
Creative Music Production – Professional Project

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*How Can Client Best Practice Help Develop an Artist as a
Creative Producer?*

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Introduction

This Professional Project thesis will involve research based around the question “How Can Client Best Practice Help Develop an Artist as a Creative Producer? “. This will be achieved by actively engaging in client best practice with two artists, one amateur artist and one professional artist. This project aims to achieve a positive development in both artists throughout the production process using skills and techniques discussed in the literature review. A journal will be kept documenting all progress with both artists in pre production, artist meetings and recording sessions. The literature review will begin with an investigation into several interviews and articles focused on practical skills and techniques used as client best practice within professional production studios. This will analyse specific techniques and practical methodology that will be used with both artists during the major project. The review will then contrast these ideas with unorthodox practical methods used to engage with an artist.

The review will then narrow its focus concentrating on the psychology behind artist performance using several academic papers. This will tie together how psychology relates to the former mentioned practical skills and the importance of its relationship with each other. The review will conclude by highlighting the psychological relationship found within the practical skills and techniques used in the studio environment. The methodology will discuss how the found practical and psychological techniques were employed and used with both artists in the production process. The methodology will also discuss the workflow during studio recording's and highlight how effective the applied practical and psychological techniques were used on both the amateur and professional artist. The analysis and discussion will assess the effectiveness of these approaches, comparing outcomes between the two artists and identifying key patterns. This thesis aims to represent the psychological relationship with the practical skills that will be used in production, highlighting why these techniques are being utilised and their importance.

Literature Review

Skills and Techniques of Client Best Practice

The pursuit of achieving a “great” performance from an artist is a process deeply embedded in strong communication and relationship with an artist as opposed to exclusively technical production skills, described in an interview from Disc Makers with producer Jon Marc Weiss⁽¹⁾ “To make a great recording, sometimes a music producer has to do it all. From communicating, coaxing the best possible performance, and keeping an artist comfortable, a lot of a producer’s skills have little to do with recording techniques.” (Weiss)⁽¹⁾. This is the overarching theme of Weiss’s interview. Weiss encourages the reader to view a producer less as a role defined simply by job title and more as a set of behaviours and duties to help guide an artist, balancing technical needs with personal needs.

Weiss discusses new artists who are “...going to be a bit greener...”(Weiss)⁽¹⁾ to the recording environment and highlights the importance of assisting them with understanding mic placements to avoid mic pops or handling headphones. Weiss emphasis’s emotional support and positive energy is crucial for eliciting good performances, feedback should feel constructive and not “condescending” “Support the artist and be enthusiastic about what they’re doing. Even if you’re telling them, it’s not a great take, be enthusiastic about the fact that you think they can do a better job.” (Weiss)⁽¹⁾. For dealing with nerves during recording, Weiss reminds the artist that there is no pressure. Relieving the artist, not making them feel they are in a hurry. A stress reducing technique Weiss occasionally used was a cap over the recording button “we had a little cap that we could put over the light so you couldn’t see that it was recording ... that helped with some people” (Weiss)⁽¹⁾.

In an interview with Seth Firkins for Red Bull Music Academy⁽²⁾, Firkins offers a deep insight about the importance of the recording environment, providing a calm, ambient and safe atmosphere allows artists to feel more comfortable in a new environment when

performing. Environment isn't the only factor to artist comfort, setting up for what the artist needs to get into a positive mood. Providing a good headphone mix, giving small amounts of reverb and delay all while setting up for recording boosts an artist's confidence. When Firkins is dealing with an artist their confidence is the most important thing in the room. The artist should “feel like they’re on stage” “...already hearing the final product...” (Firkins)⁽²⁾ if the artist feels this way they drastically perform differently.

(1) Marc, Jon. “Psychology and the Music Producer.” *Disc Makers Blog*, 16 Apr. 2020, blog.discmakers.com/2020/04/psychology-and-the-music-producer-2.

(2) Rothlein, Jordan. “Seth Firkins on Being Future’s Vocal Producer and the Power of Auto-Tune | Red Bull Music Academy Daily.” Redbullmusicacademy.com.

Susan Rogers interview from *Tape Op* (Issue #117)⁽³⁾ offers a reflection on how decisions in the production process should favour towards the intended emotions behind the work and not exclusively about technical nature. Listening with the listeners ears and perspective and not just as a producer, prioritising capturing emotion in a take rather than technical perfection. However, Rogers does express having an in-depth technical knowledge of psychoacoustics and possessing fluent technical skill leads to higher quality production. Rogers offers a holistic approach between engineering and empathy, maintaining a perceptual and cognitive awareness of audio engineering while preserving the listeners perspective of the captured emotion over technical proficiency.

Unorthodox Skills and Techniques

Hugo Maia’s PhD Dissertation on “Developing a Vigilant Musical Practice”⁽⁴⁾ offers a focused study on preparing musicians for performance considering three key factors, the performers cognitive state, the performers body presence and what mental images they draw from, and finally interpersonal communication. Maia utilised 64 games to cultivate vigilance skills in performers during rehearsals. The core question of Maia’s research is how can a composer guarantee that a notated score will lead to a meaningful, transformative performance?

