

Launching a Music Career by Hand



Culminating Experience Initial Presentation
Nan Macmillan

Background

Piano Lessons

Guitar Lessons

Poetry

& then it occurred to me that he may have come into the world empty of gardens. That he may squirm under skin, and skin would never let him out, that he might never flow, river-like. I had a dream, years from now: We sat on a bench somewhere. He cried into me and through me and a wind flooded in to make our pores water-like, cool, blue. Then we melted back into soil, with ease.

My room is a cloud on which my sisters rest
& we've started telling stories again.

i)

remember when cameras
had insides
with mirrors
 and levers
that wound film,
the sound
 the same
as winding
up a music box?

ii)

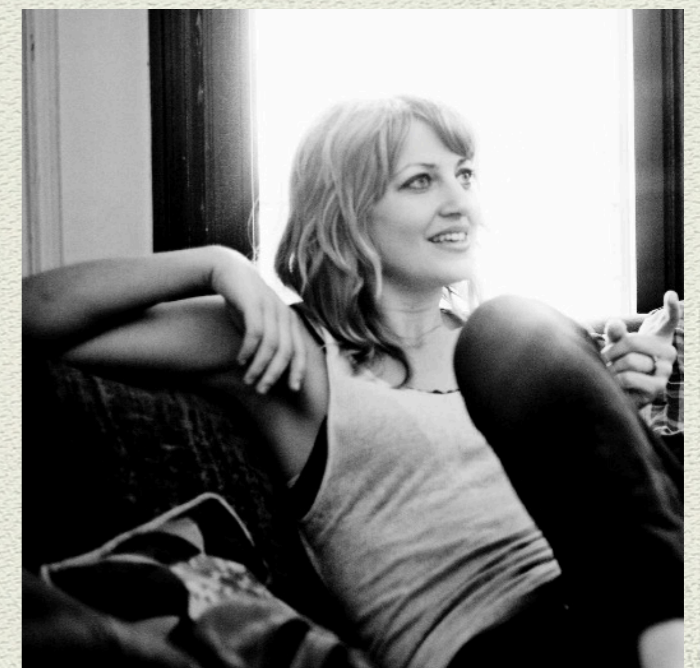
have you ever been
to your grandmother's grave?

mine died in December,
& I visited a year after.
 lichen charcoaled
 the granite
 green

& one pink lady slipper
 grew up & off
to the left

I knew
not to pluck it

Influences



What do I admire about these artists?



- ◆ 1) Songwriter
- ◆ 2) Instrumentalist
- ◆ 3) Unique Voice
- ◆ 4) Producer
- ◆ 5) Authentic & Organic Artistry

My Artistic Identity

- ◆ 1) Folk / Americana Songwriter
- ◆ 2) Instrumentalist (Guitar)
- ◆ 3) Producer & Collaborator
- ◆ 4) Authentic & Organic Artistry



CE Main Objective

“The main goal of this project is to develop the tools and generate a portfolio of work that will help me best express my artistic identity. This will allow me to have a clearer sense of artistic purpose and allow me to share my work effectively as I emerge in the music industry.”

Overview

Objective 1: Artist Interviews

Objective 2: Establish Daily Habits

Objective 3: Write 10 Songs

Objective 4: Choose 5 to Record

Objective 5: Record 5 Songs

Objective 6: Record 2 Videos

Objective 7: Create Website

Objective 1: Artist Interviews

- ◆ 1) Emerging
 - ◆ Genna
 - ◆ Matthew
 - ◆ Asher
 - ◆ McGlothlin
- ◆ 2) Established & Growing
 - ◆ Adam Barnes
 - ◆ Louis Smith
- ◆ 3) Artist at Peak
 - ◆ Sarah Jarosz
- ◆ 4) Producer: Jay Foote



Takeaways

- ◆ Have specific questions, do background research on the artist
- ◆ Be clear about why I'm interviewing them
- ◆ Ask for any further connections
- ◆ Follow up contact

Objective 2: Establish Daily Habits

- ◆ Free writing — 15 minutes / day
- ◆ Practicing Voice — >30 minutes / day
- ◆ Practicing Guitar — 30 minutes / day

Take-aways

- ◆ absolutely crucial to maintaining technique
- ◆ learning songs — guitar
- ◆ setting aside creative space

Pro Advice

- ◆ “I don’t have a set structure for when I play... I just let the moment happen.” — Adam Barnes

Objective 3: Write 10 Songs

10 songs
written

66 other song
ideas



Song Productivity

August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
3	12	8	7	3	2	5	8	11	5	2

