

Time Lapse

Berklee College of Music
Culminating Experience Project
June 30th, 2014

Tyler Sasso

The logo consists of a solid orange square. Inside the square, the text "Berklee college of music" is centered. "Berklee" is in a bold, sans-serif font, while "college of music" is in a smaller, lowercase, sans-serif font.

Berklee
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music

Valencia

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The ability to envision, hear, and create original music, is one of the primary goals of musicians around the world. It is the ability to take a series of sounds and air vibrations and arrange them in a way that can be heard and, hopefully, enjoyed by many. Songwriting begins with nothing and is sparked by inspiration. The inspiration can take numerous forms and can be different for each person. This individuality creates unique virtual molds used in developing songs. Writing music allows for the creator to explore his or her imagination and express emotion ranging from happy to sad, or from ones of realism to fantasy. Within songwriting, there are no limits as to what can be created or imagined. That is why exploring techniques to being a better songwriter are so important. To effectively create a song close to what the songwriter envisions, involves a long process of developing the skills that take the vision and hear what layers, direction, and instrumentation are necessary to properly represent that vision.

Songwriting contains several elements to it that are useful in creating a piece that can be enjoyed by not just the songwriter, but others as well. These range from the lyrical content, the direction and notation of the song, the clarity of the overall message and, in today's day and age, the quality of the recording or medium used to present the piece. All of these come together to help create, not just a song, but also a work of art that can be shared and enjoyed by others. A song can also offer a lot to the audience as well. It can be musically appealing to the listener, sparking their interest in seeing where the music could potentially take them. They can find a deep connection to the lyrics and what message the song is attempting to convey, whether they agree or disagree with it. Overall, a song can be beneficial to both the writer and their audience in a way that allows strong messages to be conveyed in numerous ways.

The process of writing a song begins with the first song and absorbing several valuable lessons in how to write, create, and record it. There are many stages that are

used, and with every song written, the writer begins to improve on each part of the process. Luckily, with today's technology, not only are we able to make great sounding recordings, but we also have access to numerous tools that can be used in the writing process to assist in the building of a song from start to finish. These allow us to hear what we are starting with as well as to receive live feedback on what the song is transforming into, allowing us to make changes when necessary. One example is transcribing the song in programs such as Finale and Sibelius and constructing the outline or specific parts and melodies for each instrument. Another way is to record several demos of the song in its different stages to hear what the song sounds like and how changing or adding parts can improve the song. Both ways are extremely useful and valuable in creating a great sounding song and recording with what started as just an idea at the start of the process.

The Project: Time Lapse

Along with learning these songwriting techniques in the past, Berklee helped me to expand on these, as well as to learn new techniques to create new songs and to update pieces that I have written in the past. This process gave me the vision I wished to accomplish while here at Berklee. It became the purpose for what my Culminating Experience project would center around. Through this project, the goal is to not only become a better songwriter, but also become more efficient at producing material to better showcase a musical vision. To demonstrate this, the project will focus on a collection of six original compositions. Three of these songs are older songs written before attending Berklee College of Music. These songs will be used to show how new techniques in songwriting and production have been used to transform them into songs that better fit the music scene, as well as being more concise as compared to the old demos and recordings. The three new songs were all written after starting here at Berklee. They will be used to show the effect that these same techniques were used to create and improve upon songwriting right from the start of the process. This project also gave me a chance to incorporate new performance techniques learned through several of

the performing classes and as an opportunity to record and work with several musicians at the school.

In the end, I hoped to have a collection of original material that connect to the genres that I listen to, as well as sounding modern and interesting; having a place in the current music scene. Through the recording of these songs, I also hope to apply many of the new production techniques I have learned in editing and mixing these songs to have a clear and appropriate final product. Demo recordings of the three old songs can also be used here as a comparison to see the difference and improvement in technique. In this Culminating Experience Project, I will give examples of each song, explaining the process behind each for songwriting, performance, and production.