An example of Maia’s implemented games was “The Nine Circles” (Maia)⁽⁴⁾. This involved a group of vocalists performing a piece for voice to a text based score with no traditional notation. This incorporated extended vocal techniques, bodily awareness, and attention to presence. Performers responded in real time to the score, inciting bodily awareness and flexibility with performance. “For Two Lovers and a Double Bass” (Maia)⁽⁴⁾ involved a performance of two musicians playing on one Double Bass, this helped develop sensitivity to environmental cues and group coordination in an open, improvised setting. Maia also used games that explored spatial exploration with performers constantly moving around a room and games with gestural exercises which involved movement based tasks as part of the performance.

The results of these studies across rehearsals and performance's participants demonstrated increased attentiveness, awareness of surroundings and responsiveness to other performers. Performers reported an enhanced sense of presence and ability to react spontaneously to both

instructions and environmental cues. “Through repeated engagement with the Games for Musicians and Non-Musicians, performers developed greater sensitivity to the interplay between cognitive intention, bodily action, and the surrounding environment.” (Maia)(p. 143)⁽⁴⁾ ,.

(3) Crane, Larry. “Susan Rogers: Prince’s Engineer on Studio Psychology.” Tape Op Magazine, 2017, tapeop.com/interviews/117/susan-rogers.

(4) Maia, Hugo. Developing a Vigilant Musical Practice. 12 Feb. 2021, pp. 8–143, researchspace.bathspa.ac.uk/13785/

Berenice Beverley Zammit’s PhD Dissertation on Professional Musicians’ Pre-Performance Routines and Strategies ⁽⁵⁾ offers an equally pertinent investigation into what role physical activity plays in preparation, wellbeing, and performance. Three Studies were conducted. The first was an international online survey of professional musicians on what pre-performance routines they use, the second was a qualitative interview study with 12 orchestral musicians from professional orchestras into the nature, functions, and perceived effectiveness of their pre performance routines. The Third was an online survey with 144 professional musicians, focusing on what physical activity they do before a performance.

Findings from study one found professional orchestral musicians do report engaging in pre performance routines. However, most of these routines do not significantly change depending on the performance context. Importantly, physical activity emerges among the routines musicians use in preparation. Findings from study 2 showed that routines are varied, they include instrument warm up, quiet time alone, mental preparation, breathing exercises, reviewing recordings, and more depending on whether the musician is performing solo or in an ensemble. Some musicians consciously adopt routines with the goal of enhancing mental readiness, focus, confidence, and reducing anxiety. The routines have a psychological function, helping to shift mindset, calm nerves, support concentration, and reinforce a sense of being prepared “PA/PE was part of the daily/weekly routine of professional musicians and that some engaged in it with a view of enhancing performance.” (Zammit)(Abstract, p. 2)⁽⁵⁾. The Third study discovered 83% reported that they exceed standard weekly physical exercise recommendations “Study 3 showed that 83% of professional musicians exceeded the recommended weekly requirements for PA/PE and that type of exercise engaged in depended on performance scenario.” (Zammit)(Abstract, p. 2)⁽⁵⁾. The type and amount of exercise varied depending on “performance scenario”. Some musicians explicitly use physical activity as part of their pre performance routine not just for general health, but because they perceive it as beneficial to performance. However, the study found no significant statistical association between a musician’s self-perceived physical fitness.

Psychology Behind Artist Performance

Psychology plays a significant part in artists performance within a performing environment shown through Claudia Castiglione focused study on “Self Representations and Music

Performance Anxiety, A Study with Professional and Amateur Musicians.”⁽⁶⁾ . Castiglione brought groups of professional and nonprofessional musicians into two performance scenarios, a live performance and an exam performance.

(5) Zammit , Berenice Beverley. Preparing to Perform: Professional Musicians' Pre-Performance Routines and Strategies". 18 June 2024, researchonline.rcm.ac.uk/id/eprint/2522/1/Berenice%20Beverley%20Zammit%20-%20PhD%20Thesis%20REDACTED.pdf.

(6) Castiglione, Claudia, et al. "Self Representations and Music Performance Anxiety: A Study with Professional and Amateur Musicians." *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, vol. 14, no. 4, Nov. 2018, pp. 792–805, <https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v14i4.1554>

The findings were that professional musicians suffered more anxiety once a mistake was made in a performance setting more so over amateur musicians “Self discrepancies showed a significant and negative main effect ... on musical self ... The interaction between self discrepancies and the professional level ... was significant ... high discrepancies between actual and future self had a significant negative effect on musical self-representation for professional musicians ... On the other hand, self-discrepancies did not significantly affect musical self for amateur musicians.” (Castiglione)(p 798)⁽⁶⁾ . However, professionals did not suffer a high anxiety or as many mistakes in an exam environment. The study found that amateur musicians with a more positive self on their ability performed better “More positive musical self-representation was significantly associated with lower concert performance anxiety” (Castiglione) (p 800)⁽⁶⁾ .

