

Room 90:
The EP, Performance, and Emergence of Wavewalk

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Degree of
Master of Music in Music Production, Technology, and Innovation

Supervisor: Benjamin Cantil

By: Alex Page

Berklee College of Music, Valencia Campus, Spain
July 2019

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
1. Introduction.....	4
2. Review of the State of the Art.....	5
3. Description.....	6
3.1 The EP.....	6
3.2 The Performance.....	8
3.3 The Emergence of Wavewalk.....	10
4. Innovative Aspects.....	11
5. New Skills Acquired.....	12
6. Challenges.....	13
7. Future Ramifications.....	15
8. Conclusion.....	16
9. Bibliography.....	17

Abstract

Room 90 is a project by Wavewalk that will mark the beginning of the true emergence of him as an artist. Since he started making music in his dorm room three years ago, Wavewalk has been working hard to create electronic music that evokes emotions and truly captures the story he is trying to tell. The project name comes from the current room number of his residence in Spain, which is where most of his ideas have stemmed from throughout this academic year. By capturing sounds and feelings that he has experienced in this apartment, Wavewalk will create a cohesive body of work accompanied by a live performance video and branding across social media and a new website.

Acknowledgments

Throughout this entire year, I met, learned from, and worked with so many incredible people. For *Room 90* in particular there are several folks I'd like to thank that made the project possible and that helped me along the way. I would have not been able to accomplish what I have without you all and I appreciate you very much for the many hours spent with me on this project.

First of all I would like to thank Tomás Santibañez for directly helping me with the writing of two of these songs as well as the live performance. He brought new life to my songs with his guitar when I needed it the most. The recording sessions and practice sessions we had for *Room 90* were fun, inspiring, and such a great learning experience for me. The final video shoot was incredible as well. Thank you for all that and for being a great friend in the process.

I'd also like to thank Matt Struble for being the main reason most of my content looks so great. He does amazing work with a video camera and was a huge part of why this project turned out as well as it did. Also thank you to Matt for listening to every song I send him and giving me really good feedback on my work. Another video thank you to Mckinley Short for helping out with the live performance session.

Another big thanks to Andrew Seely and Cellie Manno for supporting me along the way and always being there when I need help in studio sessions, when I have mix questions, or if I need reassurance that what I am doing is good and worth it.

Along with all the support I got from the people here at Berklee including the professors and other students that helped me out along the way, I'd like to thank my parents for the continued love and support on everything I've ever done. They are the reason I have this opportunity and I can't thank them enough for that.

1. Introduction

This CE proposal will be focusing on the artist Wavewalk. The intent of this project is to create music, a live performance, and develop Wavewalk as an artist in the electronic dance music genre. The main piece of this project will be a five track EP. The EP will be named *Room 90*, based on the current location that the artist is living while in Valencia, Spain. This EP will be a time stamp of music that has been created throughout the 2018-2019 academic year by Wavewalk.

The live performance aspect of this project will include a presentation of three of these original tracks using Ableton Live, an Ableton Push, Akai APC 40, vocals, and guitar. The live performance by Wavewalk of the *Room 90* EP will be accompanied by guitarist, Tomás Santibañez, and will be filmed in the AKSS Studio Live Room at Berklee College of Music, Valencia Campus.

The final portion of this CE project will be the emergence of Wavewalk as an artist. He will create a new website and all social media pages with consistent branding. This branding will showcase how Wavewalk wishes to be seen and thought of as an artist and will help build his artist identity.

The goals Wavewalk wishes to achieve in creating this project are;

- To have the *Room 90* EP completed and fully mastered by the end of the academic year.
- To have the live video documentation ready to release with the EP.
- To release the EP through a label to provide more online reach for the artist.
- To build up social media presence by interacting with more people and amassing a larger audience.

2. Review of the State of the Art

The artists that are influencing this project musically include Jon Bellion, Quinn XCII, Louis the Child, Whethan, Skrillex, and San Holo. By combining different styles including Trap, Future Bass, Indie, and Pop, Wavewalk will attempt to create a sound that is his own. San Holo has done this with his most recent project *album1*¹. Louis the Child² and Whethan³ also have recently released projects that bring a feel good pop style with electronic dance music.

Artists that are influencing the performance piece of this project include San Holo⁴, Illenium⁵, and Lido⁶. San Holo is about to begin his tour of his debut album, *album1* which he is taking a different approach to his live set. He will be using a few MPCs, his vocals and guitar as he attempts to break away from being behind the DJ mixer. Lido, who plays keys, drums, and vocals during his live sets, which are sequenced in advance to give him the chance to play these live instruments, is where Wavewalk is pulling inspiration from. These artists, along with Illenium who plays a Roland SPD-SX to trigger drum samples during his DJ sets is what Wavewalk wants to achieve while playing live.

