit these throughout the Part II preproduction process and began with the story idea step.

Story Idea and Story Structure

The song centres itself around the idea of an individual being the composer of their own script and destiny and if they are not fond of their situation, then change it. We discussed the story concept appealing to people in their 20's and 30's who are stuck in the daily grind not happy with their vocational situation and wanting a change. "It's about always trying to find that summer vibe. Trying to find that summer vibe in every opportunity" (AP, personal communication, 2017). Understanding the motivation behind the story idea, we moved onto the story structure step. It was decided that the lyric and the structure of the song worked well with the story idea, but there was a major barrier in allowing the story to be presented as well as it could, which revolved around the song's tempo. This led us to move to the next step.

Storyboard

This step presented the most drastic modification to the overall song. On first listen I felt that the song was too slow and the intended "summer vibe" could be achieved by increasing the tempo. The demo sat at 70 beats per minute (bpm). I suggested we increase by a potential 25 bpm to 95 bpm creating a much groovier tempo which in turn, would help us meet the song's intentions more accurately. Raising the tonal centre of the track by a tone, from C to D, would also assist in directing the song towards an upbeat "summer vibe". The changes were met positively and this then moved the conversation to rhythmic and drumming ideas behind the increased tempo. The new tempo was now in the ball park of stereotypical 90's hip hop tempo ranges and I suggested using a heavy hip hop groove and sonic palette with the drums juxtaposed underneath a pretty, breathy vocal floating over the top. This technique has been fashionable in recent pop music, cited in tracks such as Jessie J's "Price Tag" (Jessie J, 2011) and Amy Shark's "Adore" (Amy Shark, 2016). To further highlight the juxtaposition of heavy drums against lighter timbres was to maintain the use of simple, organic accompanying

instrumentation. Strummed acoustic guitar, minimal wurlitzer piano parts and the use of unobtrusive percussion, namely shakers and congas would heighten this effect. With the increased tempo and use of Hip Hop drumming elements, the vocal will naturally be sung significantly quicker, almost like a sung rap. Ed Sheeran's "You Need Me, I Don't Need You" (Ed Sheeran, 2011) and Jason Mraz's "Geek in the Pink" (Jason Mraz, 2006) featuring hip hop drums and grooves, acoustic guitars and fast sung, almost rapped vocals was suggested to AP as possible sonic references, but used in a fashion to suit the surf pop intention more so than pop based hip hop.

Budget Development and Production Schedule

The next two steps in the process, budget development and production schedule, were interesting as even though I was running the preproduction sessions, I was not part of the production process for this EP, however I was able to suggest some elements that should be considered in these steps. As AP is a solo artist, she does not have her own band thus session musicians would need to be hired for the recording. AP and her producer had already booked a house in Northern NSW for a week to record the EP and the subsequent related budget and schedule had already been arranged. In regards to the production schedule I proposed that they consider building the rhythm bed first, rather than starting with guide acoustic guitars and vocals and building the rhythm up successively. This would allow for a much tighter foundation and performers could then lock into the hip hop groove with greater success.

Start Over

In the final step, start over, we listened to the track and discussed sonic choices for each section. The only new element we debated was potentially not returning back to a standard chorus at the end, but continuing the harmonic progression of the solo section and singing the chorus lyric along with the repeated vocal hook at the end of the song. This would allow the final section to flow much better into the outro. The team agreed and they decided to experiment with this in production. Overall, AP agreed that the suggested adjustments to the song enhanced its commerciality and also enabled the story idea to be foregrounded much more. This preproduction session also aligned with the traditional model of production.

Sessions with MS and BC

Track 1 – Part I - Shut Down
Shut Down – Initial Demo with Preproduction cuts
The production team is still working on this project

The session began with MS playing a demo phone recording of Shut Down. He described the story of the song was simply about "turning off your bloody iPads" (MS, personal communication, 2017), largely inspired by his young three kids. He then explained the musical style he was contemplating was The Stone Temple Pilots "Big Bang Baby" (Stone Temple Pilots, 1996), meets Bernard Fanning (Bernard Fanning, 2005) acoustic. BC agreed that the 90's alternate rock sound of The Stone Temple Pilots was on brief but he was a little confused by the Bernard Fanning reference. He offered some of his own thoughts after the first listen and suggested Living Colour and Extreme's "Get the Funk Out" (Bettencourt & Cherone, 1990) as musical and sonic references for a 90's drum sound and Dave Matthews Band with interesting acoustic guitar strumming patterns as an alternative reference. Furthermore, Powderfinger's "D.A.F" (Coghill, Collins, Fanning, Haug, & Middleton, 1996) was discussed as another reference as it showcases a similar harmonic progression and a comparable use of call and response from the vocal line and a melodic lead guitar figure. Conversation then moved onto structure. It was agreed that the intro was "taking too long to get to the point" (BC, personal communication, 2017) and required condensing. This was not directly rectified and discussion changed topics to instrumentation. Again instrumentation specifics were not discussed in detail and minor structural details became the topic of conversation once again. This was largely due to the fact that BC was still learning the song and had only had minimal listens at this point. Following this, to trial structural alterations, it was decided to load the demo recordings into Pro Tools so the structure could be edited and manipulated. BC and MS experimented with different structural ideas throughout the whole song and after deliberation and investigation, now had a rough guide recording displaying the amended structure. Notes were made on additional melodic, rhythmic, lyrical, backing vocal and instrumental parts that would be added in the production process. The final arrangement was played one last time with BC explaining production notes as the tracked played and the track running time was noted. It aligned with the reference material in terms of timing, structure, arrangement and production direction. The team was content that the song was ready to enter the production stage.

