

Name: _____

Period: _____



“The only Truth is music.”

– Jack Kerouac

Music Production

When we examine the rich and impactful history of music, the phrase ‘music production’ can seem awkward and a bit antithetical, like describing a ‘gentle insurrection’ or a ‘peaceful wilderness,’ or perhaps even like making a peanut butter and bologna sandwich. Music has been considered a “language of emotion” that transcends cultures and brings people together for almost as long as we’ve been walking upright.¹ Plato believed music “gives soul to the universe.” Leo Tolstoy called music the “shorthand of emotion.” William Shakespeare claimed music to be the “food of love,” and he used musical overtures and interludes to enhance some of the most famous characters in literature (Romeo even used popular songs of the time like “My Heart is Full of Woe” to express his longing for Juliet.)

Yet the addition of the word ‘production’ to the phrase suggests that we can grab this spontaneous overflowing of human emotion and polish it, or that we can capture the lightning in a bottle and release it upon command. But the music we hear these days has been formulated, manipulated, auto-tuned, pitch-corrected, and compressed into almost unrecognizably inhuman tones. In the name of production, it seems we’ve scrubbed away the human element that originally made it music.

So what responsibility do we have to carry on this perceived ‘musical tradition’ of emotional expression? How is it that almost all of us can recognize a ‘bad’ song when we hear it, even though we may have very different tastes in music? Is it possible, or even necessary, to restore the human element to modern music? What is the difference between a producer, a songwriter, and a musician?

For the next ten days, we will seek to answer these questions and more, while exploring what it takes to build a career (or life) in music. We will learn how to write, produce, and publish music on a limited budget, and we will learn how to collaborate with others in a way that is both deeply rewarding and genuinely satisfying.

Guiding Questions:

- *How can music affect my mood?*
- *What are the characteristics of a ‘good’ song? A ‘bad’ one?*
- *How does music form a bond between the listener and the creator?*
- *What types of careers are available in music performance and production?*

¹ Mohana, M. (2018). Music & How It Impacts Your Brain, Emotions. *Psych Central*. Retrieved on June 24, 2019, from <https://psychcentral.com/lib/music-how-it-impacts-your-brain-emotions/>

What You Will Learn:

- *To build or create a song or rhythm on a minimal budget.*
- *To write lyrics that consider melody, hook, and theme.*
- *To use music as a tool to reach or connect with others.*
- *To build a career in music or music production.*

What You Will Do²:

Students can expect to learn the basics of music production and performance including songwriting, multitracking, sampling, and rhythm. In addition, they will learn to cooperate and compromise with others as they work toward the common goal of writing, producing, and performing a song.

At Home:

- *Keep a journal in which you compose lyric ideas, reflect upon your activities and surroundings, and process and analyze the new music you've discovered.*
- *Practice your instrument or craft for a minimum of 30 minutes per day, using the attached rubric to reflect upon your process.*
- *Set goals each Monday for the work you plan to complete and reflect each Sunday on your progress toward those goals.*

In Class:

- *Participate in a variety of seminars, in-class discussions, and group mini-lessons.*
- *Write- and complete- at least 4 songs.*
- *Practice and perform with your classmates.*
- *Record at least one completed song at the Marble Garden Studios.*

² Please refer to your bi-weekly checklist for specific assignment requirements.