The Old Three: Working with Old Repertoire

Careless Words

Careless Words was a song written during the second half of my undergraduate four-year program. At this time, I was performing in a four-piece band called Makeshift with a few friends from the local music scene. The band consisted of a guitar, a bassist who doubled as a keyboard player, and a drummer. The band was heavily influenced by the late 70's early 80's classic and progressive rock scene with bands like Rush, Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd and it shows in this song. The structure started with a guitar/keyboard prelude titled Music of the Spheres that alternates freely between B major and E major. This became the primary section of Careless Words through a few transformations. When the writing for Carless Words started, there were a few goals in mind that I had planned to incorporate into the song. The first goal was to create a song at a decent length so as to not be too long but also long enough to properly express the message both lyrically and musically. The other goal was to have the song upbeat and solid but also contain moments of texture and alteration without being too complex. To

do this, the foundation of what was in Music of the Spheres was adapted to fit the vision based on the goals. The first step was to increase the tempo from 72 to 110 bpm. This helped to give the song that punch and continuous drive that was in mind. Playing in the new tempo, it was clear how sections such as the verse and pre-chorus would sound like at the new tempo, while testing the song order in a demo tape. Here, the structure of Music of the Spheres was kept the same, however, the new instrumentation and tempo drastically changed the feel of the song. It was decided that an acoustic guitar would be used for the beginning of the song, as opposed to an electric or distorted guitar as originally planned. The acoustic guitar left room for the bass to play some melodic lines during the intro and break as well as the melody to have the focus in the pre-chorus and chorus. This also allowed the song to not become too complex or cluttered with distracting instrumentation. Once the first half of the song was completed, it was clear that there needed to be a chorus and guitar solo but with a harder and edgier texture. Instrumentation-wise, this meant using overdriven guitars to get that edge, but needed a way to transition between sections. To do this, an instrumental interlude was added between the second pre-chorus and chorus using the layered synths directly from Music of the Spheres. To reach the higher dynamic level intended for the chorus, chords were used on the synth that alternated between B and E but with inversions that moved up the keyboard. This, in the end, created the proper effect for the intended sound. The chorus is again a variation on the verse, alternating between B and E but using a significant riff in triplets shared between the instruments as to create a moment different from that of the verse. The song then moved into a guitar solo, which followed the same progression of a verse and pre-chorus, ending on a B chord together with the band to create a strong ending on the tonic. This eventually became the original demo tape.



(The band 'Makeshift' at the FM Lounge in Windsor around the time Carless Words was originally recorded)

When working on the song in the production class, some thought went into the arrangement of the song as well as what could be done, besides production techniques, to make the song better. Although most of it was kept similar to the original, some changes did assist, in my opinion, to help the song move and express the music better. The first change was to shorten the instrumental introductions for both the first and second verses. This helped to get to the point of the songs progression without extra time used on music that wasn't necessary. Although the introductions are shorter, the buildup between guitar, bass and drums are kept intact, while at a quicker pace, to keep the rise in dynamic in the song. The last major change to the song was an addition of another chorus after the solo to act as the outro. The song keeps the strong ending on the tonic, however restating the chorus helps to keep the lyrical integrity intact right until the end. This was a change suggested by many both in class and during rehearsals and is one that improved the flow of the song.

Most other aspects of the song were kept similar to the original with a few changes from each performer adding their own essence to their playing. Lyrically, the song was kept the same with minor adjustments to help the lyrics flow both from a storyline standpoint as well as to fit the adjusted melody. The lyric in this song describe how communication between one another can, at times, be poor and the way and words in which we choose to use them can have a dramatic effect. Sometimes people do not pay attention to what they say or sometimes do not care. The intention of this song was to bring to light the importance of how we treat and interact with each other. As this was

one of the earlier times writing lyrics, I tried to experiment with ways to write down the message without directly stating it, similar to the style of Pink Floyd.

The production side of this project proved exciting when hearing the final project. It was a chance to finally hear the song, but in a clearer way. The demo provided a good starting point, however, the lack of proper recording gear, as well as good mixing techniques held the song back from its full potential that was envisioned when writing the song. Collaborating with the great musicians and engineers, Careless Words started to sound more as originally planned, including the new changes. While mixing this song, the goal was to make sure that each instrument and voice could be heard clearly while keeping a drier, more modern overall sound comparable to bands such as Velvet Revolver. Overall, by working with the song and mixing it using techniques taught in the production class, the quality certainly surpassed the previous version showing a clearer sense of the song's intention.

Follow the Road

Follow the Road started as a short riff that was originally recorded and then put away for a few years. Later, while first starting university, the riff was brought back out, this time with a better idea as to where it could be taken musically. The first idea was to create a song that was played entirely on the acoustic guitar in a strummed format. This was the first of many changes made until the final structure was complete. By using the acoustic guitar and having it strummed, there was an idea to try it in an open tuning of D major. This meant that the guitar was strung D, A, D, F#, A, D starting with the lower string. This allowed for a different texture from the strings due to changed tension, as well as a new way to find and use chords that cannot be normally used in a standard tuned guitar. The idea behind this song was that it could be played in a duo setting with just guitar and vocals as well as be adapted for a full band arrangement. The recording of this song contains sections of both. After the short guitar introduction (*Figure 1*), the first and second verse and chorus are both left to only guitar and vocals. This allowed for the song to build in dynamics. At the start of the instrumental section, the drums and bass

