Self-Reflection Report

Over the course of this project in different groups we were to record ourselves, or an external client, performing a cover or an original song in the veins of a picked genre. As a group we looked at our options of bringing in clients, or with the people in our group seeing what everyone can play instrumentally to see if we can limit the timeframe down and record ourselves. After a few days of going into discussion – we’d decided to record between ourselves and record a cover of Nirvana’s ‘Smells Like Teen Spirit’ as we felt Grunge was a good genre to go along with.

We started to talk about who was doing what after deciding the song. We had the elemental aspects to a grunge song – a few guitars for rhythm and solo, drums, a vocalist who was still to be decided at that point, but it was definite we would need a vocalist in the song to make it sound right. We also had a to-be-decided bass element – we were unsure if we were going to record a bass guitar or use some form of plugin or insert to replicate a bass. As long as the elements sounded like a grunge song – we felt it was fine to replicate instrumentation digitally. We then looked into the microphones we needed, compiling a kit list (which was then changed on the day of the recording eventually). The practice of the instrumentation was left over to those performing – as I do not play instruments.

When we booked the studio, the only free booking we had was on the last week of the project, meaning there was more time waiting about to record, and less time to mix. We were set to record on the 26th October, when the project was due on the 28th. This being said, without a doubt we were late on handing in the project. I had my session mixed and bounced down by the afternoon on the 31st, however that is still underlined as late. The time management in this project, due to the late booking, hasn’t been the best however in the small amount of time we actually had we managed to achieve a lot.

In the recording microphones changed, and the vocalist (another group member’s dad) only stayed for three takes before his voice started to cut out due to a sore throat, so we had to make do with what vocals we managed to record and continue with the rest of the recording. We did not plan for a fire alarm to go off also, setting us back for a little bit however it wasn’t too major. The weeks previous we decided to use a synthetic bass for the bass track, ensuring that we were going to be using that when it came to recording day. However when it came to record in the studio the individual who said they would definitely do so, had said they weren’t which set us back for the bass track. We had to get a bass last minute picked up from someone’s house and try to ‘wing’ the bass – as no one in our group actually knew the bassline properly.

The rest of the recording went quite well, things were recorded cleanly and some even right on the first take – but we took multiple recordings just to be sure.

On the Friday we spent the afternoon applying an external hardware effect in studio 1 to our mix. We decided to compress the drum tracks that had been applied to a sub mix on an AUX track – compressing and EQing the drums before then recording the output of it. However, coming to exporting the session to mix them on the Friday in the workstations in the classroom, things went wrong. We didn’t see that the session was at 96kHz and would not run on a host that barely runs 48kHz sample rate. We spent an extra while trying to work out how to go around it – without having to re-export the session as it took a while to transfer due to the multiple takes – we used playlist recording which auto saves multiple recordings onto the same track. Eventually we got it to work but this took up our afternoon, and ultimately I had to mix my session on the Monday.

In terms of looking at the brief I feel we covered everything we needed in the project, on a separate document I looked at the aspects of grunge and producing techniques and referred them back to the way we recorded and mixed our session. And the understanding of rewire – I had already used rewire in the previous project as it fit well with the song – however I don’t see much options in using rewire with a grunge song as it doesn’t bode well with the instrumentation and musical aspects – thus being I left it out of the session.

Next project, I ultimately plan to work better on time management as I will need to due to the setback from this project – which has now continued into the timescale for Project 3.