

Berklee College of Music

Sing with Me: Reborn

CE Outcome Paper

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Abstract

This paper is about a journey of my hybrid identity, as an artist Kish and a business professional Seo Hyun Kim, on the process of re-releasing my first single, *Sing with Me*, in three different languages and three different genres. The purpose of this project is to test my multi-language and multi-genre recordings on specific target markets as an international release strategy. Throughout the process, I have collaborated with a total of 28 musicians, recording engineers, mixing and mastering engineers, and designers and faculties across all programs at Berklee Valencia to produce six recordings. In order to test the market before the release, I have surveyed a sample size of 200 people, mainly targeting the markets of English-Speaking countries, Spanish-speaking countries and Korea. Through the analysis of the survey result, I was able to gain valuable qualitative and quantitative results that provided insights for forming an international release strategy. It was a challenging process to produce recordings and analyze data within a tight time frame, but rewarding in that I was able to experience interdisciplinary aspects of being an artist and an executive producer, conducting market research and analysis, and providing a gateway for other emerging artists.

Keywords: International Release Strategy, language, genre, EP, market analysis

1. Summary

I have produced an EP of my song, *Sing With Me* and tested it on audiences before an international release. This song was previously released in Korean in 2015¹. After receiving several positive critiques from music producers, songwriters and a major label, I was inspired to create a new EP spanning over multiple languages and genres. As a final product of this project, an EP with three languages (Korean, English, and Spanish) and with three genres (Piano Trio, Rock, and Remix) were created. The goal was to plan a successful international release strategy and find my hybrid identity as a business professional and an artist.

To achieve this goal, I conducted a survey with a sample size of 200 participants from different countries with varying levels of languages and genre preferences. It was assumed that people's nationality, language levels, and genre preferences play essential roles in their song preferences. Based on the result, I will be able to better strategize and plan my music to market them internationally. Furthermore, this project will provide other emerging artists platforms and tools to plan and differentiate their international release and marketing strategies.

Throughout the year, I have collaborated with a total of 28 different artists, musicians, songwriters, recording engineers, mixing and mastering engineers, and artwork designers across all programs in Berklee Valencia to produce six recordings. During the process, I have learned to professionally collaborate with other musicians, and was fully engaged in leading a group of different creative sessions. Through focusing my survey on the key international music markets, mainly measuring how much language and genre play a role for global audiences, I was able to collect valuable feedback data to provide niche A&R strategies and outlooks for music trends in the future.

¹ Kish, "Sing With Me," track 1 on *Sing With Me, Swim & Shine*, 2015, Spotify streaming audio, 320kbps.

2. The State of Music Trend, Genres, and K-pop

2.1. The Importance of Multilingual Music as a Trend

MIDEM 2019 presented a session called “The Year K-pop Broke in the USA.” This session was composed of various international panels, ranging from Benjamin Jeff who is a K-pop columnist for Billboard; WENGIE, a record-breaking YouTuber and an artist whose niche is also in multilingual songs; and Melanie Fontana, a singer-songwriter for BTS. Most panels mentioned how multilingual songs have become a new niche trend. One example is WENGIE’s multilingual recording with a remix, *Mr. Nice Guy*. The panel mentioned that WENGIE is a pioneer of releasing songs with mixed languages and this will become a trend in the near future. The panels also emphasized that K-pop is transcendent of language, as it creates a vibe, culture and a fandom that is beyond being able to understand the language.²

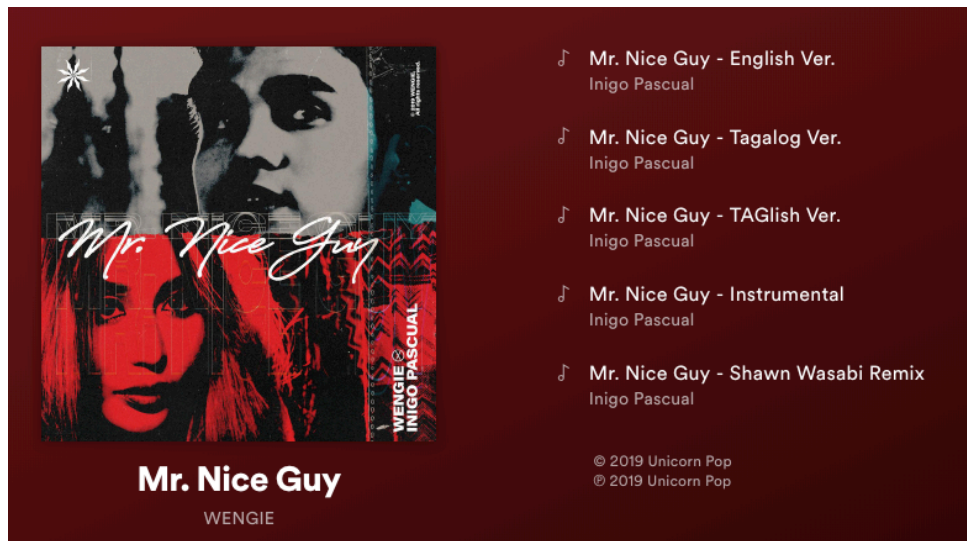


Figure 1. WENGIE’s multilingual release in 2019, *Mr. Nice Guy* featuring Inigo Pascual as a rapper

² Amber David, Melanie Fontana, Lee Danny, Schulz Michel “Lindgren,” Wengie. *The Year K-pop Broke in the USA in 2019*. Cannes, France: MIDEM, 2019

In Korea, K-Indie music is currently dominating the charts domestically. A few recent successes include an indie band HYUKOH with the help of Korean TV show called “Infinite Challenge”³; MELOMANCE, a duo ballad group whose song ‘Gift,’ which was released a few years ago, becoming No.1 on the charts after their appearance on a music show called ‘Yoo Hee-yeol’s Sketchbook.’⁴; JANNABI, an indie band whose recent songs are within the top 3 of Melon chart, even competing against the global phenomenon BTS⁵. Although a lot of them became popular through TV shows, this interesting trend of Korean audiences being attracted to indie music has risen almost to the same level as the mainstream K-pop music.

As an Indie artist, I wanted to see if even K-Indie music might transcend the language itself and draw popularity from the global audience. I also wanted to see whether the audience from the key global music market will have more or less preference towards a K-Indie song in their own languages, or if the song will transcend the language and gain attraction across audiences, which is the recent case of K-pop.

Likewise, I wanted to test and see if this kind of multilingual strategy will not only work for mainstream K-pop music, but also for Indie and emerging artists like me. By testing what kind of languages work for different target markets, I would then be able to provide roadmaps not only for myself but also for other emerging artists from Korea.

