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music

Time Lapse

Culminating Experience
Tyler Sasso
Masters of Contemporary Performance

The Meaning of Time Lapse

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- Time lapse is a technique used in photography that combines several photos over time and shows the progression through a scene.
- In this project, my original recordings will act as the individual photos of a specific point in my career.
- Together they will show a progression over time leading from where I was musically before Berklee, to where I am now after having spent a year incorporating new techniques and influences.

Musical Background

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- Guitarist/Composer from Windsor, Ontario, Canada beginning at age seven.
- Studied two years of classical as well as two years of jazz in undergraduate program.
- Performed and composed primarily classic rock and progressive rock outside of school.
- Interests include recording demos and using programs such as GarageBand to compose and build songs.

Major Influences

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- Primary genres of interest are classic rock and progressive rock/metal.
- Classic rock influences include: Led Zeppelin, The Eagles, Billy Joel, Foreigner, Van Halen, Guns N' Roses, Jimi Hendrix, Journey, Peter Frampton, Queen, and The Who.
- Progressive influences include: Pink Floyd, Rush, Yes, and Dream Theater.
- Top Guitar Influences: Jimmy Page, David Gilmour, Eddie Van Halen, John Petrucci, Steve Howe, Alex Lifeson, Eric Clapton, Slash, and Brian May.

Experience Gained from Berklee Classes

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- To expand on performance techniques, searching for new chord colours, melodic textures, and exploring new genres and themes.
- To show an increase in production concepts including recording, mixing, and properly using effects such as EQ and compression.
- To have a stronger business sense in the form of self-promotion and efficiently using social media and email lists.
- A chance to experiment with new techniques and work with musicians from different influences.

The Songs

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- The focus of the project centers around six original compositions.
- Three of which were written before attending Berklee, and the next three were written over the course of the year.
- Each were written with different goals in mind for performance, composition, and technique.
- The overall goal for each song was to be different from one another and to incorporate something unique into each song.

The Writing Process

- Each song began with either a riff or chord progression played on the guitar.
- Some songs used the acoustic guitar to get a rich raw sound and to keep a softer dynamic.
- The electric guitar is primarily used to create a wide range of effects that include distortion, delay, chorus and more.
- Each song was written with the intent to incorporate different stylistic techniques and bring them into a rock setting.

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The Old Three



Careless Words

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- Vocals : Jana Sustersic
- Guitar/Keyboards: Tyler Sasso
- Bass: Andrea Fraenzel
- Drums: Leo Teran
- Engineered by: Nick Zeigler
- Mastered by: Pierluigi Berberis
- Words and Music by: Tyler Sasso

Original Recording



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Careless Words

- The primary goal was to create a song with a progressive feel but to be concise and contain only necessary information.
- It was also a test to write a song with a shorter time, aiming for a four minute mark.
- Careless Words was written in the second half of my undergraduate degree.



Careless Words

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- Revamping the song began with taking out the instrumental prelude, leaving the focus to be just on the primary section.
- The order of the song was changed slightly to include a shortening of the section before each verse.
- This helped to keep the listener's attention because the song was now less repetitive.
- In addition, a chorus was added after the solo.
- A slightly higher tempo was chosen.
- This created a better flow and stronger ending.

Careless Words

Guitar

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- Utilizes a combination of both acoustic and electric guitars.
- The acoustics are layered in two, with one using a drop D tuning and capo on the 2nd fret.
- The electrics are layered with three main guitars and a fourth harmony (which enters later in the song).
- The use of different guitars was an effective way to build dynamics for the end while retaining the initial feel of the song.

Careless Words

Mix

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- The mixing focus of this song was to balance the instruments in order to properly represent the dynamics.
- The feeling of space was key while avoiding drowning it in reverb.
- Use of effects such as delay on the vocals and lead guitar helped create the sense of space.
- Early attempt at getting a better mix out of drums and bass.

