

HOPE THIS HELPS



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1. INTRODUCTION

This project is based on the creation of an EP and all the things that it evolves. That is because there is a big misunderstanding when it comes to music recording. In most of the cases it is seen as an easy and cheap process, consequently, I decided to make this project to clear some myths and rumors about the recording of songs, and also to give a better understanding of the meaning of the tracks I am handing in to the possible listeners.

This project has meant a big growth for me, both, personally and professionally. As a result, the goal of this body of work is to explain my experience from the writing to the recording of the tracks. I wanted it to represent what my songs are about and what this journey has meant to me.

It contains two really different parts:

First, there is the theoretical and rational part, which is a result of the research I did to clear some doubts I had. There, I learned things related to the business and the relationship between music and emotions from the point of view of other singers and songwriters.

Firstly, I start off by talking about my main musical influences and the most popular music genres right now, since having a better understanding of the place somebody's music comes from, and having the capacity to distinguish different music genres, is really useful, as it helps to define this person's style and get deeper in the pieces.

Furthermore, music and feelings have been rooted in all the cultures since unthinkable times. Yet, there is no popular explanation on how music is able to connect with our emotions so much, consequently, the only way to know it is by reading scientific documents, and still, after reading that it can be a mystery.

As a consequence, I decided to ask singers about their writing processes with two main goals: one was to establish a standard songwriting process by comparing the steps each singer uses, and the other was to see how different

people treated emotions in their tracks and the positive effects that it could have in them.

I have always been really interested in other's songwriting, seeing that I consider being open to new ways of making things can be key to keep growing and evolving as an artist. I always like to challenge myself, as a result, I wanted to learn from the processes of other singers, and trying to apply the elements I liked the most about each one to mine.

After that, I talk about music therapy, due to the fact that I have always been curious about it, and that was the perfect excuse to make a research about the topic. I have always written considering it was a therapy for me, moreover, my objective was to make that music that was therapeutic for me useful for others. As a result, I wanted to see if there was a difference between music therapy and that therapeutic effect.

Consequently, in this project I immersed myself in an investigation related to the topic. Talking to some professionals to know if my suppositions were true or not, and if I was able to help people clinically through my songs.

Nevertheless, it is not all about the feelings, since, for an album to get to people it has to be released. And this is one of the most crucial parts. I have not touched on this topic so much, as the main theme of this project is the emotions and feelings, even so, I wanted to include a definition of the music industry. That is to have a personal vision of the opportunities my EP can have after being released, since knowing the territory you are getting in before exploring it helps to be ready.

My main big objective with this theoretical part was to be set for the new opportunities and challenges this new experience could suppose. Also, to understand my need to write as a therapy seeing the same need other singers have. Overall, it is a mesh of basic things I needed to be able to go on with the project having a better idea of what I was doing and where I was.

After this rational part there is a really sensitive part, which I consider the soul of this project. It is the representation of my nature and the nature of this EP I am handing in.

I thought it was really important to contextualize everything in order to be able to show where I am coming from, however, that could not be the full project, since it did not show who I am, and it is the most important part of it.

The second part of the project is an immersion into my own world, a friendly, yet formal conversation between the reader and myself. It is not a really normal thing to do in a document of these characteristics, yet, I think it was absolutely necessary, what is more, I consider it is even more important than the previous part.

Knowing where the songs come from and the meaning of them is really crucial, and it helps to listen to them in a really different way. Therefore, I decided to put a detailed description of my tracks, explaining the experiences that lead me to write every single line of the pieces.

Furthermore, the songs and the album are full of metaphors, some of them being difficult to understand, and so I needed to explain them, seeing that with this EP I wanted to express my feelings freely, and the written part of it had to be a representation of all those things.

Besides, I considered that if I explained the songs, the album and the cover in detail; my process, which is the most interesting part would be visible.

All in all, this is a project about feelings, where I show myself completely. I think that balance between rational and emotional parts made this project really versatile and it allows the reader to get in my mind in two really different ways.

Like the EP, this document is a safe place for everybody to realize it is okay not to be okay, and to heal through the power of music and words.

After creating this body of work I know a lot of things I did not and I actually know myself better, as a consequence, I hope I can transmit all those learnings and emotions correctly through this pages.

Furthermore, music has always been a really important part of my life so being able to make this has been a blessing. Nevertheless, it has come with a lot of inconveniences which I did not try to hide, as I consider they are interesting.

Knowing what it takes to have a final product makes the result

better, consequently, I hope after reading this, people can value the EP I have done more, and can understand the hours and details I have put in every single part of it.

It is always interesting to know the steps that are necessary to do something. I have learned and realized a lot of things that making music supposes, and all those lessons are captured in the lines of this project.

It is really long, however, that is because it is so diverse. It is visible that in this project I have tried to cover and include a lot of topics, yet, never going too far from the main nucleus: the EP.

2. MUSIC STYLE

To start with this project I want to talk about my music style. First of all, because it is going to define the way the album (that is the result of this body of work) will sound. And secondly, due to the fact that for singers it is really important to have a style that can make them stand out from all the other vocalists out there. Nowadays, it is impossible to invent something absolutely new, since music has had an extremely long journey, owing to this, being inventive in this area is pretty much unthinkable.

Therefore, the key is to find a distinctive which can make people feel like they have never heard something like that, whereas it is just a little variation from a thing that already existed. That happens seeing that while listening to music, our brain segregates hormones, such as prolactin, which produce pleasure when we listen to something new, yet, close to other things we have already tuned in. That is why, all the popular songs are in essence the same, because if we listened to something drastically different to everything we had previously listened to, a massive amount of those hormones would be produced creating a feeling of disgust and repulsion towards that piece.

The peculiarity doesn't have to be necessarily musical, it can remain in the lyrical content, in other words, on the topics you address. For instance, the concepts or metaphors behind the songs, or a certain vision of the album are a few of the things that can make you a remarkable artist. Later on, we will see some singers that have gained so much respect and recognition for things like that. In brief, the fundamental affair is to find something that makes you unlike others and take advantage of it as much as you can.

The two main facts that define your style (musically wise) are the influences you have and the music genres you listen to the most; what's more, these two things are really bounded one to another. Eventually, now I am going to talk about them both individually:

2.1. MUSICAL INFLUENCES

The artists we listen to and we have listened to since our childhood determine in a really strong way how we write, owing to the subconscious memory that saves all the information our brain processes and embraces. Most of the times, when we listen to a singer so much in a short period of time, the songs we compose during that while are of a similar style and genre, as our subconscious preserves it. Straightaway, I am going to disclose the vocalists that influence my current music to have a better understanding of where my music comes from. I could go back and pay attention to the tracks I listened to in my early years, seeing that what we consume as children marks our creativity notably; nevertheless, the music I absorb has obviously changed a lot and my compositions are legitimately determined by it. That's why I am going to focus on the vocalists I listen to consistently during the period of writing and recording of the songs. This means, singers will be added in this part of the project until I make the last song. In addition to it, I listen to lots of singers, as a consequence, I will not put all of them because this part of the project would extremely long. Consequently, I am going to talk about the ones that are the weightiest influences during the process:

- **Ariana Grande**

She is one of the most famous and influential artists at the moment. She started in a Broadway musical named 13, later on, she took the role of Cat Valentine in shows like "Victorious" and "Sam & Cat". After that, she started her musical career in 2013, and that is actually when I became her fan. Being 26 years old, she has beaten a massive amount of records, and she has gone through unimaginable things, for instance, a terrorist attack in one of her concerts which caused the death of 22 of her fans and over 150 injured people. As a reason, she has been my idol for a really long while. Moreover, I am a

really hardcore and crazy fan and so her music has influenced hugely mine, besides, she's my inspiration in all the thinkable ways.

I have been a fan of hers since I was 10 years old, she is my favorite singer and at this point I am sure she will always be. I have grown with her and she means a lot to me, in fact, the amount of love I feel for her is crazy to everybody, as it is not normal. As a consequence she has inspired me more than anybody has. Her music style is pop-ish and r&b based. Her music used to be more commercial and not so personal, but due to the past events she has lived, her lyrics have turned really intimate and deep. Besides, you can really feel what she's telling you, and the spectator can really connect with her and her story. The productions are more on the electronic and computer-generated side, always researching special and new sounds and the mesh of different keyboards. Her album "Sweetener" is the most experimental one and it contains really special and different compositions, that use things like human breathing as a percussion element. Her music contains samples too (parts of songs from other artists incorporated in the new song) and she really enjoys layering as many harmonies as she can. Her style has kept developing until becoming what it is now, with notable jazz and musical theatre influences, making her style catchy and radio-friendly as much as unique. As I previously exposed, she used to make more commercial and not so deep songs with really high notes to attract people. On the contrary, now she just enjoys making music, creating massive amounts of songs in short periods of time, all of them so personal. Her sound and music have really influenced mine and my way of writing.