³ Moon Su-yeon, “‘Infinity Challenge’ HYUKOH’s *Warigari*, a song which IU mentioned, kills the charts,” *Star N*, July 5, 2015, <http://www.segye.com/newsView/20150705001596?OutUrl=naver>

⁴ Choi Hyun-jung, “Melomance’s ‘Gift’ is Writing a New History in its ranking...It is Ranking the Top in Charts,” *Music Rising, Media Rising*, October 16, 2017, <http://www.hrising.com/music/?mode=view&no=384>

⁵ Kim Eun-gu, “‘Trending band’ JANNABI has someone behind them!,” *E Daily*, May 24, 2019, <https://www.edaily.co.kr/news/read?newsId=01295606622492200&mediaCodeNo=258>

2.2. Genre Test

According to IFPI's survey in 2018, the world's favorite genre was Pop, followed by Rock and Dance/Electronic/House (See Fig.2). Although Classical/Opera genre only ranked as 7th, it was considered one of top 10 genres in the world. Although the EDM market for the US has been falling for the past two years⁶, it was still considered one of the top genres. In addition, the Hip Hop market in the US grew above the Rock market⁷ last year, with its market share of 21.4%.

I have chosen four of the top five popular genres (Pop, Rock, EDM, Rap) to be tested on the international audience. I have chosen these genres not only because they are currently world's most popular genres, but also because they relate to me as an artist, which I will explain more in detail in the reflection paper.

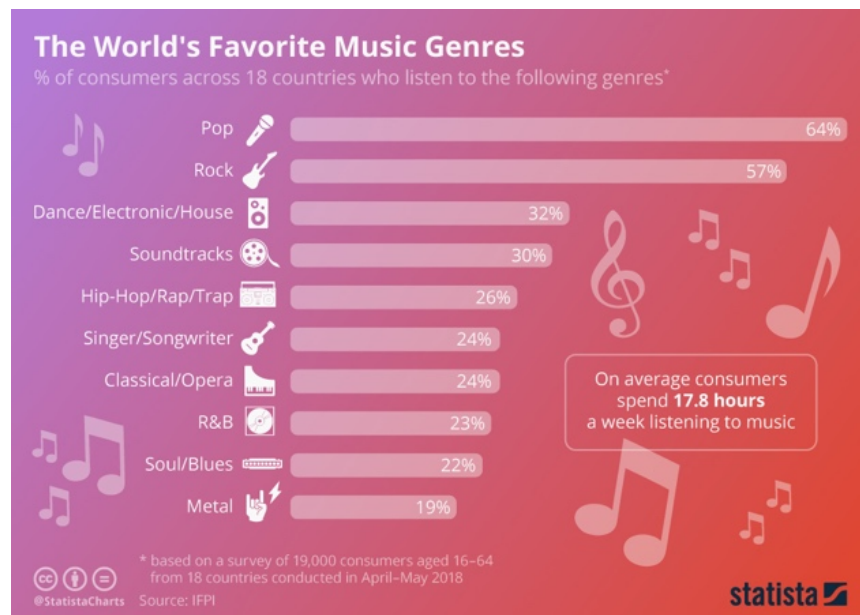


Figure 2. The World's Favorite Music Genres, IFPI 2018, Statista
<https://www.statista.com/chart/15763/most-popular-music-genres-worldwide/>

⁶ Richard Smirke, "Is The Party Over? EDM's Share of US Record Market Falls As DJ Earnings Slip to Five-Year Low," Billboard, May 23, 2019, <https://www.billboard.com/articles/business/8512892/edm-dance-music-share-us-recorded-music-market-share-ims-report>.

⁷ Share of total music album consumption* in the United States in 2018, by genre, Statista, January 2019, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/310746/share-music-album-sales-us-genre/>.

In addition, there have been examples of genre variation that brought positive influence, in terms of bringing the hype around the song, reaching more audience, and covering different dimensions of a song. For instance, Piano Guy's string mashup cover of One Republic's *Secrets* gained 108 million views⁸ on YouTube, more than half of the original song's 202 million views.⁹ Also, Piano Guy's version brought hype to the original song, adding popularity to it. Another example is Lindsey Sterling's violin cover of a video game, *Legend of Zelda*, which gained 36 million views¹⁰ on YouTube, becoming one of her most popular covers. Her violin cover has reached a new group of audiences, growing past video game players familiar with the game to reaching a wider mainstream audience. Finally, in Korea, a famous commercial which rearranged Pachelbel's *Canon In D* with Korean traditional instruments, beatboxing, and breakdancing¹¹, drew attention as it interpreted a classical song in a completely different dimension.

Drawing from these examples, I wanted to see if the Piano Trio version, although not the most popular genre, can bring hype to my song and draw a different target audience than listeners of my original song. I have assumed that this is a good way to reach niche markets and different age groups, perhaps older generations or people with varying preferences who are not familiar with Pop as much as the mainstream audience. Finally, I wanted to test the non-lyrical aspect of

⁸ OneRepublic, "OneRepublic - Secrets (Official Music Video)," directed by Chris Sims, May 12, 2010, YouTube Video, Accessed June 14, 2019, 3:52, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHm9MG9xw1o>

⁹ The Piano Guys, "Beethoven's 5 Secrets - OneRepublic - The Piano Guys," posted by ThePianoGuys, February 9, 2012, Accessed June 14, 2019, 5:07, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJ_fkW5j-t0

¹⁰ Lindsey Sterling, "Zelda Medley - Lindsey Stirling," posted by Lindsey Sterling, November 27, 2011, Accessed June 14, 2019, 4:08, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3KUyPKbR7Q>

¹¹ Jizo Entertainment, "CANON D REMIX BY KOREAN GROUP BBOY, B-BOY, BREAKDANCING," posted by jizoentertainment, August 20, 2007, Accessed June 14, 2019, 3:12, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-yYjMg1lvs>

the Piano Trio version – whether the audience will respond to my song with the same level of positivity as the ones with vocals and lyrics.

3. Objectives

The objectives for my CE project was to form the best international release strategy for gaining maximum global popularity as a Korean indie artist. Furthermore, I wanted to integrate my diverse background and previous working experiences in the entertainment industry into a hybrid personal brand, combining business strategist and artist.

3.1. Producing Six Successful Recordings for an EP

In order to achieve this and solidify my project, my sub-objective was to produce six recordings to test the audience’s response to varying languages and genres. I also wanted to experience being an executive producer and artist at the same time, liaising with different music professionals.