These artists have unique stage set ups whenever they play at festivals because most of the other acts are simply using a DJ mixer. It is interesting and is more fun to be playing instruments live on stage with a sequenced set, to give some musical freedom and improvisation to the set.

¹ Kocay, Lisa. "San Holo On 'Album1' And Bridging The Gap Between EDM And Indie Music." *Forbes*. September 21, 2018. Accessed November 28, 2018.

² Bein, Kat. "Louis the Child Have a Ton of Fun Breaking Down New 'Kids at Play' EP: Exclusive." *Billboard*, Billboard, 26 Oct. 2018,

³ Bein, Kat. "Whethan Peels Back the Petals On 'Life Of a Wallflower Vol 1' Breakdown: Exclusive." *Billboard*, Billboard, 9 Nov. 2018,

⁴ Holo, San. "San Holo - album1 Tour Documentary Pt. 1." *YouTube*, YouTube, 30 Oct. 2018. Accessed November 28, 2018

⁵ Revolution, Nick The. "Illenium Live at the Electronic Music Awards 2017." *YouTube*, YouTube, 21 Sept. 2017. Accessed November 28, 2018

⁶ Kirby, Daniel. "Lido - Live at Skyline Festival, LA 5/20/2017." *YouTube*, YouTube, 9 June 2017. Accessed November 28, 2018

Wavewalk is going to combine elements from each of these sets in order to create his own unique stage setup and presence while playing live.

3. Description

3.1 The EP

The EP is titled *Room 90* and consists of five tracks that were created both in the home of Wavewalk and in the studios at Berklee College of Music, Valencia Campus. The first song of the EP is titled “Like You” and is a blend of bass music, pop music, and indie. For this song Wavewalk did the production, arrangement, sound design, mixing, lyrics, and vocals. Tomás Santibañez played guitar, and it was mastered by Marc Rivas. Not only is this the first track of the EP, it was one of the first songs that Wavewalk created where he fully felt like his music was a true representation of himself and his feelings. Although he had sung on a few of his original songs before, this one in particular marked the beginning of a unique sound and style.

The second track on the EP is titled “Thousand Miles” and is a collaboration with Katie Lynne Sharbaugh. This song is very much a pop song and consists of smooth guitar chords, with dance music style of production around the rest of the track. Wavewalk did the production, arrangement, sound design, and mixing, while Katie Sharbaugh wrote and performed vocals on the track. Marc Rivas mastered the song. This collaboration came about after Wavewalk was the assistant engineer on a vocal session Katie Sharbaugh was doing. After hearing her do vocals on the track for another artist that day, Wavewalk reached out with the idea for “Thousand Miles”. Katie was interested in writing lyrics and singing over this already structured production and the project moved along quickly after that.

Track three is another that Wavewalk would describe as something that feels completely like his sound. The song is titled “Won’t Listen” and is a blend of bass music, pop music, and indie. Wavewalk did the production, arrangement, sound design, mixing, lyrics, and vocals on this song Tomás Santibañez played guitar and Marc Rivas did the mastering. Soon after “Like You” was created, Wavewalk continued with this new blend of genres that felt so natural to him. In this one Wavewalk dug deeper into his lyrics and worked very hard in the studio to try and perfect some of the more difficult parts to be sung. The second chorus consists of a huge drop with belting vocals. Belting out vocals was something very new to Wavewalk and this felt like the first time he was truly singing. Although he does not usually consider himself a vocalist, he knew that with a lot of practice and persistence he can get to where he wants to be vocally. “Won’t Listen” was a huge learning experience for him and is definitely somewhat of a turning point in how he produces and how he sees himself as a producer, artist, and singer.

Track 4 is titled “Broken Glass” and is the most bass music influenced song on the EP. While Wavewalk has enjoyed coming more into his artistry by adding live instrument elements to some of his new songs and singing on them, he still loves creating things that get crazy and are heavier. “Broken Glass” was created using new techniques that Wavewalk learned in the Ableton Sound Design Course at Berklee College of Music. While in this course he was tasked to create songs that contained 100 percent original sound design on the synths and the drums. In starting one of these projects Wavewalk found himself wanting to use these skills to make a track with the sound design as the focal point and to leave it without lyrics to do so. He did the production, arrangement, sound design, and mixing for this song, and it was mastered by Marc Rivas.