Takeaways

- ◆ Always record!!!
- ◆ Flesh songs out, sit with them
- ◆ I don't have one specific process —that's ok!
- ◆ Create the right environment

Pro Tips

- ◆ “Write with everyone you meet. Cultivate a daily writing practice by yourself as well. Learn your favorite songs and try and figure out what you like about them. Then write a song that uses those ideas. Do that every day.” — Jay Foote

Objective 4: Choose 5 to Record

Song Title	Instrumentation	Tempo/ TS	Key	Mood
Sapling for August	Ac. Guitar Mando Violin Vox + Harmonies	4/4, qn = 134	D	Nostalgic, longing, sentimental, folk
Northbound Train	Elec. Guitar Elec. Bass Piano Drums BGVs	6/8, 8n = 120	C	Blues, southern rock, full band
Greener Country	Ac. Guitar Upright Bass Violin Percussion	4/4, qn = 80	D	Atmospheric, folk, stripped down, easy cruising
When You Gonna Give	3 Violin Acoustic Gtr 2 Harmonies	6/8 & 4/4, qn = 85	F#m	Minor, dark, natural imagery, rootsy
Backyard	2 Guitars Violin Harmonies Marimba	4/4, qn = 75	D# (Capo 1 in D)	Atmospheric, acoustic, harmony focused, questioning, unresolved
Apple Trees	Guitar Violin 2 Harmonies	4/4, qn = 125	F (Capo 3 Open D)	Similar to Backyard, sus chords, questioning, longing
Up From It	Guitar 2 Voices	6/8, qn = 165	C# (Capo 6, G)	Upbeat, major, nostalgic, travelling, goodbye
Burden Baby	Piano Drums Bass Voice	12/8, 8n = 157	D	Soulful, ballad, about leaving
May My Love	Guitar Vox	4/4, qn = 87	G# (Capo 4, G)	Upbeat, happy, positive, wishing well
There is a Light By The Door	Piano Guitar Violin Chimes	6/8, 8n = 145	C	Minor, hopeful, reminiscent, childhood

Takeaway

- ◆ Still worth it to try recording iffy songs
- ◆ Think about how the songs fit together — lyrically, musically, with instrumentation, etc.

Objective 5: Record 5 Songs

Objective 6: Record 2 Videos

SAPLING FOR AUGUST

AUGUST WAS VIOLENT
BUT I SWEAR I SAW A SAPLING GROW
SOMEWHERE BENEATH THE FALLING HELICOPTERS
OR BY BRUSHFIRES BURNING BELOW

YOU LAID ME DOWN BY THE LILAC BUSHES
DOWN WHERE THE FIELDS ARE SO GREEN
I STILL RECALL HOW THE MOON WAS GLOWING
IT WAS LIKE NOTHING THAT I'VE EVER SEEN

DID YOU BUILD A HOUSE
DID YOU PLANT A GARDEN
DID YOU MAKE IT HOME SAFE TONIGHT?
IT IS NOT THAT I NEED AN ANSWER, DARLIN'
JUST TO KNOW THAT YOU WILL BE ALRIGHT

I AM NOT AFRAID OF THE SEASON CHANGES
OR OF THE OCEAN THAT STANDS IN BETWEEN
BUT WHAT I FEAR IS THE FICKLE NATURE
OF THE BLOWING WIND, HOW IT REARRANGES EVERYTHING

DID YOU FIND A HOME?
DO YOU TEND THE GARDEN?
DO LILIES BLOOM THERE IN THE SPRING?
IT IS NOT THAT I NEED AN ANSWER, DARLIN'
I AM NOT BURDENED BY PAIN OR LONGING

I WILL WAIT FOR JUNE, I WILL WAIT FOR AUGUST
I WILL SEE YOU IN A DREAM TONIGHT



Engineer: Nan Macmillan
Producer: Nan Macmillan
Violin/Arrangement: Korina
Davis
Mandolin/Voice: Sam Amos
Guitar/Voice: Nan Macmillan

Engineer: Ido Goldberg
Producer: Ali McLeod
Voice / BGV Arrangement:
Nan Macmillan
Piano: Sam Amos
El. Guitar: Dan Caton
Bass: Thomas Champion
Drums: Nathan Smith
BGV: Carolina Magini,
Gracie Laboy, Josh Wallace,
Eddie Ruddick