Language	Reason
Korean	I am Korean, this song is originally in Korean, and K-pop is a popular genre
English	It is the most marketable language worldwide
Spanish	It is the second marketable language, and there is a Latin music boom
Genre	Reason
Piano Trio	I wanted to produce a non-lyrical, purely instrumental version, contrasting from the Pop genre
Rock	This is a live version I have performed throughout the semesters in a K-pop band called K LIVE; Also, rock genre is linked with live performances in general
EDM	EDM is currently the most popular electronic genre, and is linked with the Ableton elective I took

Table 1. Reasons for producing six recordings for an EP

3.2. Formulating and Conducting Surveys on Key Markets

After completing the sub-objective of producing six recordings, I wanted to test the international audience's response, especially targeting the world's largest and fastest growing music markets. According to Global Music Report 2019 from IFPI,¹² Korea is the fastest growing global music market, with 17.9% growth for the year 2018. In addition, Latin America grew 16.8%, which is also the second highest rate of growth globally. In addition, North America also grew 14% in 2018. USA, UK, and Canada are the world's first, third and ninth largest market in 2018, which justifies as one of the most important markets to look at. Therefore, I chose the North American and UK market, the Spain and Latin American market, and Korea. My objective was to see if the people from these major territories respond differently to the same song in terms of their native language and genre preference. It will also be interesting to see how the same song with diverse genres can have varying levels of acceptance by a global audience.

These results provide valuable insights into custom-marketing the EP, formulating different strategies for each target market. Knowing the language preference among different target groups then enables me to know which languages to choose in the future when producing new tracks. Genre preference enables me to form clever strategies on artistic experimenting and developing several genres for my EP, and future releases.

Through this project, I wanted to gain some valuable insights on international release strategies which I could use for strengthening and strategizing my EP release. These results will then be used towards track ordering, choosing the main title, and adjusting the promotional strategy for main international markets. Eventually, this will also be used for building my hybrid identity

¹² "2018 Figures by Region," Global Music Report 2019, IFPI, June 1, 2019, <https://www.ifpi.org/downloads/GMR2019.pdf>

as an artist and a business professional, providing tools for other emerging musicians for successful international releases.

4. Methodology

4.1. Survey as a tool to gather significant data

A survey was implemented as the main data collection in this study to collect constructive and meaningful feedback data, which would have been harder to achieve through releasing and gathering market data from platforms. The data collection period lasted two weeks, and 200 participants were recruited. They were distributed evenly among four main categories as people from English-Speaking Countries, Spanish-Speaking Countries, Korea, and the rest of the world. The approach of collecting and analyzing data before rather than after releasing the EP was implemented to reduce the level of risks for marketing. The survey questions¹³ using Google Forms were designed to answer the following two main research questions, as follows:

1) Measurement of the role languages have on a song

The Korean, English, and Spanish versions were recorded and produced with new instrumentals and the only differences were the lyrics in different languages. The purpose of this was to measure how the change of a language influences an audience perception on a song.

2) Measurement of the role different genres on a song

Three different genre versions were produced – a Piano Trio version without lyrics, a Rock version by K LIVE, a K-pop band I was in, and an EDM remix by a DJ. This variation was to see how people respond differently to a same song in different genres. For genre test, I did not vary

¹³ See the survey questions in the link here: <https://forms.gle/z4fXsdujJugKXVQXA>

the language and only placed Korean for both Rock and EDM, as the main variable I wanted to see was genre.

4.2. Trimming the Song for Survey Purpose

Nowadays, people judge a music by 30 seconds or so. Apple Music's preview play is about 30 seconds, while Korean DSP melon's preview play is 1 minute. Therefore, I found it a legitimate length for the audience to listen and judge a song. The other reason of trimming the music was to keep the survey short and simple so that the participants would not skip over a song and thus would not create an objective standard to judge a song.

4.3. Face-to-Face Interviews

When I interviewed survey respondents in real life, I was able to retain more qualitative responses, and it became a session of sharing music more intimately. I was able to interview 10% of the total target audience. I conducted face-to-face interviews in order to gather more in-depth understanding of the data and feedbacks. It also provided me more stories to tell about the journey of producing songs in multiple languages and genres.

5. Resources

5.1. Recording Resources

A total of 27 people collaborated for the recording of EP across all programs, ranging from SFTV, MPTI, CPPD, GEMB, and undergraduate students.

1) Executive Producer/Videographer/Main Vocal

- Seo Hyun Kim(Kish)

2) Musicians

- Piano Trio Version: Taylor Fleming, Emily Gelineau, Daniel Seo
- Rock Version: Daniel Seo, Volk, Raco, Alex, Sunghyun
- Original: Marco Chiavetta (Bass), Issaya Rouson Whitesides (Drum), Sam Borrello (Elec Guitar), Leo Son (Guitar)

3) Rappers

- Julian Williams
- Jose Diaz

4) Background Vocals

- Randle Thompson
- Jose Diaz
- Seo Hyun Kim

5) Songwriters

- Tommy Mills - English Lyrics
- Oscar De Lara - Spanish Lyrics

6) Remixer

- Jon Sabillón

7) Recording Engineers

- Li Ying- K LIVE, Piano Trio ver
- Marcelo Willson - Spanish Ver
- Mariah Moore - English Ver
- Mohammadreza Rezaei - K LIVE Ver

8) Mixing/Mastering

- Brett Mayer - Korean/English/Spanish original ver mixing & mastering
- Robby Glade - K LIVE Rock ver mixing & mastering
- Xavery Scott - Vocal Tuning, Mastering EDM version mixing & mastering
- Ben Cantil – EDM ver mixing
- Simon Tomas - Piano Trio ver mixing & mastering

5.2. Other Resources

1) Album Jacket

- Chris N Fong Chew, Kyrie

2) Software

- Ableton, Protools, Adobe Premiere

I am involving in production side as well, editing recordings with ProTools, remix version with Ableton, and music video with Adobe Premiere.

3) Survey Data Tools

- Google Form, Excel Spreadsheet

I have surveyed 200 people through Google Form, and organized the data in Excel Spreadsheet.

6. Tasks

1) Choosing Languages

In order to release a multi-lingual EP, I chose a language that I could speak and is suitable for the mainstream market. Since I am a Korean currently living in Spain with six years of living abroad in the US, and with North America, UK, Korea and Latin America as main music markets of 2018, it made a logical sense for me to choose Korean, English, and Spanish as the three main languages to release my recordings.