The final song on the EP is titled “Late Night” and is a song that took on a few different forms since its original creation. In the beginning it was a very short song with only one drop

which had minimal vocal effects. In making this song, Wavewalk felt the vibe and wanted to put it on the EP, but knew it needed something more to really come to life. By using vocal synth and almost completely restructuring the song, he created what is now the final version of “Late Night” which has a distinct catchiness to it. It is a somewhat different style than everything else on *Room 90*, but works well as the outro track of the EP. Wavewalk did the production, arrangement, sound design, mixing, lyrics, and vocals for this song. “Late Night” was mastered by Marc Rivas.

3.2 The Performance

The live performance aspect of this project was something that was much more difficult than Wavewalk imagined, but more rewarding as well. In planning out this EP performance, the goal was to create an experience for the listeners that was more fluid and interactive than Wavewalk simply DJing the tracks as they were produced. Incorporating more technology and different controllers was a way to make this happen.

At the beginning of the year Wavewalk became familiar with using the Ableton Push as well as the Akai APC 40 after joining the Transitions Ensemble. He quickly learned the ins and out of these versatile controllers which peaked his interests in performance much more than DJing had in the past. These controllers gave him more freedom in live performing tracks by allowing him to change song structure, loop certain sections, and sing over the backing tracks. After determining what Wavewalk was going to use to perform, he then had to execute and began practicing how this would all come together.

The most important part of the performance became the Ableton Live session that was to be created to house the tracks and the effects chains that would be used in the performance. Wavewalk began by reaching back to the original project files for “Like You”, “Won’t Listen”,

and “Late Night” to obtain the stems of the songs. Once all the stems were collected, they were moved to the master session and divided into song sections that Wavewalk would trigger with the APC 40. These three tracks were the only ones selected because these are the three tracks of the EP that he sang on. Since he wanted to sing on the live versions, this made the most sense and would also make performing and planning for three songs much easier.

After the live song structures were put in place in the session, Wavewalk began to practice by using the APC 40 as the main controller and the Ableton Push as a controller that would mainly be used as a sample pad and loop machine. He used an SM58 for vocals which were accompanied by a large effects chain that included Ableton stock plugins such as auto filter, multiband dynamics, chorus, flanger, echo, redux, pedal, and reverb. He set this up on an audio channel and grouped them to use the macros on the APC 40.



Wavewalk wanted to make the set even more interesting by including a live guitarist which would elevate not only the sound, but the feeling and the emotion behind the performance. Tomás Santibañez who was the recording guitarist on some of the tracks, and who is a close friend, became involved with the set and wrote his own parts for the live pieces.

After 16 hours of practice rooms, Wavewalk gathered together a small crew including, videographers Matt Struble and Mckinley Short, and engineers Andrew Seely and Connor Moen, to record the live performance. It was done in the AKSS Studio at Berklee College of Music, Valencia Campus. The setup included a table which held the APC 40, Ableton Push, Scarlett Audio Interface, SM58 Microphone, and Laptop. The video crew had 3 cameras as well as 2 studio lights. The engineers set up a guitar amp with an SM57 and a KSM 32 for Tomás.

We tracked each song multiple times as Wavewalk recorded his set into Ableton. The final deliverables were then put together by Wavewalk. By taking the videos, Ableton Live recordings, and guitar recordings into Protools, Wavewalk mixed the live versions and matched them to the video takes in Adobe Premiere.

The main reason for creating a live set in this way was for Wavewalk to push himself to have a more unique set than other electronic dance music artists that may simply get on stage and mix their tracks together. By studying up on artists such as San Holo, Lido, and Illenium, it became clear that having the ability to either play instruments or sing is something that you should showcase as an electronic producer and artist. The advantages of performing this way is to have more control over the set and to showcase talent and integration of different technology.

3.3 The Emergence of Wavewalk

After spending so much time and effort into elevating his production abilities, Wavewalk felt it was the right time to begin showcasing this online. He wanted to build up an internet presence by creating a website and social media accounts that are consistent with branding and that build his artist image.

The website was created using Squarespace. Wavewalk has purchased the domain name www.wavewalkmusic.com. He built the entire website using a Squarespace template. The

website is host to all new music that Wavewalk posts on SoundCloud on the home page. The home page also consists of his artist bio and an integrated Instagram section to keep people up to date with the social media content he is posting. There are links to all other social media pages that Wavewalk has a profile on at the very top and bottom of the website.

He has also purchased two fonts that are used exclusively everywhere that he posts; including on his website, in videos, and in cover art, and will be used in the future for all of these things.