Focus plays a vital role in reducing performance anxiety highlighted in Katarina Habe & Michele Biasutti detailed study into Flow in Music Performance: From Theory to Educational Applications ⁽⁷⁾ . Habe and Biasutti define “Flow” as “Flow is a specific state of consciousness when people are completely immersed and concentrated on a task, that they lose the sense of time, and feel as if doing things unconsciously.” (Habe and Biasutti)(p 179)⁽⁷⁾ . The authors propose practical teaching strategies to help achieve a flow state while performing, by designing practice tasks that are challenging but achievable, encouraging intrinsic motivation rather than external pressure and creating performance contexts for a player that reduce anxiety and distractions. Habe and Biasutti also discuss how social interaction and collaborative performance with interactive settings often better support flow than solitary or purely technical practice.

Julia Zielke, Manuel Anglada-Tort & Jonathan Berger offer a detailed study into Inducing and disrupting flow during music performance ⁽⁸⁾ . Zielke, Tort and Berger investigate the musical and performance context features that correlate with entering or losing flow during actual musical performance. Two studies were conducted, the first took a group of 8 college level musicians and recorded their performance. The musicians would provide time stamps where they enter and exited a “flow” state. The second study observed a group of 25 classical musicians. These musicians each brought a piece they were most comfortable with, they performed their piece whilst being recorded and documented the following. A standard flow questionnaire of the Flow State Scale estimated how long the performance felt and rewatched

the performance video and marked when they felt they were in flow. Study one found participants identified a range of musical and performance factors that tended to induce flow such as swelling dynamics and expressive dynamics.

(7) Habe, Katarina I, and Michele 2 I University of Ljubljana Biasutti. "Flow in Music Performance: From Theory to Educational Applications." *Research Gate*, vol. 32, no. 1, May 2023, pp. 179–95, <https://doi.org/10.31820/pt.32.1.10>

(8) Zielke, Julia, et al. "Inducing and Disrupting Flow during Music Performance." *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 14, no. 1187153, *Frontiers Media*, June 2023, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1187153>

Memorization of the piece helped players reach flow having a lack of anxiety or fear of mistakes, emotional connection or personal attachment to the piece also helped players. Study two discovered the proportion of time spent in flow correlated significantly with their self-reported flow intensity, suggesting that their "timestamp method" is a valid intrinsic index of flow. "We found that self-reported flow state (FSS) ... was significantly associated with the proportion of time spent in flow [$r(18) = 0.562, p < 0.01$]." (Zielke, Tort and Berger) (p 8)⁽⁸⁾. During flow, there was a higher prevalence of small pitch intervals and stepwise melodic motion, repeated melodic sequences, and swelling dynamics.

Flow exits often coincided with disjunct melodic motion, syncopated rhythms, and sudden melodic or harmonic features that disturb musical expectations and draw attention away, disrupting immersive focus. Flow in music performance seems associated with predictable, expectation conforming musical motion, where violations of expectation surprising jumps, syncopation and abrupt changes tend to break flow.

When mistakes occur with musicians in the previous papers, it has shown a great disruption to some musician's performance, having a lasting effect on the further performance. David G. Juncos detailed report on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for the Treatment of Music Performance Anxiety: A Pilot Study with Student Vocalists⁽⁹⁾ offers an insightful study on the effects of ACT therapy. Juncos defines ACT therapy as not extinguishing problems, but learning how to process and accept them in the moment "ACT is a newer, 'third-wave' therapy that differs from previous MPA treatments, because its goal is not to reduce symptoms of MPA. Rather, ACT aims to enhance psychological flexibility in the presence of unwanted symptoms through the promotion of six core processes collectively known as the ACT 'Hexaflex.'"(Juncos)(p 1)⁽⁹⁾. This form of therapy is used with musicians to help them accept and move past mistakes made during performance, aiming to not allow mistakes to affect the further performance.

Junco's study applied this method to seven participants, the study found symptom's of stress and anxiety during performance did decrease "Although symptom reduction was not a goal,

students' MPA symptoms were significantly reduced at post-treatment and both follow-ups.” “During the baseline period, all students' scores on the KMPAI fell above the recommended clinical cutoff score (105) ... whereas four of seven students' scores fell below the cutoff by the 3-month follow-up.” (Juncos)(p 12)⁽⁹⁾ .

(9) Juncos, David G., et al. "Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for the Treatment of Music Performance Anxiety: A Pilot Study with Student Vocalists." *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 8, no. 986, June 2017, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00986>.

Psychological relationship within practical skills

Across these varied studies and interviews, the psychology of the performer is evident from the practical skills of production. Technical expertise alone cannot guarantee an expressive or confident performance. Cultivating environments that support emotional safety, focus, and self-belief. Whether through empathic communication, attention to workflow and atmosphere, pre-performance routines, or psychological frameworks such as flow and ACT therapy, an understanding of how our minds respond under pressure is crucial. The backbone behind getting a passionate, creative performance from an artist is understanding and creating a human connection with them during the creative process.