This session largely followed a traditional model for production, however there were elements of an integrated model used at times. Some composition occurred inside Pro Tools with clever editing and review from the artist and producer, however the vast majority of the session was traditionally focused.

Track 2 – Part II - Said That
[Said That – Initial Demo with Preproduction Cuts](#)
The Production team is still working on this project

Story Idea

The Part II process began with MS explaining the story idea of the song. "The main hook is 'I can't believe that I said that, I didn't mean it', which I think I probably wrote that after a fight with my wife" (MS, personal communication, 2017). MS explains that it is not an apology song, but more of a self-evaluation from outside looking in. "It's still upbeat. Just brush it off. I might not have even been wrong, I might have just been giving myself a hard time" (MS, personal communication, 2017). With an understanding of the story, conversation moved to target demographic and market. MS explained that commercial radio and their subsequent markets, naming Paolo Nutini as a comparable artist in terms of sonic direction and target market for this particular song. After hearing the song for the first time, BC added that Bobby McFerrin would be another stylistic reference, even perhaps making use of vocal based lead parts and bass lines, as an interim idea. MS also added that when he wrote the initial guitar part years ago, he was inspired by Dave Matthews, although that may not be the direction sonically for the track as a whole.

Story Structure

To address the story structure, the demo recordings were imported into Pro Tools so the arrangement could be reviewed and altered if needed, and the lyric was allocated time for scrutiny. It was agreed that the story idea was not clear enough in the current lyric as the artists intended back story was not coming through in the lyric and could be presented more effectively. New lyrics that painted the story and situation clearer were required. Everyone agreed the chorus lyric and melody was strong and well established, and contained the overarching theme for the story yet the verses required a more robust narrative to establish the story to build into the chorus. In the meantime, the song arrangement was experimented with and a base structural guide was created in Pro Tools. Discussion then shifted to the topic of instrumental and tonal decisions.

Storyboard

It was agreed that the primary focus should remain on the vocal and the fantastic acoustic guitar riff where the remaining instrumentation plays supportive roles, using Paolo Nutini as a fundamental sonic and instrumental reference, Dave Matthews for vocal phrasing, John Mayer in some guitar harmonic choices and Cody Chesnutt for drum groove and sonic aesthetic.

Budget Development and Production Schedule

Like many of the other projects, the production fee and studio hire fees had already been negotiated prior to the project's commencement however this track required the services of a session drummer. This was added to the budget and was also worked into the production schedule. The producer and artist had set themselves their own homework to go away and complete lyric writing, and to set up tempo maps in Pro Tools in preparation for the production process to begin. The intended production schedule was planned out and the team moved onto the final step.

Start Over

The start over step proved beneficial as it yielded an idea that had not been discovered in previous steps. The idea was to have two lead vocal lines run simultaneously, almost as a call and response in the final outro chorus. This allowed for more repetition of the main hook, which also contained the title of the track and the main story idea that the song was built upon. Both artist and producer were very happy with the outcome of the session and were satisfied and unified in the direction of the song heading into the production phase. This session aligned with a traditional model of production.

Sessions with AT and DL

Track 1 – Part I – Amigos
Amigos – Working Desk Bounce
The Final version is being completed by the production team

The session began with AT explaining that she did not base the song on any references. "The song started as a sample based groove on the Loopy HD app on my iPad, but no, I didn't make the song with the intention of following anyone" (AT, personal communication, 2017).

Moses Sumney and Anderson .Paak are two artists that AT was fond of however she was not sure if those references aligned with the intended direction for Amigos, with the exception of Anderson .Paaks infamous groove. DL moved the discussion onto intended instrumentation for the track. AT explained she had considered drums, bass, trumpet and electric guitars as a basis with a view to review should inspiration arrive in the recording process. Using Anderson .Paak as a groove based reference, DL suggested that recording the rhythm section playing at the same time would help to align with this, so the players could feed off each other's movement to capture the tightest groove. A recorded phone demo was then played for review. AT built the track around loop layering and used a drum loop to build the groove from and as such, the demo presented as quite a complete track. The structure, lyric, melodies and instrumental parts were all excellent, however some arrangement elements were identified for improvement. These elements were noted and DL took this opportunity to bring in a session bass player and they began rehearsing with a view to record drums, bass and guide acoustic guitars simultaneously in the same room. The preproduction for this song was quite brief as a result of the demo being very well developed, however the discussion and amendments that did occur all proved beneficial for the song. During the recording process a lot of production experimentation, and preproduction like decision making occurred. This may have been due to a preferential working habit of the producer, or the fact that the demo was presented to an already well developed standard, nevertheless, it was clear that this session aligned with an integrated model for production much more than a traditional model.

Track 2 – Part II – Freedom
Freedom – Initial Live Demo
The Final version has not been completed yet by the production team.

Song Idea
This session differed from Part I as it was conducted digitally over Facebook Video Chat. AT began the session by explaining the two main story ideas behind the song. AT describes

> The song is inspired by travelling. So how travelling changes you and it
>
> takes you out of a situation that you're in, in the country that you grew up,
>
> with friends that you've known who expect you to be a kind of person.
>
> You're always growing and evolving as a person when you're travelling. The
>
> other side is the evolution to being a more consciously thinking person.
>
> Putting Freedom first and whatever freedom means to you (AT, personal
>
> communication, 2017).

DL went on to ask who the target demographic she felt the song and subsequent EP was aimed at. AT explained she did not feel the EP would be aimed at anyone in particular, but was more of an opportunity for her to release a work that was "a truer version of myself" (AT, personal communication, 2017), and to build a fan base around that artistic direction as opposed to previous releases. The song had no commercial aspiration thus the need to stick to pop radio formats was nullified giving the artist and producer much more "freedom" creatively which suited the song and story idea perfectly. Discussion then moved onto the story structure step.

