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Influences: Eight Songs/Artists That Impacted My Musical Journey

Ava Lynch
Western Michigan University, avalynch3@gmail.com

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Creative Works Reflection

I elected to pursue my project, "Influences: Eight Songs/Artists That Impacted My Music Journey" as my final thesis because it allowed me to combine my two greatest passions within the world of music: songwriting/arranging and producing. This project was a culmination of eight songs, written by eight favorite/most significant artists, and covered in my own unique style of writing and producing.

The process began with selecting songs, which was a simple process as I already knew what I wanted the overall theme of the project to be: songs that I have a personal connection to. I selected songs from my childhood, songs from my present roster of favorite artists, and songs that are connected to members of my family. From there, all I had to do was decide how each song was going to be recreated.

Going into this project, I knew I wanted to work with two ensembles that I had not previously explored, and that included a string quintet and an eight-voice ensemble. I also intended to include songs that were more stylistically in my wheelhouse with some more modernistic changes by including synthesizers and other processed sounds that I haven't previously incorporated much. At this stage, I had to select which songs were going to fall under which arrangement style, and the primary factor in this was how I felt the vision for each would be best accomplished.

Moving on from that aspect of the planning stage, I then began to write and arrange the songs. I had begun creating the string quintet and voice arrangements first as they were going to be more challenging than what was within my wheelhouse. I began writing these four arrangements within music notation software as they were being written for live musicians. Once

drafts of these were created, I began to create drafts in the other style and get things moving along for those tracks as well.

After drafts turned into more concrete versions, musicians were starting to record and the songs started falling into place. Once I would obtain all the necessary tracks for a given song, the production phase would begin and I would start processing individual elements for the sounds I wanted to get out of them and cleaning up any mishaps that might have been within the take. Once each element sounded the way I wanted it to, I moved on to mixing the track as a whole and implemented choices that would bring out the best in each element without letting them interfere with each other.

Finally, I got to the final products and reached the end of this project. It certainly was a learning experience in many ways. I had never previously worked with music notation software for voices before, and I had minimal experience doing so for strings, so both came with a learning curve. Another aspect that I had to learn a lot about to accomplish this project was the balancing of frequencies and making sure the voices could still stand out from their competing instruments like piano and guitar so things didn't sound muddy.

Overall, the project turned out as good, if not better, than I could have ever expected. Watching these songs go from drafts in writing to full blown productions was a very cool sight to see, and a very cool project to be a part of and create. There are some things within the process I might have structured differently, or I may even include a more structured timeline for any future endeavors, but I think this project exceeded all of my expectations. I could not be more pleased with the end result I received, and I cannot wait to pursue more projects like this.