Methodology

The purpose of the methodology is to be able to apply the found practical and psychological techniques from the literature review during production. Having two contrasting artists in skills level, musical background and genre proficiency means that not every technique will be able to be applied in the same way or have the same results. Because of this the research will have broader results between techniques used between the two artists. Finding each artist's areas of will be done through a series of scheduled artist meetings in pre-production. The intent of each session is to identify individual strengths, weaknesses, and preferences, with a particular focus on implementing client best practice. A journal will be kept documenting each artist meeting, highlighting what areas of development will be discussed and covered. Firkins ⁽²⁾ use of establishing a comfortable environment for the artist will be discussed with each artist in pre-production, learning what environment both are most comfortable in. During the first two client meetings with the amateur artist “Kalem” (*Appendix A and B*) it was evidently clear that Kalem's preferred environment to perform in was one of isolation. Observation showed that performance quality improved significantly when he was alone, indicating a preference for isolation, his performance improved and became far more relaxed. As a result, recording sessions were structured to place Kalem in a separate vocal booth while communication was

maintained from the control room. “I would say it definitely had a positive effect as normally I would have trouble singing for people, the privacy and isolation of the booth made me feel a lot comfortable like I was just singing in my room alone” (*Kalem, Appendix G*). As for the professional Artist Cliona this was the complete opposite, Cliona preferred a supportive, open face to face communication in the same room while recording and during artist meetings while Cliona was playing (*Appendix F*). Because of this when recording with Cliona I remained in the same room as her to offer consistent positive encouragement, feedback and support.

Weiss’s⁽¹⁾ particular focus on engaging with newcomers to the studio, teaching them of mic placement and vocal technique was applied with during our pre-production artist meetings. Using vocal exercises such as humming scales ascending and descending with Kalem proved to be informative of his ability and highlighted his weaknesses. Kalem struggled to keep descending lines consistent and to keep on pitch (*Appendix A*). However his tone and understanding of intervals is great. Teaching Kalem about Stomach Voice, Chest voice and Head voice and being able to identify them was an initial challenge but Kalem had a great understanding by the end of our session. Going through transitioning from each voice was a bigger challenge but provided with excellent information as to where Kalem’s vocal range is most comfortable and flourish’s the most. His Chest and Head voice are excellent and transitioning between the two is perfect. Where with transitioning from Stomach to chest is good, but loses the note being sung occasionally. Stomach to Head voice is the biggest struggle, both voices are strong individually but transitioning between these two causes lots of pitch problems and sustain is lost (*Appendix B*). These problems that were persistent throughout our artist meetings were resolved by consistent practice and scheduled meetings adjusting technique. As well as this, these sessions informed decisions in songwriting, accommodating the song writing to be tailored to Kalem’s singing style, skill set and range. This allowed Kalem’s performance to shine in the studio and during practice (*Appendix B and G*).

From the initial artist meetings three songs were written all tailored to each artist’s strengths and personal taste in music. During our second Artist meeting (*Appendix B and E*) both artists selected their favorite song of the three to work on. Having the artists be able to pick their song of choice was essential, as being able to work on a project where you are equally passionate about the song as the writer instantly boosts motivation, passion and performance. This was evident in both artists, particularly Kalem (*Appendix B*).

The principles of (Juncos)⁽⁹⁾ detailed report on Acceptance Commitment Therapy proved as a useful asset with Cliona. During our first artist meetings (*Appendix D*) if a mistake was made during a take or run through, Cliona would instantly stop the performance and become irritated over the mistake. In a recording environment this is a problem, as stopping during a take is time consuming with multiple re-recordings and losing the rest of what could have been a good take with only a minor mistake in the middle. Using ACT with Cliona was tremendously effective, especially being physically right beside her during each take in the room. Being able to offer her instant feedback and encouragement, talking through accepting mistakes in the

moment internalising her perfectionism and moving forward without letting the mistake affect her further performance worked fantastic. This led to a very swift recording process and fewer takes needed as the session went on. During artist meetings, a discussion was undertaken with each artist discovering what helps them focus, achieving a flow state (Zielke, Tort and Berger)⁽⁸⁾ in musical performance with the two artists during a short few interview questions about both artists experience. Kalem demonstrated improved concentration through repetition and minimal interruption (*Appendix G*) where long breaks would break his focus if left too long. Cliona flet most in “flow state” by having an organised, clear planned session. Organisation and structure was key with Clíona, coming from a classically trained performing background and being a classical educator, this only makes sense her focus is connected to her diligent background of consistent classical training “Something which helped me feel 'in the zone' was how the session was organised. Dylan had a plan for the order which we were recording everything and this allowed for a streamlined process with no wasted time.” (*Clíona, Appendix F*).