Story Structure and Storyboard

AT is a very skilled lyricist and is able to construct very well structured and considered lyrics and songs, and this track was no different. They did not require adjustment. Where the story structure step was useful was solidifying musical and production details for each section in the song to give light and shade and sonic interest throughout the track. Different rhythmic elements were discussed for different sections, the use of African rhythms in sections, the omission of harmonic instruments at particular parts and minimizing instruments in the third verse to bring the dynamic down. Following this, DL moved onto the storyboard step. From reviewing the demo recording DL pointed out that the main hook lyric "we can sing freedom" in the chorus had a tendency to sound like "we can't sing freedom". This was noted and agreed that in the vocal recording they will need to ensure that the correct lyric is annunciated as clearly as possible otherwise the lyric becomes quite contradictory. DL also suggested that the final lyric "so choose freedom" was unnecessary. The sentiment was already clear in the story thus there was no need for it. The track as a whole was built around an African inspired rhythmic bed and drum groove. This was a very important foundation for the whole song. DL suggested a session drummer, who was a mutual friend of them both and has a strong background and knowledge of African drumming and rhythm, to come and drum on the track. Structurally, DL felt that the demo presented some vamp sections that could be shortened, however he wanted to experiment with those sections after the drummer had laid the rhythmic bed down in the production process. Further instrumentation wise, AT was looking at very similar accompaniment to her previous song, drums, bass, electric guitar and horns but with the addition of a choir at the end of the song. DL made the point of recording that section with an actual choir rather than layering minimal voices. AT agreed wholeheartedly and discussion led directly into the next step, budget development, and what session musicians would be required.

Budget Development

Session musicians for drums, bass, electric guitar, horns and a choir were needed and personnel was chosen. As a lot of the session musicians were friends and colleagues it was suggested that some of the players may accept payment with a BBQ, some beers and a catch up, so BBQ supplies were worked into the budget.

Production Schedule

The production schedule was reviewed from a chronological production point of view however dates were subject to availability of the session musicians. It was agreed that this would be solidified in the future.

Start Over

The final step, start over, brought about some new discussion for the third verse. Both AT and DL were undecided on exactly what they would do production wise in this section. AT suggested to highlight the African influence of the song that this verse could be based purely around a vocal call and response, omitting all other elements. This idea was met positively from DL. Both artist and producer were now very happy with the direction of the song. This preproduction session aligned with a traditional model of production.

Part II – Formalised Process Outcomes

The primary focus of this research was to investigate if a formalised preproduction processes could be adopted and applied to music preproduction to achieve outcomes that meet the expectations of artists and producers. Participants were asked to reflect on whether they believed the formalised process for Part II made a different impact on their preproduction session. There was a unanimous yes for a positive impact. BC notes "The formalised process for this song was a different experience to the first song, but positive in different ways. I feel this approach really emphasises the creative and storytelling aspects of the song, which largely focused on lyric and emotion whereas the first song was probably more focused on overall musical arrangement and technical requirements" (BC, personal communication, 2017). RS agreed stating,

> I believe that following these steps resulted in positive outcomes for the
> track, and would say that this process assisted in an even more productive

and cohesive artist/producer team. Having Brad fully across the message and my direction for the feel of the track prior to recording brought out quite a few changes to the way in which we approached the track. An example of this can be seen in the 1st verse, where I had planned on using sticks for the drums but moved to brushes after talking it through with Brad in pre-production (step 3). This resulted in a much more appropriate percussion section that allowed the song to slowly build for the listener and brought more attention to the vocals. (RS, personal communication, 2017).

AP believed that the Part II process was not only beneficial for the song, but also made the session more efficient. "It changed the way we analysed the song and was a different way to discuss what needed to be changed. It gave the session more direction and had a quicker impact on improving the song" (AP, personal communication, 2017). DL noted that the new steps changed the thought process of approaching preproduction, which in turn developed new and different ideas than what would have occurred without the formalised steps (DL, personal communication, 2017).

It was clear that the participants positively agreed that *different* results were achieved in Part II, and were asked if they thought the Part II process yielded *better* results than the previous session, as perceived by the participant. AP believed that improved results were achieved through the Part II process stating, "I preferred working through the steps as it helped me (the artist) understand overall what we needed to look at in order to improve the song" (AP, personal communication, 2017). Producer DL also agreed. "Yes, better results were achieved, in particular from steps one (story idea) and two (story structure). The focus on 'the story' became a commonly used concept throughout tracking and mixing which did serve the song, rather than the individual. This gave the song a life of its own and allowed for further development" (DL, personal communication, 2017). The immediate focus from steps one and two on 'the story' of the song was substantiated by BC also.

If we look at it in terms of steps, the real difference in approach was the content discussed in step 1 and 2, and then also the final step of having a check and measure in place where you revisit the whole process to ensure everything is covered. The other steps I feel generally occur, although in a less structured or ordered manner, in my normal preproduction process. (BC, personal communication, 2017).

Artist MS also agreed that the Part II process gave greater benefit overall as "focusing on the story line first and foremost reminded me of the benefits of consciously holding audience attention lyrically and my desire to 'snag' the listener with relatable subject matter" (MS, personal communication, 2017). AT gave a slightly different response suggesting that rather than improving the song, the process actually enhanced the producer and artist relationship by involving the producer in the process more, in their session.

> I think the second preproduction process gave the producer more of an idea what the song was about and involved him more. The first preproduction process was quite quick and didn't involve looking into the story of the song. The relationship is definitely important. Knowing who you are working with allows there to be an openness to suggestions. That is where the creative juices start to flow (AT, personal communication, 2017).