- 7 Rings: _

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QYh6mYIJG2Y>

- Thank U, Next:_
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gl1aHhXnN1k>
- God Is A Woman:_
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kHLHSIExFis>
- No Tears Left To Cry:_
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffxKSjUwKdU>

- **Billie Eilish**

Being just 17 years old, she has reached the hugest dreams of tones of people all over the world. She is well known for her successful debut single “Ocean Eyes” which was released when she was just 14 and it got her to where she is now. She was born and raised in Los Angeles. Her elder brother, Finneas O’Connell is her producer and co-writer, this makes everything so close to her. One of her latest singles, Bad Guy, has beaten a lot of unimaginable records, in addition, being just 17 years old, she has become one of the hottest names in music. She is one of my favorite singers and hugest influences, despite the fact that I listened to her music for the first time last year, she gained my heart so fast.

She has a really peculiar music style. Although her first songs, such as Ocean Eyes, were a little basic, she has now developed a unique and amazing style. I would say she is pop-ish, even though it is impossible to classify her in one genre. Her songs have different contexts, songs like “Bury a Friend” are absolutely born from her imagination since she makes up stories the same way a writer does it in a book. However, other tracks, such as “Wish You Were Gay”, are personal and deep songs that talk about her personal experiences and feelings. Her music tends to be on the dark side, and she and her brother, besides using lots of vocal harmonies, enjoy playing with new sounds and effects to challenge people’s tastes. As I

said, all her music is absolutely produced and written by her and her sibling which may make the process of recording really different. She has synesthesia, as a result, she makes the most of it. In songs like “Xanny”, they recreate the uneasy feeling of when a person that smokes blows the smoke in your face with sounds, looking for the inconvenience as of voice distortions. She also adds tons of tiny details in her songs that are unnoticeable until the song is listened a few times at high volume. In short, all these elements and her deep lyrics make her music unique and new for the audiences, which makes her be popular and attractive to the listeners.

- When The Party’s Over:_
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbMwTqkKSps>
- Bury A Friend:_
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUHC9tYz8ik>
- Xanny:_
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZyybvVx-js>
- All The Good Girls Go To Hell:_
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PZsSWwc9xA>

- **Amy Winehouse**

She was born in London in 1983 and broke into the music business when, at age 16, a classmate passed on her demo tape to a record label. Moreover, she won five Grammy Awards connected to her 2006 album *Back to Black*, and earned acclaim for songs like "Rehab" and "Love Is a Losing Game." Sadly, she passed away in 2011, at the age of 27 from an alleged accidental alcohol poisoning. She has been an icon for me since I was a kid, and her style has marked myself so hard.

Although she signed her first record deal as a jazz vocalist, her music later blossomed into an eclectic mix of jazz, pop, soul and R&B. Her style preserved the essence of previous artists and bands such as “Ella Fitzgerald” because of her musical influences, that were mostly jazz and soul singers. Even though her music changed, it kept being so jazzy and resembling of her musical predecessors production and musically wise. Her music was so personal, as a matter, that is showcased in tracks like “Rehab” which shows how direct she was in terms of lyrics. She kept the physical instruments whereas she was not really keen on the new types of electronic music that were being created at that time, at least not for her music. A really important part in her style is her attitude and strong personality, which kept her in the eye despite the fact she was making music that was being replaced by the new genres at that time. She was really smart musically wise, therefore, she knew how to protect jazz and blues styles, keeping them on the top of the charts. In fact, she was one of the last artists, if not the last one, to do it, as now it is unimaginable to see a song of those genres on the top of the charts. Despite being so strong, her music can reach people so easily and make them connect with what she does.

- Back To Black: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJAfLE39ZZ8>
- You Know I'm No Good: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-l2s5zRbHg>
- Tears Dry On Their Own: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ojdbDYahiCQ>
- Stronger Than Me:
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7CYE0DYIbaw>

- **SZA**

Her full name is Solána Imani Rowe and she was born in 1990. She is an American singer and songwriter. In 2012, SZA self-released her debut EP “See.SZA.Run”, which she then followed up with her second EP, titled “S”. She then signed with the label Top Dawg Entertainment, through which she released Z. In 2017 her first album “ctrl” was finally dropped.

Her music genre is straight-up R&B, owing to this, she is one of the most influential artists in this genre. Yet, she is not really known in our country, owing to the fact that her genre is not really respected and consumed here. Besides, you can see she is pretty influenced by avant-garde jazz, alternative rock, and rap. The autotune effect is really present in her voice in all her songs which may be on account of her rap influences. Her tracks melt in a really natural way recorded physical instruments with a large quantity of electronic-generated sounds. The instrumentals are hugely impacted by jazz and rap, factually, we can compare them to the ones of the rapper Mac Miller, which makes sense as they were great friends. Like Ariana Grande, you can see the presence of samples in the songs. Her background chords usually are a loop of the same instrument, where they add different variations during the different parts of the songs.

- The Weekend: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cMD63TwzB1o>
- Broken Clocks: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVc-K1kKkVk>
- Garden (Say It Like Dat): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcJo0tIWYbY>
- Love Galore: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hHXfCOjb3fk>

- **Melanie Martinez**

She started her career as a contestant in the TV show “The Voice” where she got to be among the last six contestants before being eliminated. After that, she enlisted herself in a national tour where she sang the covers she did in the programme and some original songs. After great success, she signed with Warner/Chappell Music and so she released her first single “Dollhouse” in 2014. For good, she released her debut album “Cry Baby” in 2014, a conceptual album that tells the story of a little girl named Cry Baby who lives in an unstructured family, all made up by her imagination. In September 2019 she released an album named “K-12” with no singles, which was accompanied by a full length musical movie inspired by it which follows to explain the story of Cry Baby, this time specifically, her life at school which is not shown in her previous album. In an interview with “PeopleTV” she mentioned she already has two sequels planned for the film.

Her music style is a mesh of independent genres such as indie-folk-pop and alternative pop. She describes her music as a heavy child: with repetitive hip-hop rhythms and nostalgic childish sounds. Her songs are really childish and innocent (owing to the fact that the point of view is from a child), but with really dark messages and subtones, and really strong lyrics, which make her music really creepy. She, furthermore, treats weird topics which showcase her amazing and huge imagination, together with those babyish conducts. She is one of the most influential alternative artists, seeing that with just an album out she has changed lots of things and rules from the music industry with her unique and scary style. Her music is overall electronically generated but incorporating children’s toy-instruments which transmit what she wants, an immature sound with really deep and striking messages and stories. Her new album and movie are just amazing and every single detail

is so curated and perfected. She changed her sound without losing her essence, also, she incorporated a lot of dancing in the videos. The fact that she took the risk to make a full movie is so admirable and so creative. It is obvious that she has worked a lot on it and after seeing it I was really influenced me and pushed my mind to create things I never thought I would. In the songs of it, she talks about really serious and important topics which unfortunately are really frequent on our society, furthermore, she talks about personal experiences without breaking the concept of the album and movie.

- Cry Baby:_
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O87IzhoexyA>
- Mrs. Potato Head:_
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkri1NUq9ro>
- Show & Tell:_
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cXPoQ5WalM>
- Nurse's Office:_
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2YM5zSapNg>

- **Lolo Zouaï**

She is a French-American singer who was born in Paris in 1996 even though she was raised in San Francisco. After flying to Los Angeles and getting turned down by the artist who flew her there, she began recording her own music by herself as well as performing at talent shows and open mics. She eventually collaborated with producer Stelios which helped her to expand her audience and career which broke out with the single "High Highs to Low Lows", gaining popularity through the SoundCloud platform. She afterwards launched her debut album "High Highs to Low Lows" named after the song I previously mentioned.

Her style is really unique, she makes R&B but with noticeable influences from her roots. She blends classical styles of French crooners with Arab influence from her father's Algerian roots. As a result, her music is composed by R&B and Hop-Hop influenced beats, with melodies full of Arabic cadences and mixing perfectly the English and French languages. Her tracks tend to be personal, demonstrable in the “High Highs to Lows Lows” lyrics, where she describes the experience of being taken to LA by a famous artist with lots of promises and then being left. Her songs are really catchy and an amazing variation of the typical genres we know. She sings in a really soft and smooth voice, which fits perfectly with the style of the tracks. She has known how to take profit of her roots and culture in a really admirable way. She plays a lot with the mesh of different vocals with autotune for the chorus of her songs which praise her Arabic influences.

