

Berklee College of Music

“INTNSE”

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

Supervisor: Pablo Munguia

By Dana Fakhoury

Valencia Campus, Spain

July 2019

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: III

ABSTRACT: IV

INTRODUCTION: 1

DESCRIPTION: 3

PERFORMANCE: 3

PRE-PRODUCTION/PRODUCTION: 4

POST PRODUCTION: 4

INNOVATION: 5

NEW SKILLS ACQUIRED: 5

PRODUCERS SKILLS 5

PERFORMANCE: 6

CHALLENGES: 6

FUTURE RAMIFICATION: 7

CONCLUSION: 7

BIBLIOGRAPHY: 8

Acknowledgments:

As this paper comes to be fully written, I feel heavy hearted parting the enchanting people I have met this year, worked with, laughed with, cried with, but most importantly brought my paper and project to life.

A Thank you to everyone who has been part of my journey and helped me grow. To those who gave their time willingly for my benefit. Thanks for the artists, classmates and friends for letting me be part of their journey, work and collaboration. To the faculty and advisors who guided me and trusted in me. Thank you to my Family and the people I call my family for being supportive, encouraging and letting me exceed your expectations.

... Finally, I thank music.

Abstract:

The project entitled “INTNSE” deriving from the word intensity. The grammar writing was changed for personal and esthetical reasons. “INTNSE” was Dana Fakhoury’s music production portfolio as Earlybird during her year spent at Berklee College of Music. It included a full branded show-reel portfolio that samples some of the producer’s best work in a creative and easily accessible manner through a website. The purpose was to feature her on the music market as an up and coming producer, artist, mix engineer, and a live programmer for Ableton. In the future the author would like to perform her own set as well as collaborative sets live and help artist reach their ultimate goal in production.

Keywords: Producer, Artist, Mix Engineer, Live performance, Earlybird.

Introduction:

Prior to coming to Berklee, Dana was a self-taught multi-instrumentalist. She played guitar as her main instrument, ukulele, a bit of bass, piano and drums and any other instruments she could get her hands on. Dana was fascinated by instruments and how she could make them blend with one another. Composing is what kept her mental state calm, and feeling happy. She also played in a cover band back home for two years called “The Missing Pixels” before they moved on into writing an EP of original songs. However, she felt that the passion wasn’t there and the motivation of her band mates wasn’t enough. She left the band and her hometown and started moving around the world in order to understand what she wanted from music and where she belongs. Little did she know that it was not up to her to make that choice but rather than it choosing her. After getting injured in both hands with a severe case of tendinitis, Dana could not take the path of an artist musician anymore. But wasn’t ready to give up on music.

The main objective of “INTNSE” is to show that intensity is not always a negative trait when it comes to a passion. However, it is a great attribute to demonstrate dedication and motivation in order to achieve an end product and pursue a goal no matter what obstacle comes your way. That is how Dana became Earlybird.

Review State of the Art:

“INTNSE” aims to produce and co-produce with up and coming indie/electronic/pop/acoustic artists with a warm and organic sound that makes a listener dream

or go on a journey. Such as Jain, La Chica, Ellie Goulding, Sylvan Esso, Maggie Rogers, Oh Wonder, FKJ, Fakear, Tycho, Lord Huron, Fink, etc.

This project is influenced by Laura Escudé Aka “Alluxe”¹. Escudé is an artist, an entrepreneur and a live show programmer. She also founded Transmute an eight-week accelerated mentoring program for serious up and coming artists who want to take their performance to the next level. All three domains capture Dana’s attention and interest to follow such a similar and successful path. “As CEO and Founder of Electronic Creatives, Escudé put her music programming, DJ and controllerist skills to use training programmers and operators for The Weeknd, Iggy Azalea, Charli XCX, Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Porter Robinson and many more.”¹ Another member on Laura Escudé’s Electronic Creative team is Rayna Zemel². The latter works mainly as an Ableton playback programmer. However; she is also a live show designer and a music producer. Rayna’s influence derives more from sharing a similar background of having to do a different degree before pursuing their true passion: music, and excel at it.

On a production and creativity level, Dana is heavily influenced by Calvin Harris³. Although she doesn’t know all his music; Harris managed to strike his production techniques, beats sound and style as well as collaboration into Dana’s way of producing music. Dana wishes to work similarly to Harris, releasing albums and singles with a lot of vocal collaborations. She is already doing so with Berklee Music Production Technology and Innovation singer/songwriter

¹ Laura Escudé, "Laura Escudé." 2018. <https://www.lauraescude.com/laura-escude/>.

² Rayna Zemel, “Rayna Zemel.” Accessed November 27, 2018. <https://raynazemel.com/about/>.

³ Calvin Harris, "Releases." Calvin Harris | New Single 'Promises' Out Now." 2019. <http://calvinharris.com/releases/>

Celestine Manno. She also started working with Berklee's Contemporary Performance Program folk singer/songwriter Genna Matthews on a track.

All artists, producers and entrepreneurs mentioned above have websites with a similar objective of being informative as they are already established. "INTNSE" on the other hand will have to be different as the project is about establishing Dana as a producer, mix engineer, an artist and live programmer for Ableton. The website has to appeal to its target audience at first glance and make it feel welcoming and trustworthy as well as intriguing.

Description:

Dana's project as Earlybird is a portfolio demonstrating her as a producer, an artist, a mix engineer and a sound designer.