are added in a 70's style similar to songs from bands like the Eagles. For the instrumental section, the goal was to create something similar to a solo, however it was not to be a conventional solo of individual notes. With the guitar in an open tuning, it gave the guitar a chance to play more of a melody while still strumming the open strings in the background to take the place of a solo. This then lead to a bridge adding new chords to change the texture from the focus on the tonic. Here the bridge then ends with a unison riff before the dynamics are brought back down. The intent of this was for it to be used as a transition back into the final verse, while also allowing the song to build up dynamically again to create a stronger ending.



When re-recording the song at Berklee, the intent was again to get a cleaner and clearer recording to better show how the song was meant to sound. Unlike Carless Words however, Follow the Road had no major changes to it, just a few textural additions and the incorporation of production techniques that were used to record and mix this song. Some parts from the original song were even used again in the new recording such as the twelve string acoustic guitar during the instrumental section and the original vocals. The vocals remained were to keep that part of it as close to the original as possible. Some production techniques like cleaning the vocal endings and using auto-tune on a few notes helped to make the vocals useable and at a higher quality for this recording. From there, a click track in Pro Tools was made to work around the vocals and twelve-string guitar so that the band was playing to them. Then the guitars, bass, and drums were recorded live in the studio to get a true and together sound. After working with the mixing and editing in the second semester, it was realized that the recording needed a doubled acoustic guitar effect during the instrumental section to add extra body and dynamics to it. Looking through several of the original takes however, it appeared that none of them seemed to line up properly with the main guitar to create the desired effect. To fix this problem, it was apparent that re-recording the guitars might help resolve the issue. After editing the drums and bass together, the guitar was then re-recorded on top from scratch. This would allow for more time to be spent focusing on the guitar track. Once recording the main guitar was completed, it was then time to record the doubled guitar. It was recorded while playing along with the first track to get the desired effect. From there it was a matter of mixing them down and cleaning up the rough edges on the track. After mixing and mastering the track, it is clear to the ear that by applying new and updated recording techniques, and even using the original vocals, that the song is much clearer and overall shows how the song was meant to be represented compared to the original recording.

harmonize with. This allowed the ability to explore this arpeggiated style guitar with having the foundation of the song and chords taken care of. For dynamic purposes, some sections of the song do contain a distorted guitar, however most of the guitar in the song is focused around the clean arpeggiated guitar. These sections with the distorted guitar include the intro build up, the pre-chorus, chorus, and the outro. It is used not only for texture purposes but also to add importance and weight to certain parts of the song. The order of Turning Point is also different from the other songs. Firstly, Turning Point is a longer song, however that was an aspect of the song that helped it to fit into the progressive style by allowing the song to develop on its own without worrying about time. Lyrically, a story could be told and allowed to develop naturally and flow with the music. Secondly, it is written in a minor and darker tone to closely relate to the lyrics, however it still contains moments in a brighter tone in order break some of the musical tension such as the interlude and chorus.

The addition of the keyboards brought a whole new texture to the song making it completely different from what it might have otherwise been. The cleaner tone of the Rhodes piano combined with the clean guitar in a great way. An example of this is heard during the introduction when the piano and guitar start. There is a lot of musical texture there but it still allows for a lot of space and clarity in the song. When thinking of a transition to use between verses, the idea of a short piano solo came to mind. Using this allowed for not only my first song with a keyboard solo, but seemed to fit the cooler colour of the chords at that section as opposed to another guitar solo or leaving it blank. Overall, this song took a bit longer to arrange than some of the others. With the song on the longer side and involving many sections, it becomes very likely that a part of the song could be overstated and become redundant or too much information could be unnecessarily added into the song. The introduction section leading into the initial riff of the first verse was particularly difficult to transition and took several different arrangements to find something that properly moved from one part to the next, did not sound rushed or too short, and still fit the colour of the song. The use of distorted guitars at this section somewhat foreshadows what the song will eventually lead into, before dropping back into the clean guitar groove for the first two verses. This process taught

me a lot about arranging and thinking more about the importance of how long each part is. Also, it brought light to how to make a transition within the song and to not look for outside sources to make it work. In the end, these came together to create a song that was both similar and very different to what was originally imagined in a good way. In some ways the song has certain instrumental aspects that connect it with bands from the 90's era. This was not a specific or initial goal, but it did, however, show a sign that my writing seemed to be sounding more modern though keeping the influences of the older artists. It became a sort of turning point, in some senses, towards being able to think in a more modern way when writing.