- Ride: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0QXftpulPF4>
- Caffeine: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vabaTWEqWkE>
- Moi: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hE_a0g2ukf8
- Blue: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLWQyntxh54>

- **Rosalía**

She is a catalan singer who was born in 1993. Her first TV appearance took place in 2009 when she was only 15 and she auditioned to get in “Tú sí que vales” where she did not have a lot of success, and even the jury thought she had a good base, they also said she did not sing really well. However that didn't stop her. As a consequence, she then got a flamenco music degree in the Superior Music School from Catalonia (ESMUC) where she received lessons from Chiqui de La Línea, a

flamenco teacher who just accepted one student per year. She has two albums out “Los Ángeles” and “El Mal Querer” which share a strong flamenco music influence, yet, aside from this, they have really different styles. In a short period of time she has become a worldwide success and has gained the respect of some of the most important artists in the world.

She was the person that introduced me to music in spanish. When I was a kid I used to listen to a lot of spanish artists and bands, for instance: Pablo Alborán, La Oreja de Van Gogh, and so on. Nevertheless, when I grew up I started to distance myself from everything that was Spanish and Catalan related in the music branch. It was for no reason, I stopped enjoying the kind of songs that were offered in these languages because I felt like everything sounded the same, and so, when “El Mal Querer” came out it was a breath of fresh air because she sounded different, and I started to listen to a few more artists in spanish. Her music and style are unique but not too weird and that’s what made her popular. Owing to the fact that she has studied a lot of music we can see that she has known how to create a different dimension, a new sound that has captivated millions of people, because it is developed with a lot of delicacy and technique. In my view, she is a really good example of constance and work, we just have to see her audition for “Tú Sí Que Vales” to know that she has obtained a lot of the things she has now by working really hard. Despite that, she has brought me lots of new ideas and influences in music, for me the most important thing I have learnt from her is that no matter how many times you are told you cannot do it, no matter how hard and far it looks, anything is possible if you go for it and you try hard. The key of success is not making slightly different versions of the songs that are already popular, whereas, the key is to do what you heart tells you to, and developing your own unique style, something people can know you for. Rosalía is loyal to her roots, even so, she has

managed to develop a whole new sound and I think that is so admirable. There has been a lot of controversy around her too, but as far as I am concerned, what she is doing to flamenco music is cultural appreciation, in addition, she is opening this music genre to the world, moreover, I am sure she knows more flamenco music than most of the people that judge her, due to the fact that as I said, she has a degree in flamenco music. In my opinion, this flamenco, pop, reggaeton, trap and r&b style she has is perfect, even I personally don't enjoy trap and reggaeton a lot. I had the luck to be in the first row in one of her concerts, and I am really proud to say she is one of my favorite artists. She is a beast in the stage, she absolutely knows what she is doing and she created a whole new world in the stage.

- Pienso En Tu Mirá:_
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_4coiRG_BI
- De Aquí No Sales:_
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vy4lZs8fVRQ>
- A Palé:_
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zwpwbdGNlk>
- Aute Cuture:_
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CLFUhty8EF4>

- **Kehlani**

She was born in Oakland in 1995. She aspired to be trained as a dancer at the “Juilliard School”, but due to a knee injury, she decided to focus on singing. Her singing career started in 2009 as the lead singer of a group named PopLyfe, which she left in 2013 after the end of America's Got Talent, as a result of some disputes. Her first mixtape “Cloud 19” was released in 2014 and it was listed as one of the “50 Best Albums of 2014”

by *Complex*. She released her second album “You Should Be Here” in 2015 which lead her to have a Grammy nomination and to start her first North American tour. In 2016 her suicide attempt was made public after some controversy and fake rumors had been going around her, luckily she recovered. Her third album “SweetSexySavage” came out in 2017 and it was her most popular album until the date. Finally in 2019 her most recent album “While We Wait” was dropped.

Kehlani’s style is the perfect example of what modern R&B is, nevertheless, sometimes we can see some Hip-Hop and Soul undertones in her pieces. I feel like her style really suits me in a way, in fact, I remember the first time I listened to her music I thought: that’s perfect for me, as it was exactly the style that I had been looking for to listen. It is not the style that most of my songs have, but she has influenced me a lot. Her productions are really complex and most of the times, absolutely computer-generated. She has a really sweet voice which she uses to sing really beautiful melodies and some singed raps, moreover, she adds a lot of vocal harmonies in her pieces. The singed raps is one of the reasons why consider she has influenced me a lot (that will be really notorious in “Self-Esteem”) since I have been adding some rapping parts in a lot of my songs and she was the first artist that introduced me to the rapped singing. Her music is really unique, yet, at the same time, not so far from the R&B we already know. In my opinion, the production of her tracks plays a really important part in them, as it is, like I said, really curated and well done and worth listening. It really makes me want to be able to record something with her producers one day.

- Gangsta: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LAYgZEMMWxo>
- Nunya (feat. Dom Kennedy): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8apVb832NhY>

- Nights Like This (feat. Ty Dolla \$ign):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l99qCuWx1ml>
- CRZY:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2d7U4CX0PHk>

- **Carly Gibert**

She was born near Barcelona in 2001 and is a social media star that has accumulated more than 310.000 followers in the past years. She started making covers of other artists on Musica.ly (now named TikTok), moreover, she put out “Once We Can Fly” an EP together with a group named Kimotion and a single called “Do You Even Care”. However, her truly owned official music started last year, with a single named “Tired of You” which she made with one of her best friends Aleesha. After that, she has dropped two more singles: “Third Eye” and “As Lost As We Were”, the three of them produced by AllNight (my producer). Besides, she has moved to Los Angeles, where she signed with Universal Music Studios, and she is recording her first album there.

Despite the fact she just has three songs that are of her style out, she has influenced me a lot. I am really blessed to be able to work with the person who produced her first three tracks since she is one of my idols. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] recommended her to me a few years ago, since she is Catalan but sings in English like me. Now I have been following her for a long time and seen her achieving what she has. She influences me a lot, in the sense that she has what I want to have in the future. Her lyrics, specially the ones from “Third Eye” employ really interesting metaphors, as a result, she has pushed me a lot to add more figurative meaning lyrics in my songs, in addition, I have found really interesting to explain what I feel in a different way it is, in some cases it is

even more explanatory than saying what you think straight out. It probably sounds ridiculous to say that I am influenced by somebody who has three songs out, but if you see the evolution of the allegories and metaphors in my lyrics, there is a considerable change. However, I have obviously not been just influenced by her, Melanie Martinez and Billie Eilish played a really important role in my use of figurative lyrics. Her dark musicality in the songs “Third Eye” and “Tired of You” has really marked me, those dark beats with those sweet and angelic vocals feel like heaven, consequently, I have felt inspired by her in some tracks musically-wise.

- Third Eye:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yGw6xB2new>
- As Lost As We Were:_
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMzt4FKrcF8>
- Tired Of You with Aleesha:_
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sfOUNecJGU>
- Do You Even Care:_
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5CA6CTwRw0>

- **Lana Del Rey**

With the birth name Elizabeth Woolridge Grant, she was born the 21st of June from 1985. She is an American singer and songwriter who was born in New York City and raised in Upstate New York. She instantly became a viral success after the release of her debut single “Video Games” in 2011, which lead her to sign with Interscope and Polydor later that year. Her major label debut was with “Born To Die” in 2012 which proved her international success. Furthermore, she got her first grammy nomination with her EP “Paradise”. After that, she topped the charts in 2014 with the album “Ultraviolence”.

Shortly afterwards she released “Honeymoon” in 2015 and “Lust For Life” in 2017, the second one topping the charts and being nominated for the Grammys again. Finally, in 2019 she released her sixth studio album, under the name of “Norman Fucking Rockwell!”.

Her music was described as “Hollywood sadcore” by some critics, who have emphasised on its cinematic sound, with themes like tragic romances, glamour and melancholia. What’s more, her pop culture references, including the theme of 1950s and 1960s Americana. Those elements have undoubtedly classified her work as alternative pop, as a matter of the fact, in an interview with *Artistdirect* she said: “I wasn’t even born in the ‘50s but I feel like I was there”. Besides, some of the tags she has been described with the most are: pop rock, indie pop, baroque pop, dreamy pop and psychedelic rock. In addition, she said she really likes hip hop, ye, she does not have the swag to sing it. Furthermore, the instrumentation in the songs tends to be the basic one from the old pop, still, adding modern elements and touches to it. She treats a lot of topics and sings about drugs, cars, money, bad boys, etc. Despite those topics, her sound is vintage, almost like a time deformation with soft melodies, with angelical arrangements that makes the song seem to move slowly. She also uses a jazzy ornaments in her lower range while singing, giving a really emotive delivery. She loves layering voices. Although, her stage confidence is not really high, yet, she has been getting better at it. Her special and sentimental sound has inspired me so much, as she is able to create a whole new ambience with her sound, taking the audience’s head to new places, which is really admirable.