Experimenting with games (Maia)⁽⁴⁾ and pre performance routines (Zammit)⁽⁵⁾ were put into practice during pre-production and before takes during production in the studio. With Kalem pre performance exercises proved to be quite effective, doing five minutes of jumping jacks, running on the spot and Burpees greatly boosted energy during vocal takes providing a far more emotionally driven and passionate performance in the process. (*Appendix A*). During our recording session in Sun, before entering the booth Kalem would do these quick five minute exercises to boost energy and performance, these would also take place at the end of a break before restarting recording again. With Clíona these pre performance exercises did not prove very effective at all, these only took away Cliona's focus from the session and did not boost energy (*Appendix D*). The varied effectiveness of these techniques further reinforced the need for an adaptive, individualised approach.

Analysis

This analysis evaluates the effectiveness of client centred production techniques applied to both artists, amateur and professional. Drawing on observations, session documentation, and artist feedback, this section critically examines how practical and psychological strategies influenced performance, workflow, and creative development. The findings are interpreted in relation to the literature reviewed and the process of the methodology, with particular focus on communication, environment, psychological support, and adaptive production methods.

A key finding is the impact of recording environment on artist performance, strongly supporting (Firkins) that comfort and atmosphere are central to achieving high quality recordings. But the results demonstrate that what constitutes a “comfortable environment” is

highly individualised. For Kalem, performance anxiety and self consciousness were clearly increased when others are around . His improved performance when alone suggests that social pressure was a negative factor towards his performance. This lines up with (Castiglione's) ⁽⁶⁾ findings that amateur musicians are more affected by their self perception during performance. By removing the perceived audience to perform in isolation, his confidence increased, resulting in a more relaxed and expressive vocal delivery. On the other hand , Clíona much preferred someone else in the recording room. Rather than being kept in isolation while playing, she welcomed company. Allowing for instant face to face feedback on takes while also creating a great, relaxed atmosphere in the room, treating each take as a performance and enjoying the production process.

Another part of the project with Kalem was assisting him with vocal techniques. During our artist meetings, running through different vocal techniques and strategies with Kalem proved very productive and rewarding, as this firstly allowed for the songs to be specifically tailored for Kalem's vocal range. Identifying Kalem's vocal strengths and weaknesses early in the pre production process, for example learning his transitions from chest to head voice were most comfortable and smooth for him. This then allowed for the recording process to be quite efficient and not as strenuous on Kalem's voice during multiple takes. As (Roger's)⁽³⁾ explains how prioritising emotional delivery over technical perfection is often the better lane to take, rather than trying to overcomplicate each vocal and guitar part, each part was written to accommodate both Kalem and Cliona's skills and techniques and musical taste, allowing for more emotive and expressive performances that serve the song. Overall this process of building a strong, consistent relationship with an artist through meetings and practice sessions helps them develop both their confidence and technical skills, sometimes even a simple compliment of encouragement during a take is enough to change the artists perception of the session, and give them the morale boost to deliver a brilliant performance “ *I think the positive feedback and reassurance definitely helped as I wasn't too happy with the performance until I was reassured that I was doing okay*” (Kalem. Appendix G).

Where support was given in guiding with technique and musicianship with Kalem in both vocals and guitar, this was not the case with Clíona as her ability and skills were extremely refined, polished and precise as expected. This is where a shift in mind set as a producer must change, in response to other aspects of the recording environment that may be an issue with a different artist. Clíona is a perfectionist and wants each take to reflect her diligence and outstanding standard, when a mistake occurred during a take she would stop playing or reflect back on the mistake, leading to the rest of the performance to be affected. This is where the implementation of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy techniques with Cliona became an extremely valuable practice. With each artist session, getting more used to the idea of accepting imperfection in the moment, lead to more and more complete takes. Clíona's mind set is similarly represented in (Castiglione's) ⁽⁶⁾ findings that professional musicians are more affected by mistakes due to higher expectations of themselves. The concepts of ACT were also effective with Kalem but proved to be most effective with Clíona.

The concepts of “Flow State” were achieved differently by both artists, with Kalem he felt he was most focused “in flow” while in the isolated vocal booth after recording his first few

takes, getting the nerves and initial anxiety of performing out of the way and easing into the session “*Definitely towards the end of recording the acoustic guitar parts and the vocals for the chorus I felt like I was hitting my stride*” (Kalem, Appendix G). While Cliona felt most comfortable and focused when there was a clear, structured plan placed forward before and during the session. Coming from a classically trained background this makes completely sense. Elements of uncertainty, spontaneity and improvisation were not aspects that would help Cliona achieve her flow State,” *Something which helped me feel ‘in the zone’ was how the session was organised. Dylan had a plan for the order which we were recording everything and this allowed for a streamlined process with no wasted time.*” (Cliona, Appendix F).

Pre performance routines had very different results for the two artists. Kalem excelled in both confidence and performance after five minutes of pre performance exercises, vocal exercises and even simple jumping up and down on the spot before a take (Appendix A), supporting (Zammit’s)⁽⁵⁾ findings that exercise does indeed improve performance and the energy within a performance. Where Cliona on the other hand found these pre performance routines only as a distraction, sticking to her regular pre performance ritual’s starting off with tuning up, playing scales, and sight reading the score Acapella before playing the piece on Violin.