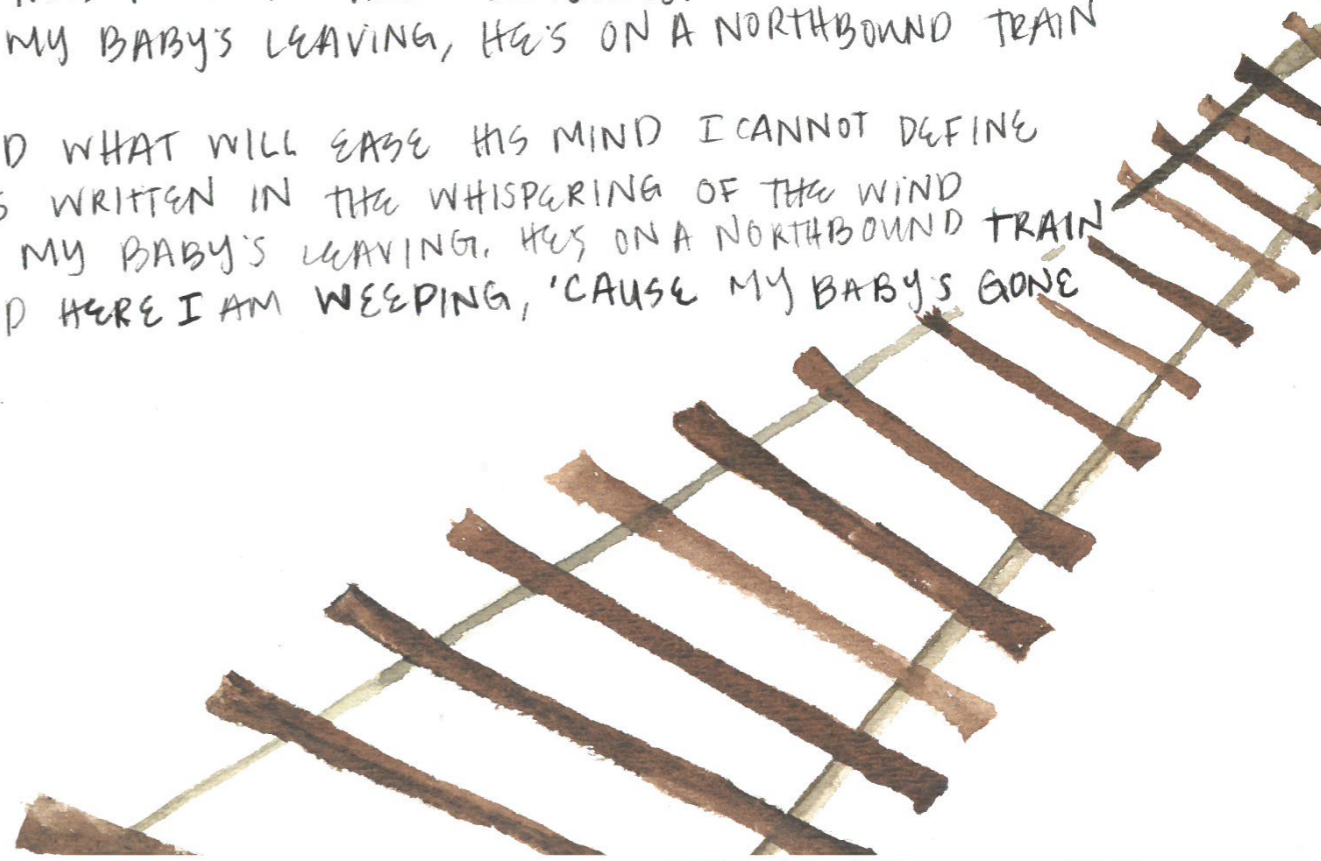
NORTHBOUND TRAIN

HE IS SO TENDER, HE'S LIKE THE WARMEST OF RAINS
FOUND HIM IN AUTUMN
WHEN THE SUN WAS SINKIN' LOW AT THE END OF THE DAYS
HE IS LIKE UNNAMON, HE REMINDS ME OF HOME
BUT THAT'S JUST A FARAWAY DREAM
FOR IT SEEMS WE'VE MADE A HOME OF THE ROAD
AND MY BABY'S LEAVING, HE'S ON A NORTHBOUND TRAIN

AND IF I TRY TO RUN
OR TRY TO FOLLOW HIM I KNOW HE WON'T LET ME
'CAUSE WHAT HE NEEDS TO FIND IS NOTHING THAT I
COULD GIVE TO HIM, IT'S FAR BEYOND MY REACH
SO MY BABY'S LEAVING, HE'S ON A NORTHBOUND TRAIN