- Doin’ Time: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qolmz4FlnZ0>
- Fuck it I love you/ The greatest: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrSX_OcpeJg

Hope This Helps

- Born To Die: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bag1gUxuU0g>
- Venice Bitch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qg3DxELVPj4>

2.2. MUSIC GENRES

This part will include the most recurring music genres in the actuality, since there are thousands of different music genres, consequently, I am going to focus on the ones that are the most used now. I am also going to talk how the styles are like now, and not so much in the past as they have all evolved a lot and suffered several changes, therefore, this part of the project would take an unnecessary amount of space if I explained the whole history and evolution of every genre. Although, there will be some exceptions, for example, jazz music has already had a long history and some parts of it are key to understand the genre. In addition to it, I am not going to include the styles that do not potentially influence my music, in other words, styles of music that a person wouldn't listen the same way they do with the ones I am going to talk about, for instance, children's music or soundtracks. Besides, I will not categorize myself in a certain style as I think that is pretentious and I prefer the people who listen to my music to consider which style they think my music has, furthermore, I have no idea what my style is even though I have a little idea of the genres that are closer to my music.

- **Pop Music:** pop music is a genre of popular music that had its origin in the late 1950s as a derivation of traditional pop, in combination with other musical genres that were fashionable at that time. They often use pop music and popular music interchangeably, although the second has a broader meaning seeing that it includes other genres other than pop that are considered popular. Lots of times the music that appears on record charts is seen as pop music, but it is not like this.

In the same way, other art forms that aim to attract a mass audience pop music borrows and assimilates elements and ideas from a wide range of other musical styles such as urban, dance, rock, latin music, rhythm and blues or folk. However, there are essential elements that define what the style is like, for example short-to-medium-length songs, written in a basic format, as well as the usual use of repeated choruses and melodic hooks. The regular length often goes between two and a half minutes to

three and a half minutes. The beat and melodies tend to be simple with a limited harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics normally focus on simple themes (love and romantic relationships) although there are plenty of exceptions.

Pop tends to appeal to a general audience, rather than a particular sub-culture or ideology. It has been said that the production, recording and production usually have more importance than the live performance.

- **Hip-Hop:** hip-hop music is a genre which was developed in the United States by African Americans and Latino Americans, in the Bronx borough of New York during the 70s. It is a rhythmic music that commonly accompanies rapping (rhyming speeches that are chanted).

It was developed as a part of a culture, and it is defined by four key stylistic elements: rapping, DJing/scratching with turntables, breakdancing and graffiti writing. Other elements include sampling (taking a portion of a sound recorded in any kind of way to reuse it as a musical instrument or a different sound recording in a song, lots of times it consists on taking a part of another song and adding it to the production of a new song) beats or bass lines from other records (or synthesized beats and sounds). Aside from the samples, they also incorporate synthesizers, drum machines, and live bands.

The term hip hop music is sometimes used synonymously with the term rap music, even though, rapping is not a required component of hip hop. Rappers write, memorize, or improvise their lyrics and perform their works a capella or to a percussive beat. While often used to refer to rapping, Hip-Hop more properly denotes the practice of the entire subculture. The genre may also incorporate other elements of hip-hop culture.

- **Contemporary R&B:** also known as simply R&B, it is a music genre that combines elements of rhythm and blues, pop, soul, funk, hip hop and electronic music. It has a really distinctive production style: drum

machine rhythms, pitch corrected vocals, and a smooth vocal arrangement.

The electronic influences are increasing and the use of hip-hop type beats is really common, although the roughness and powerfulness of hip-hop is reduced and smoothed out. The majority of R&B hits feature electric based instrumentation. This genre is also known for the use of melisma (in the case of the fandoms I am in, we call them vocal runs, it consists on singing a single syllable of text moving between different notes in succession, singers like Whitney Houston and Mariah Carey made it really popular).

- **Jazz:** it was originated in the African-American communities of New Orleans in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and had strong blues and ragtime influences. It emerged from independent traditional and popular music styles, the influences of the West African culture and the European military music are so remarkable.

Since the 20s jazz music has come a long way in both, quality and complexity. As I previously said, it began in the early 1910s combining French quadrilles, bingüine, ragtime and blues. In the 30s the heavily arranged swing bands, Kansas City jazz (a bluesy, improvisational style) and Gypsy jazz got really popular. During the 40s Bebop emerged and it turned that danceable popular genre into a challenging “musician’s music” which was faster and employed chord-based improvisation. After that, cool jazz developed, introducing a calmer, smoother and linear version of jazz.

In the 50s free jazz emerged and it was played without regular meter, beat and formal structures. After, hard bop emerged and it introduced influences from rhythm and blues, gospel and blues. Next, in the late 60s and early 70s, the Jazz-rock fusion was born combining the jazz improvisation with rock’s music rhythms, electric instruments and highly amplified stage sound. In the early 80s, a commercial form of jazz fusion named smooth jazz gained a lot of popularity, therefore, it had a significant radio airplay.

It is defined by swing and blue notes, call and response vocals and polyrhythms (simultaneous use of two or more rhythms). It is considered one of America's original art forms by so many intellectuals.

Swing is one of the main characteristics of the jazz music. It is a rhythmic impulse that makes you want to dance or snap your fingers, it is characterized by the use of syncopation which is the technique of placing the accents in surprising places. In addition to it, the improvisation is another main characteristic of jazz music. Blues has the most basic structure for improvising in jazz. A speech-like use of instruments allows artists to personalize their voices.

- **Rock:** it is a music genre which was originated as “rock and roll”, a style that had strong influences from genres such as blues, rhythm and blues and country, during the early 50s in the United States, later in the 60s, it developed into a range of different styles.

By the late 60s a huge amount of genres formed from rock including progressive rock, extending some artistic elements; glam rock, defined by the aesthetic and visual style; and the well-known subgenre named heavy metal, which was based on high volume, power and speed. Later on, the punk rock emerged by making stripped-down, powerful critiques and it influenced other subgenres such as new wave and alternative rock. After that, alternative rock broke into the mainstream and it formed genres like indie rock, pop punk, rap metal, etc. This type of music has also embodied cultural and social movements.

Rock was really inspired by other genres like electric blues, folk, jazz, classical music, and other styles. Musically-wise it is centered on the amplified electric guitar, usually supported by a group which includes the electric bass, percussion produced from a drum kit which combines drums and cymbals, singers and sometimes they are complemented with keyboards. Classically, a rock band took the form of a quartet whose members covered one or more roles.

The songs tend to be based on a 4/4 time signature (a convention to specify how many pulses are contained in each measure) and have a verse-chorus form, in spite of all these characteristics, the genre has become extremely diverse. Yet, like in pop music, lyrics are often about love, nevertheless, they also address a wide variety of themes that are frequently social and political. Melodies are often originated from old musical modes suchlike Dorian and Mixolydian as well as major and minor modes. Harmonies go from the common triad to dissonant harmonic progressions. As a consequence of its complex history and its tendency to borrow from other musical and cultural forms it is said that it is impossible to make an exact musical definition of rock.

- **Reggaetón:** it is a urban musical genre that comes from latin music. Its sound comes from the spanish reggae. It was invented in Puerto Rico where it got its name. I started gaining popularity in 2004, as a result, it was extended in the United States, Europe, Asia and Africa.

It combines jamaican, dancehall and latin american music influences, such as salsa, latin hip hop and electronic music. The voices include various verses which are singed and rapped, usually in spanish.

Lyrics tend to be inspired in hip hop, characterized by selfishness, ostentation and a huge sexual charge. This has originated a lot controversy around this style, since a ton of the lyrical content of this genre contains objectification of women's bodies with sexual interest, which show the sexism that this genre comes with.

It has a particular rhythm named "*riddim*", also known as "*Dem Bow*". This rhythm tens to be really repetitive in *reggaetón* songs.

- **Country:** also known as country and western, it is a music genre that was originated in the 1920s in the south of the United States and in the coast of Canada. At first, it combined the folk music from the european immigrants, especially from the Ireland ones with other musical forms that were already rooted in North America, like blues and gospel. The

word “country” started to be used in the 50s, before that, the topic that was used was “hillbilly”.

There are a lot of country variations, nevertheless, the most popular ones are the ones which combine with pop and rock music. These ones, have had a massive success. Other country styles would be: the bluegrass (popularized by Bill Monroe and Flatt and Scruggs, based in fast rhythms played by the mandolin, the violin and the banjo), the western music from Hollywood (a more sophisticated style with clear jazz influences, which was popularized by Bob Wills), etc.