2) Choosing Genres

I chose three genres that are distinctively different yet can add to the original music. I also collaborated with some of the best musicians from Berklee and used AKSS studio, utilizing the school's resources. I have chosen Piano Trio, as I wanted to try non-lyrical recording as one version and also to test if this genre can expand my song's audience. I also observed a lot of string players at Berklee, which provided me an opportunity to collaborate with undergraduates and SFTV students. I have also chosen a Rock version, because I was in a K-pop band and performed with the band several times, including a full hour K-pop concert, which had great responses from the audience. Finally, I have chosen EDM Remix, as EDM is currently one of the most popular global genres, and since I took the Ableton Class during spring semester.

3) Songwriting in English/Spanish

I had regular meetings with Oscar De Lara and Tommy Miller on "translative" lyrics writing. I met up with Oscar every Wednesday after Publishing Class for about a month, discussing possible ways to make the Spanish lyrics better. Since I did not fully understand Spanish, I tried

to discuss relevant themes, keywords and visualization for us to write the lyrics that best fit the theme of *Sing With Me*.

4) Recording Six Tracks

I recruited musicians, background vocal singers, rappers, recording engineers, and mixing and mastering engineers in order to record and produce the recordings. For the multi-language versions, common instrumental was recorded, with new drum, bass, acoustic guitar, and electric guitar, advancing from the instrumentation of the original version. For the vocals, I needed to record main vocal and dubbing vocals for chorus and harmonies. I also needed two rappers, each fluent in English and Spanish for featuring. Finally, for the Piano Trio, I needed a pianist, violinist, and cellist; for rock version, I requested K LIVE band to do a live recording; for EDM version, Jon Sabilion from GEMB made a remix with Ableton.

5) Editing/Mixing/Mastering

I have comped total of 20 vocal tracks, and also comped acoustic guitar. Many MPTI students and a faculty worked on mixing and mastering my tracks - Brett Mayer mixed the multi-language versions, while Robby Glade mixed a Rock version, and Ben Cantil helped mixing EDM track, with Xavery Scott mastering it. Simon Tomas from SFTV mixed a Piano Trio, as that is his main expertise.

6) Forming the Survey and Measuring 200 People

I have formed my survey that asks questions about their demographics and email for future marketing purposes, and also other questions to measure their preference on language and genre. For 200 participants, I have surveyed Berklee Masters students from all across programs; Berklee Boston College students I met here and in Silicon Valley trip; Music industry professionals I met

at MIDEM; European friends I met while traveling; A group of young people from Spain and Latin America from local Spanish church; a group of Koreans in a local Korean church in Valencia; I even interviewed Equipment Room staffs, librarians, Security employee, and Front Desk personnel at Berklee. I also interviewed and surveyed even two French people I met during a carpool ride to Cannes; and a cook from Turkish restaurant I go every week- I was surveying all kinds of people around me, using my networking skills both face to face and remotely, as much as possible.

7) Planning for Korean & Worldwide Release

I have signed a contract with Disrupción Records for a Worldwide release, excluding Korea and China. For Korea, I have proposed a release with special promotion through a Korean distributor FEEL MUSIC, a company where I distributed original song *Sing With Me* before, which was accepted with a set date to be released early Fall this year.

7. GANTT/Flow chart

Categories	2018			2019					
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.
English Lyrics	START				DONE				
Spanish Lyrics			START				DONE		
Piano Trio Recording		DONE							
Piano Trio Mix/Master				DONE					
Drum Recording	DONE								
Drum Editing		DONE							
Bass Recording	DONE								
Bass Editing		DONE							
Acoustic Guitar Recording						DONE			
Electric Guitar Recording					DONE				
Vocal Recording - English					START	DONE			
Vocal Recording - English Rap				DONE					
Vocal Recording - English Dub							DONE		
Vocal Recording - Spanish							DONE		
Vocal Recording - Spanish Rap								DONE	
Vocal Recording - Spanish Dub								DONE	
Multilingual Ver Mix/Master									DONE
Rock Version Live Recording						DONE			
Rock Version Mixing									DONE
Rock Version Mastering									DONE
Remix Production						START	DONE		
Remix Mix/Master									DONE
Artwork - album jacket design								START	DONE
Artwork - profile photo								DONE	
Survey Design							START	DONE	
Survey Video Production								DONE	
Survey 200 People								DONE	
Distribution/ A&R Strategy							START	DONE	

8. Risks

There were some risks that could be ameliorated or be resolved, and other risks that were not avoidable. Time constraint, pro-music bias, and large number of required musicians and engineers were risks that were able to be resolved or ameliorated. Choosing to produce six recordings on one song instead of six songs, placing order of songs in the survey, and slight difference in the mixing process for each song were factors that were unavoidable.

1) Time Constraint

Time constraint for the production was the largest obstacle of this project, as I had to produce and deliver six recordings within a year. It was also challenging because I needed to recruit a large number of musicians for different genre and find songwriters and rappers native in English and Spanish. This constraint was resolved by changing the direction of my project, from post-release market analysis to pre-release market test. Instead of gathering real market data from DSPs, I was able to gather both quantitative data and qualitative feedbacks from evenly distributed target audience.

2) Pro-Music Bias

Another risk was having more Berklee students participate in the survey than the rest of the audience, which might shift the survey's result in different direction. However, as I implemented the survey, I found that pro-music bias can actually work better for the genre test, as the pro-music participants typically had more experience listening to many genres and can be more objective and open-minded for the experimentation on genre. For the multi-language test, I have divided up the target audience into equal amount of people per target group to decrease the risk. I

have also tried to reach out to as many non-Berklee people as possible using my network outside of school.

3) Requirement of a Large Number of Musicians/Engineers

Since I needed to produce six recordings, I had to collaborate with a large number of musicians and engineers. This meant that I needed to depend a large portion of my work on other people and risk the challenge of scheduling and finding times for a group of people for each session.

I was able to resolve this issue through scheduling sessions in advance and double checking with musicians; sometimes for some simple sessions that I could not find an engineer, I sought help from the Graduate Assistants and engineered the session myself, involving in the production side as well.

4) Slight Difference of Production Quality on Each Song

Because the Korean vocals were the released version that has already been mastered, it was inevitable to avoid having some differences with how English and Spanish vocals were produced. The English and Spanish versions had a chorus that sounded more like singing together, which is actually an enhancement from the Korean version, but it was impossible to change the Korean vocal that was already recorded four years ago.

5) Order of the Songs

For the survey, the song was placed in an order of Korean-English-Spanish. It was inevitable to place one language earlier than the other. The order of the song might have slightly biased people to choose a certain version, which was one comment I received from the survey.

6) Six Recordings for One Song

The six recordings were recorded and produced all for one song, for one same melody. Because I invested most of my time in producing six different versions of one song, it was a risk that was taking away other opportunities for me to record. However, this experience has led me to produce a trilingual recording called ‘Superficial’, instead of making it into three different versions, which shows that this risk has actually provided me ways to decrease risks for the future release.