Discussion

After completing this professional project, one of the main take aways has been that a producer must be able to be adaptable, capable, emphatic and understanding towards each individual artist. Being able to tailor your skills and interpersonal skills to each artist accordingly. The analysis has show the effectiveness and weaknesses of the used psychology and practical skills used during the project. But there are things that in retrospect can be improved upon if undergoing this project again, or expanding the project. Firstly the sample size of two musicians being expanded could see a greater pool to draw more varied results from, allowing for more contrasting or similar results between them, making any findings from the project stand on stronger grounds. It would also allow for more experimentation with the ensemble. If there was a bigger sample size of musician’s, solo recording session could be under taken like the current project, but group ensemble performances and pre production sessions could also be done. Being able to see how a group dynamic can change with a wide spectrum of contrasting skill levels between the sample of musician’s from complete beginner to amateur to professional, studying how they work together with each

other or clash. This could result in a vast selection of contrasting pieces recorded and even potentially a live performance with these musicians.

However to accomplish something like this, a significant amount of additional time would most definitely be required. If undertaking this project again, dedicating more time with each individual artist over the span of multiple months, even up to a whole year could yield extraordinary results and numerous final project artefact's. Another aspect that if there was more time would have been interesting is allowing the two artists to write their own song. This could be a fully complete composition or simply the foundation of a song with just a verse and some lyrics. Then these songs could be worked on together developing them further, with both artists being able to then play on their own and each other's original songs. There were aspects that went wrong during the project, most notably was one of the musicians, Kalem unfortunately broke one of his ribs from falling while walking home from work. This unfortunately meant that a pre booked studio recording session with Kalem was cancelled, losing out on a whole day of additional recording. His recovery period was 7-9 weeks, he broke his rib during the last week of February which left very little time to be able to record again with Kalem once fully recovered before the project deadline. This was an unforeseeable and unfortunate circumstance, however fantastic recordings of Kalem were captured in the studio the week before his injury thankfully. Another aspect that went wrong was scheduling conflicts with Clóna, she is a violin, Piano and musicianship teacher in Cork and Kerry and is also actively in several Orchestral groups across the country. Because of this it proved difficult for Clóna to find free time to make it all the way up to Dublin for the day, as teaching days, rehearsal, concerts and travel did become a problem and lead to a lose of a recording day in Sun Studio. However, fortunately recording happened with Clóna at the researchers residence in Kerry which proved to be a success and suited Clóna much more, both with location, time and the fact it was a small, intimate recording space which suited Clóna's personal preference when it came to recording.

Conclusion

After fully researching and conducting this professional project, finally does this project answer how can client best practice help develop an artist as a creative producer? From applying the found technical and psychology techniques discovered during the research for this project, it has highlighted the significance and importance of client best practice in the development of an artist, with one of the main key findings discovered from working with

these two artists has been adept ability. To be able to tailor approaches individually to accommodate for both artists accordingly, no matter if they are a amateur or professional in the studio environment. One approach from an academic paper is not a given fix that can easily be applied to any and all artists, individual needs must be recognized and acknowledged with an artist, creating a personal relationship with each of them allows for greater understanding of their personal strengths, weaknesses and individual needs during recording.

Where adept ability and personalisation for these artists really shined was during our artist sessions in pre production, learning more and more about both artists and from the information learned during these sessions, the song writing process took direct influence. Writing songs that suited both musicians range, playing style and skills aswell as their own personal musical taste, having personally tailored songs which the artists both enjoyed. Identifying psychology factors during this project proved effective in practice with ACT being used during recording, allowing for both artists, particularly Clíona to move past mistakes that may happen during a take, not allowing the present moment to impact the further potential of each take.

In conclusion, the aim to showcase that client best practice plays a fundamental role in the development of an artist as a creative producer, has shown to not be a clear and definitive process. There is no one trick that will help develop every single artist that you work with, however there is the value of learning to understand the people you work with, and apply found techniques accordingly to their personal needs. The most important take away from this professional project has been learning to listen, understand, and truly learn about each individual artist, building strong working relationships with each one allows for an extremely rewarding production process.

