# Berklee College of Music, Valencia Campus

# 100 Days of Jams

## **Davis West**

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Degree of Master of Music in Contemporary Performance (Production Concentration)

**Supervisor: Casey Driessen** 

# **Table of Contents**

Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Introduction	vi
1. The Project	1
2. Objectives	1
2.1 Develop Compositional Techniques	1
2.2 Play Original Repertoire	2
2.3 Collaborate	2
2.4 Production	3
2.5 Grow A Fanbase	3
2.6 Be A Better Musician	4
3. Methodology	4
3.1 Compositional Inspiration	4
3.1.1 Lead Sheet	5
3.1.2 Chordal	5
3.1.3 Electronic	5
3.1.4 Improvised	6
3.1.5 Reharm	7
3.1.6 Lyrical	9
3.2 Theory	11
3.2.1 Classical	11
3.2.2 Jazz	11
3.2.3 Bluegrass / Roots	11
3.3 Production	12
3.3.1 Garageband Loops	12
3.3.2 Ableton Beats	12
3.4 Video	13
4. Analysis	14
4.1 Jam #6: "Japanese Fried Chicken"	14
4.1.1 Improvised Dessert	14

4.1.2 Fried Theory	15
4.1.2 Sitting Chickens	16
4.2 Jam #22: "Tigersuch"	17
4.2.1 Tiger Displacement	17
4.2.2 Such Harmony	18
4.2.3 Tigercam	20
4.3 Jam #28: "Evening In Saffron City"	21
4.3.1 Metronome City	21
4.3.2 Chord City	21
4.3.3 Jam #76: "ヤマブキの夜"	22
4.4 Jam #37: "Is Everything A Camera?"	23
4.4.1 Pickled MIDI	23
4.4.2 Fiddle Rick	24
4.4.3 Memorizing Rick	25
5. Social Media	26
6. Results	30
6.1 List of Jams	31
6.2 Data Conclusions	33
7. Professional Plan	33
8. Conclusion	35
Appendix	36
Rihliogranhy	40

Abstract

This project is an intensive compositional, collaborative, and artist identity project which

focuses on developing methods to create music, and how to publicize content in an entertaining,

interesting, or otherwise publicly accessible manner. For one hundred days, I composed original

music, paired it to video, and uploaded to social media. Half were done solo, half were "jams" or

collaborations with others. Along the way, all the data were collected and analyzed to formulate

musical decisions. Certain examples are explained theoretically to identify personal musical

habits, which then shaped later compositions; some worked and were used as models, others

were not so smooth, so I learned what to avoid. Technology like Ableton was implemented to

make each individual jam look and sound nicely produced, as well as look unique and

entertaining. Social media analytics were taken from Facebook and Instagram, with focus on

followers, views, likes, and comments. This data also formulated artistic decisions in the creative

process. I hope this project may inspire future musicians to try their hand at creating original

content and shed a light on how to keep the creative process intriguing for the creator and the

audience.

Keywords: composition, jam, collaboration, Ableton, creative process, analysis

iν

## Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my sincerest appreciations to my professors, colleagues, friends, and family who have made this project possible. This would not have been executed anywhere as successfully without the help of my advisor, private instructor, and program director Prof. Casey Driessen, who supported me every step of the way and provided wonderful ideas every week. I would also like to recognize my CE committee for offering their expertise: Ben Cantil, for his encyclopedic wisdom of electronic music; and Alex Perrin, for critical tips on data analysis and marketing myself on social media. Other professors and faculty who I would like to recognize for offering their expertise include: Gary Willis, David Wallace, Mimi Rabson, Victor Mendoza, Max Wright, and Stine Glismand.

I feel deeply grateful to have the opportunity to collaborate with so many fantastic musicians within the Berklee family. They are (in order of jam appearance): Carlos Llerena, Sergio Martin, Chris Black, Tommy Champion, Eddie Takumi Ruddick, Kathleen Chen, Devin Malloy, Nathan Smith, Rohan Bhatia-Newman, Carolina Magini, Ryan Kimbrell, Sophie Mae Wellington, David Mehalko, Michael Patsos, Jobi Riccio, Sam Leslie, Korina Davis, Josh Wallace, Sarah Martinson, Yeji Yoon, Nan Macmillan, Shaudi Vahdat, Jasmine Kok, Diego DeMarco, Nehir Akansu, João Bouhid, Abaasa Rwemereza, Chris Weigers, Eva Villalba, Josh Harris, Dan Caton, Leslie Helpert, Ali McLeod, Sylvie Leys, Mohannad Nasser, and Gracie Laboy. This project would not have been possible without their passion and support.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to my family. All my life they have unconditionally supported my dream to become an artist. I love and thank them profusely.

#### Introduction

Growing up, I learned about music by playing with people of varying stylistic backgrounds. From before I can remember, my mother taught me the basics of classical piano, music theory, notation and dictation. I fell in love with it and took to it quickly, using the instrument as a tool for creating and understanding harmony. When I began playing the violin at age 9, I still focused mainly on classical music, so I was surrounded by the style in many forms – orchestral, chamber, concerti – ranging from Mozart and Shostakovich, to Janacek and Schnittke. However, in high school I found a serious passion for jazz violin, and would later focus my undergraduate violin performance degree in both jazz and classical music. Diving deep into the bebop world, I immersed myself with artists like Freddie Hubbard, John Coltrane, Bill Evans; and jazz fiddle players like Billy Contreras and Christian Howes.

After graduating, I was invited to tour with fiddlers for a year and then later moved to Arkansas to freelance, where I played Grateful Dead and John Scofield songs with funk bands, and Bill Monroe and Tony Rice tunes with bluegrass bands. I also wrote music to perform with alternative jazz-influenced string quartets centralized in Dallas, Little Rock, Chicago, and Detroit; I would love to continue doing this as part of my career. When I came to Valencia, I found several avenues for playing and composing, but quickly discovered a new interest in electronic music. This got me started on creating music through technological means like Ableton. I elected to take the Electronic Dance Music class offered by Ben Cantil, where I learned how to emulate sounds used by artists I like such as Tennyson, Anomalie, and Tom Misch.

Every time that I adopt a new style, I want to share the beauty and uniqueness with other musicians who may not have had the same stylistic background as me. At the same time, I want

to absorb and adapt to their styles as well. Through sharing and embracing different genres, I can develop not only my improvisational voice, but my compositional skills as well.

Several artists such as classical violinist Hilary Hahn have campaigned with the tag "#100daysofpractice" which acts as a self-motivator to practice every day. However, my focus is on **creating** rather than practicing; I want to hone my compositional skills and collaborate with as many people here as I can, during this short year we all have together. For my Culminating Experience here at Berklee Valencia, I want to concentrate on composing or otherwise creating original music every day for 100 days while incorporating the influences which have enhanced my musical voice and identity as an artist.

\_

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Greer, Suzanne. "The 100-Day Practice Challenge." *Studiohelper.com*, 1 Dec. 2017, blog.studiohelper.com/performance/the-100-day-practice-challenge/.