Performance:

Despite her injuries Earlybird found a way to make music and perform it while being connected to an audience. From collaboration with Vocalists to her own instrumentals, the way she is in sync with the machine of her choice makes her performance relatable. Earlybird performs using an Akai Apc40 mkii and an Ableton Push and if she has a chance she will add live guitar playing to her set. In the performance and set preparation. Dana used Ableton as her go to software for various reasons. One of them is that Ableton is made for electronic music producers and performers and the MIDI controllers that she used are synced and can be mapped to Ableton. She also preferred performing with the Akai Apc40 mkii much more than the Ableton push as her set needed to overwrite the knobs instead of just using the given parameters.

Pre-Production/Production:

The pre-production to every collaboration needed a lot of rehearsals and meeting points with the artists. On all these projects Dana was responsible to set meetings and follow ups with artists she collaborated with. Making sure that the artists are focused and in their right mind set to get the best out of their sessions. It was also important to she be meticulous in her work and coordination to fulfill all tasks. Be sure that if other musicians were needed to book them and rehearse with them. Also, Dana needed to be responsible and make sure that everyone's schedules are aligned and are up to date while being informed.

The project required a lot of hard work and studying in between to learn better production skills and sound designing synth and working with an oscillator to get the sounds artists want faster and at a professional rate. Expand and search for remarkable sound libraries. Investing time to learn all required DAWs at a deeper level.

During the production process all time was spent in the studio recording with the artist or alone until the sound was fitting the track or style. Dana had to also collaborate with recording engineers and session musicians to bring her vision to life. As well as a videographer to document her working process without it looking staged.

Post Production:

Once the music was done Dana exported all her stems and prepped her files for the mixing process. It was a lot of knowing what EQ to remove and automation to delete or keep when changing software. Sometimes an EQ serves as a sound designing tool rather than mixing. And in order to get that objective perspective on the produced work. She moved her work from midi files to audio and from Ableton to Pro Tools. Where she later discovered that mixing and editing on pro tools is much more efficient and organized than Ableton.

Innovation:

Being a producer, an artist, a performer and a mix engineer already exists. There is not much to innovate in that field. However, Dana's approach and commitment to a project made it feel different and innovator. She was not only one person in the room but many. She took great interest in each project she carefully selected and gave it more than the extra mile it deserved. Her intention during a collaboration was to always make sure the artists felt secured and well rounded. She was a fan of every artist she worked with, and that made the experience more rewarding for her. Another aspect that made Dana's project feel refreshing and innovative is that she didn't only feel like a producer but she got to perform every piece of work she produced, the artist wanted her on stage. And that last part showed the audience a new way of artist connecting, bonding and the chemistry they had creating the music and delivering it. The impact was larger than an artist with a backing track.

New Skills Acquired:

Dana grew a lot during this year. Coming in Berklee's door she was lost on what she wanted from the music industry. But the more time passed and she worked on project she noticed that creating music, organizing, rehearsing and being on stage is what made her heart beat and her mind focus.

Producers Skills

Sometimes not saying anything but jamming or let the artist work made a session creative. Setting a mood before the artists walk in makes a big difference. Leave your personal life out of the room unless its relevant to the music. The focus should be on the artist and the

craft not the producer's day. Every session that Dana had was for two hours, however Dana always had the room and equipment booked for six hours instead. One of the reasons is to not feel rushed and another is for when inspiration came through; she and the artist could continue working. She always planned for a food break or a coffee break and in these moments, she bonded more with the artists. One very important thing in production is to always foresee and think ahead and not to take anything personal. Once that is achieved production goes smoother.

Performance:

The best lesson in performance was practice, and when you get that one down practice more. For some people electronic performance looks cool, but preparing a set and making the decision of what loops to play and how to play them as well as what effects go with the set at what time. Those were all new decisions that Dana had to make in little time and for the first time. Another skill to acknowledge with performance is to know the software and machine you are using and your set like the back of your hand, because midway through a performance you will run into some sort of trouble and will have to troubleshoot it while you keep smiling and performing. It's a lot of time and dedication and patience.

Challenges:

Dana wouldn't really call them challenges but more of learning curves. Besides her CE she was working with Sofar Sounds Valencia and leading a music production workshop with "She Knows Tech". Had she not been highly organized and responsive all the little detailed hiccups would have been major problems. The biggest challenge was when you are working with people who are not invested as much as you are but you have to keep moving the project forward.

Future Ramification:

Finally, Dana is becoming the music production technology and innovation fellow after her graduation. During that year she intends to be her own artist, welcoming collaborations of course and start building her team of mix engineers, master engineer and find a good manager. She also aims to get more in depth with producing and performing with the Ableton Push and the Apc40 mkii and build her own stage set up, evolve and become a professional. On the side she will still be aiming to continue her duties with Sofar Sounds Valencia and collaborate with “She Knows Tech”.

Conclusion:

To sum it all up, “INTNSE” is Dana Fakhoury’s music portfolio as Earlybird. The latter is a producer, an artist, a mix engineer and a live programmer using Ableton. Intensity is what you need if you want to step ahead in the game. There is little time to take a break and chill if you want to make it, you have to want it and work for it.

Bibliography:

Escudé, Laura. "Laura Escudé. " 2018. <https://www.lauraescude.com/laura-escude/>.

Harris, Calvin. "Releases." Calvin Harris | New Single 'Promises' Out Now. " 2019.
<http://calvinharris.com/releases/>

Zemel, Rayna. " Rayna Zemel." Accessed November 27, 2018. <https://raynazemel.com/about/>.