DL extrapolated this idea, suggesting the use of the steps "further separated the individuals from the art in a positive way. The tools or steps allow the ideas to generate in a way that did not feel personal and removed bias or preconceived thought patterns through the processes" (DL, personal communication, 2017). In my observation of this particular session DL is referring to, the artist AP, particularly in Part I, had a tendency to not always voice opinions when certain musical elements were discussed. This may have stemmed from an uncertainty about the validity of the suggestion from the producer, an inability to imagine what the idea might sound like, or perhaps the notion that the producer and the artists were not always in a simpatico mindset. In Part II however this drastically improved. AP states "I like working through the steps as it gives the session more structure. Part II definitely helped us analyse each aspect of the song and made sure the song was ready for production" AP, personal communication, 2017).

In terms of time efficiency of the Part II process, there were some differing views. AP believed that the formalised process did produce 'quicker' results as the steps helped to analyse the song more efficiently, putting a spotlight on exactly what required analysis (AP, personal communication, 2017). DL had a differing view, "I wouldn't say that the result was quicker or slower, however that wasn't a necessity or contributing factor for the artist or myself. Nonetheless, with more practice using these steps, it would have been a quicker process" (DL, personal communication, 2017). The division as to whether the Part I or Part II process was

more time efficient results from different participant experiences, however it was agreed that even if Part II did not take less time, the use of the time was much improved due to the formalised structure. Through my own observation of the Part II process, I also found that the preproduction sessions did not necessarily take less time to complete but the formalised process certainly made an improved use of the time. The Part II sessions were much more focused and allowed all participants to concentrate on a single element at a time, and also forced participants to persist with one step until it had been fully examined. As there was no formalised structure in Part I, I felt that this allowed the sessions to either prolong for much longer than they needed to, or sessions moved ahead from good ideas too quickly without proper investigation, leading to a number of quality ideas being neglected or forgotten about later. In turn, the sessions continuity had a tendency to ebb and flow in terms of relevance and validity at times.

Each producer had their own working habits and process for Part I, which did not follow a repeatable process. BC, one of the external producers acknowledged, "I don't generally work as a lyricist or songwriter and I tend to focus more on the technical aspects of the process when producing" (BC, personal communication, 2017), and DL agreed that the emphasis on steps one and two in particular gave a greater focus to the story that was not normally part of his everyday preproduction practice (DL, personal communication, 2017). This highlights the validity of the formalised process as it encourages technical-type producers to engage with the story and meaning of the song so they can then apply technical and musical elements to heighten the story and ultimately the connection to the listener; whilst conversely, the Part II process also allowed lyric-focused producers and participants to engage with technical aspects of the production in step 3, the storyboard step.

Another interesting and unexpected piece of data gathered from the session with DL and AT was centered around the production schedule. As this was not a considered step in their Part I process, the team began tracking the same day as their preproduction, which differed from their Part II process that occurred remotely on a separate day. "I think the latter is much more beneficial. Completing the session remotely removes the tendency to want to speed up and get to 'the good part' – playing" (DL, personal communication, 2017). This working team was not auteur or artist producers (Burgess R. J., 2013, pp. 13-14) where studio-based songwriting and recording would commence as soon as ideas were made. This team was a traditional artist and producer pairing, however as DL stated, their 'desire to get to the good part and play' was a

distraction from the preproduction being as effective as it could have been. This would also suggest that even if scheduling did not allow for a separate day for preproduction and production, Part II's step three to six would have been beneficial to their preproduction process from part I, in particular the start over step. The rush to want to play instruments by artists and musicians and the comfort zone that creates can be counterproductive in a preproduction setting. One of the successes of the Part II process lies in the fact that the first two steps do not require any musical performance, or the need to touch a musical instrument. They are exclusively focused on research, analysis, concept, the story idea and story design in step one; and content outlines, scripting, framing the problem and solidifying the lyric and story structure in step two. This turned out to be an unfamiliar process for the participants in this research, yet across the board, perceived positive results were recorded.

With artist AP, I lead the preproduction sessions in a producer role but did not go on to produce the record. The producer requested I help to develop the song with the team through preproduction and then they continued the production process themselves. This particular working arrangement gave some unexpected feedback from their team.

> One of the key points that can contribute to the success of using these a third party for preproduction is that the producer can separate himself or herself from the ideas when tracking. It removed personal association to the ideas; therefore, the artist and myself didn't feel responsible for any failure in unsuccessfully implementing the ideas. It removes blame and egotistical behavior in both parties from any session. (DL, personal communication, 2017).

In this instance, the pre-producing producer takes on the role somewhat akin to a session musician. If the output does not meet the objectives of the core creative team, the ideas can easily be discarded without impact on the working team. Discarding ideas within a working dynamic can be a difficult subject to broach and the level of success of a session, or overall production definitely hinges on the relationship between artist and producer. KH explained further,

> I think you have to put all the trust into the producer because they have the ideas and they are sometimes out of the box ideas. It might be something that you might not have thought of but in the end it could turn into one of the

greatest things you've ever thought of and then your wishing 'oh I wish I

came up with that'. (KH, personal communication, 2017).

DC also substantiates KH's statement explicating "as a group, we trust in the producer's input due to his own songwriting ability, technical aptitude and vision for the song. The producer has a level of experience and ability to challenge a track in order to both offer respect and to develop it beyond its initial stages" (DC, personal communication, 2017). Using a third party to run a preproduction session has its advantages, and demonstrated a positive outcome for the production of AP's record, however the relationship between the record producer and the artist remains the key focus for a positive overall outcome. The ability for a producer to navigate creative differences in the relationship may prove to be a major contributing factor to the successful outcome of a preproduction session, or more widely, a whole production.