Wavewalk has created an Instagram, Twitter, Facebook page, Spotify artist page, SoundCloud page, Patreon, Bandcamp, and Youtube channel. There is consistent branding across all of these as far as profile pictures, backgrounds, color pallets, and artist image as a whole. With these social media accounts Wavewalk intends to show people his artist side with a bit of his personal touch to it. While it mainly revolves around new music alerts, he also showcases himself jamming in the studio or at home and wants people to be able to see the real him while maintaining fully the artist persona.

4. Innovative Aspects

There are two main innovative aspects of this CE project. The first being the blending of genres of music that Wavewalk has found himself immersed in. The second being the live performance and the fact that it is based around these artists that are trying to do something more complex and involved than DJing.

Wavewalk has described the music on the *Room 90* EP as a blend of indie electronic pop and bass music. After several years of bouncing around styles trying to find a good balance and a place to fit in musically, Wavewalk simply let his intuition take over and stopped trying to make

a certain type of music. Instead, he made what came to him and what felt right emotionally. This brought about music which has a nice relaxing vibe in the intros and verses that then opens up into large trap and future bass style drops. The juxtaposition of these somewhat clashing styles is something that Wavewalk has heard from some other small artists that are currently coming up through SoundCloud. These artists are Faux Ivvy, Bonjr, Shwril, and Inadze. After hearing this type of music elsewhere, Wavewalk also felt confident in the fact that it's not necessarily so crazy to try and put styles together that may seem like a clash.

The live performance is the other innovative aspect of this project. Many musicians and producers who make this type of music tend to have a DJ set for their music when they play live. This is very typical and can be very interesting, however, Wavewalk wanted to show off his musical abilities a bit more than a DJ set can. By learning new technology this year and getting comfortable with the APC 40 and Ableton Push, Wavewalk determined this a much better way to play his own music. This setup also allows him to easily manipulate the tracks from their original form and gives him the freedom to sing over the tracks. Having this type of live set is something that is much less common in the dance music genre and is definitely an innovative way to present this EP in a live set.

5. New Skills Acquired

Before coming to Berklee Wavewalk was at a point in his music career where he was lacking confidence in both producing and mixing. After arriving to Berklee all of that changed and through *Room 90* Wavewalk learned how to use Ableton much better. He became more advanced at producing, mixing, and sound design. In his productions he is utilizing much more complex aspects of arranging and sound design as well. While his productions used to consist of

very little original sound design, now they are almost fully original in that sense. He only pulls from sample libraries for specific things such as sounds that cannot be synthesized or to get some inspiration from other producers samples.

Another skill acquired over this year was the ability to perform. Before Berklee Wavewalk had only played small DJ sets. Now he has the knowledge and ability to perform with several different types of controllers and using Ableton's live capabilities which were a foreign language to him before.

Other than being a better mixer, producer, and performer, Wavewalk has learned so much more about the importance of building a brand and having an artist identity. Having only released remixes under his real name, Alex Page, before coming to Berklee, Wavewalk had no presence online and no sense of what it meant to be an artist. Now after learning from other students and from several courses, he has tried to maintain consistency online and a sense of professionalism with his posting and interactions with other producers and artists.

6. Challenges

In the midst of creating *Room 90* and having a lot of fun with it, there were a few challenges that needed some serious attention. The first challenge was something that Wavewalk was used to, and was expecting to happen. Over the last few years he has made hundreds of song ideas yet the basis of *Room 90* was meant to be a cohesive project that had a certain sound. To do this it was important to select the right tracks for the EP. Over the course of this year Wavewalk had over 20 tracks that had the potential to make the final list. It was a major challenge to select the correct ones that all fit together, had the sound he wanted, and represented the message and emotion that *Room 90* was supposed to portray. While this was a major issue, it was also a

challenge that was good for the project. It ultimately lead to a track list that he was very happy with. Some people are able to say they want to make a five track EP and just write five songs, but Wavewalk knew he needed to make way more than necessary and cut out some songs that he may enjoy, but are a good fit.

The second challenge that was much more difficult to deal with is the fact that Wavewalk began to get tired of the songs he had selected, and had trouble listening to them and working on them during the second semester. Before Berklee, Wavewalk was in the habit of creating things fast and being done with them. Although they would never turn out the way he wanted, it was more about getting the practice and creating a lot of music. However, for this project it had to be different. The process was different to make a full body of work that was cohesive and that he was proud of.