Follow the Road

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- Vocals: Kyle 'Wolfgang' Gibbard
- Guitar: Tyler Sasso
- Bass: Daniel Toledo
- Drums : Leo Teran
- Engineered by: Nick Zeigler
- Words and Music by: Tyler Sasso
- Melody by: Kyle Gibbard

Original Recording



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Follow the Road

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- The initial goal of Follow the Road was to write a song built around the acoustic guitar.
- The acoustic guitar offers the ability to strum chords differently than you would on an electric guitar and was an aspect I wanted to include in an original song.
- It was a chance to create a song similar to the acoustic tracks of the Eagles and the Black Crowes; combining the acoustic guitar with a full band arrangement.

Follow the Road

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- Was one of the first songs that I had written the lyrics for that seemed to work as a storyline.
- The melody was created by the singer after two run-throughs of the song.
- It had the ability to be performed as an acoustic duo but the middle section also had the foundation to incorporate a bigger sound spectrum of layered acoustic guitars, drums, and bass.

Follow the Road

Guitar

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- The guitar for this song was tuned to D Major (D, A, D, F#, A, D).
- It is an open tuning that allows the guitar to not be fretted but still sound a full chord.
- The different layout of the fret board led to the discovery of the intro riff.
- The recording contains one primary acoustic, a secondary 'double' in the middle of the song, as well as a 12 string to follow the dynamics of a full band.

Follow the Road Mix

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- Before basic tracking was completed for this song, some pre-session work was done.
- This included taking the original vocals and 12 string guitar, placing them into a new Pro Tools file, and creating a click track.
- The old tracks could still be used and the new tracks could be recorded over them.
- Some of the acoustics were re-recorded at my home studio to better create the doubled guitar effect.

Turning Point

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- Vocals: Kyle 'Wolfgang' Gibbard
- Guitar/Keyboards: Tyler Sasso
- Bass: Daniel Toledo
- Drums: Leo Teran
- Engineered by: Randy Schroeder
- Mastered By: Pierluigi Berberis
- Words and Music by: Tyler Sasso
- Melody by: Kyle Gibbard

Original Recording



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Turning Point

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- The vision for Turning Point was to create a song based primarily around progressive ideas.
- There were no initial restrictions on a time, rather the music was to develop in a way that flowed best.
- This was a first attempt at creating a song that followed more of a 70's theme than an 80's (i.e. no synthesizers).
- Writing for Turning Point began with the idea to create a guitar line that did not focus on chords, but more on an arpeggiated style as heard in the intro.

Turning Point Guitar

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- The primary guitar in Turning Point is a clean guitar with chorus added.
- The chorus adds a sparkle to the guitar, allowing for a crisp and clear sound to both create a unique sound as well as to cut through the mix.
- The clean guitar focuses mainly on playing arpeggiated style chords, allowing for room to play off and at times harmonize with what the keyboard is playing.
- This is also the first song that incorporates jazz style chords.

Turning Point Guitar

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- Using these style of chords adds more colour and emotion to the song than normal power or open chords could achieve.
- This was one of the first steps in the interest of combining aspects of jazz into rock to help expand the possibilities still within the rock form.
- Although it is not a direct jazz guitar playing style, the influence from jazz playing helps to see what potential a chord might have and how it might change the effect of the song.

Turning Point

Mix

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- The vocals for this song was completed using the original demo tape similar to Follow the Road.
- Because of this, a similar Pro Tools session was set up ahead of recording the basic tracking.
- Mixing presented some complications, primarily with bleed-through on the drums.
- This was partially resolved with automated volume within Pro Tools as well as changes in panning.
- This was also the first song to re-amp the D.I. bass using a guitar amp plug-in to create a warmer and fuller bass tone.
- Turning Point was the first song to use a Rhodes style keyboard.

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The New Three



Nothing I Wouldn't Do

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- Vocals: Luis Regidor Pain
- Guitar/Piano/Organ: Tyler Sasso
- Bass: Robert Roddy
- Drums: Leo Teran
- Engineered by: Tyler Sasso
- Words and Music by: Tyler Sasso

Original Recording



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Nothing I Wouldn't Do

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- The purpose for this song was to complete and expand on some of the ideas brought out by Follow the Road.
- This includes the use of the acoustic guitar strumming chords using most of the strings to create a thick sound.
- The style of how the band works differently with this song was influenced by the Eagles' later work, especially their 'Long Road out of Eden' album.

