

METANOIA: Graduating Life

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INTRODUCTION:

In this report, I will discuss my PA6033 advanced practice project. My final goal for this task was to document the journey associated with the development of my upcoming EP, 'Metanoia,' highlighting both the highs and lows during its evolution. The research that went into producing this project involved reading online discussions about standardised video-editing software and developing a general understanding of common editorial approaches through extensive research and analysis of YouTube videos and documentaries in the desired style. The message I hope to convey through this autobiographical documentary is that musical projects, as intricate as an EP, require artists to allow themselves to be more vulnerable with their listeners, which in turn makes them more aware of their insecurities and the importance of safety within their audience. This can be seen especially when navigating the experience with both admiration and negativity, as well as how the pressure of popularity can impact artists more than the public realises whilst highlighting that it is also okay to seek help to complete such a project, as the best version of one-self comes from welcoming others on your journey.

TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT:

The tools implemented for the project's development were:

- Logic Pro X, audio processing
- Final Cut Pro X, video editing
- PreSonus PD-70, microphone for dialogue recording
- BeyerDynamics DT-770 Pro (80 Ohm), headphones for mixing
- Logitech C920, main camera
- iPhone 15, second camera
- Other personal video recordings
- OBS, video streaming and recording software

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Due to scheduling issues, most of the resources mentioned in this project's proposal have not been implemented. Unfortunately, with my working schedule combined with my University commitments, it became evident once the project began to unfold that my ability to implement external equipment had been significantly reduced. This realisation presented a challenge, but it also inspired me to maximise the potential of the personal equipment I had at my disposal. Using my iPhone 15 was a spontaneous decision that turned out to be quite beneficial. This choice allowed me to create a stark contrast between the more intimate, personal sections of the documentary and the high-quality imagery typically achieved through professional-grade equipment. The iPhone's camera capabilities provided a practical and effective solution, especially given my strict timetable and the constraints I faced. The portability of the iPhone also enabled me to capture spontaneous moments, lending authenticity to the narrative I aimed to convey. In addition, I incorporated unorthodox tools, such as the Logitech C920 webcam. This choice not only saved time during setup and preparation but also ensured that I had a reliable backup solution in case my primary equipment, like the PD-70 microphone, malfunctioned. Such contingency plans were vital in a project where every moment counted. However, the main technical issue I encountered during the development was related to the demanding specifications of Final Cut Pro X. My personal computer struggled under the weight of the software's requirements, which significantly impacted both its processing power and the available storage space for my project files and renders. This challenge pushed me to adapt quickly, finding workarounds to optimise my workflow while still aiming for a polished final product. Through these experiences, I learned the importance of flexibility and creativity in achieving project goals, even when faced with unforeseen obstacles.

DELIVERY:

The goal of the project's showcase was to explore a different perspective on a conventional performance, in this case by showing the behind-the-scenes of the EP mentioned previously instead of a more direct presentation of it. As initially proposed, the final product's presentation was supposed to take place in the form of a live premiere on YouTube. However, due to the module's request for an in-person performance, I had to adapt the whole concept of the showcase to suit the planned event organised by the University, keeping this option as a backup plan in case of any difficulties.

During the meetings for organising the event, which took place in class with the leading lecturer, who was also the event organiser. We discussed the possibility of showcasing my documentary in the spaces provided by the University through streaming it in a continuous loop, which means that participants and audience members could come and go throughout the video. This idea was inspired by a recent trip to the F1 Exhibition with Sönke Prigge, where there were documentary-style videos that you could join in on at any time. In terms of an ideal setting, I would have preferred to use an edit suite, Studio 3, or room 3.24 (a large rehearsal room) for this plan. As I came to realise later, other members of the showcase had booked all the edit suites. Unforeseen renovations and pre-scheduled lectures unrelated to music also meant that there was no suitable venue for my plan to take place. At this time, after resolving all the technical issues and having a private conversation with the lecturer to discuss possible solutions for the previously stated obstacle, I was forced to fall back on my backup plan of publishing my material on YouTube. The way this was achieved was by using the platform's embedded publication options, which allowed me to schedule the event's time and date with just a few clicks. As underwhelming as this setup is, one advantage I gained from using this approach was complete control over the scheduling, which was ultimately set for April 11, 2025, at 4 pm local time. To conclude this section, despite the chaotic nature of the process, I managed to obtain an acceptable result by relying solely on my project management skills, and I received overall positive feedback from the live spectators and viewers of the documentary.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT:

My ambition and intention with the documentary were to illuminate the artistic struggles and triumphs that marked my journey at the University of East London, as well as the various setbacks intrinsic to previous projects that ultimately gave rise to my work, 'Metanoia.' The title itself evokes a sense of transformation (Zille, 2020), mirroring my evolution not only as an electronic music producer but also as an individual evolving through layers of creative challenge and personal introspection. In conceptualising the documentary, I envisioned a structure that would delve deeply into the nuances of my mental health during the narrative timeline of the EP, while also evolving into a profoundly personal retrospective that encapsulates my artistic metamorphosis. The concept's tripartite vision was ignited and nurtured by my dedicated assistant producer, Maggie Pikesley. Her unwavering support and invaluable contributions were pivotal, helping to shape what became a musical soundscape, rich in texture and depth. This documentary, therefore, stands as an exploration of each chapter's production in the context of my creative journey, interweaving insights drawn from my extensive research into the art of videography — a medium as impactful as the music itself (Jayswal, 2020).