Each one of those styles are unique and different in their execution and in the use of chords and rhythms. Traditionally, it was essentially played with string instruments, such as guitar, banjo and violin. Even so, other instruments were used, for instance: accordion and harmonica. In the modern country, electric instruments have been introduced, some being: electric guitar, electric bass and keyboards.

This type of music relates to emotions and current happening events like suicide, love, alcohol consumption, etc. Sadly, these topics tend to introduce some teenagers to these same conducts. Nevertheless, when this music talks about love it is a really good option for a romantic mood. Furthermore, country songs tend to have really deep lyrics. Other topics treated are: loneliness, family, values, poverty, rural life...

- **Electronic:** electronic music is mainly produced and performed with electronic musical instruments, such as synthesizer , the sampler, rythm boxes following a rhythmic pattern and more recently computers, which have a key role in the production of the contemporary electronic music. Instruments like electric guitar and the Hammond organ are also employed to make this musical genre.

There is a wide variety of music types derived from electronic music which show a really big range of sonorities which goes from ambient music to industrial music which is more experimental. This range of sub-genres includes: synthpop, dance (with a ton of variations too), etc.

Aside from the exclusive use of electronic instruments, this music style does not have established characteristics. Een so, one of the features that this genre presents is that it is not necessary to be a musician to make it. That is to say, the best term to define electronic musicians would be “sound crafting”. This type of music does not require a really deep music knowledge, in addition, the most important thing to make tracks from this style is to have a good desktop and equipment.

3. MUSIC THERAPY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Viewed historically, music as therapy is both ancient and young. Music has been used in treatments since the earliest times, as a result, there have been a lot of concepts regarding its functional mode over the centuries. However, the scientific basis for music therapy emerged after the Second World War and the term on itself was introduced in 1950 more or less.

Music therapy is now used in many fields of medicine, as well as in special pedagogies and mental health protection. It complements other kinds of therapies such as pharmacotherapy, psychotherapy, physiotherapy and more kinds of art therapy, consequently, it requires a really strict cooperation of therapists, physicians and psychologists.

3.2. HISTORY

For primitive human beings, music had a magical and mystic meaning and it was treated as a necessary part of their everyday work and activities. Curative rituals that were based on the use of music were applied in treatment of chronic diseases (for instance, psychogenic sterility or headaches), as well as psychiatric disorders (including bipolar affective disorder).

The ancient application of music in therapy is present in the Bible, where King Saul was treated for depression with harp playing. Ancient Greeks held that music can influence both soul and body by forming personality and giving the release of accumulated emotions. Depressive patients were prescribed listening to dulcimers and noisy sounds to get rid of their unpleasant thoughts, whereas in the treatment of manic states they used calm songs with flute accompaniment.

Later, in the Renaissance, the curative properties of musical harmony and the therapeutic effects of music were described by Zarlino. Some of them were: pain relief, restoring hearing, treating madness, etc. Besides, it was still used for the treatment of depression and mania.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, the curative influence of music was explained by vibrations. It was thought that music sent vibrations through the skin, exciting muscles and other inner body parts. It was thought these vibrations are transferred by nerve fibres or fluids by resonance passages. In this way, issues like circulatory failure or tissue tension can be removed.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries the first studies about the influences of music on physiological organisms were started. Changes in blood pressure, pulse and breath under the influence of acoustic stimuli were described. It was noticed that unusual acoustics like dischords lead to tension. However, previously known material is experienced as pleasant and leads to calm. Further studies revealed that it's not about the quality, but of the intensity of experiencing music. Therefore, it is impossible to predict a person's reaction to music or to select appropriate musical compositions for therapeutic purposes. Due to the different modes of perception, the research and the nature of experiencing music are thought to be some of the most difficult fields to study.

A scientific basis for music therapy emerged after the second World War. Standards of practical utilization of music therapy were established, as well as procedures to set the goals defined. In the 20th century, music therapy developed in two directions: the "American School" with an empirical and clinical profile and the "Swedish School" directed in a theoretical direction.

By the forties music therapy had been applied in 31 states of the USA and in 1950 the National Association for Music Therapy emerged. Authors such as J. Altschuker, wrote important dissertations creating a scientific basis for music therapy. The orientation of the "American School" is limited to the description of effects observed during the application of different styles of music and perceives music therapy mainly as a supplementary method to psychotherapy.

However, according to A.Pontvik, who was the driving force behind the “Swedish school of music therapy” and founder of the Institute of Music Therapy in Stockholm, music has an ordering and intellectual influence through “psychoresonance”, which restores the personal balance of an individual. The Swedish school considers that music plays a central role in the treatment.

3.3. DEFINITION

Music is defined as a structured tonal sound moving in time and space. Since its primitive imitation of nature’s sounds, it has converted into organized forms that have varied with time and culture. While on the one hand, sound is a natural phenomenon. Seeing that, music is a result of man’s conscious development of sound. Its basic elements are rhythm, melody, harmony, pitch, tempo, dynamics, timbre and the text of a song (included because it is fundamental in the music therapy).

Therapy (from Greek *therapeia*), is basically a health-giving service. When this term is applied to the treatment of mental, psychological and behavioral disorders, it becomes comparable to the term psychotherapy and so it covers a lot of modern therapeutic approaches.

Music therapy is considered a psychotherapeutic process, seeing that it is *“a form of treatment ... in which a trained person deliberately establishes a professional relationship with the objective of removing, modifying, or retarding existing symptoms, of mediating disturbed patterns of behavior, and of promoting positive personality growth and development”* (Wolberg, 1954, p. 8).

Music therapy is not a substitute for music lessons. The patients can acquire certain musical abilities during the program, such as the sensibility to the tone, the rhythmic control, dynamics control, etc. However, these competences are probably secondary

3.4. USES

○ 3.4.1. Heart diseases

It is well known that music has benefices on our breathing rate, heart beat and blood pressure. A study from the University of Pavia in Italy, confirmed the benefits of music for our cardiovascular system. The experiment consisted in 24 test volunteers, who were asked to listen to a playlist which contained 6 different styles of music with 2 minute long pauses between each one. After the study, they came up with the observation that music with faster beats had a stimulating effect whereas slow music had relaxing effects.

During the pauses the heart beat, blood pressure and breathing rate of the volunteers returned to normal levels, furthermore, sometimes they got even healthier levels than the one they had obtained before listening to the music. Some clinics like “The Mayo clinic” in Rochester, use music to reduce the tension and stress after cardiovascular surgeries, seeing that it aids in faster recovery by causing the patients to relax and adopt an optimistic state of mind.

○ 3.4.2. Alzheimer

Music has been known for restoring memory loss in the people suffering from Alzheimer and dementia, since it stimulates the dormant area of the brain that cannot be accessed due to the degenerative disease. Concetta Tomaino, the executive director of the Institute for Music and Neurologic Function, has been researching for more than 30 years about the effect of music in the brain. She conducted a study where dementia patients had 1 hour of music therapy 3 times a week for 10 months, as a consequence, their scores on the cognitive-function test improved by 50% at the end of the therapy.

- 3.4.3. Autism

Autistic children have issues in the social area, therefore, that keeps them closed in their personal world. Music touches them emotionally, motivating them to interact with others and express themselves freely. Activities, such as singing songs and rhythm exercises, improve their focus and memory.

- 3.4.4. Depression

Music is a great stress reliever. Through a research, it was proved that music can uplift the mood of elderly people who suffer from depression. The musics which help the most are inspiring and happy songs rather than sad songs, owing to the fact that these last can make you feel worse. Just listening to music can actually be really helpful in bad moments. The power of music is yet to be explored fully, but it is for sure that it has a deep effect on our body, mind and soul.

- 3.4.5. Post-stroke recovery

A daily dose of the patient's favorite type of music can speed the recovery from debilitating strokes according to some researches. In Finland, when stroke patients listened to music for a couple of hours each day, verbal memory and attention improved notably, in difference of patients who did not receive musical stimulation.

- 3.4.6. Chronic headaches & migraine

Music can help people who suffer from several migraine and chronic headache, as it helps to reduce the intensity, frequency and duration of the headaches.

- 3.4.7. Epilepsy

Research suggests that listening to Mozart's sonata "K448" may reduce the number of seizures during epilepsy attacks. This has been denominated the Mozart's effect.

- 3.4.8. Adolescents with mood disorder

Adolescents have identified many benefits of listening to music, including emotional, social, and daily life benefits, along with the formation of one's own identity. Music can improve one's mood by reducing stress and lowering anxiety levels, which can help counteract or prevent depression. As children make the transition into adolescence, they become less likely to sit and watch TV, an activity associated with family, on the contrary, they spend more of their free time listening to music, and taking part in activities associated with friends.