9. Outcomes

9.1. Audience as a Whole

1) Demographics

As a whole, the audience was evenly distributed into four groups – people from English-speaking countries, Spanish-speaking countries, Korea, and Rest of the World. They had an average age of 26.8, 54.1% of them were female, and 58.3% of them were from Berklee.¹⁴

In terms of language skills, 85% of them spoke English, 50% Spanish, 29% Korean, and 27% other languages or multiple languages. For English 48.8% of them spoke fluently (level 5), followed by level 4 (21.7%), and level 3 (19.3%). For Spanish, however, there were less people

¹⁴ The result from this paragraph onwards is coming from my survey on 200 people created on Google Forms. Link in Appendix.

that were relatively fluent (27.1%), and more people that had Spanish as beginning level (level 3 – 18.4%, level 2 – 19.3%). From here, it could be indicated that more percentage of people spoke Spanish as their second language. For Korean, it was almost exclusively native (level 5, 24.9%), with the exception of others in level 2-4 (7.8%).

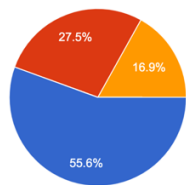
For the fluency of other languages, for the first language, 31.7% chose native for the first language, while 40.8% chose level 2-4. For the fluency of second language, relatively less people chose native (10.1%), and 43% chose midrange, level 2-4. The overall language skills were less evenly distributed than the demographics of people from different countries, which could be considered another factor that determines people’s choices of favorite versions.

For their preference of a song and a rap in different languages, and their generally preferred genre and the genre they chose for my song in different versions, are listed with graphs in the next page.

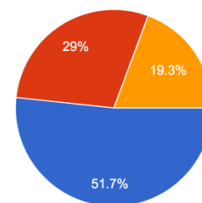
2) Language Preference

After listening to the same song in 3 languages, which version do you like the best?

Which RAP version do you like the most?



● Korean
● English
● Spanish

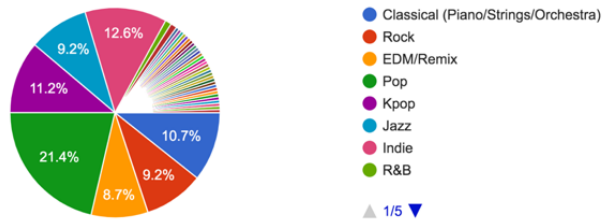


● Korean
● English
● Spanish

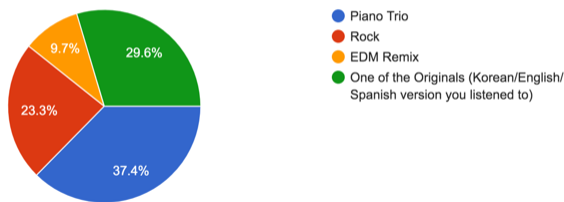
Overall, the majority of people preferred Korean version, with song slightly higher degree (55%) than the rap (51%). English was the second preferred version, with rap (29%) slightly higher than song (27%). Also for Spanish, slightly more people preferred it in rap (19%) than the song (16%). The result indicated that preference for a song and a rap may vary slightly and should be taken account when forming a song in different languages.

3) Genre Preference

In general, what is your favorite genre?



What is your favorite version?



The overall demographic's genre preference was quite evenly distributed, with Pop (21%) being the top, followed by K-pop (11%), Classical (10%), Indie/Jazz (9%), and EDM (8%). However, the result of their favorite version in genre was quite different from their genre preference; Piano Trio was remarkably the top choice (37%), followed by One of the Originals (29.6%), which is a Pop/Indie genre, and Rock (23%), with EDM (9%) being the last. This result indicated that the audience's preference of genre does not always result in their favorite songs, and factors other than merely genre, such as arrangement, melody, and production quality can lead the listeners to listen to recordings that are not even their favorite genre.

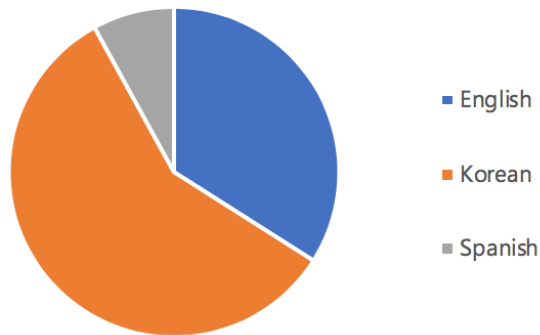
9.2. Audience Divided into Three Main Markets

In order to see if there are differences of response from the target markets, the results are also analyzed according to each target market below. Rest of the World market is skipped for further research in the future.

9.2.1. Spanish-Speaking Demographics

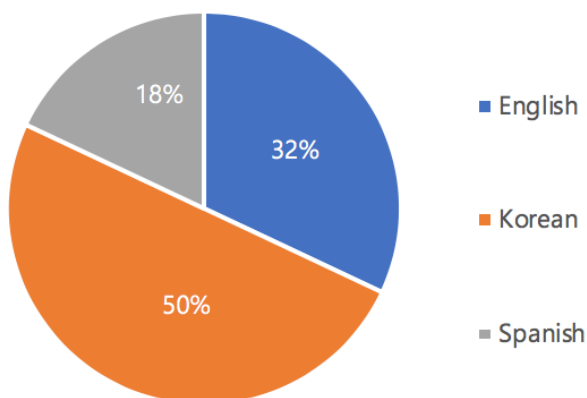
1) Language Preference

After listening to the same song in 3 languages, which version do you like the best?



Surprisingly, only 8% of people from Spanish-speaking country chose Spanish as their favorite version. Instead, the majority chose Korean (58%), followed by English (34%) version.

Which RAP version do you like the most?

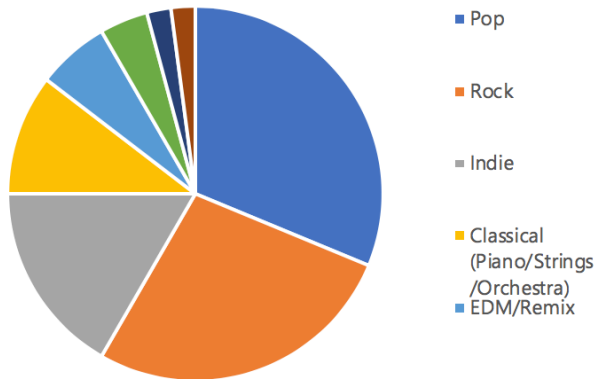


For Rap preference, the order of preference was the same as the song, but here an interesting finding was that there were less percentage of people who preferred Korean (50%), and more percentage of people preferring Spanish version (18%) than the song. English rap preference (32%) was similar to the

percentage of English preference (34%) for a song. This could indicate that more people from Spanish-speaking countries specifically prefer rap in their own language than for the entire song.