HE IS A RAMBLIN' SOUL, AND A RAMBLER SO AM I
AND THOUGH WE HAVE SHARED MANY MILES, MANY PATHS
WE NEED TO RAMBLE ALONE SOMETIMES
SO MY BABY'S LEAVING, HE'S ON A NORTHBOUND TRAIN

AND WHAT WILL EASE HIS MIND I CANNOT DEFINE
IT'S WRITTEN IN THE WHISPERING OF THE WIND
SO MY BABY'S LEAVING, HE'S ON A NORTHBOUND TRAIN
AND HERE I AM WEEPING, 'CAUSE MY BABY'S GONE



Vocal Arrangement

NORTHBOUND TRAIN BVS

NAN MACMILLAN

♩ = 115

VOICE

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

5

VOICE

S.

A.

T.

B.

SOPRANO

NORTHBOUND TRAIN BVS

NAN MACMILLAN

♩ = 115

5

9

13 (A1) "HE IS SO TENDER..."

17

21 (B1)

25

(A2) 2 3 6

29-30 HE RE-MINDS ME OF HOME 33-38

39 4

41-44

WE'VE MADE A HOME OF THE ROAD

Then



Now



WHEN YOU GONNA GIVE

DAYLIGHT IS CREEPING ITS WEARY HEAD
SUNSHINE IS SHOWING HER TEETH
TIME'S RUNNING OUT IN THIS WEARY BED
SO WHEN YOU GONNA GIVE YOUR LOVE TO ME?

MOCKINGBIRD CRY AT THE LONELY MOON
GRASSHOPPER RUBBING HER WINGS
TIME'S RUNNING OUT IN THIS WEARY HEAD
SO WHEN YOU GONNA GIVE YOUR LOVE TO ME?

HUSH LITTLE BABY, DON'T YOU CRY
MAMA'S GONNA SING YOU A LULLABY
AND IF I DIE BEFORE I WAKE
I PRAY THE LORD MY SOUL WON'T TAKE



Engineer: Ronald Ayala
Producer: Nan Macmillan
Arrangement: Korina Davis,
Dan Caton, Nan Macmillan
Voice: Nan Macmillan,
Gracie Laboy, Naomi
Westwater
Violin: Korina Davis, Nehir
Akansu, Gracie Hays
Guitar: Dan Caton

Objective 6: Record 2 Videos

preparation & artistic vision is key



video: Jon Forsyth
audio: Ronald Ayala
location: Playground Art
Center

Video



BACKYARD




AM I GOOD TO THE CORE LIKE AN APPLE TREE?
HAVE I WRONGED YOU TONIGHT?
AND THE FIREWORKS GO RED OUTSIDE
I CAN HEAR 'EM GLOW

HOW I TRUSTED BEFORE LIKE A CHILD
NOW THIS DOUBT CREEPS IN MY MIND
LIKE THE IVY EVERGREEN OUTSIDE
I CAN FEEL IT GROW

HOW DO I MAKE IT BACK TO THE BACKYARD
LITTLE BIT OF HEAVEN WE FOUND MANY YEARS AGO

DO I WANT FOR MUCH MORE THAN WHAT'S REQUIRED?
AM I GREEDY FOR A LOVE
THAT IS FANTASY, FICTION AND FOE?
SOMEONE TELL ME IF SO

HOW DO I MAKE IT BACK TO THE BACKYARD
LITTLE BIT OF HEAVEN?
HOW DO I PUSH ASIDE THE WY GROWIN' IN THE GARDEN?
HOW CAN I MAKE IT BACK TO YOU?
SOMEONE TELL ME HOW SO



Engineer / Producer /
Arranger / Voice / Guitar:

Nan Macmillan

Violin: Yeji Yoon

Greener Country

Takeaways:

- ◆ rehearsal is key!
- ◆ important to have a vision going into session
- ◆ try out different textures / instruments, not all will work

Takeaways

- ◆ rehearsals
- ◆ re-recording
- ◆ plan ahead
- ◆ comfortable studio environment

Pro Tips

- ◆ For me, a good studio environment requires a great engineer who doesn't talk too much, is prepared and thinks ahead---to allow the musicians to create / listen without being bogged down by the technical aspects of a session. Another component are musicians / producers who create an environment of possibility and positivity." — Jay Foote

Objective 7: Website

- ◆ How do I want to showcase my artistic identity?