Ethnomusicologist Alan Merriam (1964) once stated that music is a "universal behavior;" something that everyone can identify with. Among adolescents, music is a unifying force, bringing people of different backgrounds, age groups, and social groups together.

- 3.4.9. Boosting immunity

Music can improve the immune function. Scientists talk about how a particular type of music is able to create a positive and deep emotional experience, which leads to the secretion of immune-boosting hormones. This can contribute to a reduction of the factors that are responsible for illnesses. Listening to music or singing may also decrease the levels of stress-related cortisol, which with higher levels can lead to a decreased immune response.

- 3.4.10. Physical and mental performance

Music can be also good for both physical and mental performance. I will not extend this part a lot, because for me it is interesting to know the disorders it can help with, as it is the pure form of music therapy. Yet, it is interesting how listening to music can help with things such as: athletic performance, body movement and coordination, fatigue, productivity, intelligence (learning and IQ), emotional intelligence, memory performance, concentration and attention, sleep, stress, etc.

3.5. METHODS OF INTERVENTION

Music therapists use different methods according to the needs and preferences of the people they work with. Some of these tools are the following:

- **Singing:** it is a therapeutic tool which helps in the development of the articulation, rhythm and breath control. Singing in group can enhance the social abilities and provide a major group awareness. The singing can help in the memory and dialogue of people with dementia, furthermore, it also reduces the anxiety and fear. It can also help to improve the index of oxygen saturation of people with breath issues. In addition to it, it can stimulate the language areas of the brain of people who have talking difficulties.
- **Playing instruments:** playing instruments can boost the thin and thick motor coordination of people who have a mobility disability or that have suffered a cardiovascular accident, a head injury or a pathological process. Playing in instrumental sets can help the cooperation, attention and can provide opportunities to practice leadership roles in participants. What's more, it can help to recover musical abilities. People who learn how to play an instrument for the first time can also increase their wellness and self-esteem.
- **Rhythmic activities:** the rhythm-based activities can be used to facilitate and improve the movement range, joint mobility, agility, force, stability, coordination and relaxation. The rhythm and compass are important to

prepare the motor areas of the brain in things like the heartbeat. The use of rhythmic patterns can also help people with processing adversities to boost their capacity and to tolerate and process the sensorial information correctly.

- **Musical improvisation:** improvising offers a creative non-verbal medium to assert thoughts and feelings, doing it without judgement, in a affordable way that does not require any previous musical formation. It helps the music therapist to establish a relationship in three ways: between the patient, the therapist and the music. When words fail or emotions are really difficult to express, music can fill the silence. When the confidence and interaction have been deformed by some type of abuse, improvisation is an opportunity to restore the interpersonal contact. Besides, when the learning capacity is limited, being given the chance to try different instruments and musical sounds can provide the possibility of the control of a new skill and improve the personal satisfaction.
- **Composition and creation of songs:** making music and generating songs can facilitate the exchange of feelings, ideas and experiences. Writing songs with hospitalized children, for instance, is a way to communicate and understand fears. For people with a terminal illness, composing song is a vehicle to cope with the test of feelings and the sense of life and death it supposes. It can also provide an opportunity to create a legacy or a shared experience with a caregiver, a child or a beloved person before death. Finally, the lyrical discussion and the creation may help teenagers to treat painful memories, traumas, abuses, convey feelings and thoughts that are not usually accepted socially.
- **Music and image:** experiences based on images, such as the Guided Imagination and Music, can supply opportunities to figure out, process and interact with the unconscious material that can be reflected in a subject's life.
- **Musical listening:** listening to music has a wide range of therapeutic applications. It helps to develop cognitive capacities, such as attention and memory. For instance, it allows the people that have to experience an intervention the opportunity to exercise their self-control in an

uncertain environment. During the pregnancy, tuning in music can provide a connexion between the uterus climate and support the different stages, boosting the relaxation and giving distraction to the mom. In the situations where the cognitive perceptions are hurt, like in a initial or medium dementia phase, listening to music can provide a contact with what is familiar and enlarge the orientation of the reality. What's more, for people with illnesses like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, listening to music is capable of making the dialogue easier and contribute with a motivation to take part in the social activities.

3.6. CLARIFICATIONS

It is difficult to distinguish what is music therapy and what it is not if you do not have a basic knowledge of the topic. After the interviews with music therapists, I found out there is huge difference between what music therapy is and what is just an action with therapeutic effects but not considered music therapy. Basically, for a thing to be considered music therapy it has to be guided by a professional and be made with the intention to be a therapy. Still, I have decided to make a little summary of examples of things that are not music therapy.

Examples of actions related to music which are therapeutic, but not clinical music therapy:

- A person with Alzheimer's listening to his/her favorite music with an iPod and headphones.
- Celebrities performing at hospitals and/or schools.
- A piano player in the lobby of a hospital.
- Nurses playing background music for patients.
- A songwriter composing a song about his/her feelings.
- A violinist playing the violin to take negative feelings out.
- A choir singing on the pediatric floor of a hospital.

3.7. CONCLUSIONS

This research about music therapy has been really interesting for me, due to the intrigue the research project I did in fourth of ESO, which was about autism, generated in me, since music therapy appeared as one of the possible treatments for it. I really like music, consequently, I was so curious about this topic and specially to know if writing songs could be considered music therapy, and if listening to music you like could also be considered music therapy. My EP is named "*Hope This Helps*" for a reason, therefore, I wanted to know if my songs could be clinically therapeutic to listeners.

This investigation has shown me that it is not clinically therapeutic to listen to songs and feeling identified with them and neither writing songs. As a result, I have decided to stop my study about music therapy here. It is a really interesting kind of therapy, and I am sure I want to keep learning about it in the future, but it is not relevant for this project. Nevertheless, I decided to leave the research I did about it here, since I consider the world of music therapy is really intriguing.

I am still aware that writing music and listening to music you like has therapeutic effects, nevertheless, it is not helpful treating certain illnesses. Yet, I know that my songs can be psychologically convenient. Music has a deep connection with people and so feeling identified with a song can be helpful going through tough times. Seeing that, I will not stop making music to help others, and I will still use songwriting as a therapy, as it has helped me so much to get over negative feelings.

These types of actions are not clinically accepted as therapies because they do not cure illnesses and they barely relieve the symptoms, but I still defend they are really helpful mental health wise, and this is a thing the music therapists have said in the interviews, the only thing is that the results do not last for so long. That is to mean, feeling identified with songs may not cure diseases, even so, it can relieve anxiety and stress levels.

All in all, the thing is, actions like songwriting and listening to music can be considered music therapy when they are done with a professional who guides the process. These actions done without professional are not considered music therapy. Despite all that, these processes are helpful mentally in a different way. This means my music is not useful for music therapy, but it can be helpful to people in a not clinic way.

Like I said, music is a really powerful tool, which can connect people and superpass language boundaries. I think it is a beautiful way to interact with each other emotionally, and a way to make it easier to open up for certain people. Besides, overall, it is a message to say that nobody is alone to people who need support and do not have it in their daily life.

3.8. QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY MUSIC THERAPISTS

Questions answered by the music therapists María Ballesteros Hernández and Eli Pujol Manyans. Normally these questions should not go here. Nevertheless, I summarized their answers so they could be here, seeing that I think they are really interesting.

1. Does the treatment adapt to each person or there are certain steps which must be followed?

M- The most common thing is that the music therapist starts making a music historial of the person, that is to say, asking about the music from the life of the patient: the tracks that accompanied important moments, the music he or she liked during childhood, the song he/she has sung or danced and the music the person does not fancy. That information is really important, since it can markedly affect the effects of the treatment. The development of a session relies in the ambit it is executed. The music therapist adapts to the techniques and capabilities of the person, and also to the goal to reach.

E- It adapts to each person depending on his/her objectives. The steps that have to be done for everybody equally are: making a medical history, setting the goals, planning the treatment according to the objectives, defining the indicators which help to evaluate and an examination.

2. Are there different styles of music therapy or all the music therapists follow the same pattern?

M- The techniques used in a music therapy session will depend on the ambit and the needs of the patient or client. In addition to it, it relies on the specific formation of the music therapist. There are methods developed by music therapists which have been used for decades and that have proved their efficacy. Some of them are: the method created by the pioneers of the research in the music therapy Paul Nordoff and Clive Robbins, the pattern of Dr. Benenzon in the late 60s, the Bonny method from Guided Music and Imagery, and later, Neurologic Music Therapy.

There are a lot of other methods but, in brief, these are some of the most remarkable ones.