Common Factors Affecting Positive Results

As well as the interdisciplinary study of the preproduction process, this research also aimed to investigate if there were any common factors in preproduction sessions that affected positive outcomes, however, before it could be established if there were any individual factors that affected positive results, I thought it was pertinent to discover from the participants if they believed more broadly that preproduction as a process was beneficial. The preliminary questions that the participants were asked in the interviews and questionnaires were 'if they believed that the preproduction sessions were productive for the song' and 'if the song benefitted from preproduction'. Both of these questions were met with a unanimous yes from all participants. "I definitely think preproduction was beneficial. We got to plan out what the song was going to turn out like. Just get a layout and an understanding. Even though it's not set in stone and we could scrap anything tomorrow, we created a brief for what the song was going to sound like" (KH, personal communication, 2017). Producer BC remarked, "in my opinion yes, preproduction was both beneficial and productive for the song. In a few hours we were able to achieve a number of things that not only improved the song but also will ensure the workflow is much more efficient when it comes to actually recording the track" (BC, personal communication, 2017). Artist RS replied, "preproduction resulted in a more productive environment, with ideas and direction thought out prior to facing them later on in the recording process" (RS, personal communication, 2017). With a unanimous positive response from all participants regarding the productivity and benefit of preproduction as a whole, the participants were asked if they felt that any particular factors were the catalyst for

these results. Some of the answers were expected, yet some were unexpected. Part I and Part II of the process were treated as separate data samples to determine the differences between the two processes.

Common Factors from Part I
Elements relating to musical and operational functions of preproduction such as focusing on song structure, song length, using reference tracks, lyric analysis, understanding the backstory or story idea, tempo, groove, deconstructing the meaning within the song and using a Digital Audio Workstation to edit were expected responses from the participants. These were all factors that the participants felt helped to aid in positive outcomes for the song, and for the preproduction session as a whole. Some elements that I had not considered prior to the research that affected perceived positive results for a majority of the participants were focused on environmental and relationship based factors. Creating a working environment conducive to creativity, or creating the right 'vibe' has been defined by Watson and Ward as "a combination of both a relaxed atmosphere and an open and creative relationship between the producer/engineer and artist, thereby making the process of recording enjoyable, and encouraging musicians and recording artists to give their 'best' performance" (2013, p. 2911). Environmental elements such as the comfortable, relaxed, respectful, air-conditioned, dim-lit, physical studio environment were all elements that appeared from multiple participants. The idea of creating a nurturing environment is not new, but has been suggested by Mixerman as a considered practice to become isolated from the outside world by creating a 'womb' so he can be more productive and creative (Mixerman in Bates, 2012, p. 8). He achieves this by "bringing carpets, soothing tapestries, lava lamps, and other decorative items that effectively pad the control room, creating a nurturing environment in which he can work" (Bates, 2012, p. 8). Producer DL also added "taking regular breaks in the sun helped to balance out the cold studio environment" (DL, personal communication, 2017), which was an additional environmental variable that was important for his team. Although these factors were, for the most part, subconscious and habitual decisions or work patterns from the participants and their producers when they were setting the sessions up, I did not initially consider the impact that these factors may have had on the overall outcome.

The most interesting data resulting from the Part I process was centered around the record producer and artist relationship. "The producers laid back demeanor allowed for an ability to feel comfortable around the producer and only having two people in the room at any given

time helped to achieve positive outcomes in our session" (RS, personal communication, 2017). Feedback of this nature was received from each working partnership. When asked about specific factors of this description, DC lists "respect for each other, honesty, friendship and collective input" (DC, personal communication, 2017) as important. KH agreed citing a major factor was "the connection we had in the studio. We were on the same page and had the same idea of the sound that we were chasing" (KH personal communication, 2017). DL expanded upon this further, "having a preconceived trust in the producer's ability helped to ensure that the ideas were taken seriously" (DL, personal communication, 2017). MS noted that "team rapport was very positive due to pre-established creative, personal and professional levels of respect between myself and the producer" (MS, personal communication 2017). The responses from DL and MS of having preconceived trust and having pre-existing relationships with the working team gave curious insight. Ettlinger (2003) states there are two types of trust when working in a collaborative environment: emotive trust, rooted around personal feelings between collaborators; and capacity trust, based on judgement of competent workplace performance of the other collaborator (p. 146). A pre-existing relationship affords the participants a sense of comfortability, but also may improve professional efficiency as there is no 'getting to know you' phase needed.

> Myself (BC) and the artist (MS) have an existing relationship and spent a number of years making music before in a traditional band context, and whilst that was a while ago it was interesting to approach this session as an artist/producer as opposed to band members. We get along on a personal level which I think help us achieve a level of comfort that can take longer in a production session between strangers (BC, personal communication, 2017).

Not all of the producer and artist partnerships had pre-existing relationships. One such session was the session with myself leading the preproduction, with the record's producer DL and artist AP. DL and I had worked together before, however AP and I had not. From this session, DL raised a very interesting factor that he believed to have a great impact on the outcome. He recalls "without a doubt, the use of comedy is an essential tool; using comedy helped to create trust, make the artist feel more comfortable and create the right vibe" (DL, personal communication, 2017). In another session, AT also commented that the session guitarist that was brought in for the session and his quick wit "was the glue for the whole session" (AT, personal communication, 2017). Using humour as a means to keep the environment relaxed and 'laid-back' acted as much of an interpersonal factor as an environmental factor. Being able to create an environment that was as comfortable as

possible for the participants gave the most positive outcomes. Another such explanation of the positive use of humour to heighten focus and awareness stems from the Reticular Activating System (RAS) in the brain. "The system helps in prioritizing information and controls what appears in the mind's eye, at any point in time. This region is also responsible for bringing your mind into periods of heightened attention, alertness or higher focus" (Bodytomy, 2017). The RAS acts as a filter or switch to all of the data around you, allowing you to only focus on what your brain perceives as 'important' at any given time. The use of comedy or humour "acts as a jolt to the RAS" (Van Gemert, 2015), allowing participants to switch on and remain focused on the task at hand.