## 1. The Project

Between January 28 and May 8, 2018, I have executed this project by creating musical content every day for 100 days, with an aim to do roughly half solo and half with others. I played acoustic and electric violin, piano, synthesizer, viola, melodica, drum pads, and some auxiliary percussion "instruments" like frying pans, ladles, and video game controllers. I have also created beats and samples using Ableton and Garageband, or notated in the form of a notebook sketch or a chart on Sibelius. Each one is titled, and for consistency within this paper they will be referred as: Jam #00: "Title" or alternatively, "Title" (xx). Jams are paired to videos, ranging from practice room recordings to visual art. Daily videos will be uploaded to Facebook and Instagram, keeping me accountable to follow through and essentially campaign myself to a wider fanbase as a musician and a creator. This guided my stylistic decisions influenced by classical theory, jazz harmony, bluegrass rhythms, and electronic music production.

## 2. Objectives

My primary objective is to become a better musician. While this project started off as a personal challenge for myself, it ended up being one of the most comprehensive and intensive projects I have undertaken. Through *100 Days of Jams*, I hope to walk away with a honed musical skillset focusing on: composition, playing, collaborating, producing, and social media.

## 2.1 Develop Compositional Techniques

Until this project, I never truly created a compositional plan. In other words I would wait until inspiration struck. Ideally, I would like to foster a routine workflow and organize a compositional to-do list for any music across any genre. This means honing my analytical ear by evaluating and regularly looking back at previous days to identify recent habits in my writing

and playing, as well as using technology as a vehicle for composition. I hope to work at a faster rate and finish more original ideas.

## 2.2 Play Original Repertoire

Being a student in a contemporary performance program, improving my violin technique is a main focus of this project. However, I would like to apply it to my original music, thus expanding my library. *100 Days of Jams* acts as a regular flow of original music output to cultivate my artistic voice and write more songs. With more original songs, I have more options to choose in a live performance. I can make more careful musical decisions by having access to songs that check multiple boxes (i.e. songs that require violin vs. songs that require piano). I hope to step away from this project with ideas to further develop over coming years, as well as songs to immediately put to test in a live show.

#### 2.3 Collaborate

In our fast-paced technological world, artists today are able to collaborate and produce entire EPs remotely without even meeting.<sup>2</sup> While the circumstances are sometimes inevitable, I believe there is a certain beauty that can only be attained when playing music in the same room with another person. To emphasize the importance of playing music together, I played with as many people from the Berklee Valencia campus as availability and time allowed. There is a plethora of musical styles that exists here in the Contemporary Performance program alone, and I aspire to incorporate their unique voices into my project, as well as to share my vocabulary with them.

\_

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Rutherford, Chrissy. "Alina Baraz On Creating Her Debut Album Over Facebook." *Harper's BAZAAR*, Harper's BAZAAR, 28 Mar. 2018, www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/art-books-music/interviews/a12553/alina-baraz-interview-2015/

#### 2.4 Production

A relatively new territory for me, one unintended result of this project sharpened my abilities to record, mix, make beats, sample, and practice video production. I used iMovie to create videos and package these musical pieces into 100 easily accessible minute-long deliverables. Videos range from practice sessions, jams, live outdoor performances, and music video-type productions, to psychedelic visuals. These skills were self-taught, but made more easily accessible through resources like the Tech Lab.

#### 2.5 Grow A Fanbase

By means of uploading these videos to social media, I am potentially reaching a global audience to persuade them to continue listening to my music even after the conclusion of this project. I will take data analysis from media platforms Facebook and Instagram, to note the differences in viewership before, during, and after the project. I will record data for followers, likes, and comments on Instagram at increments of 20 days to note any potential tendencies. These numbers will aide artistic decisions for later jams.



Figure 1. Instagram analytics – follower growth over five weeks

#### 2.6 Be A Better Musician

As noted earlier, my most important goal at the end of the day is to become a better musician. This encompasses everything listed above, as well as bringing the values I learn during this project with me to future projects. By developing compositional techniques and identifying my habits, I can compose music much faster. By having a wider selection of original songs, I can collaborate with musicians by catering to their specialties. By producing these works in rapid succession, I am able to work at a more efficient pace, ergo involve myself in more projects that interest me.

#### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Compositional Inspiration

Being a composition-centric project, a big challenge for me was to keep myself interested and vary up my source of inspiration. Some mornings I would wake up with a very clear melody in my head, which I would transcribe by hand and later layer harmonies; however on other days, I would have no clue what to do even after playing back a four bar Ableton loop for an entire afternoon. Eventually, I found that musical preferences and tendencies still exist, regardless of how inspired I felt. Therefore if I forced myself to just sit down at the piano and play any given chord, my ear would have some sort of preference as to what might happen next. I would wait until ideas would strike me spontaneously, but as the days progressed, I was able to play one chord on the piano and develop ideas immediately without second guessing myself. By the final days, I had established such a productive routine that I had a "safety" pile of song ideas that I could fall back on. I took note of the methods I used to compose, and as I categorized them, the methods helped form new jams. Here are the six methods of composition I aim to develop over the course of 100 Days of Jams.

#### 3.1.1 Lead Sheet

Lead sheet writing is described as a repetitive form of musical notation which denotes melody and harmony, but does not specify chord voicings, voice leading, bass, or other aspects of accompaniment.<sup>3</sup> This is essentially music which jazz musicians read. Of the 100 jams, 57 fall under this description. See Appendix for examples of this style of writing: "Tigersuch" (22), "Dandylöwe" (60), and "Chromeforest" (99).

#### 3.1.2 Chordal

Similar in concept to lead sheet writing, chordal writing was effectively an exercise I assigned myself once a week. Instead of writing whole melodic ideas with chord changes, I would sit at the piano for an hour with a timer and write out new chord progressions. If I played two chords that I liked, I would write it down and develop that idea. Occasionally I would preplan an overarching shape in my head (i.e. I would want a four chord progression, or a harmony that would lend itself to a waltz), but most of the time I would improvise until an idea jumped out and felt right. Chordal writing had a loose parameter — some weeks I would double down in anticipation for a busy schedule, sitting for 2 hours jotting as many song ideas until the timer went off — in the end I would find myself making musical decisions more quickly.

#### 3.1.3 Electronic

In looking at compositional methodology, I noticed that one giant pillar glared to me as a weakness; a gaping hole in my skillset as a musician. This hole was electronic music production, and I felt it was a necessary skill in an exceedingly technological industry. Therefore, I focused a lot of my attention in improving my Ableton skills: creating beats using MIDI, creatively using

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> • Webster, James (2004). *Haydn's 'Farewell' Symphony and the Idea of Classical Style: Through-Composition and Cyclic Integration in his Instrumental Music*, p.7. Cambridge Studies in Music Theory and Analysis. ISBN 978-0-521-61201-2.

samples, using Ableton as a recording device, and all around production. One example which emphasizes this facet is "L'Aurore" (75). Inspired by a solo violin composition by Belgian composer Eugène Ysaÿe, I sat down with a MIDI controller through Ableton and I didn't get up until I made a beat that I liked. I started with a simple chord progression that somewhat reminded me of the violin sonata, then I added a beat which had a 6/8 subdivision. In the second repetition of the progression, I replaced the beat with a 4/4 subdivision at the same time as adding a melodic bass line, and then for the last repetition I mashed the two subdivisions and added a sub octave to the bass line. I also added textural sounds of water into this track. Simply by adding subtle differences to spice up the musical texture, I learned that I could create a complete (albeit short) musical product using only a computer.