The lyrics on this song touch to the point about how we can control our own outcomes. Sometimes, however, we can let situations or people get in the way. This can have a negative effect on us as it can get in the way of our goals and passions. This is where the use of the minor tone of the song matches with the lyrics. The music does later turn to more of a major setting. Again, this matches with the message of the lyrics. In the chorus, the lyrics shed light on how we can decide what happens to ourselves. In a moment, we can choose to look ahead at where we want to go, or keep looking behind us at our past and let that lead us somewhere else. The fundamental message though is that the choice is ours and that no one can make it for us. The lyrics in this song again experimented with writing in a style that talks about a subject without directly mentioning it in the song. An example of this is in the first verse with the mention of no mans land. This is in reference to the name given to the battlefield in World War I. The battlefield here could also refer to an imaginary battlefield we have within ourselves when dealing with tough situations or decisions. The melody, as sung by the vocalist with a great deal of tension, also mimics, in an odd way, how the lyric addresses the subject of the song.



(An example of guitar effects on a pedal board. Effects can have a strong impact on a song such as the use of a chorus effect (blue pedal) on Turning Point.)

The final recording of the song began with using the same vocal track as the original demo. This was to keep certain aspects and qualities of the way it was sung in the final recording. The new version was kept very close to the demo in the sense of the order, but re-recorded with a clearer image of certain parts of the song. A key component was to get the drums more into the groove and contain less fills as in the original demo. This would specifically help the verse to grab the weight and groove that it had the potential to have. Here, we again recorded in a live band setting with guitar, bass and drums. This way the bass and drums would lock in a way that can only be achieved in a live setting. The guitars were only recorded on the clean section, as the plan was to re-record them in a later section. After editing and doing a first draft edit of the drums and bass the song went back into the studio to re-record the guitar so as to properly and specifically place them in the track where the keyboards could be recorded. The next step was recording the keyboards and making sure that the parts fit alongside the guitar properly while also filling in any gaps that the arpeggiated guitar might have left. From this point all that was left was filling in the guitar and keyboard solos then moving on to a final mix and master. Overall, this song accomplished many goals that were a focus at the time when thinking of where to take my writing and playing. It is important to think in more of a modern way of writing and especially recording and this approach can be heard when comparing the new version to the original demo of the song.

Constructing New Repertoire: The New Three



Starting at Berklee sparked the interest in taking in new techniques from several of the classes and applying it to songwriting to create songs that were completely different from the old three. The goal was to still have them sound as though they fit in a single catalogue, however, the aim was to have each song unique from the last containing new influences and techniques that give each song its own signature. There are some similarities between the old three and the new three, as well as within the new three themselves, as songwriting is a progression and not random steps, but the focus was to not have them be confused with one another. To achieve this, each song had to have a different approach set for it as well as different goals from the start of the project. This would give each song its own identity. It was every intention as well to, in some way, use the significance of the location, classes and fellow students located here at the school. This journey started in first semester during the production techniques class with a song titled Back Home.

Back Home

Back Home was a song that was written for our first project in the production techniques class. This was the first opportunity within the curriculum to attempt different songwriting goals on a large scale as far as recording was concerned. We were also

given pointers that we could follow for some key characteristics in making a catchy and well-received song such as clear writing, catchy lyrics and an interesting musical hook. Up to this point, my writing had taken a turn into a more progressive style, however it would usually end up in dead ends musically speaking and not flowing in a way that would work. This class was an opportunity to change that by following closely to some of the mentioned pointers. The hardest part of writing this song came right at the start with finding a main riff and then somehow introducing that theme. The introduction was eventually worked out, however, using influences from artists such as Rush and Van Halen in the 80's hard rock style of using a melody built on harmonics and having the band build up behind it. To keep the song flowing and to help it not drag, a lot of time went into the arrangement side of the side, including help from the drummer. Here, a lot of attention was given to how one section moved into the next, basically listening to hear where the song wanted to take itself as far as tensions and resolutions went. The length of the song was also an important factor in making sure that nothing dragged on too long and potentially losing the audience's attention. If the song's information could fit into an appropriate time frame, then the other information could be considered filler. This was one important lesson learned though the process of writing this song. The essential factor and hook to this song is, without question, the chorus. The comment to try using a repeating chorus that could be sung by someone after hearing it for the first time was something that had been missing from my repertoire. This project presented itself as an opportunity to try and experiment with this idea and through some first impressions, appears to have accomplished this goal on some level. Overall, Back Home was essentially an excuse to dive into trying new techniques to advance original songs without having to make it too complex inevitably taking away from the song and its message.