Nothing I Wouldn't Do

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- This song was also an opportunity to try out some of the jazz ideas taught within lessons.
- Though it is not directly playing a solo jazz guitar piece, it is more the idea of the guitar focusing from the top string down (essentially the melody instead of bass).
- This helped to see how to combine chords with more texture on the top note and to expand and accent the vocal melody.

Nothing I Wouldn't Do

Guitar

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- For this song, the acoustic is again tuned to an open tuning, this time A Major (E, A, E, A, C#, E)
- Originally, it was intended to be played on the electric guitar (as heard in the demo).
- The guitar is divided into two parts, one playing the primary chords while the other played more diverse and moving chords.
- The second guitar also plays higher up the fret board to focus on a different range out of the way of the first guitar.

Nothing I Wouldn't Do

Mix

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- The recording for this song was done without outside help.
- The drums and vocals were recorded in smaller studios, the guitars and bass were recorded at my home studio, and the piano and organ were done through MIDI.
- Each was done separately starting with the drums playing over a rough guide track.
- This was the last track to be recorded after using upwards of 40 hours spent in the on campus studios between all of the tracks (not including recording outside or mixing sessions).

Nothing I Wouldn't Do

Mix

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The piano in room B89, used for the recording. Due to tuning issues, the track was not kept in the final recording. Four microphones were sent to the Mbox.

The drums in Studio A, used in for the recording.



Distant Journey

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- Guitar: Tyler Sasso
- Bass: Daniel Toledo
- Drums: Leo Teran
- Tabla: MT
- Engineered by: Kyle Pyke
- Mastered By: Pierluigi Berberis
- Music by: Tyler Sasso

Rehearsal Recording



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Distant Journey

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- The primary goal for this song was to create a more modern heavier style similar to John Petrucci's solo album 'Suspended Animation', as well as some of Steve Vai's work.
- The song was to be an instrumental, focusing on the electric guitar.
- The final mix was key to creating the modern sound that was desired.
- It was also a chance to use new instrumentation such as the tabla.

Distant Journey

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- The song began with the introductory riff.
- The song is organized into three primary sections.
- This was my first instrumental which meant there was plenty of uncharted territory to explore.
- The chance to write a more intricate and virtuosic style solo using techniques such as alternate picking, tapping, and sweep picking.
- It was a chance to follow a different mode and test out new scales.

Distant Journey

Guitar

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- Though the initial guitar plays an arpeggiated line, the main guitar is a heavier comp playing lower chords.
- To achieve the lower notes, all the guitars were tuned to double drop D (D,A,D,G,B,D).
- The solo guitar was tuned standard.
- A high use of harmony on the guitar is used throughout the song, at times up to five layers.
- Effects such as flanger are used to give an edge to selected parts of the guitar.

Distant Journey

Mix

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- This was the first time using a plug-in called 'Trigger'. It adds a sample to a drum hit allowing you to center in on the specific sound you want.
- This was used only on the snare to get a tight skin sound that cuts through the mix, but also has no rings or overtones.
- A lot of time was spent mixing the toms to get a crisp and deep sound that matches modern sounds.

Distant Journey

Mix

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- To close in on the specific guitar tone, the guitar was sent through a 'MXR Super Badass Distortion Pedal' and then straight into Pro Tools through the Mbox Pro.
- Plug-ins such as EQ, Low Pass, Compression and Eleven Free were used and tweaked to create the desired sound.