## 3.1.4 Improvised

As mentioned in section 2.3, an enormous portion of this project involves collaboration; being such, my goal was to try and meet up with someone for a jam every other day. Given students' busy schedules in a masters level program, it became progressively more hectic to schedule even a one-hour jam. However, of the 100 jams, 46 were collaborations with other musicians. Due to this imminent air that existed in knowing that videos were publicized every day, I believe it pushed my collaborators and me to make more concise and intelligent musical decisions.

A few improvised jams that stood out were "Japanese Fried Chicken" (6) with Sergio Martin and Chris Black, "Mother Indecisive" (34) with Korina Davis, and "Fiddle Oud, Little Food" (96) with Mohannad Nasser. For each of these jams, we sat down for a maximum total of perhaps 2 minutes. One of us would establish a groove, and the other(s) would follow – we boiled music down to its bare roots: no charts, no chords, just sharing a good time.

What resulted was a beautiful series of interactions and musical dialogue that could not have otherwise occurred. In "Japanese Fried Chicken," there is a brief moment when Chris loses grip of his halo handpan, to which he mutters quiet expletives and Sergio and I burst into laughter. Not a beat was lost however, and the whole interaction made the final cut. Our music was stylistically interesting as well: Sergio provided a guitar riff inspired by Colombian rhythms and jazz harmonies, Chris embellished the midrange with an ominous hemiola as I chopped and took a I discovered that the music all of a sudden gained a lighter, fun tone to it where we weren't only focusing on playing the next change correctly, or keeping perfect time.

Similarly, Korina and I got together and improvised a four chord groove for "Mother Indecisive." We solos over it, gave it a little breakdown section and a recognizable hook; after playing it through just twice, we had our take. The video ends with us laughing and having a good time, which really speaks to the music itself and how it made us feel. Playing improvised, unplanned music was always fun and exploratory; I felt like I came out of these jams knowing myself and my collaborator(s) just a little bit better. In "Fiddle Oud, Little Food," Mohannad and I set up the camera and played the first thing that came to our heads; no rehearsals, run through, or even discussion of musical content. We ended up stopping a few families in their tracks and garnering a bit of an audience, inspiring us to play a couple more tunes for them. Letting go of boundaries and parameters led to accidentally serendipitous moments.

## 3.1.5 Reharm

While this section could potentially fall into section 3.1.3, compositionally speaking, reharmonizing preexisting nonmusical videos proved to be an entirely different method of creating. This section encompasses a small but very important subset of jams in which I found videos that I liked from social media or a TV show, gave pitches to spoken dialogue, added chords to give

the voice a "melody" in Ableton, then finally played that "melody" line on violin. The first of two was Jam #37: "Is Everything A Camera?" inspired by Adult Swim's *Rick and Morty*. I took the famous opening scene from Season 3, Episode 3 "Pickle Rick" and did exactly the outlined steps. There is an option on Ableton to extract MIDI data directly from the melody, however in this scenario, with background noise in the episode, it picked up some very odd noises as pitches and I eventually opted not to use it. After putting pitches to every syllable, I added chords to compliment the line either directly or by giving it some semblance of a groove. Afterward, I recorded myself playing the initial melody which I knew so well by this point, and synchronized the two videos together in iMovie. Since there were two characters, I was able to distinguish between them by emphasizing their respective vocal range on the violin. Morty's hesitant, quiet voice tended to resonate best within the A string, and Rick's more aggressive and crude demeanor was more appropriate when played on the violin's D and G strings.

The second of two was Jam #85: "That's How You End It," for which I followed the same steps with a different video. This time, I took a reaction video to an announcement for an upcoming title in the popular video game series, *Super Smash Bros.* and added the chord notation to the video. The response to this video has been amazing and it seems that people of all backgrounds regardless of musical interest are able to enjoy the content simply for the entertainment.

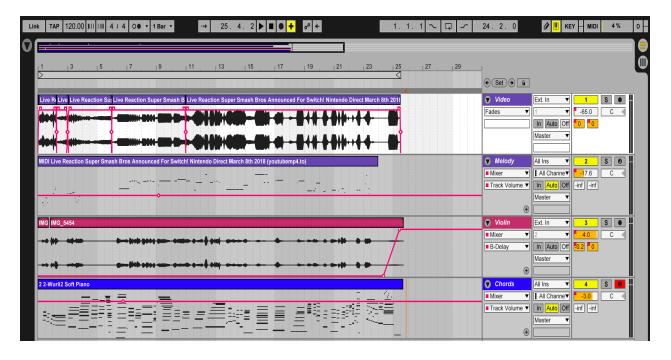


Figure 2. Ableton project for Jam #85:" That's How You End It"

Creating the chords for these jams was perhaps the most difficult aspect, as the musical direction was entirely up to me; would the chords follow the vocal line word-for-word? Or would I provide a pad for the voice to accent over? Similarly, would the direction of the chords ascend when the melody also ascended? Would they move the other direction to create counterpoint? These were questions I was asking myself and trying to work around. Detailed examples of this will be expounded upon in section 3.

## 3.1.6 Lyrical

My final category of compositional focus is lyrical composition. This entails songs that were written with the lyrics first. Words were never my forte in musical composition, but occasionally I think of certain phrases that sound aesthetically pleasing and write them down. These compositions are those where such words were the initial piece of compositional information. Normally my jams come from melody or harmony, but some word combinations trigger musical ideas, and over the last 5 years, I had collected several notebooks of lyrics, and

this project happened to be the perfect outlet for a few ideas. Among them, "Boring Coffee" (45), "Go With The Stream" (52), "Mister Nuthatch" (58), "Outer Space Is So Great" (80), and "Roselit Shades" (100) were all songs that began only as words. Since I will be explaining Jams #45 and #100 in greater detail later, I will briefly outline the writing process for Jam #58, "Mister Nuthatch." This song was taken from a series of lyrics I started writing in 2014, with irregular additions to my "notes" app on my iPhone, and with no intention of publicizing in any way. In the thick of doing these daily jams, I began looking to the past for inspiration, and found these words:

#### Mister Nuthatch

His business card alone can steer the course of conversation His art however cannot say the same Paints a thousand pictures but he's never said a word Throwing stones at birds is inhumane

Face the facts run round the track
Having no fans is no fun
But mister Nuthatch baby drawing portraits in the sun
Of dreams that he remembered from
nights that he forgot

Someday soon you'll get there too Right in Mona's spot

Figure 3. Notes for Jam #58: "Mister Nuthatch"

While the Davis in 2014 liked the words themselves and could even make out a rough melody, he didn't feel quite equipped to create a full-fledged song out of it. Four years later, with more confidence in my ability to make songs and 50 jams under my belt, I feel ready to not only solidify the melody while reading those words, but to play a chord progression on piano at the same time. It took a long time to feel comfortable with my lyrics – and I admittedly still don't feel fully secure – but this project swung the door of songwriting wide open and I now feel that writing lyrics is something that I am comfortable doing, and even enjoy.