The lyrics of the song was written based on a true story about the experience of starting at Berklee and, for the first time, being away from home, friends, and family. It was used as a way to express the various emotions felt, primarily in the first month of living in Spain. The aim, however was to have a positive song about the experience and not one that feels or sounds sad by using minor keys or slower tempos. To do this, the

words used and the story line was critical in creating the desired effect. The story starts with the feeling of uncertainty at starting a new school and being in a foreign country. This is used in both verses with a minor chord used to hint at this part of the lyrics while still returning to a major feel. The lyrics then build up to the part of realizing the opportunities that the year has in store and the desire to accomplish these to eventually end the year successfully. This is again mimicked in the pre-chorus by the music building along with the lyrics before hitting the main message of the chorus. Here, in few words, the chorus describes in a positive way the feeling of accomplishing these goals and being able to take this experience back home in a positive way. It's showing that, at times, it might not be easy to be away from what you're used to, but with hard work there will be something to show for it all in the end. It is something that can be shared among the students at Berklee specifically to the story, but also anyone going through a similar experience in their own lives in a way that hopefully works as a positive influence in the situation.



(Two screen shots from the Back Home Pro Tools Session. The first picture of the Edit Window shows where the waveforms are visually placed and editing the waveforms takes place. The second picture of the Mix Window, shows where plugins for effects, signal routing, panning and levels take place. In the edit window you can also see the layered backing vocals used during the chorus. (Group of red waveforms))

The production aspect of this project would be different than later projects as more time was focused on our first song and time in the studio. After working up demos and rehearsing with bass and drums, the order was worked out to flow in a way that better fit the flow of the song. This allowed the music to have a stronger effect. Within the class itself, there were many chances to perfect certain aspects of the song starting with a demo of just guitar, a multi-track demo of all the instruments, including a rough vocal, and finally moving into starting the basic tracking of the final product. The bass and

drum tracks from this session were used in the final recording, while the guitar parts were re-recorded and added later in the smaller studios. This allowed more time to pay attention to how the overdubs were written and would work together in the song as well as over the set rhythm track. With the completion of both the rhythm and lead guitar works, the vocals were the last part to record. Using takes from the demo tracks as references for the melody, the primary vocals were constructed. Through somewhat of an accident, the five parts, three times layered harmonies on the chorus were slowly constructed until all of the parts that were needed on the recording were completed. Through editing, the song was brought together by cleaning up fade in and outs, tightening the kick drum to the bass guitar, cleaning up some timing issues, and overall mixing. To give the chorus harmony a full sound, part of the vocals were copied and pasted at different section. This way, harmonies of the same note were still different from one another, allowing the slight tension between each track to add depth to the overall harmony, creating a full and large sound. After receiving some critiques on the overall mix, the song was revisited and remixed during the second semester, using new techniques acquired during that semester to create a clearer more crisp sound. This is apparent when comparing version on the drums, specifically the toms and kick drum, as well as cleaning up the backing vocals even more. Back Home was a chance to try out new ideas in song writing as well as to try and achieve goals never achieved before and it is a song that was a joy to both write as well as listen to.

Distant Journey

With all the Mediterranean influence, not only heard in the area of the school, but also through several of the students and teachers at Berklee, it is difficult to not let it have an effect on your playing or writing. Exploring new scales and modes becomes an inevitability, as is the case when writing the song Distant Journey. This song became a chance to not only venture into new musical themes and ideas, but also a chance to experiment with new song formats and instrumentation. This came about in first

semester with the creation of the initial arpeggiated guitar riff heard during the introduction. It is based around a D double harmonic minor scale, using the bass to play the primary melody, focusing on an Arabic and Eastern influence. The original intent of this song was to create it similar to the other songs in the sense of having vocals as the center of the focus. After trying several different variations of the primary riffs, and several ideas that could be used to follow as verses and a possible chorus, the song was put on hold, as the flow was not there. The direction the song was taking was not sounding or forming into what was intended. The primary riff (*Figure 3*) was kept on tape, however, so that it could be revisited later. The song was then re-opened in the later half of the second semester, hoping that it would be ready to use for one of the school projects. But this time, one major goal that was planned was to include an instrumental song in the final collection of songs. With influences such as John Petrucci and Steve Vai, it became clear that this song had the potential to become that song. The first step was now to think about the arrangement differently as a lead guitar would take the melody instead of vocals. The main riff of the song was taken from the initial arpeggiated section found at the beginning. It was written as a variation using the bass melody line, but played lower on the guitar along with a heavier gain setting to achieve tones similar to bands such as Dream Theater. From this point, the rest of the song was comprised of two main sections acting as a verse and chorus, as well as a third section acting as a bridge. A solo section was written following a similar pattern to what was used in the verse section. Demo tapes were then recorded of guitar and a drum loop so that the sections could be heard as they flow together. This also allowed the ability to play the lead guitar on top and write what would eventually be the main melody and guitar harmonies. From the demo tape, the order was kept mostly the same with the exception of stretching out the solo section to make it flow better. The only issue was connecting the softer intro and then transitioning into the heavier first section. This is where the idea came to include the tabla. The tabla gave a certain authenticity to the sound, making it not just a heavy song, but also allowed the listener to have some space between the first intro and the heavy intro to the second section.