Due to the physical location of two of the preproduction sessions, rather than the participants being in the same room, the sessions were conducted online via Skype and Messenger chat. This format proved to have its own positive and negative elements. The fact that geographical location has no bearing on whether preproduction can occur provides obvious positives in time and fiscal efficiency. It also allowed the session to be very easily recorded which aided in an excellent review tool for when the songs were to be recorded. Specifics about the preproduction and any changes that were discussed in the sessions were able to be examined and reconsidered at a later date by the production teams and the artists. From the participant feedback, one negative was identified from the online format as discussed by DL. "Using Skype did inhibit the process as it's harder to connect physiologically with the other communicators" (DL, personal communication, 2017). The connection between participants is important and as previously discussed, a great deal of planning and practice goes into making the participants feel as comfortable as possible in the sessions, so not being able to physiologically connect with each other may play a slight role in the session not being as effective as it could be. Being in different physical locations did not afford the producer, or the artists an opportunity to "create the right vibe" (Watson & Ward, 2013, p. 2911) as the workspace and social interaction was through a computer screen. In both of these cases however, the recording processes were conducted with the participants in the same studio, allowing that physiological connection to occur during the production phase.

When participants were asked if they would participate in preproduction for future projects, a unanimous yes was presented, highlighting that even with a lack of a formal process, any form of review and third party assessment of the song with the view to improve it, is met with positive affirmation from all participants.

Common Factors from Part II

A significant amount of the data emerging from Part II was focused around the understanding, importance and application of the concept of 'story.' As a formalised step that all sessions were forced to allocate time to – when participants may not have done so in previous sessions – the story idea (step one) and story structure (step two) steps received positive affirmation from participants, with artists DC, KH, MS, AP, AT, RS and producers BC and DL all commented on this aspect. "Understanding the story was so beneficial as it allowed us to think creatively about how we would support that message musically" (DL, personal communication, 2017). KH agreed stating "the story process was a really big factor. We looked at the techniques and musical elements that we were going to emphasise to bring out the story. This is so important with music because there is a story in the song" (KH, personal communication, 2017). As DC commented, "The first three steps shaped the song" (DC, personal communication, 2017). As the Part II preproduction process was derived from the narrative-heavy disciplines of film and television, animation, short film and documentary, the story focus is magnified in my preproduction model, and given a much greater formal importance than is typically the case in music preproduction. As stated in Chapter Two, much of the scholarly attention in music preproduction has a focus on aspects of a song such as song arrangement, lyric, instrumentation, sonic choices, tempo, time signature, groove and performance qualities or rehearsal or demo recording considerations. Even though lyric and lyric refinement is a vehicle for the story, a gap exists in the literature and understanding of the story as a formalised focus in the preproduction process if most members of the creative team and preproduction participants found this emphasis on story, backstory and narrative to be novel. Film and television, documentary and animation elevate the concept of story to the foreground of creative practice, setting clear narrative objectives and a focus on story design. When positioned as the first step in preproduction for recording, the story becomes a major focus, with technical and musical considerations tending to become more supportive of song narratives.

Further to this, participants were asked if any other elements of the Part II preproduction process were instrumental in achieving positive outcomes. RS identified that "step six (start over) really brought the benefits of the preproduction process to a light, where we were able to do a whole '360' and see how each preproduction idea affected the track; most of which had a positive impact" (RS, personal communication, 2017). DL cited step one in particular as benefitting the song, "identifying the target market and making decisions from this point of

view" (DL, personal communication, 2017). In this case, DL echoes the ways that Harrison and Loveland's 'audience analysis' step can be important before developing other creative objectives. AT suggests that the most beneficial factor from her point of view was the storyboard step, step three. This helped the producer and artist plan how to sonically intertwine African music with Western music which was a key objective for that song (AT, personal communication, 2017). From a technical application angle, MS found that using a DAW to arrange the song from manipulating a prerecorded 'iPhone' demo helped to solidify arrangements, transitions, repetitions and build ups whilst forming the initial basic song structure (MS, personal communication, 2017). This allowed his production team to hear changes in real time, as opposed to making notes, rehearsing and physically playing and singing the changes back. Discussing musical elements such as key and tempo made for helpful elements in AP's session, as well as listening to reference materials so the artist and producer were able to actually hear sonic choices that were being discussed.

From the perspective of the artist-record producer relationship, Part II was quite similar to Part I in the sense that supportive, relaxed, creative, comfortable and positive attitudes and environments were seen, by all participants, as having a positive and major impact on the sessions: "The dynamic was great as everyone was involved and sharing ideas" (AP, personal communication, 2017). KH agreed, remarking that "teamwork is always key. I think it's really important that we communicated well and you have to listen to each other's ideas which is what I think we did" (KH, personal communication, 2017). Another element identified by DL was the pre-existing artist/producer relationship, something common to Part I and Part II:

> I think that having previously known each other helped. I prefaced our
> session by explaining that we are using a process and that none of the ideas
> we spoke about had to be set in stone or definitely used. I think that takes
> away the artist's want to hear the song as it had been written. In both
> sessions, the ideas we came up with will all be used though. (DL, personal
> communication, 2017).