## 3.2 Theory

#### 3.2.1 Classical

A large part of my musical foundation has been classical music, and though my current stylistic interests have shifted, Baroque counterpoint and Bartokian inversional symmetry still fascinates me today. As such, my jams will extract deep-rooted classical harmonic tendencies and apply it to my current interests, both as a composer and player. My string-playing colleagues in the program also come from a relatively classical background, so writing through-composed material came more naturally. Jams which focuses on these classical harmonic elements include "Mathly Waltz" (13) and "Paddynini Caprallas No. 1" (49); I expanded my multiple-part writing and counterpoint through jams like "Liontrot" (72) and "Ode to Ophelia" (87).

## 3.2.2 Jazz

I wanted to incorporate my background in jazz by including thick harmonies into my heavily post-bop compositions such as the previously mentioned "Tigersuch" (22), Kat Eyes (47) and "Nice Shirt Bro" (73). These jams contain harmonic movement which loosely mimics that of John Coltrane's "Giant Steps," notably in descending major thirds. "Tigersuch" (22) also features a polyrhythmic ostinato similar to Terence Blanchard's live rendition of "Footprints" by Wayne Shorter.<sup>4</sup>

## 3.2.3 Bluegrass / Roots

Until I came to Berklee Valencia and took private instruction with Casey Driessen, I never received formal training for fiddle styles like bluegrass. Together we worked on classic fiddle tunes and on expanding my bluegrass vocabulary by transcribing artists like Ricky Skaggs and Tony Rice. In transcribing, I took note of trends and tendencies like sliding into the third of a

11

\_

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNEv-31x8rk

chord or playing double stops more frequently. Such vocabulary made its way to my jams, which I eventually grouped into a set that I call "Is This Bluegrass?" which comprises of "Greenfire" (19), "Redwater" (67), "Silvercloud" (77), and "Chromeforest" (99). I can foresee these songs being a part of an acoustic live set or an album.

#### 3.3 Production

## 3.3.1 Garageband Loops

Initially, Garageband was my main method of creating backing tracks and recording for my jams. Jam #23: "Monday Pork Buns" was the last jam that was created using Garageband, as I intentionally wanted to improve my Ableton skills and use it as an instrument. Nevertheless, Garageband provided the basics needed to provide a layered musical demo to play over. Hardly any use of MIDI was incorporated – and if it was, it was not altered (no modulation or automation) – but the software provided a glimpse into what my future of integrating technology could look like. I had thorough experience with using my looper in solo settings and on tour; for me Garageband was essentially a visual looper. Waveforms existing on top of each other on my computer screen gives me a more tangible feel to the music, making fine tuning possible.

#### 3.3.2 Ableton Beats

As the jams went on however, Garageband simply wasn't enough and did not provide the sounds or manipulation that I was trying to integrate. With guidance from Ben Cantil, I quickly took a liking to Ableton and used it as a compositional tool as well as an instrument. The first jam to incorporate Ableton was Jam #17: "Baby's First Drop," but I was not comfortable with recording audio directly into the DAW, resulting in getting a recording of phone audio for both the Ableton backing track and my violin. While it achieved the intended effect, it was not as clean as it could have been. Jam #30: "Modern Dreams" was the first which used Ableton as a

recording device. Since this jam was a collaboration with singer Carolina Magini, I set up my Scarlett Focusrite interface and was able to edit and mix our respective sounds individually. My beat producing techniques sharpened, as did my recording efficiency. Lastly, Jam #79: "Look Mom" was a jam which heavily featured the use of Ableton as an instrument; this jam was triggered and manipulated using only an Akai APC40.

## 3.4 Video

On top of audio production, in order to make my music more accessible and entertaining to the general public (and myself), I decided to pair everything to video. All visual editing was done in iMovie. Most videos were taken directly from a playthrough or rehearsal, such as: "Winnie The Pooh Combo" (26), "Tablewave" (63), "Cookie Jar" (81), and "Chromeforest" (99). Two were artistic visual mashups of videos and images taken from the internet, "Calamity Gengar" (94) and "Memehop Dojo" (98). However, a majority ended being a mixture of both. For example, "Triple Mutton Karate Pork" (82) was indeed a video of a playthrough: I sat outside with my violin, and played a rhythmic groove only using chopping and nothing else. Upon editing the audio, I was nearly finished when I realized that it was uninteresting for me to watch myself chopping in front of the camera, regardless of the nice weather. So I found some images of popular cartoon characters representing a form of "chopping," though this was intended sarcastically as the characters were all karate chopping. I faded them into and out of the video and lowered the opacity, still making it clear that I was on the other side. This gave the once-still video something interesting and entertaining to offer to somebody who maybe would not otherwise enjoy a 35 second clip of contemporary extended violin technique.

## 4. Analysis

In this section, I will be thoroughly analyzing four of my 100 jams. The points of analysis are: compositional, theoretical, and production. In compositional analysis, I will talk in depth regarding the methodology listed above in section 3.1. Theoretical analysis takes an academic look at my musical tendencies; I will talk about the theory behind respective classical, jazz, and bluegrass influences incorporated into my music, as well as dissecting harmonies. The jams I will analyze are: "Japanese Fried Chicken" (6), "Tigersuch" (22), "Evening in Saffron City" (27), and "Is Everything A Camera?" (37).

## 4.1 Jam #6: "Japanese Fried Chicken"

What started as a dinner and casual hang with my two friends ended up being one of the more memorable and entertaining jams for me to watch, to this day. My friends Sergio Martin and Chris Black invited me over to their apartment, and I decided to make them some Japanese fried chicken (called "kara-age"). What resulted was this jam.

## **4.1.1 Improvised Dessert**

After dinner, we decided to play some music so I took out my fiddle, Sergio uncased his acoustic guitar, and Chris brought out his steel handpan: a large, uncommon, lap-cradled percussion instrument with seven pitches. Using the restriction of the handpan's pitches as guidance, Sergio and I played a groove over it. Chris played a hemiola which emphasized groups of three eighth notes:



Figure 4. Transcription of handpan ostinato

The chords notated above were improvised in the moment, and though we wavered at first, we eventually agreed on that chord progression. As described in section 2.1.4, there was a moment in which Chris's instrument slid down his knees and nearly tipped over — I remember thinking within that moment that Sergio and I hadn't verbally communicated our chordal plan whatsoever, however the three of us all felt comfortable enough musically such that we were able to genuinely respond to the situation and laugh. We could very well have lost control of the rhythm or chords, but we were able to share the moment and still keep the music going.

## **4.1.2** Fried Theory

As shown in the previous figure, the chords used in this jam were: c minor, F dominant sus, A flat major 7, and G dominant. The c minor shown in the last measure almost acted as a G sus chord over C, resolving to the tension-filled G dominant by the third beat. In terms of Roman numeral analysis, the form is: i  $IV^7VIV^7$ , which is a progression coincidentally shared by the chorus of "More Than A Feeling" by Boston (with a major tonic as opposed to the minor). I happened to perform this song over 80 times on tour, so it is quite possible that the progression was somewhat ingrained into my muscles, despite solidifying it after identifying the pitches of Chris's handpan.