Figure 3 (This is the primary pattern played by the guitar. With the top string tuned to D, playing two D notes in succession but on different strings sounds like two separate notes are being played due to the difference in string size and tension. Here you can see how the bass takes the form of the melody as the other notes act as a drone for the D chord.)



(During the first section of the song, the guitar and bass play a variation of the opening section together. Here, with the guitar using a heavy distortion effect, the notation focuses more so on the bass note melody, taking out the rest of the arpeggiated notes.)

The song was then brought into the studio where the initial tracking session took place for the final recording. Here guitar, bass and drums were recorded with the intention to overdub any lead guitars, harmonies and tablas. Before recording the overdubs however, a lot of time went into the editing of the song to get a tight, crisp sound between the bass and the drums. To get that heavy and modern tone, it was essential to have these two instruments as close as possible. Firstly this helps to have the rhythm section sound as if it is one instrument. If the bass or kick plays out of place from one another, the listener's attention can be quite easily distracted from the song. Secondly, if there are any timing issues before recording overdubs, these have a good chance of staying in the overdubs as well as the musician will be playing to the mistakes. Once all the issues were worked out, the overdubs began with the rhythm guitars. To get a full sound, the guitar is played once and then panned to the left side of the speakers or sound field. A second guitar with the same tone is then played with the intent to play similar to the first take, though not exact. This track is then panned to the right side of

the sound field. This creates a doubling effect essentially filling out the song. Through a process of trial and error, the lead melody was then written along with the primary harmonies heard in the second section as well as the outro. This then left only the tabla to be recorded. It was done in the smaller studios over several takes. Some of the tabla was then edited to include a section of its waveform reversed. This created an effect that could not be achieved through normal playing but added a great texture to the song. Writing and recording this song opened the door to explore many new ideas and themes as well as more influence on looking ahead while writing a song to hear what might be missing or what might be eventually added to the song. It helped to look outside of the box and try to look for new instruments or melodies that can take the song past what might have been originally written.



(Apartment setup used to record the guitar parts from Distant Journey)

Nothing I Wouldn't Do

The final original song included in the six is, in some ways, a variation on Follow the Road. After looking back and listening to Follow the Road, it did achieve some goals, but also created and brought light to new ones following a similar pattern as seen in Follow the Road. The primary reason was to again use open tunings on the acoustic and explore what chords and positions could be found on the guitar. This time, instead of tuned to D major it was tuned to A major. Although it is another open tuning, the strings are set up differently between the two. Here, instead of having the tonic in the bass string there is the fifth. The order is as follows: E, A, E, A, C#, E. In this case, although the

two songs are both open tunings, playing the same chords on both would cause different results. The benefit of using the open tunings is the ability to notate on some strings while keeping the others open allowing notes to sustain through different chords. This can add to the song's tensions, in the case of this song in a very pleasing way, while also adding space and clarity to the chords. The song started by trying out different positions of chords and seeing how they work with one another before settling on an introductory section. This would also be used for the verses. From this first section, it was clear what direction the song could be taken in while also using many guidelines used in some of the other newer songs. This included keeping the song, in some ways, simple. The order was also to be kept simple using only what was necessary to keep the song flowing. Beside the verse and chorus, the only other part of the song is the bridge and the solo section. It was done with the intention to aid in keeping the focus on the lyric, specifically the chorus, as well as to aid in keeping the song length at a reasonable time. The song was pictured to be a modern style of a ballad while still hinting at classic rock styles such as the Eagles and Aerosmith to give it a bit of identity.

Figure A

Figure B

(Figure A and Figure B both show the primary chord progression used in 'Nothing I Wouldn't Do'. Figure A shows the notation above as well as the positioning on the guitar played in open tuning on the tab below. Figure B shows the same notation however the tab shows how it would be played differently on a guitar tuned to standard. Notice how Figure A provides a more efficient way to play the chords compared to Figure B. Also, due to the layout of the fret board, a note from the second chord would have to be left out (B is missing) as there are too many notes on the single string.)