From my own observations, when the artist is aware that they have the ability to make changes to or discard ideas it opens the session up to with song amendments and improvements, whether it is musical, lyrical, or sonic changes. The artist – who is commonly the songwriter – can have a tendency to grow attached to the manner in which the song was initially written, or how they are used to playing it live; in such a scenario, changing their

artwork can be met with resistance. By working with the artist and letting them know that any changes or experimentation that occurs in preproduction is not 'set in stone' and can be workshopped and edited at any point, the producer can facilitate extended collaborative songwriting sessions. Artists in turn feel more involved and have a sense of ownership over work that has benefitted from collaboration and creative development. This strengthens Pras and Guastavino's standpoint of the producer's "primary mission is to guide the musicians as an artistic director of the project" (2011, p. 84). As KH explained,

> a lot of rewriting benefitted the songs. When I write a song as an artist, I don't tend to look that closely after I've written it. Having that extra voice in there saying 'well this could be improved' or 'we could do something different here to make it more interesting' really helped the song. With the preproduction stage, it's time to elaborate on ideas and anything can be changed. We can always go back and change something, which I really like. (KH, personal communication, 2017).

Positive communication between the producer and the artist helped to create a safe, creative environment for the artist to feel comfortable in, not only in preproduction but also in the production stages. RS states that the supportive environment that was created during preproduction helped in production when laying down vocals especially. "Any ideas that I didn't support were thrown out with ease by the producer which made things move along quickly, but most of the producer's ideas were used, sometimes manipulated, and benefitted the track" (RS, personal communication, 2017).

All participants agreed that they would participate in preproduction for future recordings. With the feedback gathered and through my own observations, the Part II process presented the most positive perceptions about the benefit for the songs. With a heavy focus on story, and how technical and musical considerations can further serve the story, Part II provided the greatest overall benefit for the song as far as the artists and producers where concerned. However, it was clear that even in the absence of a formalised preproduction model, any use of review or third-party assessment of the song provided perceived benefits. In my experience and in that of the research participants, without a specific model, preproduction sessions tend to proceed according to creative teams' individual creative working habits, and while there may be benefits from these creative habits, this research has shown that there are also perceived

benefits that may result from the repeatability, uniformity and thoroughness of more formalised preproduction models drawn from other creative disciplines.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

The role of preproduction in popular music record production is dynamic, and difficult to define. With the proliferation of home studios and producer roles, and the digital world of relatively free music distribution, the functions and applications of preproduction have been blurred. This thesis has presented an investigation into preproduction as a process and its use and application in the music industry. The record making process and preproduction's role in it was investigated, exploring the record producer and artist relationship and their subsequent roles, and studying preproduction processes from other creative disciplines such as film and television, animation, microdocumentary and short film, with the aim to discover if their formalised preproduction processes could be adopted and applied to music preproduction to achieve outcomes that meet the expectations of artists and producers. Also, it was examined if any common factors from preproduction sessions resulted in desired outcomes for the creative and production teams.

This practice-led and action-based research consisted of preproduction sessions with six different artists and three record producers (including myself) where each project contained two parts, using a different original song and preproduction process for each part. Part I utilised the everyday working habits and preproduction techniques common to each producer and artist team. Part II employed a new preproduction model, developed from an interdisciplinary study of other creative arts preproduction practices from film and television, animation, short film and microdocumentary production. The major contributing interdisciplinary processes stemmed from Caldwell's five preproduction steps in animation (Caldwell, 2001), Harrison and Loveland's twelve preproduction steps from the film, television and advertising industries (Harrison & Loveland, 2009), Jetnikoff's process for microdocumentary making, (Jetnikoff, 2008), Perkins' short film preproduction framework (Perkins, 2016), and Thomas' three fundamentals for preproduction in animation (Thomas, 1984). From this, similar steps were able to be merged to create a six step process for music. Personally, I worked with four artists in total including three cases where I was the active producer for the preproduction sessions and subsequent records, and one where I led the preproduction phase of the project, but did not produce the final record. Two other external producers ran two-part preproduction sessions with their own artists where I was not an active participant, but was present in an observatory capacity. All participants gave feedback on each session, in the form of a semi-structured interview and questionnaire.

The Part I process allowed the producers and artists to interact and perform preproduction following their own natural working habits, without the use of a formalised process. The creative teams were able to work organically, allowing the session to take on any direction they saw fit. Feedback data was collected from each participant at the completion of the session. Following this, each team participated in the Part II preproduction sessions, applying the developed six step production process derived from an interdisciplinary investigation. At the conclusion of the session, feedback data was collected on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Part II process, and also the differences between Part I and Part II.

The data revealed that all participants viewed preproduction holistically as a positive and important process that improved and benefitted the outcome of the songs. All participants agreed that they would participate in preproduction for future recordings whether it followed the Part I or Part II formats. However, the Part II process did present a more complete process with perceived benefits for the songs, especially in terms of story and narrative development. The formalised six step process had a strong focus on investigating the story behind the song, and how musical and technical elements could be used to heighten the communication of the story to the listener. The structured format of Part II was also found to contribute to an effective producer-artist relationship. Participants discovered that by understanding and completing the steps in chronological order, they were able to compartmentalise discussion and debate about specific elements of the songs. This streamlined the preproduction sessions and allowed a more focused dialogue between participants for each step, minimising the urge to move ahead in the process before an issue had been fully examined. In terms of time efficiency, participants were divided as to whether they believed the Part II process was more time efficient than Part I, however it was agreed that even though Part II may not have taken less time, the use of the time was improved and more effectively structured.