Folk / Americana Songwriter

WORDS



LYRICS

Sapling for August

Backyard

When You Gonna Give

Northbound Train

POETRY

I. Matins

III. Prime

My Room is a Cloud

Instrumentalist



Producer & Collaborator

COLLABORATIONS



Appears on:

Track 4: Sidewalk

Track 9: Expiration Date

Track 10: Sidewalk Slammer



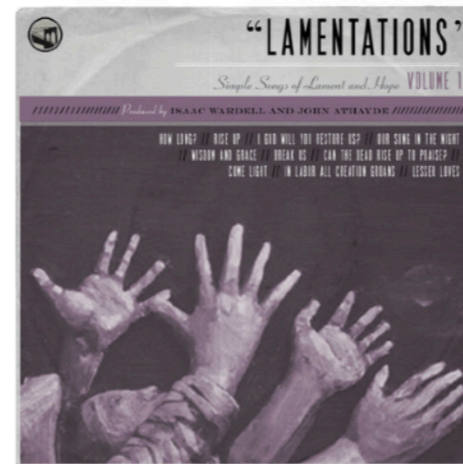
Appears on:

Track 2: Let It Be In My Heart

Track 6: Holy Presence

Track 7: Mary, Mary

Track 9: On Tabor



Appears on:

Track 1: How Long?

Track 3: Our Song in the Night

Track 8: Come Light

Track 10: Lesser Loves



Appears on:

Track 1: Then At Last

Track 7: We Long to See You

Track 10: In You O Lord I Am Found (Psalm 139)

Authentic & Organic Artistry

ABOUT



Nan Macmillan has travelled and lived in America's north, south, east, and west, and her music and lyrics encompass and imitate the landscapes of each. Raised in the suburbs of Boston, Massachusetts, she began songwriting and playing guitar at twelve years old, where she performed in local coffee shops and restaurants. She then spent four years in Ojai, California where she went to high school and continued writing and performing. Some highlights include recording a demo CD in Nashville, performing at Old Settler's Music Festival in Austin, Texas, and recording a single in the home studio of Academy Award winning film composer James Newton Howard.

She then relocated to Charlottesville, Virginia where she attended University of Virginia and graduated with a double major in Poetry

Writing and Music. In her four years there, she gained a set of practical skills that have prepared her to exist as a self-sustaining artist in today's music industry. She involved herself deeply in Charlottesville's music scene, interning at a local radio station, a music management firm, and a recording studio. As a songwriter, her lyrics are rich and complex, rooted in natural imagery that reflects the changing landscapes she's seen throughout her life. Her voice echoes back to Joni Mitchell and Stevie Nicks, with a southern strength reminiscent of Gillian Welch, all of whom are large influences for her. She is currently in Valencia, Spain, completing a Masters in Contemporary Performance with a Production Concentration at Berklee College of Music where she continues to write, record, and perform around town. She plans to move to Nashville to pursue performance and recording opportunities there.

Takeaways

- ◆ Online presence is important
- ◆ Put time & thought into photo shoot
- ◆ Get feedback — still need to do!

Pro Tips

- ◆ I think it's just trying to find that balance of letting people in because they follow you, they care about your music, they're supporting you, but also where to draw the line... it's just whatever feels natural and normal to you." — Sarah Jarosz



Reflection

- ◆ Clearer artistic identity
- ◆ Development of sound
 - ◆ instrumentation
 - ◆ production
- ◆ Good material to share as demos

Reflection, Cont'd

- ◆ Areas of strength
 - ◆ songwriter, minimal production, vocal arrangements
- ◆ Areas to improve / to seek help
 - ◆ mixing, larger band recordings, charts, guitar

Collaboration is Key

- ◆ Producer, Guitar player, Filming: Shaudi Bianca Vhadat
- ◆ Vocal arrangement: Ido Goldberg
- ◆ Vocal harmonies: Naomi Westwater, Gracie Laboy, Sarah Martinson, Eddie Ruddick, Lily Byrd:
- ◆ Engineer: Korina Davis, Gracie Laboy, Carlos Llerena
- ◆ Co-songwriter & voice: Nathan Smith
- ◆ Voice & Guitar: Nehir Akansu
- ◆ Guitar: Sarah Martinson
- ◆ Bass: Victor Mendoza Ensemble

Next Steps

- ◆ Share Music, Video, Website
- ◆ Find other artists
- ◆ Improve on Guitar
- ◆ Re-visit song ideas

Multi-dimensionality

Thank you!