

Mentor Visit Assessment #1

Date: 1/29/2021

Subject: First Mentor Visit With Cody

Assessment:

In my first mentor visit with Cody, we dove deep into a discussion about the process of songwriting, the tools used to convey emotion, as well as ways to add contrast, texture and tension within a song during the production and writing process.

As soon as I brought up the idea of songwriting, Cody had me bring out a journal and immediately start jotting down words and phrases that came to mind when I thought of what I have gone through or what I have felt, either right now or in the past. Within just a few minutes I had filled a page full of thoughts and feelings. Both the speed and utter confidence that Cody showed was education in itself; songwriting requires no formality or planning. It is a process which allows for the complete expression and exploration of oneself without walls and barriers, unless you want there to be. After this, Cody forced me to write a simple melody on the fly, which we played around with. Eventually, after experimenting with bass patterns and chords which accentuated the feeling of the melody, Cody and I established a strong chord progression with a solid sense of tension and release. A specific tool that Cody repeatedly put into use was the Suspended chord, which sits in between a minor and major chord. Using a suspended chord allows the chord following it to act as a resolving sound, meaning that it relieves the moment of tension. I will continue to use this throughout the Final Product process.

Following the creation of the chord progression, we discussed many “devices” (tools) that are used in a song. One that he put a great deal of emphasis on was the use of common tonalities between chords. Chords are constructed of 2 or more notes, and using a similar note in 2 chords that are next to each other in a progression makes the listening experience fluid and enjoyable from the listener’s perspective. When used throughout the entirety of a song, common

tonalities allow for a “ride”. Another device which Cody and I spoke about was the substitution of a chord for the same chord, but at a different spot on the guitar, making small changes in the sound and big changes in the feeling. By adding variation from an original progression in a song, the songwriter catches the listener’s ear and keeps their attention for a longer period of time, thereby making it more interesting. These sorts of changes, while seemingly unnecessary, add texture and variation to the song, while still maintaining a sense of repetition and familiarity.

At the end of our session, Cody actually gave me some “homework”. I am tasked with creating new chord progressions based off of the one that we created, which may be used during an alternate section of the song, such as a bridge or chorus. I am also going to attempt to record the progression in my DAW (Digital Audio Workspace) as well as find a suitable bass pattern and perhaps rhythm pattern. I cannot wait to see what we will come up with over the coming weeks.