The common factors that participants believed to result in positive outcomes for the song in Part I largely stemmed from three main areas: musical and song development, environmental elements, and the producer-artist relationship. The musical and song development factors such as song structure, song length, using reference tracks, lyric analysis, understanding the backstory or story idea, tempo, groove and deconstructing the meaning within the song were expected responses from the participants. These elements are typical to song development and preproduction, yet still important factors as seen by the participants. Environmental

elements such as the comfortable, relaxed, respectful, air-conditioned, dim-lit, physical studio environment were all elements that appeared from multiple participants and although they may be subconsciously habitual from practitioners when they set their work environments up, they proved important factors for participants. A negative environmental factor to come out of the research was centered around operating preproduction sessions remotely via online conferencing from Skype or Messenger chat. Although some positives were discovered from the remote preproduction sessions – such as breaking the geographical location barrier, solving scheduling problems, and partly negating the urge to 'rush' preproduction session so participants can get to performing – a negative element was that participants were not able to connect in a meaningful, embodied way as well as they may have been able to face to face. This is an area that offers opportunities for further research, to determine whether the face to face connection from preproduction sessions provides more or less effective results than online sessions.

The producer and artist relationship was revealed to be a contributing factor to the success of the preproduction sessions for Part I. Participants felt that if producers were able to develop comfortable, safe and respectful environments in the preproduction sessions, artists and producers were more likely to build a stronger rapport and cultivate an honest and trusting relationship. This in turn led to artists being able to open up more in the working dynamic, with the perception that the recorded songs benefitted as a result. Participants also felt that the use of humour in the sessions broke down professional barriers and a more trusting, comfortable and creative environment was established. The artist and record producer relationship also provides another interesting avenue for further research. Adding more negative or incompatible working relationships to the sample – to investigate if any positive common factors arise from negative or uncomfortable relationships, and how the perceived success of a session is impacted upon by negative artist/producer relationships – could fill a potential gap in knowledge.

Feedback from the participants regarding Part II of the research was largely focused on individual steps from the preproduction model, and the heavy focus on 'the story'. Parallel environmental and relationship factors were also important, as they were in Part I. The story idea, story structure, storyboard, production schedule and start over steps in particular were singled out as providing positive outcomes for the songs, resulting from the more stringent

structure that was absent in Part I. The focus on the story and structured preproduction had the most positive affect on participants; in particular, the degree to which musical and technical considerations where perceived to better serve the story through structured preproduction. The 'start over' step offered participants a 'check and measure' opportunity where – once they completed the first five steps – they were forced to return to the start of the process to ensure the song met all of the desired objectives. This meant the working teams were constantly rewriting, reviewing, experimenting and 'scrapping' ideas whilst maintaining a focus on their perceptions and intentions for the songs. This stringency introduced by the formalised structure, the focus on the story, and formalised return to the song's objectives meant that Part II was generally perceived to have positive impacts on the music production process overall.

In this project, I have implemented a formalised thorough, structured and repeatable preproduction process in popular music record production. This research reiterates that "preproduction is critically important to making the best use of time, energy and budget in the studio" (Murphy R. C., 2001) and the implementation of preproduction processes in Part II of the research has contributed to efficient use of time, energy and budget in the studio, along with a more comprehensive and methodical process through which participants perceive that they extract the greatest benefits for the song. A limitation that this research did identify was that all of the gathered data was from participant perception and tended to lack clear measurable feedback. However, this qualitative data is directly from the participant and it is their point of view that will inform the future practice of those participants and their community. The creative practice of this study was focused only on singer-songwriter solo artists operating within the pop spectrum. There is scope for further study with this formalised process with bands and larger ensembles, and also to different styles of music. As stated earlier, the creation of popular music recordings has many specialised processes and this research builds upon the academic study of collaborative preproduction using a formalised, interdisciplinary framework that may offer benefits for many more songs in the future, while also offering some avenues for future research in popular music production.

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Appendix A

PART I
• Was the preproduction session productive for the song?
• Did the song benefit from the preproduction?
• What specific parts/elements of the preproduction session were helpful/beneficial/achieved positive outcomes?
• Were those outcomes directly initiated by the producer, or a collective/collaborative decision?
• How was the dynamic of the session from all members?
• Was there anything that did not go well?
• Do you trust that the producer's ideas are actually beneficial for the song?
• If there were positive outcomes, what do you think helped to achieve them?
• Are there any other elements of the session, or factors from the session that you think helped make it a positive experience - for example, rapport with team, the studio environment itself, temperature, time of year, was it relaxed/tense etc.
• Did the ideas from Preproduction get used in the final production of the song? Some, all, none?
• If not, what were the reasons? Did they move away from the song's story? Were the decisions made for the benefit of the song? Or any other reason?
• Would you participate in preproduction with future recordings after this session?
PART II
• With the six preproduction steps, do you feel that they made a different impact on the session?
• Do you think that better results, than the previous session, were achieved in the end because of these steps?
• Were we able to achieve a result more efficiently, or to a higher standard by following these steps?
• Did the song benefit more from this at all?

• If so, how?
• Feel free to address the same questions from Part I in relation to Part II
• Was the preproduction session productive for the song?
• Did the song benefit from the preproduction?
• What specific parts/elements of the preproduction session were helpful/beneficial/achieved positive outcomes?
• Were those outcomes directly initiated by the producer, or a collective/collaborative decision?
• How was the dynamic of the session from all members?
• Was there anything that did not go well?
• Do you trust that the producer's ideas are actually beneficial for the song?
• If there were positive outcomes, what do you think helped to achieve them?
• Are there any other elements of the session, or factors from the session that you think helped make it a positive experience - for example, rapport with team, the studio environment itself, temperature, time of year, was it relaxed/tense etc.
• Did the ideas from Preproduction get used in the final production of the song? Some, all, none?
• If not, what were the reasons? Did they move away from the song's story? Were the decisions made for the benefit of the song? Or any other reason?
• Would you participate in preproduction with future recordings after this session?