Another one of my tendencies began to show its face during my solo. Over the G dominant chord, I played this figure:



Figure 5. G dominant example

Over the G dominant, I play the B natural on the third beat following a B flat, essentially delaying the third by arriving chromatically. I then play E flat and F, both pitches which hint at

an augmented chord in this context. The idea of B flat  $\rightarrow$  B natural  $\rightarrow$  E flat  $\rightarrow$  A flat is taken up the octave, bridged by the F. Just as the figure begins by delaying the chord tone from a semitone below (the third), it ends by delaying the chord tone G from a semitone above, A flat; a series of colorful note choices implying a G altered chord. However upon review, I discovered that a over year prior to this jam, I did a transcription of a solo by fiddler player Billy Contreras playing a live version of "Groove Merchant." Over the third chorus, he plays this figure:



Figure 6. Billy Contreras transcription

Admittedly, I have tremendous respect for Billy, and his playing has influenced mine greatly. However, I did not expect to be using his ideas note-for-note in a completely different song than he played. In the second measure of the figure, it is apparent that he plays the exact same eight pitches in the same order that I played.

## 4.1.3 Sitting Chickens

The resulting video for this jam was actually our second take. Production-wise, this jam actually took very little to no effort. I simply set up my phone on a stand and played. Our first take was only about 30 seconds long, as we needed to check the levels. We first had me sitting right next to the camera, where Chris sits in the final video. Sergio was in the middle, and Chris was on the left. However, upon listening back we realized that the violin and its higher register cut through the instruments too well, resulting in drowning out the handpan. Additionally, since the violin is played pointed leftward from the left shoulder, the angle only showed the back of

my violin. When we switched places, it immediately solved not only the sound level problem, but the visual problem as well.

## 4.2 Jam #22: "Tigersuch"

Tigersuch is a tune of mine that has been written and rewritten to fit several different formats. It first existed as an eight bar Garageband loop. I tried to develop a melody over it, as well as a drum groove. I wanted to try and play it with friends, so this acted as an initial demo for the song. Then, I notated it as a musical score on Sibelius. This, paired with the demo, allowed for a smooth first read-through and still gave room for feedback from fellow musicians. Next, we recorded the song at the Ann Kreis Scoring Stage (AKSS) at Berklee Valencia. The final video used for *100 Days of Jams* was recorded on my iPhone, capturing audio coming from the sound booth at the AKSS and video straight from the live room. Musicians featured are Carlos Llerena (tenor sax), Sergio Martin (guitar/bass guitar), and Devin Malloy (drums).

## **4.2.1 Tiger Displacement**

As introduced in section 2.1.1, "Tigersuch" follows the lead sheet style of composition. There is a melody and chordal structure, but most of the rhythm and bass parts are up to the performers to fill in. It started off as a rhythmic motif, arranging sixteenth notes in groups of seven. The ostinato is a two bar rhythmic motif:



Figure 7. Jam #22: "Tigersuch" rhythmic motif

Though it looks complex on paper, what resulted was a lopsided, almost laid-back feel.

Some of us felt the idea in groups of seven sixteenth notes, others felt it as an echo of dotted eighth and sixteenth note being anticipated each time by one sixteenth note until the cycle

matched back up in four repetitions. The problem with this concept was that I had heard the idea so many times that I started feeling it rather than reading it. For those who need a more solid visual representation of the rhythm, this was not helpful. My first draft of "Tigersuch" had the ostinato written like this:



Figure 8. Jam #22: "Tigersuch" motif before

While it is the same number of beats and technically just as accurate as the later edition, this notation simply caused more confusion than necessary. Clearly my intentions were to communicate that the rhythm was 3+4 sixteenth notes, but I learned that it is crucial for musicians to have a visual representation of where the beats of the bar fall.

The melody was a vague, hardly existent idea when we first read it through. The only musical idea I was married to was the rhythmic ostinato shown above. Even the form was quite rough and took a few play throughs for me to feel like it was performable. However, in following my format of lead sheet writing, I took elements from rehearsal and incorporated them into the final product. For example, in an early rehearsal, Sergio played a C natural over an F sharp major chord – normally, unless the chord itself dictates, playing a sharp 11 scale degree runs the risk of clashing, or just sounding wrong. I ended up liking how it sounded, and I wrote a C natural into the melody over that chord.

## 4.2.2 Such Harmony

The harmonic development of this jam took form over several weeks, and I feel that perhaps even now it can be improved. I felt that since the rhythmic movement was so dense and complex, the chords should be a little more palatable. The A section finds the chords descending

by whole step every two bars, starting from B flat and eventually reaching down to E. With this framework, I wanted to give each chord one "color note" that didn't naturally exist in a diatonic triad: the B flat chord is a minor with a suspended 11; the A flat chord is a minor with a grinding tension between the minor third and the 9th; F sharp major contains a 9 as well, with the melody playing sharp 11; and the E major contained an optional sharp 11 from the countermelody.

The B section of this jam (which was not featured in the video) is a direct quote from a previous jam that I uploaded, Jam #17: "Baby's First Drop." The line I play in the jam inspired me and stuck in my head so long that I decided to use it in Tigersuch. The C section contains this phrase:



Figure 9. Jam #22: "Tigersuch" C Section

The melody was memorable for me, and the chordal movement was interesting as well. I especially liked the F sharp minor, as it delays the arrival to F by a semitone. In roman numeral notation, the chords function as: I vi #iv IV. It was not until after recording and listening back that I realized I had completely ripped off my own tune. A year before this jam, I wrote a song called "Haku" and arranged it for string quartet. Measure 68, also coincidentally its respective C section, contains this phrase:



Figure 10. "Haku" excerpt

As evident, though the rhythm is slightly inexact, the melody is almost identical in movement to "Tigersuch", simply pitched down a minor third. Harmonically speaking, the chords in "Haku" over this section move: A flat major  $\rightarrow$  f minor  $\rightarrow$  d minor  $\rightarrow$  D flat major, or I vi #iv IV.

## 4.2.3 Tigercam

By the time this jam was uploaded, I was still less than a month into 100 Days of Jams. As such, certain production elements were still missing – musically, I wasn't editing anything yet, aside from adding a filter to the video. The difference between the audio in the final mixed studio recording and my phone recording is staggering. However, I did implement something into this video that others did not: movement. All of the jams until this point were still shots. A big reason was that I had not implemented iMovie or any form of video production until around Jam #30; I simply didn't know how. For this jam, I asked my friend to come record and move the camera around so we could get a nice shot of all the musicians, as well as some interior shots of the soundboard. The result was an action-packed video that showcased multiple points of interest: the music, the performers, and the recording studio.

## 4.3 Jam #28: Evening In Saffron City

Some days, the task of creating music from scratch felt so daunting that I would have to reserve time at the school practice rooms to force myself to come up with an idea. This was one of them. I turned on a metronome and sat at the piano.