The lyrics were written as a way to dedicate a song to my girlfriend. Songs in this style are very common, however it also raises a lot of challenges. First, the most difficult part is to write lyrics that contain a story and flow together, but don't sound over the top or too cheesy. If this happens, it can take away from the music, regardless as to how well written the music might be. The lyrics need to fit neatly within the song similar to how the bass and drums work together. The lyrics were written through several drafts and versions until the final one was chosen.



(Home studio setup used to record the acoustic guitar for Nothing I Wouldn't Do)

This song was intended for the final project, however it was not recorded during the production class, meaning that it was the only song not recorded on the scoring stage. This allowed experimenting with both the smaller studios as well as using the Mbox to record guitars back home. The first step was to get the drums recorded before the semester was over, as the drummer would be graduating from the undergraduate program before the third semester. To do this, a simple backing track with the guitars playing through the order was made. A recording session was then set up in Studio A where the primary focus was recording and capturing the drums. After several takes, we had what we needed and the song was then put on hold until the acoustic guitars could be recorded, with the exception of some editing. During the break between semesters two and three, the session was taken back home and the acoustic guitars were recorded there using the Mbox. Here, the guitars were re-arranged from the simple demo version to tracks with more depth and focus on melody. A strong use of what was taught in lessons was used

here. Although the lessons were based more around a jazz form, the foundation of the idea is essentially the same. This was to have the guitar not only play chords, but to have some sort of melody that could be heard within each chord. It can be heard in the two primary acoustic guitars on the track. Sometimes one takes more of a melody such as in the verse, whereas at times they play off each other in a call and response style as heard in the chorus. This helped to create more of an identity within the track as opposed to just playing chords. Over the course of three sessions, the guitar tracks, including the solo, were completed. A session was then used to work with the bass player in both writing and recording the bass track to fit the style as well as to work well with the drums. With the foundation of the song complete, a few instruments such as piano and organ were added to fill out part of the texture. The organ was recorded using MIDI whereas the piano was recorded in one of the ensemble rooms found on campus. Unfortunately, the tuning of the piano was just slightly off compared to the recording. To resolve this, the grand piano was also recorded using MIDI and one of the piano sounds through a plug-in called Kontakt. The piano's purpose in the song was to further accent the call and response used by the guitars during the chorus. Outside of the chorus it adds further depth and harmonic structure to the song. Finally, the vocals were added to the track to complete it once again using the smaller studios at the school. Overall, the song accomplished many of the objectives envisioned for it at the start, while still keeping a modern sense to it, holding true to my CE project's overall goal.

Technical Applications

Through several of the classes here at Berklee, opportunities are provided to explore and improve on several aspects that are relevant to the music industry. These include an expansion of our performance abilities through performance based classes, as well as ways to explore the production side of music through various production and technology classes. There are a wide variety of ways to advance our ideas of performing through classes such as private lessons, topics in improvisation, work with our ensembles, performing for our classmates, and many others. Each of these generates interest in the live music aspects and provides the ability to search for new material and

improve on weaker points of our abilities to become better at performing. Different classes touch on different sides of this topic to help gain an overall improvement of several aspects. For example, private instructions allows you to expand on the physical playing in forms of new chords and scales from different genres, as well as mentally being able to think in new musical ways. This includes the ability to improvise in different genres like jazz or funk and to be able to use the proper language for each to fit within the genre. For guitar, private instructions provided the opportunity to work on ideas relating to self-comping and soloing. Essentially, it's the ability to perform the bass, harmony and melody at the same time on one instrument creating the sense of one instrument being an entire band. This is also very useful for accompanying a soloist or vocalist as it can provide the singer with more appropriate backing music while still being very musical. The topics in improvisation class helped to see music from a different view by hearing what some of the top musicians in different eras and genres played and transcribing the notation. By doing this you can visualize what the musician was thinking and playing on the recording, as well as having a chance to further analyze the music. You can identify how the type of notation and musical effects were applied, such as tremolo, fit into certain genres or eras. This is very useful when trying to fit in musically to a similar musical setting. Having the transcribed music also allows one to physically perform the same solo or melody and get a sense of the musical language they were using. All of these ideas combine to further evolve ones' own performance techniques while also improving how an individual listens and absorbs other music to combine it with their own performing.