E- There are different currents: Nordoff-Robbins, Beneznon... Moreover, there is also a lot of unqualified practice of the profession, and those people do not follow any movement.

3. Is music therapy directed just to certain diseases or it can be useful to anybody independently of their mental and physical health?

M- There is clinical music therapy, which focuses on the treatment of pathologies, however, there is also music therapy in a social scope which has goals such as integration, the non-violent communication and the development of social abilities. Furthermore, there is parental music therapy, which boosts the strengthening of the link between the parents and the baby, and the work of the labor.

E- Music therapy can be used for any goal, the using of music for a non-educative aspiration (meaning, for a therapeutic one), boosts the quality of life. That is music therapy, therefore, there are not habitual diseases it is used for, in contrast, it is employed for a lot of things: there is an educative area, a clinical one, a geriatric one, an emotional one, accompaniment during mourning, etc.

4. How has music therapy evolved in recent years?

M- It is expanding both internationally and in the different ambits and institutions, this has eased the increase of investigations and publications, which increases the scientific evidences of the treatments.

E- The quantity of people who live from it is increasing, nevertheless, not always with professional formation. There is a really good training in The Basque Country, and it is even better in other countries. Still, we do not have a lot of experience with the subject and the musical requirements needed to get access to it.

5. Which benefits are the most remarkable ones with the use of music therapy?

M- The main goal is to encourage wellness. The benefits that help to get closer to that target are really diverse, moreover, they rely in the needs of the patient.

On the one hand, some objectives can be measured almost instantly, for instance, the increasing of the oxygen level in blood and the regulation of breathing in anxiety.

On the other hand, some are long-term, like the mental rehab of a person with brain or marrow damage from, for example, an accident. In some occasions, it is possible that the subject will get back to the health estate and capabilities he or she had before the accident; in that case, the goal is to get as close to it as much as it is possible. Furthermore, the long-term benefits are seen in the treatment for people with dementia. Music therapy will not make the illness disappear, yet, the symptoms can be slowed down, it is possible to facilitate communication and expression routes and improve the wellness of the person. The patients with COPD (Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) have breathing difficulties and music therapy can teach them how to regularize it, make it deeper so it is more effective, in addition to it, it encourages them while they walk which is a recommended activity for them.

E- Any intervention that involves music therapy, if it is well-planned, can offer a good result, yet, there is not one area in that it works better, since it works the same for any specific need the patient has to fulfill.

6. Can it work by itself for a patient or it has to be combined with other therapies?

M- Music therapy works independently, still, like any type of intervention, the benefits enhance if it is worked in interdisciplinary coordination with psychologists , doctors, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, social workers, teachers and speech therapists, that is to say, all the professionals that may be treating the patient.

E- That relies on what it has to improve. Usually, music therapists work along with other therapists, as she/he receives their assignment and

works on it through music. Even so, depending on what is being treated, it is not enough. Just another tool to try to accomplish the goals set.

7. Is music therapy the same than the therapeutic effect that it can suppose playing the piano to a pianist, composing to a writer or listening to music to anybody, meaning, does it have the same benefits?

M- Creating or performing a piece of music have the music itself as an objective, they do not have therapeutic benefits. It is proved that playing an instrument has a lot of benefits neurologically, also, listening to music too. Still, in a minor scale. Writing a song is a cognition work. Even so, these are not therapeutic processes, seeing that they are not guided by a therapist and they are not conducted in a specific way with definite goals. It depends on the person and the situation.

E- No.

8. If not, which is the difference between music therapy and the therapeutic effect of playing the piano for a pianist or writing a song for a composer?

M- Indeed, writing a song can provide a lot of wellness to a person and have a therapeutic effect, although, it is not a process designed by a qualified professional, therefore, the benefits can be shorter or less intense and deep.

E- Music therapy consists on setting some therapeutic goals for a certain situation. However, the listening of a musician in the same situation is just a moment of aesthetic communication.

9. What makes music have so many benefits for health up to the point of becoming a therapy?

M- It is an interesting question. The sound surrounds us before we are even born. The hearing is developed at the fourth month of gestation and it entails a really important impulse in the stimulation and development, neurologically wise. The baby listens to the heartbeat of the mother, the movement of the fluids and her voice which is recognized after labour. There are studies which prove that babies identify music that their moms have listened to repeatedly during pregnancy. If the mom had positive

emotions and enjoyed those songs, pleasure hormones could get to the baby, which means that, in the uterus, the baby could associate certain music to emotions. That is why it is so important that the mother listens to music she likes, even if it is heavy metal and not Mozart.

Another reason on why music affects us so much is because we live with constant rhythms, like the heartbeat and the breathing. Therefore, the percussion has existed in all the eras and all around the world, since it connects with the unconscious physical side of the person. And a drum rhythm can automatically induct people to make things they would not do another way, like a bar or a club.

Finally, one of the distinctive features of music is that it is a tool of emotional communication and memories with emotional weight are recovered better. Seeing that, music therapy is a really powerful tool to prevent or slow down the elderly dementias.

E- What makes music special is its capacity to connect with the different sections of our brain: the speech one, the emotional one...

10. Is being a music therapist a profession where you have to keep recycling yourself and where you have to adapt to new techniques, or it is the same throughout the years?

M- Music therapy is a scientific discipline which is right in scientific development. Investigations around the world are testing technique and treatment hypothesis, as a result, it is a responsibility of the music therapist being up-to-date of these scientific evidences and incorporating them to its working activity in benefit of its patients and clients.

E- Any profession needs constant training.

11. What is a normal session with a client like?

M- The development of a session really relies on the field it is made. It can be started with an introductory activity to place the person in the space and moment, after that, carry out the techniques destined to progress in the therapeutic process and finally making a closing activity.

E- Each session is unique and different to the others, it is depending on what is treated, the patients, the environment, the ages, the goals, etc.

12. How long does the treatment take? And, how does every session change along the process?

M- The lasting of the treatment depends on the scope it is conducted and the needs of the person. The sessions adapt to the patient or client progressively through time and also during the session itself, according to its condition.

E- It is different for each person. It is the same than a school. There is a certain programming and the sessions can be similar to each other with a certain person, as a result, they develop according to the achievements.

13. Why did you decide to be a music therapist?

M- I was introduced to a cellist who was studying to be a music therapist in the United States and she told me her experience. As a professional violinist, I had always focused on the musical practice and creation itself. I was fascinated by the chance of being able to help others thanks to it. I did my first curricular practices of the music therapist master in the palliative care unit and I knew I had found my vital vocation.

E- For vocation, and also for curiosity after working on music as a teacher and a performer.

14. What does being a music therapist mean to you?

M- It is the possibility to help people using a versatile, useful and wonderful tool.

E- A really difficult job which is not really valued, nevertheless, it is really looked for.

15. How do you see this profession in the distant future?

M- Established in health, social and education centers. And available for the people who need it and can benefit from it.

E- It has to work a lot on the recognition of seriousness and prestige. That would be possible by improving the training and creating mechanisms to avoid the profession's intrusion.

16. Are the results of music therapy short-term, long-term or medium-term?

M- Like in every treatment, the results can vary more or less depending on the person. The persistence in the treatment, the implication, the effort... It all helps. If the person has had a good relationship with music and enjoys listening to it, plays an instrument or sings, it is easier and the results will be better. Some goals can be measured almost instantly,

such as the increasing of oxygen in the blood, the breathing regulation in people in an agony state, which leads to a decrease of the anxiety.

Others are in the long term, this were mentioned in the answer of the fifth question, for instance, the rehab of a person with brain or marrow damage, in cases like a car accident. It is possible that the person will not come back to the health state and capabilities he/she had before the accident, therefore, the goal is to get as close as possible. In addition to it, a long-term treatment would be the one for people with dementia. Music therapy will not make the illness disappear, but the symptoms can be slowed down, facilitate the communication and expression and boost the wellness of the person. The patients with COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) have breathing difficulties, and music therapy can teach them to regularize the respiration, to make it deeper so it is more effective, furthermore, it cheers them up while they walk, which is a recommended activity for them.

E- It relies on every case.

4. THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Since immemorial times, music has been in the streets of all cities, towns and fields. That is including: melody, rhythm and movement. It surpasses strong boundaries like: language, nationality and ethnicity. Besides, it is both, an instrument of change and a symbol of tradition.

The presence of industries which are completely dedicated to this process show its growth and capacity to engage with economy. The industry affects local economies, since it provides employment. As a result, it leads to the creation of music products.

Over the past decades there has been a huge interest in the music industries. There are various reasons for this:

First of all, as I said, the economic impact of these industries is abundant. It generates incomes of 67 billion dollars (60,5 billion euros approximately) worldwide in 2010, for example. What's more, profits are still on the rise.