The analysis for this jam will be a slightly different one than the rest, as this jam was later adapted into an entirely new jam, turning it into a completely new piece of work. I will be discussing the compositional and theoretical elements of this song within the first two sections, and in the third I will explain the production, as well as the adaptation.

#### **4.3.1** Metronome City

The compositional process for this follows my method for chordal composition. I played a chord, and I let my ear guide me. After ten minutes, I came up with some chords that I felt happy with, and they were: b flat minor, C dominant, and f minor. I had no rhythm or melody in mind, so I set a metronome to a 30 bpm and played it back until something felt right. The constant click felt monotonous, so I removed the second click per each group of four clicks, and it felt much more musical. I had to keep a steady inner pulse and subdivide whilst playing the ideas I wanted to convey.

## 4.3.2 Chord City

By focusing on the chord structure first, I was able to simply "fill in" the melody rather than composing it from scratch. With the chord structure from above as my framework, I played a G dominant after the f minor, and eventually I colored the chords by using extensions within the melody. For example, the first note of the melody begins with a C: the 9th scale degree in the chord b flat minor. This created a tension with the minor third, D flat. I found a correlation and a tendency for myself between the voicing of this specific chord and a chord mentioned within

section 3.1.2 of "Tigersuch" (22): A flat minor. In this chord, I use the 9th scale degree B flat to create tension just as the 9th degree of B flat minor is used to create tension in this jam. Rather than focusing on creating a melody, I let the chords shape the melody for me. In the end, the jam became twice as long as the intended chord structure. The first half acted as a ii-V7 turnaround to f minor. Instead of playing the same chord voicings twice, the last chord changes every other time to a second inversion E major with an F in the bass. This alternate chord is also a respelled G dominant with a flat 9, which creates an expectation to resolve in c minor. I use this voicing to reassign a given subdominant as a pivot point:

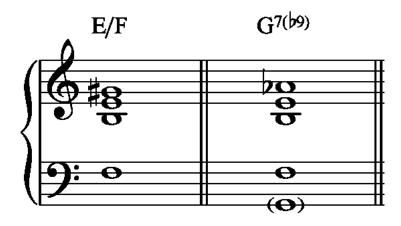


Figure 11. E major with F in the bass

## 4.3.3 Jam #76: "ヤマブキの夜"

In terms of production, this jam was the first that used a microphone that was not built into my iPhone. My friend was nice enough to lend me a Shure MV-88 microphone for a majority of these jams — the quality of audio became significantly higher than the previous days. Being an even-numbered jam, the video was slated to be in black and white; the palette matched the style of the song.

As introduced at the beginning of this jam's analysis, section 3.3.3 will be focusing on both the production elements as well as "an adaptation." The adaptation refers to Jam #76: "\*

ブキの夜" or "yamabuki no yoru," which is a direct Japanese translation of "Evening in Saffron City." The first video game I ever played was *Pokémon: Red Version* in Japanese, and every time I listened back to Jam #28: "Evening in Saffron City," it reminded me of the game. I took the file which contained the original audio and put it in Ableton. I pitched up the track 3 semitones, sped it up, added a bass line, and put beats to it using only sounds found in the video game. At Jam #28, I wasn't editing using iMovie yet, but by Jam #76 I had lots of practice. I downloaded half an hour of *Pokémon: Red Version* gameplay footage, sped it up by 1470% and lowered the opacity. The combination of the sped-up gameplay and sped-up piano playing was a bit overwhelming at first, but ended up working well with each other.

# 4.4 Jam #37: "Is Everything A Camera?"

## 4.4.1 Pickled MIDI

I had never reharmonized human speech before, but once I learned it was possible, I couldn't resist. To sample, I used an episode of Adult Swim's *Rick and Morty* — an episode titled "Pickle Rick" which gained a cult following. I extracted the audio from the first minute of the episode, and I transcribed and assigned pitches for every spoken syllable, into MIDI. I then played harmonies underneath it with a MIDI keyboard, and recorded violin. Composing in this fashion was extremely new to me, but it was a lot of fun and opened up possibilities to many future projects.

#### 4.4.2 Fiddle Rick

When I tried to export a Sibelius score from the MIDI part that I extracted for the voice, it turned out impossibly difficult to read. Here are the first four lines:



Figure 12. MIDI auto transcription

As evident, since there was no consistent tempo within the speech, it was impossible to fit it to one time signature or metronome marking. In addition, segments of voices were identified as multiple parts with both upward and downward stems, such as in measure 4 of the example. I knew in that moment that if I wanted to do this jam, I had to transcribe everything note for note.

With the notes in place, I could harmonize it how I wanted. For the large part, the bass line came first and dictated which chords should be played. As a guideline, since the vocal line jumped around in range quite a bit, I tried not to move larger than a whole step in the bass at any time. These parameters made the composition process more enjoyable, as I could make

contextual decisions which would alter the mood, but there were already expectations and a melody in place, which gave me a fun workaround. Not having to make melodic decisions let me focus on chord inversions, chord movement, and rhythm.



Figure 13. "Morty! Rick? Hey Moooorty!"

#### 4.4.3 Memorizing Rick

For the violin part, instead of reading off of the MIDI transcription, I handwrote a guideline of pitches which needed to be played at specific moments of the clip (see Appendix), and I memorized the dialogue. It took hundreds of repetitions of listening, but I memorized it. It proved to be necessary in order to create a seamless, unedited video of me playing along.

In production of this jam, I encountered a heart-stopping warping accident which convinced me for a moment, that I would have to toss the idea. After laying down the harmonies and even the violin part, I tried to sync the original video clip onto the music in iMovie. What I found was that after 5 seconds, the video went out of sync. I thought it was a warping issue, so I tried to readjust the audio clip in case I accidentally dragged it...but still to no avail. Eventually, I found that in order to extend the very last note spoken by the character Rick, I had to slow down the audio exponentially, simultaneously adding delay and fading it out. What I didn't realize was that I had not set a transient before the clip, effectively stretching out the rest of the

audio clip ever so slightly. In order to match the video to this Frankenstein of an audio clip, the first 40 seconds of had to be sped up 105%, then slowed down 88%. I will always remember to set up transients first.

#### 5. Social Media

Posting content at a scheduled, rapid rate was never something I considered doing. I mainly thought it was too demanding to keep up every day, but the repetitive action actually proved to be quite meditative. I also had the impression that people would get annoyed by seeing me post content on social media for one hundred days, but by posting daily, I got daily responses, which helped me understand what elements might have contributed to a jam's success. Likes, comments, views, and shares were all objective responses which helped me shape artistic decisions, in addition to suggestions made by family members and colleagues, as well as in CE advising sessions. Several colleagues of mine (not associated with Berklee) were consulted as well, for advice on things such as when to post, or what to tag. Several of these friends have acquired students or playing opportunities through Instagram, so I felt it was important to develop a presence there, specifically, with all of the posts getting automatically reposted on my Facebook Artist page.