It took stepping away from the projects for about a month. At first Wavewalk began to work on new music but quickly realized the cycle would continue of never truly finishing work if he kept down this path. There needed to be a shift in mindset to accomplish something greater such as the *Room 90* EP. Wavewalk decided to stop making music altogether for a few weeks and focus on thinking about how to make the tracks he already had better.

After taking this break, he decided to change the song structure of almost all the songs. He contacted Tomás Santibañez to have him record guitar for two of the songs. Wavewalk also rewrote and resang some of the songs. This, inturn, gave new life to the songs and made Wavewalk very proud of them once again. It was difficult to get over this producing hurdle, but now it is a skill and something to remember for future projects that he may work on.

7. Future Ramifications

A large part of this project in the second and third semesters was the search for a label to release this EP on. The main focus of efforts was to simply reach out to as many small artists releasing on labels and label managers to engage with them and start getting his name out into the community. To do this, Wavewalk scoured SoundCloud for many hours searching for labels and artist collectives that have music similar to his and that he enjoys. Not only did he find many labels that he believed had potential for wanting to release this EP, but he also found so many artists to connect with and talk music with.

Wavewalk discovered that Discord, a chat room type of application, is huge in the music industry for these up and coming artists and small labels. After getting involved in the communities and speaking with many of these artists, Wavewalk felt it important to start asking around about labels and seeing what kinds of opportunities he may have to release this project. Specifically he spoke with Kumo Collective founder Patrick as well as Phuture Collective founder Michael. These two connections turned out to be very important as he asked them advice about submitting music and what these small labels were looking for. Unfortunately, while these people are still wonderful contacts to have in the industry, neither of them felt that *Room 90* was something their label should be releasing.

Wavewalk received many more “no’s” along the way from 14 of the other labels that he had submitted music to. However, in the end there was one label, Crown Collective, that expressed interest in the project. Going forward in the next few weeks after graduation, Wavewalk will be setting up a contract and a plan for release with Crown Collective. With this *Room 90* will get more exposure than if it were simply self released. This is a big step forward for Wavewalk and has potential to open many more doors in the future.

8. Conclusion

Room 90 encompasses everything that Wavewalk wished to achieve this academic year at Berklee College of Music. Not only was this a culmination of musical talent and production techniques to create a unique sound for Wavewalk, it was also a massive learning experience about every aspect of being an artist. From the music, to the live performance, and on to the branding and artist image, each piece of this project was needed in order to fully imagine the potential of Wavewalk moving forward. Wavewalk will take this project and all of the knowledge that he has gained over this year and continue to grow as an artist, producer, mix engineer, vocalist, performer, and social media marketer. Hopefully there comes a time when some of the more administrative tasks can be taken on by another person who believes in the same vision. But for now, Wavewalk is confident in his abilities to create good quality music and other content that position him in the dance music industry just as intended at the start of the year.

Room 90 took a lot of creative energy, time, and passion to make. There were many ups and downs throughout the process. Yet, the outcome ultimately represents Wavewalk as an artist and will be used to propel his career upon graduating from Berklee College of Music.

9. Bibliography

- Bein, Kat. "Louis the Child Have a Ton of Fun Breaking Down New 'Kids at Play' EP: Exclusive." *Billboard*, Billboard, 26 Oct. 2018, Accessed November 28, 2018 www.billboard.com/articles/news/dance/8481889/louis-the-child-kids-at-play-ep-breakdown.
- Bein, Kat. "Whethan Peels Back the Petals On 'Life Of a Wallflower Vol 1' Breakdown: Exclusive." *Billboard*, Billboard, 9 Nov. 2018, Accessed November 28, 2018 www.billboard.com/articles/news/dance/8484146/whethan-life-of-a-wallflower-vol-1-album-breakdown.
- Holo, San. "San Holo - album1 Tour Documentary Pt. 1." *YouTube*, YouTube, 30 Oct. 2018. Accessed November 28, 2018 www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxOM_OJZDQw.
- Kirby, Daniel. "Lido - Live at Skyline Festival, LA 5/20/2017." *YouTube*, YouTube, 9 June 2017. Accessed November 28, 2018 www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRcKXJs3kuQ&t=1795s.
- Kocay, Lisa. "San Holo On 'Album1' And Bridging The Gap Between EDM And Indie Music." *Forbes*. September 21, 2018. Accessed November 28, 2018. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lisakocay/2018/09/21/san-holo-album1-edm-indie-music/#491bfaf035db>.
- Revolution, Nick The. "Illenium Live at the Electronic Music Awards 2017." *YouTube*, YouTube, 21 Sept. 2017. Accessed November 28, 2018 www.youtube.com/watch?v=HlkeQeMKf6k.