2) Genre Preference

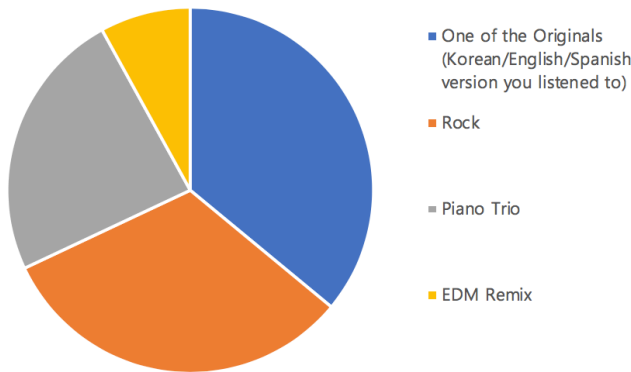
In general, what is your favorite genre?



For Spanish-speaking people, Pop (31%), Rock (27%), and Indie (17%) are top three genres, followed by Classical (10%) and EDM/Remix (6%). EDM/Remix was not really a popular genre compared to English target market. One important thing to note is that “Pop” and “Indie” to Spanish people (in

Spain) actually means Spanish Pop and Spanish Indie, as those two are the most popular genre in Spain. For Latin Americans, it needs more research.

What is your favorite version?



The favorite version aligned with their genre preference in some ways, with Original version (36%) followed by Rock (32%), but Piano Trio (24%) was an exception, as with their genre preference it was only 10%. This indicates that preference of genre does not always result in choosing their favorite song,

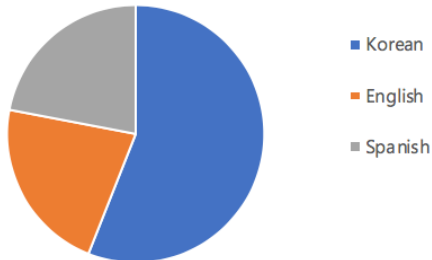
and a preferred genre can be transcended by a good melody and better arrangements.

For those who chose Korean, a lot of comments were that “it sounds more natural and real,” with one person preferring Korean because it sounded “exotic.” For those who chose English, some of their comments were that “the song suits English better” or it “sounds better in English.” For those that chose Spanish, some comments were “because they sound more urban” or “has more power” and “rhythm” to it.

9.2.2. English-Speaking Demographics

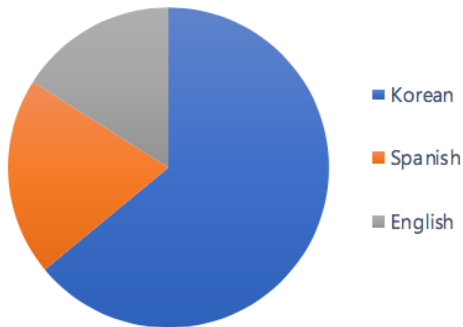
1) Language Preference

After listening to the same song in 3 languages,
which version do you like the best?



Korean (56%) was the most preferred language, with English (22%) and Spanish (22%) perceived the same. The preference of Korean song was similar to Spanish/Korean audience, but the main difference was that more English-speaking people chose their own language, English, for the song preference.

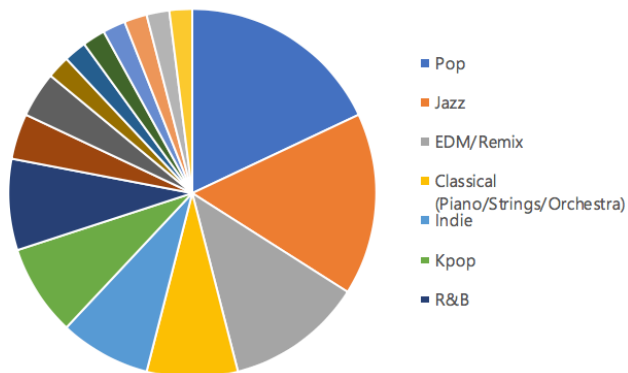
Which RAP version do you like the most?



For rap, much more percentage of people chose Korean (64%) compared to the Spanish audience. Spanish (20%) and English (16%) percentage were more even with each other

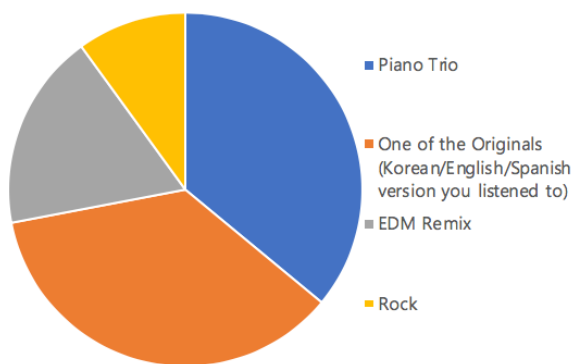
2) Genre Preference

In general, what is your favorite genre?



Pop (18%), Jazz (16%), and EDM (12%) are the most popular genre, with Classical, Indie, K-pop and R&B all evenly distributed (8%). Jazz was one of the main genres, partly because many Berklee performance students from English-speaking countries were surveyed.

What is your favorite version?



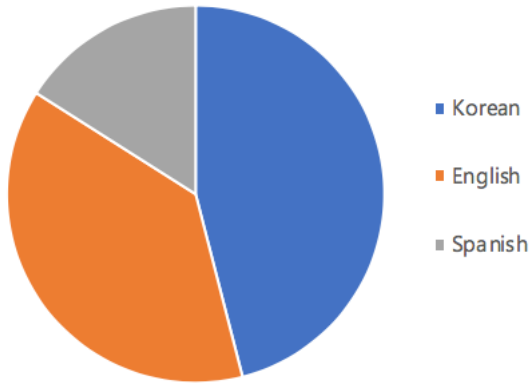
Piano Trio (36%) and One of the Originals (36%) had the same percentage of preference, while EDM (18%) preference was much more than the Spanish-speaking people’s preference (8%). This was partially because English-speaking people prefer EDM genre more, but the percentage was

much higher than their genre preference itself. Also, Piano Trio was equally as popular as the Pop/Indie genre of the original, also supporting the idea that a great song can transcend a genre and can be elevated by a genre that is not necessarily people’s preference.