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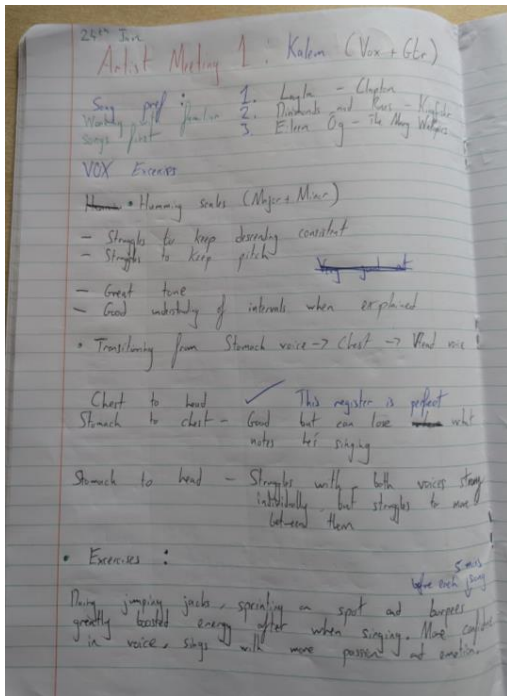
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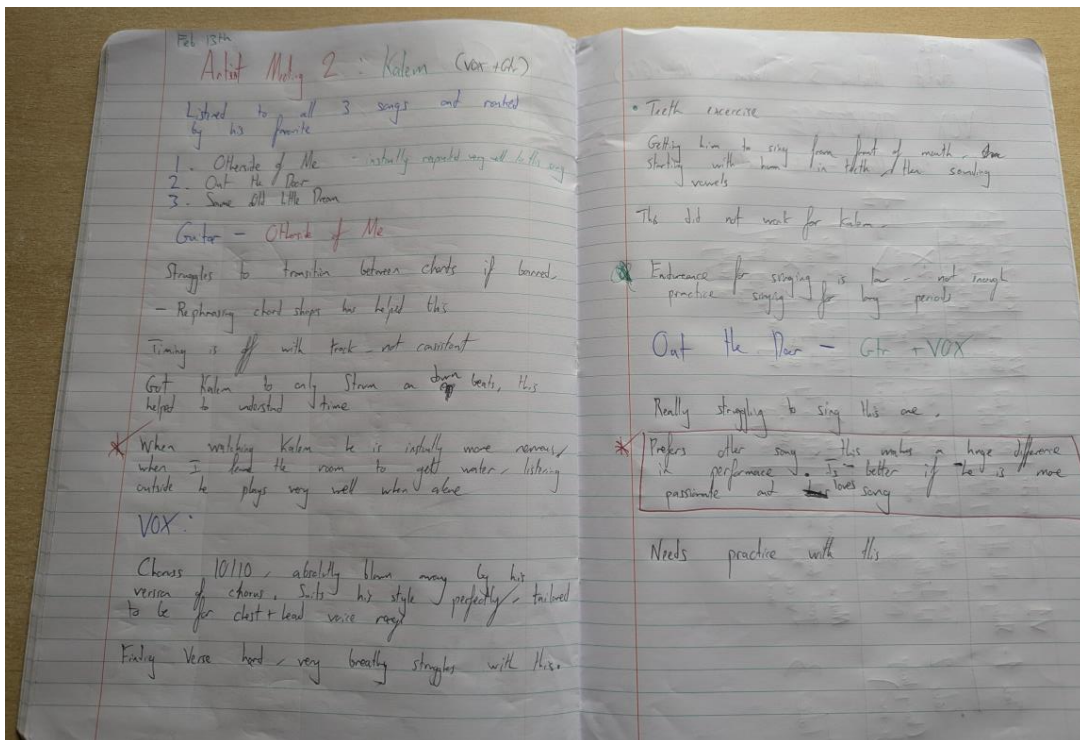
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Appendices

Appendix A: Client Meeting 1 Notes with Amateur Artist - Kalem



Appendix B: Client Meeting 2 Notes with Amateur Artist - Kalem



Appendix C: Client Meeting 3 Notes with Amateur Artist - Kalem

	V1	Pre chor	Chor	V2	Chor 2 + Final
Take 1	Shaky, pitch off, timing slightly		Pitch is hard to hold	Better but Pitch off, Swelling hair too much	Energy good, Pitch bit better, Brise - Good tone but high note off
Take 2 (Clearing bridge for now)	Timing better, lot better pitch off	letter, pitch high note	Sustained notes better, Struck voice improved	Timing slightly off, pre chor off	Chor 2 - X last note good, Final - ✓
Take 3	Massive improvement, great voice work	breathle and hard needs	Chor - X Pitch is big issue, Tone is good	Pitch and tone good, Rhythm very loose	Chor 2 Better nice sustain, Final - X energy great but pitch off slightly

21st Feb
 Artist Meeting 3 - Kalem (Vox + Gtr)
 VOX PRACTICE
 Of the best - Needs work
 V1
 V2
 Chorus
 Final

Appendix D: Client Meeting Notes 1 with Professional Artist - Cliona

Feb 5th
 Artist Meeting 1: Cliona (Violin)

- Prefers to play as if "Live"
- Not Pref to play no click
- Leave score open to her own interpretation with dynamics
- Condensed score would be the best
- Fantastic player, great articulation and phrasing
- * Mistakes cause Cliona to lose her feeling and stop playing
- ACT use to stop "Stopping" if mistake happens
- Cliona is a complete perfectionist
- Pre performance exercise
- Did not work, only left fatigued and was not able to focus, felt "silly" but fun to start like this
- Standard Routine
- Tune up, play scales briefly, ~~no~~ slight read on spot. That is it very simple pre performance set up preferred