The production and technology-based courses at Berklee are also relevant to performers as it provides musicians with a way to explore different instrumentation, writing techniques, and most importantly, using recording software to properly represent one's own music. Programs such as Pro Tools offer any musician the ability to put their music in digital form, which in today's digital age is very useful for promotion, social media, and overall presentation of our musical identity. The courses based around production begin with the process of proper mic placement and continues until having a mastered final product. Starting off a recording with a clean and efficient basic track is key to a good recording. This means having a proper mic level and placement on the

instrument being recorded. Placing a microphone at different angles and distances from the source will create a wide range of phase, EQ, and sonic differences. It is important to know what genre the song fits into, thus helping know what mic sounds are appropriate. Once in the recording program, there are then several ways to manipulate and create new sounds to close in on the vision of the song you want. This includes equalization, which allows you to change the colour of the sound, panning, which allows you to move an instrument to different sections of the sound field such as the left side of the recording, and level, which effects how loud or quiet the instrument is in the final mix compared to the other instruments. Other highly used effects include compression, reverb, and delay. Together, by using each effect efficiently for both the genre and in the recording itself, helps to create a polished and effective sounding recording. By being able to explore and properly use these techniques, it is very easy for musicians today to create their own EP's, demo tracks, and singles that can be used for a wide range of situations. Primarily, especially in a career's early stage, your recordings can be used on social media sites such as YouTube and Soundcloud, giving the listeners a clear idea of what your musical vision is as well as giving yourself a more professional sound. Overall, performance and production can work effectively together to create a copy of your musical identity that you can share with fans, musicians and producers for personal enjoyment and career purposes.

The Aftermath

The classes and activities held at the Berklee Valencia Masters program have offered numerous lessons that can be applied to the music world. This does not just relate to performing, but also several aspects that can be crucial in the ever-changing music scene. Through the various classes taught here, attention has been focused on how, as musicians, many aspects of ones' career can be controlled by ones' own actions. In the production class, skills in the recording studio as well as in post-production and editing were shown to be of great importance. The skills taught here show how, with access to today's technology, a musician can do a great deal of work in the recording

process on their own: from creating demos to even completing final studio tracks. Starting with generating good sounds in the studio and combining that with applying proper techniques with music editing and processing, such as properly using effects like EQ and compression, allows for a great deal more control over the sound and direction by an artist. This can be extremely helpful at the start of a career when promoting for shows and opportunities, as well as gaining attention on social media such as YouTube and Facebook. It is useful for all artists from smaller to bigger cities, to all have the chance to get online recognition. This must, however, also be paired with a good skill for properly applying effective business techniques. It is one thing to have a great song, but another thing entirely to properly know how to promote it and gain the attention of possible fans. The business course at Berklee approached several of these situations and offered effective ways that musicians, especially at the start of their careers, can learn how to enter onto the scene. This includes using useful tools such as social media and email lists, as well as ways to look and predict where the music scene is headed in the future to better prepare a plan and achieve a successful future. All of these combine to give a glimpse as to what the music industry is truly made up of, even outside of the songs themselves. It also sheds light on the importance of knowing what may happen in different situations on a production, portion, or even financial level to get the best chance possible at a long and continuing career.

Outside of the production and business, of course, is the music itself. During my time here at Berklee and my focus on this Culminating Experience, the music was the primary objective. The lessons taught at Berklee allowed for a greater view into how different influences, objectives, musicians, and writing techniques can all have an impact as to how a song is created and shaped. One small aspect can have a dramatic effect on the direction of a song until the final product. Control was a main goal when working on this project. This refers to learning the necessary tools to gain control over taking the sound heard in ones' head, and forming a complete work of art. Control can also refer to knowing when to let things happen and allow for more freedom over the direction a song is taking, but also knowing when to be firm with what your intentions are as a songwriter. This is one way to allow yourself to follow your vision and goals, but to also allow for

new influences or other musicians to have a positive effect on where your music can go. One way to learn this control is to allow yourself to incorporate new styles in your playing and pushing your own limits to learn stylistic language as well and theoretical practices used in different genres. In a sense, it is the ability to speak the language of several genres and to gain the ability to know when and where to apply which one. Many of these ideas were attempted on this project, as to be able to break down the writing of the project and to know the reasoning why something is being used. Through the time spent here at Berklee, many new techniques in both writing and playing were continually being taught. The CE project stands as proof as to how these lessons were applied and the affect on our own abilities in songwriting and production. The comparison between the 'old three' and the 'new three' shows a progression in writing and technique, but also an expansion in experimentation and new ideas. The lessons taught here at Berklee will continue to have a great effect on the approach to not only songwriting and performing, but also all of the aspects applied to the world of music.