9.2.3. Korean Demographics

1) Language Preference

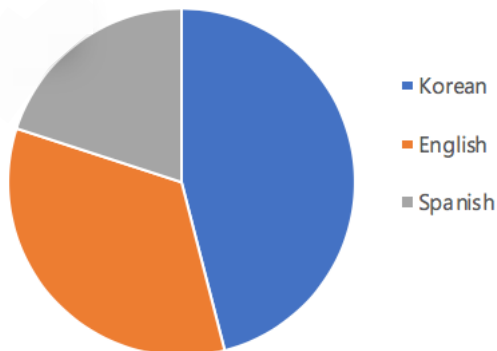
After listening to the same song in 3 languages, which version do you like the best?



The Korean people also chose Korean (46%) as their main preference, but here it was interesting because English (38%) preference was not much far away from the Korean preference. A good percentage of people also chose Spanish (16%) as their favorite. Korean people's preferred percentage of foreign

language was higher than that of audience from Spanish-speaking or English-speaking countries. Some comments were that "the English versions seem to fit the light and upbeat atmosphere of the song/rap the most," and also that it sounded more energetic and rhythmic. For Spanish, people commented that "it sounds unique" and "more passionate."

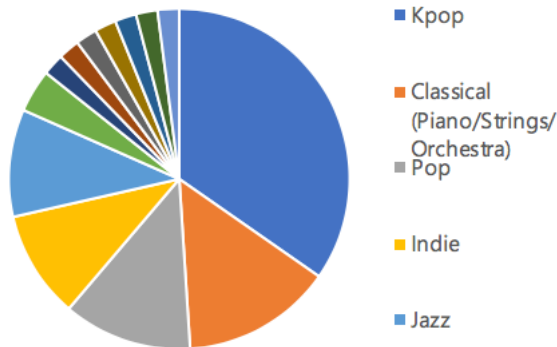
Which RAP version do you like the most?



Rap version's result was interesting, because less percentage chose Korean rap (46%), and more on English (34%) and Spanish (20%). For both Koreans and Spanish-speaking people, English rap was much more popular than it was to English-speaking people.

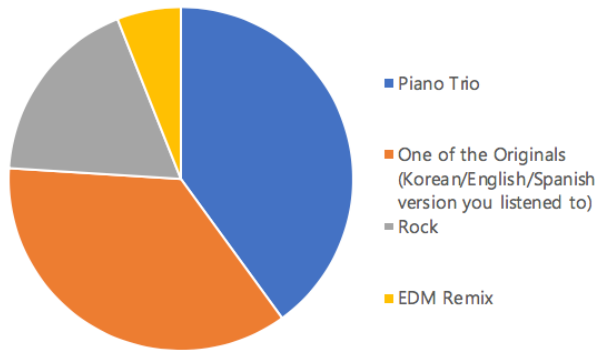
2) Genre Preference

In general, what is your favorite genre?



K-pop (35%) was the most popular genre among Koreans, followed by Classical (14%), Pop (12%) and Indie/Jazz (10%). It was interesting because classical was the second most popular genre, although not high in terms of percentage.

What is your favorite version?



Piano Trio (40%) was Korean people's favorite genre, tightly followed by One of the Originals (36%). Rock (18%) was also popular to some extent, with comments stating "the genre fits with the lyrics" and "adds energy" to the music. Koreans, their preferred genre does in some

extent lead to choosing their favorite version, which was different from that of the target audience from Spanish-speaking and English-speaking countries. However, more than twice the percentage of people whose favorite genre is classical chose Piano Trio, still indicating that their favorite version transcends their favorite genre.

9.3. Overall Results and Discussions

Regarding language, one important finding was that exotic languages were deemed more attractive to target markets outside of Korea, especially audience from English and Spanish-speaking countries. An important factor to note is that for rap, more percentage of people in general preferred it in their own language, although foreign language, especially Korean, was the most

popular choice. One major difference between people's preference of a song and a rap is that much more percentage of people preferred song in Korean, which could be linked to K-pop's popularity regardless of people not being able to understand the language, whereas for the rap, less people preferred Korean one and actually preferred English version more, which indicates that rap's main language as English plays a role and that it is more universal language that can be transferred better via rap, unlike songs with melodies. From this, I could conclude that instead of producing three tracks in three separate languages, it might be more unique and draw more attention to mix different languages, especially incorporating different language for a song and a rap.

Overall, people's preference of genre was not necessarily parallel to their choice of favorite version of genre. This indicates that other factors come into play, such as a transferrable melody, a better arrangement, and a difference in production quality. I have also learned that sometimes, a track with a completely different genre from the original version can actually hype up the song in an unexpected way and expand the target audience to a larger realm.

Some further research and analysis needed are on the rest of the world's perception of languages and genres; whether Piano Trio is perceived differently across different age groups; including Hip-hop as a main genre in a question asking about a preference of genre in a new following survey on A Cappella and Mix-language versions; analyzing main shortcomings of each genre; and forming specific strategies to market each language and genre.

10. Conclusion

Through this project, I have learned that the most important factor in determining a song's success is not necessarily the audience's language background or preferred genre, but more about the authenticity. IFPI's Global Music Report 2019¹⁵ mentions George Ezra and J Balvin as artists who gained global success transcending genres and languages because of their authentic and honest approach to music. Likewise, my future task will be to develop myself as a genuine Korean artist, experimenting with languages and genres that are more authentic to my artist identity.

In addition, through the survey's quantitative and qualitative feedbacks, I was able to gain valuable insights and suggestions. The results of the survey showed that different genres, especially Piano Trio and Rock version, added to the original music and made people appreciate the song even better. The most popular language was Korean among all target markets, suggesting that even for K-Indie genre, a good song can transcend the language to reach global audience. I was also given several suggestions during the surveying process. One suggestion was to also produce an A Cappella version so that DJs and other producers can remix my song. Another was to mix the languages within one recording instead of designating each language to an individual track. These suggestions can be tested through another quantitative survey and be incorporated for an international release strategy in the future.

As a next step, I would like to incorporate what I have learned from this operational project into an international release strategy, specifically through choosing and focusing on the key track to be promoted, optimizing track order and main title for each target market, and building myself as a hybrid brand of an artist and market strategist.

¹⁵ "Case Study: George Ezra," and "Case Study: J Balvin," Global Music Report 2019, IFPI, June 1, 2019, <https://www.ifpi.org/downloads/GMR2019.pdf>

Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

A link to the Google Form survey is here: <https://forms.gle/z4fXsdujJugKXVQXA>

Screenshot of questions asked:

Sing With Me

Thank you for your time! Here are some fun questions :)

What's your name?

Short answer text

Your email address

Short answer text

Are you

- Male
- Female
- Consider as other

Where are you from?