Overall, the response from people has been overwhelmingly positive. I use the two platforms (Facebook and Instagram) as my means of quantifying. I have collected the data for number of followers on each platform and produced the following graphs, where each line represents number of followers:

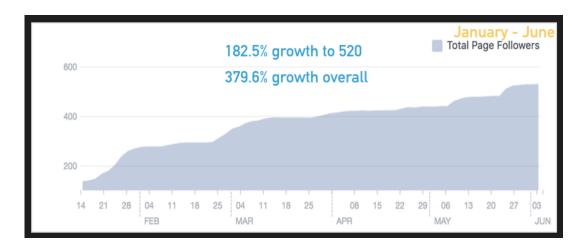


Figure 14. Data taken from Facebook Business



Figure 15. Data taken from Instagram

These graphs include data from approximately 20 days before and after the project, to show its impact. As evidenced, over the course of one hundred days, Facebook saw a 379.6% overall growth in page likes, and Instagram saw a 151.9% growth. I had been active on Instagram for some time before this campaign, so I already had a bit of a fanbase there. My prediction was that daily posting would increase my following greatly. I found certain data points in followers to have a direct correlation with my actions, while others were quite arbitrary. For example, in the first figure there is a significant growth at around February 25, which I cannot understand whatsoever. Perhaps it simply took that long for my posts to gain a wide

enough reach and become accessible to new viewers, or perhaps people just tend to check their Facebook more towards the end of the month. For whatever reason, there was an increase in likes at that time which has no apparent direct correlation. Contrarily, in both of the graphs we see a steady increase all the way until May, and then each line plateaus, more or less; the angle becomes less acute near the beginning of May. The project ended on May 8. My hypothesis for this decline is that I stopped posting regularly. I gathered from this that people like to see new posts on a frequent basis, and less frequency means less traffic. Below is a representation of both graphs shown above, overlaid atop each other.

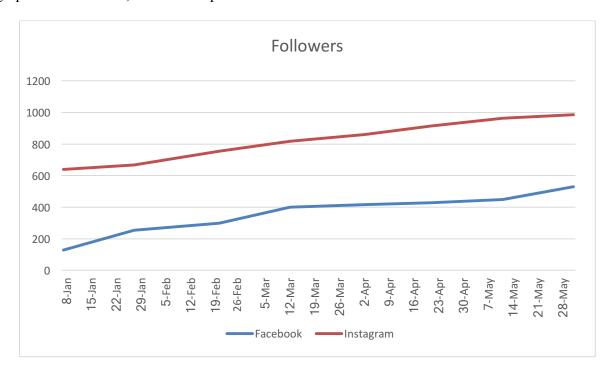


Figure 16. Followers

In addition to these graphs, I compiled meticulous data for likes, views, and comments from Instagram in a spreadsheet (see deliverables for full table). The most well-received jam overall on Instagram was *Jam #51: Vaporwavedash*, with the most views, third in most likes, and second in most comments. I believe the integration of pop culture (videogames), recognizable samples, interesting musical content, and entertaining visuals contributed to its popularity. The

results inspired me to make *Jam #85: That's How You End It*, which later saw a viral reaction on another social platform, Reddit.

On Facebook, the most popular video by far was *Jam #99: Chromeforest*. At 85 likes and 52 shares, this video features Casey Driessen playing alongside me, which I believe contributed largely. Casey was kind enough to share my video through his own artist page, which also garnered followers and likes. Referring back to Figure, I believe the sudden growth shown around May 25 is a result of Casey's share.

As for jams that were not as successful as I imagined, I was hoping for more response from "Is Everything A Camera?" (37) as well as "Fast Awake" (54). "Is Everything A Camera?," analyzed in detail above, was a jam I worked on meticulously with technical errors and adjustments ironed out along the way. With a growing popularity in harmonized speech, I assumed this rendition of a recently-popular TV show would gain some traction. Unfortunately, this jam had a little under 1000 views on it, compared to *Vaporwavedash*'s 2500. This could have been simply due to lack of visibility, or not enough tags. Regarding "Fast Awake," I was simply proud of the composition and wanted it to be heard, but it ended up with only 288 views. This could have been due to the video being in black and white, or the audio not sounding very produced. Going forward, I think there are certain elements which may lend musical content to a larger audience, but ultimately it seems that you never really can tell what will "go viral," until it does. I will continue to experiment with making music with pop culture, and this project gave me an insight into what kinds of content people like to look at.

Lastly, I noted another trend across the board for these jams: I noticed that while likes and views kept racking up on older jams, after the initial 20 days, almost none of the jams saw an

29

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> http://www.nme.com/blogs/tv-blogs/always-sunny-drummer-2019418

increase in comments. It was as if these posts had a shelf life for comments. By the fifth and last data collection day, I copy-pasted the entire "comments" column, and only one post saw additional comments. Some even saw a decrease – this was most likely due to the fact that there are many "zombie accounts" on Instagram which are essentially bots liking and commenting on random posts<sup>6</sup>; these zombie accounts, if reported, get deleted, as do their respective likes and comments. Whether it is due to these zombie accounts, or simply due to people not wanting to scroll back more than 20 posts and add additional input, is unclear. However, I believe that if I want to change this result for the future, a viable solution may be to request some sort of interactive response from the audience, for example: "What artist does this song remind you of? Write in the comments below!"

As a result of this constant connection with social media, I feel less apologetic about posting content and promoting myself. As an artist, I believe it is a necessary facet of my professional life and my goal is to reach as wide of an audience as possible. I have learned that in order to achieve this, I must promote often and across many platforms.

#### 6. Results

This section will outline some numerical conclusions that I drew from this project. First I will list all 100 jams by title, then draw some broad conclusions. These conclusions are objective and are a numerical representation of my execution. If I choose to do a similar project in the future, I believe these numbers will help guide me.

.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/small-business/sb-marketing/what-to-do-with-zombie-social-media-accounts/article33298286/

# 6.1 List of Jams

1. ONE
Triple Stop Triple Chop Hip Hop Glip Glop
3. Amstel Oro
4. Semi-Lion
5. Eleven Hours
6. Japanese Fried Chicken
7. Tengu Defense
8. Blazers For Sale
9. Wub Wavedash
10. El Doc
11. Shinkansen
12. Take Your Time (But Hurry Up Cause We Have Rehearsal)
13. Mathly Waltz
14. ¿Quieres Bolsita?
15. Zeldamüsik
16. Pizzic@o
17. Baby's First Drop
18. Valen-cia/tine
19. Greenfire
20. Bomberman Jr.
21. Ravel Second Movement
22. Tigersuch
23. Monday Pork Buns
24. Kiefer Sutherland in E
25. r o n a d m
26. Winnie The Pooh Combo
27. Melodica-Moog Stew (con hint de jam)

28. Evening in Saffron City
29. Falling Yo-Yo
30. Modern Dreams
31. Staple Your Fate To The Curtain
32. Mørkenbøiß
33. Living Life Like The Edge
34. Route 612
35. March Showers
36. Staying Up
37. Is Everything A Camera?
38. Needs More Cello
39. Para Flam Fiddle
40. Homesick
41. Sidon For Smash For Switch
42. Answer To Everything
43. Mother Indecisive
44. Out With The Mood In With The Blue
45. Boring Coffee
46. Packin Beats
47. Kat Eyes
48. All I Ever
49. Paddynini Caprallas No. 1
50. Nuevo Raum
51. Vaporwavedash
52. Go With The Stream
53. Notebrush Jig
54. Fast Awake
55. In Need Of Jamswers