Out of Berklee Studios

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Apartment Studio
Valencia, Spain



Home Studio
Windsor, Ontario

Back Home

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- Vocals: Luis Regidor Pain
- Guitar: Tyler Sasso
- Bass: Andrea Fraenzel
- Drums: Carlos Ballester
- Engineered by: Alayna Hughes
- Mastered By: Pierluigi Berberis
- Words and Music by: Tyler Sasso

Rehearsal Recording



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Back Home

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- The primary goals of this song were taken from many of the ideas suggested during our production class for our first project.
- Some of these ideas have not been used before in my writing process and this gave me the opportunity to try them.
- Some of these included writing lyrics in a clearer way; keeping the song format to one that's not as complex and creating hooks that stick with the listener, such as a chorus.

Back Home

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- I also intended to try and keep the song closer to a modern pop style as far as not containing too many sections, leaving the focus for the hook.
- With the hook being the chorus, the rest of the song essentially needed to build its way back up to the chorus.
- The order went through several major changes until the song became clearer and had an approach that was more stylistically appropriate.
- The song began with influences from bands such as Rush and Van Halen.

Back Home

Guitar

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- The main rhythm guitar section contains two guitars, each playing similar chords, however, in different positions on the guitar so as not to have them play in unison. This allows for each guitar to be clear in the mix.
- The intro guitar contains a few effects to create the sound that is heard. These include delay, chorus, and a panning effect.
- On the bridge, two separate clean guitars play the same line, with one being an octave higher to simulate a 12 string guitar.
- This song also uses a wide variety of harmonized guitar lines.

Back Home

Mix

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- Back Home was initially mixed in first semester.
- It was later remixed following some of the suggestions given when the project was initially submitted.
- Back Home was the first song suggested for use with Trigger.
- When remixing and starting at the drums, I focused on a better kick sound as well as using Trigger on the snare.
- I was also able to apply new techniques that I had learned after first semester.
- These techniques included isolating the toms, adding a low pass to lead guitars, switching and layering harmonies, and using limiters and master compressors.

Putting it All Together

The ~Acoustic Waves~ Project

- ~Acoustic Waves~ I am currently a part of this duo.
- At first, it was a great way to earn some money playing jazz standards at banquets and charities.
- Also, it was a chance to play modern music at festivals and outdoor shows.
- It is an opportunity to use my training from Berklee

Putting it All Together

Performance

- Techniques taught in private lessons has given me the skills to better accompany the singer.
- This includes a wider array of arrangements of songs (not just playing what's on the page), exploring various chord colours and structures, as well as being able to perform solo to give the singer a break.
- This will add individuality to the songs we play as well as to make it more interesting to perform.

Putting it All Together

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Production

- Our group now has a way to be able to record songs on our own with high quality.
- These recordings can be used for promotion, social media, as well as to release an album.
- With the tools taught in production, we can properly produce our sound to tape as well as take control over the sound and direction through mic placement for general mixing and mastering.

Putting it All Together

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Business

- There are a few plans in mind for the future of the band such as beginning to write original songs for the project, as well as to add more instruments such as drums and bass to further our songwriting and performance opportunities.
- The business classes provided valuable information that will be applied in the future.

Putting it All Together

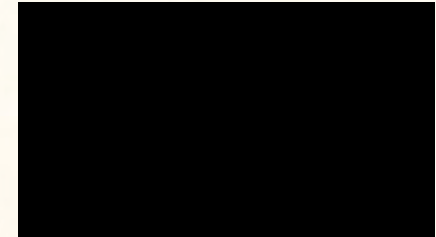
- These include properly setting up social media such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter.
- It is crucial to properly use these sites to get the most benefit, such as keeping fans involved and interested through messages written on Facebook, as well as having new material presented to fans on YouTube in a timely matter.
- An E-mail list is also very important to keep track of your popularity as well as staying connected.
- We hope to apply these soon and see what impact they have.

Over the Rainbow

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- Performed by: ~Acoustic Waves~
- Vocals: Lisette Gagnon
- Guitar: Tyler Sasso
- Engineered by: Tyler Sasso
- Music By: Harold Arlen
- Lyrics By: E.Y. Harburg

Video Performance





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Thank You

Berklee Valencia 2013/2014
Tyler Sasso