

The logo for Berklee College of Music, featuring the text "Berklee college of music" in a serif font, with "Berklee" on the top line, "college of" in the middle, and "music" on the bottom line. The text is white and centered within an orange square.

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CULMINATING EXPERIENCE FINAL REPORT

“Liquid Dreams” EP & “The iPod Guitar: a new concept of live performance”

1. Introduction

The technology industry that specializes in music is highly established, resulting in a period of transition and introduction of a majority of new products in the process of production and live performance. The aim of this work is to **integrate an iPod touch in the body of an electric guitar**, giving the artist the ability to control specific parameters of his own music from different applications in order to enrich the performance. Together with this innovative project, I will **write and produce an EP of electronic rock music**.

2. Description of the Culminating Experience Project

That being said, these would be the main features of my project.

- **Electronic/Cinematic Rock EP of 4 tracks: “Liquid Dreams”**
- **Integration of an iPod Touch in the body of the guitar** to control Ableton Live from different applications. There are other applications that contain synthesizers or loopers that can be useful. That being said, I will create from **2 to 3 different templates in Line Lemur in order to control a session**, Ableton Live built-in effects, guitar sounds **from the iPod Touch**.
- Creation of **1 lyric video** in the Music Video Production class.

How the work contributes to the profession

Tablets, smartphones and computers have always been used as an external device, far from the instruments of the musicians. This project offers a new point of view in the use of the iPod Touch, which is to integrate it in the body of the guitar, allowing the performer a total control, both the instrument and the different applications designed for a live performance.

An appropriate and successful use of the iPod Touch and the apps together with the instrument can generate new products in the industry, both in the side of the applications and the design of new guitar models. Furthermore, offers a new concept of live performance that can be used by other bands and musicians in the future.

3. Innovative Aspects of the Work

Each part of the project has different innovative aspects

“Liquid Dreams” - EP

My 4-track EP is a totally new experience for me. It is my first music work as a producer, songwriter and performer. It has been a very important challenge to bring into a reality the sound I had in my mind and fulfil my expectations. It has been a journey with a great progression in lyric songwriting, composition, production and engineering, combining electronic and organic sounds in order to find the sound that we usually listen in the rock songs of the action movies. The innovative part of this project is mainly personal, positioning myself out of my comfort zone and being involved in a new experience as a performer, producer and sound designer.

“The iPod guitar: a new concept of live performance”

This project is the culmination of my experience into the technology side of the masters program. I felt the need of challenging myself developing a prototype in the field of the music technology and I thought about this idea. In the last two years, it has highly increased the number of companies and projects related to controlling the own sound of the guitar or MIDI aspects of a session wirelessly through the instrument in itself. Although we do not know when this situation will be a mainstream current, we see how this technology is potentially growing in the music technology industry.

My proposal is an App prototype to control a session in Ableton Live through an iPod touch via Bluetooth, an idea that has not been done or prototyped before. The good point of this project is that everybody nowadays own an iPhone, iPod Touch or an Android cellphone, which would allow them to download the app and get into a new experience. This project has been developed using the Liine *Lemur* app, one of the most used tools in the music and audiovisual scene.

4. New Skills Acquired

This final project at Berklee College of Music combines all the knowledge acquired during all this year in the program. I wanted to make a work where I could bring into a reality all the areas of the music production and the innovation of the music technology industry.

That being said, I have managed the skills in music production and engineering, being able to choose the specific microphones, preamps, synthesisers, samples and production tools that can make the sound that I have in my mind a reality. On the other hand and outside of the masters program syllabus, I have developed my skills as a vocalist with the help of my colleague and friend William Pailen and my skills in lyric songwriting my program director and professor, Stephen Webber.

On the technology and innovation side, I have developed my skills in Audio/MIDI programming and wireless signal flow in Wi-Fi/Bluetooth and how this can affect to the final sound. Furthermore, I have learned how this programming tools can be applied to a musical experience and a live performance.

5. Challenges

Given my final Culminating Experience has two different projects, I will split this point into two different parts:

“Liquid Dreams” - EP

One of the reasons I came to Berklee was to be able to create my own music. On the beginning, since I was working with DJs in clubs, I wanted to develop a project that involved EDM and guitar, but by the end of the first semester I realised that this was not the path I wanted to walk through.

All my life I have wanted to create my own music project, being the main singer and guitarist of the band. This year, given all the faculty members, the colleagues of the different masters programs, the facilities, tools and resources we have in the school, I thought it was the moment of making something ambitious and challenging, so I decided to involve myself in all the process and being the main performer of my own album, the writer of the story I wanted to sing. This has led me to practice vocal techniques, writing lyrics, working on sound design, etc. each and every week of the year, trying to stay on my maximum level.

Probably, the most difficult part it has been singing and writing lyrics in English, trying to find the perfect words, expressions and phonetic pronunciations. Since the beginning I said I wanted to sing, many of the faculty members and colleagues advised me to do it in Spanish, my mother language, but given I am in an American school and everything is in English, I wanted to challenge myself to do it in a language that is not my main one, but is the language used by all the musicians that I love. That was the main reason I wanted to do it in this way.

“The iPod guitar: a new concept of live performance”

As a starting point, my main concern was how to attach the iPod to the body of the guitar; if I was finally going to make a hole on the body and how this would contribute to a better performance and; furthermore, how would it be routed and connected in order to have the best signal flow with the least latency. I soon realised that it was not necessary to make a hole on the guitar body, but sticking the iPod with a specific velcro would easily work and would make both the guitar and the iPod more comfortable items themselves.

The main problem I have found during the development of this prototype is how to deal with the latency. I initially was using a local Wi-Fi but I realised, with the help of David Mash, that this connection was not stable, so Bluetooth would make it better. To solve this problem I downloaded a new App, *Midimitr*, in order to make *Lemur* to work via Bluetooth with Ableton Live. This connection improves slightly the issue of latency but it still makes a lot of problems. Doing researches and meetings with professionals of the industry, I realised that I would need to create a brand new App and build an specific interface that would allow to work with the less latency possible. That being said, this prototype has a lot of possibilities in itself exactly how it is now.

6. Future Ramifications

These two projects have very different ramifications and future paths. On one hand, the EP show my skills as a producer, songwriter and performer, which would allow me to work as a music producer,

assistant in a studio, sound designer, etc. as well as perform in live with my future band. On the other hand, this EP is willing to be completed with more songs until creating a whole album.

According to the App prototype, this would allow me to work in the technology industry as a Product Tester or as a Product Developer, even finding a company or an investor interested in keeping developing this idea and turning it into a final product ready to be sold in the market.

7. Conclusion

In general terms, this year at Berklee has been a very rewarding experience. I have learned much more than I expected on the beginning, challenging myself but, at the same time, surprising myself about my progress. The process of prototyping and pitching every month has been really tough but necessary to realize ourselves about our mistakes and improvements. It has been an essential tool of progress. As a personal thought, I would like to have realized myself before about what I really wanted to do at Berklee, even before starting, in order to make a better or bigger project. Anyway, I am really proud of my work and my progress during all this year. Thanks to all my colleagues and faculty members to help me to make this happen.