- English-Speaking Country (US, UK, Canada...)
- Spanish-Speaking Country (Spain, Latin America)
- Korea
- Other...

How old are you? (American age)

Short answer text

Are you a student/faculty of Berkeley?

- Yes

Which language do you speak? (multiple answers)

- English
- Korean
- Spanish
- Other...

What's the level of your English?

1 2 3 4 5
Can't Speak At All Native/Fluent

What's the level of your Spanish?

1 2 3 4 5
Can't Speak at all Native/Fluent

What's the level of your Korean?

1 2 3 4 5
Can't Speak At All Native/Fluent

What is the level of your other language? (first one, if any)

1 2 3 4 5
Can't Speak at all Native/Fluent

What is the level of your other language? (second one, if any)

1 2 3 4 5
Can't Speak at all Native/Fluent

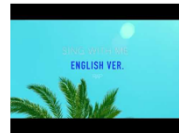
In general, what is your favorite genre?

- Classical (Piano/Strings/Orchestra)
- Rock
- EDM/Remix
- Pop
- Kpop
- Jazz
- Indie
- Other...

I am releasing a same song in 3 different languages. All the instruments are the same, the only differences are languages. Take a listen to the following three versions

Description (optional)

Sing With Me - 3 language versions



After listening to the same song in 3 languages, which version do you like the best?

- Korean
- English
- Spanish

After listening to the same song in 3 languages, which version do you like the best?

- Korean
- English
- Spanish

Which RAP version do you like the most?

- Korean
- English
- Spanish

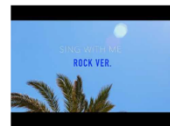
Why do you like those versions for the song/rap? (Kindly write at least 1 sentence :)

Short answer text

Now, please listen to the three different genres of Sing With Me

Description (optional)

Sing With Me - 3 genres version



What is your favorite version?

- Piano Trio
- Rock
- EDM Remix
- One of the Originals (Korean/English/Spanish version you listened to)

Why do you like this genre version the most? (Kindly write at least 1 sentence :)

Short answer text

Appendix B: Sing With Me – English Lyrics

INTRO:

Sing with me
Cantaremos tu y yo
Sing it loud Sing it proud
Won't you let it free

Sing with me
Bailaremos tu y yo
Don't hold back
Just react
Come on, feel the beat

VERSE1:

Put your worries all behind
It is time to let them go
Take a chance
Sing and dance
Won't you free your soul

Come get caught up in the sound
And get caught up by the scene
Don't be shy
You will fly
If you dance with me

CHORUS:

Sing with me
Cantaremos tu y yo
Sing it loud
Sing it proud
Won't you let it free

Come to me
Bailaremos tu y yo
Don't hold back
Just react
Come on, feel the beat

VERSE2:

If you're ever feeling down
If you're ever feeling low
Let it out
Say out loud

Come on sing some more

We can celebrate and drink
Make a toast and feel the beat
You can jive
By my side
When you dance with me

RAP:

Fresh air cold water let's get out and
party like it's your birthday
Don't let others get into your way
Now's the time to enjoy the weekend
Let the rhythm come up and sink in
You gotta vibe and ride with the feeling
Live it up and sing like you like it
Floor is yours so dance like you mean it

CHORUS 2ND:

You and me
We can sing out in the street
No one can
stop you now
when you're young and free
Come to me
Let's get caught up in the scene
Dance and jive
Feel the vibe
Come on ride with me

CHORUS (repeat)

OUTRO:

Sing with me
Come to me
Won't you sing and dance with me,
sing and dance with me,
Sing and dance with me

Sing with me
Come to me
Won't you sing and dance with me
Yeah~yea

Appendix C: Sing With Me – Spanish Lyrics

INTRO:

Cantemos

Let's sing

Cantaremos Tu y Yo

You and I, let's sing

Por amor

For love

Con valor

With pride

Por el dia de hoy

For today

Cantemos

Let's sing

Bailaremos tu y yo

Let's dance, you and me

Y al final

At the end

Tu verás

You will see

Que es el amor

What is love

VERSE1:

Cuando Creas Que Estas

When you're feeling that

E-Envuelto en dolor

You are surrounded by pain

Vamos Ya

Let's go now

Baila ya

Dance now

Sana el corazón

heal the heart

Oye Como Suena la canción

Listen how the song sounds

Al Ritmo de tu voz

To the rhythm of your voice

Cantala

sing it

Tocala

play it

Bien te Sentiras

You will feel good

CHORUS:

Cantemos

Let's sing

Cantaremos Tu y Yo

You and me, let's sing

Por amor

For love

Con valor

With pride

Por el dia de hoy

For today

Bailemos

Let's dance

Bailaremos tu y yo

You and me, let's dance

Y al final

At the end

Tu verás
You will see

Que es el amor
What is love

VERSE 2:
Nunca debes olvidar
You shouldn't forget

La belleza de vivir
The beauty of life

Siente lo
Feel it

Goza lo
Enjoy it

Suelta el corazon
Let go of your heart (Free your soul)

Mira como gozan en España hoy
Look how they are enjoying (life/moment)
in Spain today

Los músicos del mundo
The musicians from the world

Esto si
This is

Qués vivir (Que es vivir)
Really living (it)

Ven a compartir
Come share it (Come join Berklee)

RAP:
Mira como baila la gente
Look how people are dancing

Y hasta los árboles ya se mueven
And even the trees are moving

Que esperas? Siente el movimiento
What are you waiting for?
Feel the movement

Tienes talento, y el cuerpo lo siente
You have talent, and the body feels it

Canta! Que esta canción es tuya
Sing! Because this song is yours

Vamos! Que se sienta la bulla
Let's go! Let the noise be heard

Dale, cántala, báilala, tócala
Give it, sing it, dance it, play it

Quiero quel mundo sepan
I want the world to know

'Sing With Me'

CHORUS 2ND:
Junto a ti
Together with you

Voy a vivir y sonreir
Come live and smile

Y los dos
And the two of us

Seremos
We will be

Muy felices hoy
Very happy today

Ven aquí
Come here

A vivir con emoción
To live with emotion

Y al final
At the end

Tu verás

You will see

Que es el amor

What is love

CHORUS (Repeat)

OUTRO:

Cantemos

Sing with me

Bailemos

Dance with me

Cantaremos tu y yo

Sing with me, you and me

-remos tu y yo

-ing with me, you and me

-remos tu yo

-ing with me, you and me

Cantemos

Sing with me

Bailemos

Sing with me, you and me

Cantaremos tu y yo

Sing with me, you and me

Yeah~ yea

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