The first chapter of the documentary unfolds as a glimpse into my artistic theory, showcasing a curated selection of self-produced tracks that represent my lighter and more optimistic tone. This segment is complemented by a visual that embodies deliberate duality: an intimate interview setting, where I take on the role of narrator, coupled with a series of candid clips that are enhanced with a vintage tape-like texture. This aesthetic serves as a metaphorical flashback, weaving nostalgia into the storyline and encouraging viewers to engage with the additional layers of context embedded within the narrative (Makarov, 2019). Throughout this chapter, I reflect on transformative university projects, particularly a reggae track that was created during my Foundation Year at the University of East London. This reflection articulates the challenging personal decisions that have furthered my career, illustrating how setbacks often herald new beginnings.

As the narrative flows into the second chapter, the continuation of themes established so far invites viewers deeper into my artistic theory. This segment not only underscores my creative journey but also illuminates the sources of inspiration that have influenced specific projects. Among these, the organic and natural sounds that breathe life into Porter Robinson's album 'Nurture' emerge as a primary influence—a major turning point in my artistic development.

Robinson's work has profoundly shaped my sound and approach to electronic music, fostering an emotional landscape where themes of nostalgia and personal articulation flourish. The emotionally resonant writing style found in 'Nurture' has instilled within me the confidence to create work that reflects my true identity, capturing the essence of my experiences and emotions. This chapter further discusses the influence of notable figures in the music industry, such as Porter Robinson, Kharfi, and Tokyo Project, shedding light on the importance of creative freedom (Reitov, 2024), mentorship, and mutual support in nurturing artistic growth.

Venturing into the final chapter, I delve into a more intricate and personal exploration of the narrative interwoven throughout the tracks. This section provides a richer context for the themes that have been discussed, drawing clear and honest connections to my own life experiences—moments that shaped me both personally and artistically. Here, I go beyond mere technical analysis; instead, I offer a deep and soulful insight into the creative process behind each piece, intentionally sidestepping the complexities of technical intricacies in favour of a more relatable narrative. As I outlined the topics for this part, I recognised how this simplification allowed for a fluid quality in storytelling (Sutton, 2021), inviting listeners to connect with my journey on an emotional level.

By sharing the raw essence of my experiences and reflections, I aim to create a narrative that resonates deeply, one that showcases not only the music itself but also the heart and soul that went into its creation. This extensive narrative is ultimately a tapestry—a vivid interlacing of personal growth, struggles, and inspirations that richly inform my artistic expression. Each chapter, each track, and each reflection contributes to a broader understanding of what it means to create art in a world that often feels disjointed and overwhelming. Through this documentary, I seek to inspire others who may find themselves on a similar path, struggling with their own artistic identities and mental health. I hope that by sharing my story, others might feel empowered to explore their own journeys, embracing both the light and shadow that coexist in the realm of creativity. The aim is to foster a sense of connection through shared experiences, highlighting the universal themes of transformation, resilience, and artistic expression that define us all. emotional level. By sharing my own journey and reflections, I hope to create a relatable experience that resonates with others, showcasing not just the music but the heart and soul that went into its creation.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Reflecting on my journey throughout the development of 'Metanoia: Graduating Life...', I realise that this project has not only been a creative endeavour but also a profound personal exploration. One of the most significant lessons I learned was the importance of adaptability and resilience. The challenges I faced, particularly with equipment limitations and scheduling conflicts, taught me to embrace spontaneity and make the most of the resources available to me. This experience reinforced the value of thinking outside the box; using my iPhone 15 and alternative tools not only enriched the documentary but also allowed me to capture authentic, candid moments that truly resonate with my message. Moreover, I gained a deeper understanding of vulnerability in the creative process. By sharing my experiences, I found that the connection I create with my audience deepens when I present my true self, flaws and all. I would argue that acknowledging my insecurities opened a dialogue about the pressures artists face and underlined the significance of seeking support along the way. Collaboration and community became key themes in my work, emphasising that no one has to navigate their artistic journey or their lives alone. Ultimately, this project taught me invaluable lessons about creativity, flexibility, and authenticity. As I move forward in my artistic pursuits, I will continue to prioritise these topics, ensuring that my work reflects not just my music but also the feelings and experiences that shape me as an individual. The journey of creating 'Metanoia' has not only prepared me for future projects but has also solidified my belief in the power of storytelling through art.

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