56. Hi	ire Me
57. Ga	ator? I Hardly Even Knower
58. M	ister Nuthatch
59. Sh	nadow DATO
60. Da	andylöwe
61. M	archtember
62. Ra	ain Dance
63. Ta	ablewave
64. Li	ck The Fool
65. Rı	un Home Charlie
66. Ca	all-Out
67. Re	edwater
68. Ba	ack To You
69. Sł	now Me
70. I'ı	m Late For Rehearsal
71. Te	erranort
72. Li	ontrot
73. Ni	ice Shirt Bro
74. Ca	asa Cheia
75. L'	Aurore
76. ヤ	マブキの夜
77. Si	lvercloud
78. Sc	proti Kware
79. Lo	ook Mom
78. Sc	proti Kware

80. Outer Space Is So Great
81. Cookie Jar
82. Triple Mutton Karate Pork
83. La Puerta
84. Band of Travelers
85. That's How You End It
86. You Can't See it
87. Ode to Ophelia
88. Snoopy&Winnie
89. Birds Are Dinos Too
90. Calm Before The
91. That Was Crazy
92. Disconnectivity
93. Nostalgia In Valencia
94. Calamity Gengar
95. Squid Cetera
96. Fiddle Oud, Little Food
97. Error: Title Not Found
98. Memehop Dojo
99. Chromeforest
100. Roselit Shades

A further detailed spreadsheet of this chart including Instagram views, likes, and comments is available in the deliverables.

#### **6.2 Data Conclusions**

With the confidence and knowledge that I produced this many original pieces of music, I believe I am now properly equipped to develop a new idea with much faster speed and efficiency. Here are some conclusive numbers that I have tied with this project:

•Solo jams: 54

•Collaborations: 46

•Collaborators: 40

•Jams made primarily on Ableton: 35

•Jams including violin: 78

•Jams including keys: 51

•Reharmonized speeches: 2

•Songs with words: 11

•Composed solely by me: 90

•Composed in collaboration: 10

•Videos in black and white: 43

•Videos in color: 57

#### 7. Professional Plan

Concluding this project was a bittersweet moment for me. While I was happy to have completed the challenge, I was simultaneously a little sad about not having the platform to constantly publicize my stream of musical consciousness on a daily basis. However, it gave me an uplifting confidence within me that I do have the ability to create content that people enjoy; people who don't even know me personally, feel a connection to my music. With this knowledge, I will bring values that I learned during this journey with me to the "real world" to give myself more solid professional positioning. My plan for after Berklee is to freelance in Berlin and establish myself as a solo artist. I will be organizing live sets using a few of these jams, and presenting them in a manner which I can perform both solo and with others.

One set in particular that I would like to establish is a group of jams that I affectionately dubbed "Is This Bluegrass?" which include "Greenfire" (19), "Redwater" (67), "Silvercloud" (77), and "Chromeforest" (99). These jams were all composed with bluegrass influences, and can be shared with others as easily as they can be played solo. Developing this set will entail adding other folk and bluegrass tunes that may fit this genre. Another set that I have been putting together is one called "Mostly Beats," which is a compilation of some of my favorite beat-jams. These include "Tengu Defense" (7), "¿Quieres Bolsita?" (14), "Kat Eyes" (47), and "Nice Shirt Bro" (73).

Compiling my jams into stylistic groups will establish my own musical voice and present the most appropriate slice of my musical style in a given setting. For example, while a small café may be home to "Is This Bluegrass?," the "Mostly Beats" set may feel out of place.

A plan I have derived through the execution of this project, is to perform more original music. With these sets, I can more easily reach out to booking agents, promotors, festivals, schools, and colleagues. With the internet being available to anyone with a computer, I have a much broader reach, and I can present entire sets to booking agents to give an example of my playing with the click of a mouse. As such, I will be developing these sets into cohesive Ableton sets as prerecorded backing tracks. With the help of Prof. Gary Willis, I have been working on making my preexisting songs sound more "produced." I believe this will be the key to my success as a performer.

Lastly, with my desire to continue teaching, I believe I can present these jams in an interactive, educational way to students who may feel constricted by the violin. I have done improvisational workshops in the past; now I feel I have a better understanding of it myself, and therefore I have more to offer in a teaching setting.

#### 8. Conclusion

100 Days of Jams was originally nothing more than a personal challenge that I wanted to see through. Per Prof. Casey Driessen's suggestions and positive encouragement, it became my Culminating Experience and I couldn't be happier with the decision. As one might imagine, there were certainly days when I felt too tired or lazy to compose, but this project forced me to sit with an idea even if I didn't like it. Over the course of the one hundred days, and even beyond that timeframe, I learned extremely valuable information about how to compose, how to improve my playing, how to share music and adjust to fellow collaborators' skillsets, how to produce interesting content both musically and visually, and how to market myself as an artist on the internet. Most importantly however, I absolutely feel that I accomplished my goal in "being a better musician." I feel more polished after this project. I feel I have the tools necessary to play the music that I envision in my head, and I am able to present it in a public, unapologetic manner.

Until now, I never felt that my music was "ready" to play. There was always something that needed to be fixed. This project made me appreciate the creative process and understand it on a much deeper level. Creating music feels less daunting, and more meditative. Going forward, I have the tools to create music on my own, and to translate my musical thoughts into a tangible format with a fast turnaround. I can develop ideas on my own as well as present them to collaborators. As I move from this stepping stone that is Berklee to the next, I feel excited, anxious, and slightly scared. But most of all, with the help of professors, friends, colleagues, and family members — I feel ready.

## **Appendix**





# DANDYLÖWE



## CHROMEFOREST



# Ode to Ophelia







## **Bibliography**

- Greer, Suzanne. "The 100-Day Practice Challenge." *Studiohelper.com*, 1 Dec. 2017, blog.studiohelper.com/performance/the-100-day-practice-challenge/.
- •GameFreak. Pokémon: Red Version. Nintendo, 1996. GameBoy.
- •"Pickle Rick." Rick and Morty. Adult Swim. 296, Atlanta. 6 Aug 2017, Television.
- Rutherford, Chrissy. "Alina Baraz On Creating Her Debut Album Over Facebook." *Harper's BAZAAR*, Harper's BAZAAR, 28 Mar. 2018, www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/art-books-music/interviews/a12553/alina-baraz-interview-2015/.
- Webster, James (2004). *Haydn's 'Farewell' Symphony and the Idea of Classical Style: Through-Composition and Cyclic Integration in his Instrumental Music*, p.7. Cambridge Studies in Music Theory and Analysis. ISBN 978-0-521-61201-2.
- Westberg, Megan. "Hilary Hahn Commits to Practicing for 100 Days in a Row—with Unexpected Results." *Stringsmagazine.com*, Strings Magazine, 3 Nov. 2017, stringsmagazine.com/hilary-hahn-commits-to-practicing-for-100-days-in-a-row/.