Appendix E: Client Meeting Notes 2 with Professional Artist – Cliona

	Pref. Chor V1	Chor	P. Chor 2	Chor	Bridge	Final
Take 1		More less Perfect mistake correct	Perfect	Timing slightly off	Perfect, needs to be harder on strings	emphasis accents more
Take 2 Just V3 Part				Perfect more vibrato on last note of each phrase		
Take 3 Just V3 Part			Excellent phrasing is Perfect			
Take 4 Just V2 (Part chor)		Mistake made completely correct end of take, ACT will be useful				

Song preference
 1. Out the door
 2. Outside of the room
 3. Same clip like room

V1
 Run
 through

28th Feb
 Artist Meeting 2: Cliona (contin)

Appendix F: Interview Questions and Answers with Professional Artist – Cliona



Dylan Shortt <dylantshortt@gmail.com>
to Cliona ▾

1. Comfort & Environment

How did the recording environment created affect your confidence and performance during sessions?

2. Communication Style

Did the way I gave feedback (e.g. encouragement etc) help you improve your takes? If so, how?

3. Focus

Were there any moments where you felt fully "in the zone" while recording? What do you think contributed to that?

4. Handling Mistakes

When mistakes happened during takes, how did you react, and did I help you move past them?

5. Efficiency & Workflow

How effective and efficient did you find the session workflow (setup, takes, feedback, pacing)?

6. Pre-Performance Preparation

Did any pre recording routines (warm-ups, conversations, etc.) help you feel more ready to perform?

7. Producer Artist Relationship

How important was our working relationship in helping you deliver a strong performance

8. Professional Growth

Even as an experienced artist, did you take anything new away from this session that you would apply in future recordings?

• 9. The Most Important Question

- Did you have fun!



Cliona Lynch
to me ▾

10:58 (1 hour ago) ☆ 😊 ↩ ⋮

1) I found the recording environment to be comfortable and supportive which gave me confidence throughout the recording.

2) Yes the feedback given helped me to improve. The feedback given was clear and provided clarity on how certain sections should be played. I was able to improve my articulation for the bridge and adjust my dynamics which improved the recording.

3) Something which helped me feel 'in the zone' was how the session was organised. Dylan had a plan for the order which we were recording everything and this allowed for a streamlined process with no wasted time.

4) Helped me to move past them by not making a big deal of it and providing encouragement.

5) Found it to be very efficient, each section was timed out well and everything was set up and ready to go at the start.

6) not really lol

7) It was important as I felt comfortable to try different things and make mistakes without judgement and could play confidently.

8) I learnt abot microphones and and recording set ups



Cliona Lynch
to me ▾

I found the whole experience to be very enjoyable and and had fun throughout the recording session

Appendix G: Interview Questions and Answers with Amateur Artist – Kalem



Dylan Shortt <dylantshortt@gmail.com>
to kalemllloyd03 ▾

- **1. Comfort & Environment**
How did the recording environment created affect your confidence and performance during sessions?
- **2. Communication Style**
Did the way I gave feedback (e.g. positive framing, encouragement) help you improve your takes? If so, how?
- **3. Performance Anxiety**
Did you feel nervous during recording, and were there any specific things I did that helped reduce that?
- **4. Focus**
Were there any moments where you felt fully "in the zone" while recording? What do you think contributed to that?
- **5. Handling Mistakes**
When mistakes happened during takes, how did you react, and did my approach help you move past them?
- **6. Pre Performance Preparation**
Did any pre recording routines (warm-ups, conversations, etc.) help you feel more ready to perform?
- **7. Development Over Time**
Do you feel your performance or confidence improved across the sessions? What specifically changed for you?
- **8. Producer Artist Relationship**
How important was our working relationship in helping you deliver a strong performance?
- **9. The Most Important Question**
Did you have fun!



Kalem Lloyd
to me ▾



1. I would say it definitely had a positive effect as normally I would have trouble singing for people the privacy and isolation of the booth made me feel a lot comfortable like I was just singing in my room alone
2. I think the positive feedback and reassurance definitely helped as I wasn't too happy with the performance until I was reassured that I was doing okay
3. I was kinda nervous starting off but once we got into it and I had a chance to settle I was fine
4. Definitely towards the end of recording the acoustic guitar parts and the vocals for the chorus I felt like I was hitting my stride
5. I feel like because of the amount of work and time constraints we had I didn't really have time to focus too much on mistakes, it was more oh well run it again
6. We actually tried getting rid of the lyrics to give it more of a natural attempt but as Dylan can attest it made me freeze up not seeing them in front of me
7. Once I stopped really caring about volume like I normally would and just gave it everything I think it started to really pick up
8. Well knowing Dylan for years certainly helped a lot as I think the pre determined trust was important to have as a foundation to feel comfortable in the booth
9. 100% it was a blast, recording a song in a booth was always something I wanted to give a go and thanks to Dylan trusting me with his work I was able to see that dream through