Secondly, music industries have a colossal cultural and global influence and scope. Music is a very powerful communication channel, moreover, it ties together subcultures, communities, nations and regions. In fact, music is an indispensable element of many people's lives.

The third reason is the fact that the music market has been heavily affected by digitalization, which has deconstructed traditional value chains and business models.

The fourth reason, connected to the previous one, is the possible lessons other industries can learn from the transformation music industries are undergoing. It is one of the most affected by changes in technology, since it has created alterations in the consumption of music.

When we talk about music industries, we mainly focus on production and distribution. These are crucial stages in the chain of values that leads to

the consumption. Consumption activities are only studied when they affect the traditional and actual senses of production and distribution.

4.2. THE RECORD INDUSTRY

The record labels are the companies which market music and its correspondent videos. It is in charge of new artists recruitment and development, music publishing and copyright enforcement.

Marketing is actually one of the most important functions of record labels, since public consciousness of their brand and associated artists is the way they make money.

All through the 20th century, record labels were the leading force behind the most successful artists. These had the power to make and destroy artists, depending on the amount of money that was invested in promoting their music.

The internet has now given artists the chance to market and distribute their music independently using social media and streaming platforms. The labels now offer the so-called “360 deals” to artist’s that give them a cut, including album sales, media appearances, etc.

We can distinguish two types of labels:

- Major labels

These offer deals to the world’s most successful music artists. These record labels, like Universal Music Group and Sony (which I will talk about later), own distribution chains that put the music of their artists in the hands of millions of consumers in a matter of days or hours.

These labels sign a lot of agreements with their artists, such as licensing and distribution pacts, which give artists considerable cuts of their earnings. Many of these major labels own sub-labels that specialize in publishing and

recording different music genres. For example, Universal Music Group earns a ton of labels such as: Interscope Records, Island Records, Republic Records, Capitol Records, etc.

- Independent labels

These, often have barely enough money to keep their office lights on. Independent or indie labels offer low-paying deals to new artists, which helps them to gain recognition. These labels are independent companies without corporate backers, that is where their name comes from.

Independent labels have smaller distribution networks than the major labels. Nevertheless, indie labels have a big reputation of betting high for upcoming music trends, What's more, they give big opportunities to unknown artists who end up becoming international sensations.

4.3. HISTORY AND CHANGES OF TECHNOLOGY

The internet changed the way we communicate and interact with each other, it also changed the way we consume news and a long list of other things. Moreover, it changed the way we consume music. In the early 1990's, the industry was still doing well, having exorbitant numbers in the sales of CDs.

A group of german researchers worked for 12 years to develop a compressed music file which kept the quality of a CD, but travelling faster in the optical fibre cable so it could be easily stored in a computer. They finally came up with the MP3 format in 1994.

People started downloading songs for free without being aware they were committing a massive copyright infringement, which caught FBI's attention after some pressure was made by the Recording Industry Association of America. Nevertheless, during those years, billions were lost in copyrights due to piracy.

The “unbundling” concept appeared. Consumers were able to pick just the songs they liked from their favorite albums. That changed the launching strategy of CDs, consequently, those often had just one good song and the others were just to fill the disk up. Consumer’s behaviour and desires changed completely and the record industry was not so happy about it. Still, they finally realised they would have to adapt to the digital era.

Record labels had to become digital and convert the pirates into buyers. Steve Jobs created iTunes, charging 0.99 dollars per song downloaded. It was not received with a lot of enthusiasm at first, yet, with the hit of the iPod and some time, the digital sales started to grow.

A few years later, the labels were less afraid of technology, seeing that, business models based on streaming music started to arise. One of these businesses was “Spotify” which had paid millions in advance to record labels. That made them happy, as a result, they felt they were getting the control back.

Spotify has now a broad music catalogue to please record labels and consumers. This gives access to millions of songs paying a monthly subscription fee or having a free account supported by ads. Despite that, there are rumours which say Spotify does not care about artists. Some clues indicate that record labels do not distribute their gains to artists after receiving those payments in advance. It appears that either the record companies or the most popular streaming services are not keen in having transparency, specifically since it might lead them to pay somebody.

The digital format made the job to produce a whole record cheaper. This became an encouraging aspect for independent artists to seek their careers and make their music reach their fans. As a consequence, there has been a growing number of business models focused on independent artists. These are publishers, distributors and producers.

These changes opened new markets, established new opportunities, dissolved some companies, created others and changed the way artists monetize music nowadays. Just as we have seen, the whole structure was reorganised.

The bands that were not appealing for labels now have the chance to build their career by their own. In lots of cases, a major record label would hire them after their first album release if they succeed, since labels avoid to take risks most of the times. Even so, an independent artist nowadays has to take care of many things besides the music such as managing their careers, at least until they find a record label.

4.4. THE THREE MAJOR LABELS IN THE INDUSTRY

- **Universal Music Group**

It is an American global music corporation which is a subsidiary of the french group Vivendi, one of the world's most important music companies. It became the world's biggest company after the purchase of the british label EMI in 2007. Its headquarters are located in Santa Monica, California.

Since 2004, the corporation is no longer related to the film studio Universal Music Studios. Moreover, Fast Company named Universal Music Group the most innovative music company, moreover, the business was listed in the Top 50 most innovative companies in the world. That is because it is the example of what a modern label should look like. This company has licensing agreements with more than 400 platforms worldwide.

Universal Music Group co-developed Vevo, which is a site for music videos inspired by "Hulu.com", which allows the free ad-supported streaming of videos and other music content. Although, in 2018 Vevo announced the site would not be available anymore to focus on the YouTube distribution.

It owns some of the most important records, such as: Capitol Records, Interscope Records, Island Records, Republic Records, EMI Records, etc. Furthermore, it has some of the most important artists in the world signed, including: Ariana Grande, Billie Eilish, Justin Bieber, Shawn Mendes, Selena Gomez, Halsey, Katy Perry, Mabel, Loren Gray, Marshmello, Njomza, Queen Naija, Tori Kelly, Troye Sivan, The Beatles,

Lana Del Rey, BlackPink, Carly Rae Jepsen, Avicii (legacy), Ella Mai, Ellie Goulding, Earthgang, Guns N' Roses, Juice WRLD (legacy), Kendrick Lamar, Madonna, Summer Walker, Zedd, Raye, Demi Lovato, Jessie Reyez, Nick Jonas, Amy Winehouse (legacy), Drake, Hailee Steinfeld, James TW, Nicki Minaj, Lady Gaga, Carly Gibert, Taylor Swift, DNCE, etc.

- **Sony Music Entertainment**

It is a musical company owned by Sony. It was founded in 1929 under the name of American Record Corporation, which proceeded to be named Columbia Recording Corporation in 1938, after being bought by Columbia Broadcasting System. Later on, it reorganized to become CBS Records. And finally, in 1988 it was purchased by Sony Corporation and named Sony Music Entertainment in 1991.

It is part of the three biggest music companies worldwide. It also possesses the 50% of SYCO Entertainment, which operates some of the biggest and most successful reality TV formats, such as Got Talent and The X Factor.

The 17th of July of 2019, the fusion between Sony Music Entertainment and Sony/TV was announced, to become Sony Music Group.

It is the owner of some of the world's biggest record labels, some of them being: Columbia Records, RCA Records, Epic Records, etc. And it has signed some of the most successful artists globally, for instance: Harry Styles, Rosalía, Camila Cabello, Mariah Carey, Khalid, Travis Scott, Tyler The Creator, Céline Dion, Adele, Beyoncé, Calvin Harris, Chloe x Halle, John Legend, Grace VanderWaal, James Arthur, Lil Peep, Little Mix, Noah Cyrus, One Direction, Becky G, Britney Spears, H.E.R., CNCO, Lolo Zouaï, Normani, SZA, Shakira, ZAYN, Pharrell Williams, Solange, Tyga, Zhavia, Kesha, Fifth Harmony, Meghan Trainor, Zara Larsson, etc.

- **Warner Music Group**

It is an entertainment and record label company which has its headquarters in New York. It is the third biggest company after Sony

Music Entertainment and Universal Music Group. It has an annual facturation of thousands of millions of dollars, with more than 3500 people employed and operations on more than 50 countries worldwide.

The company was publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange until May 2011, when it announced its privatization and sale to Access Industries. Moreover, since 2018 it has expanded its business in the digital media through the purchase of Uproxx Media Group.

The company owns and operates some of the biggest labels in the world, including: Elektra Records, Warner Bros. Records, Parlophane and Atlantic Records. And has signed some of the world's most successful artists, for example: Aretha Franklin (legacy), Ava Max, Bazzi, Bruno Mars, Cardi B, Dua Lipa, Charlie Puth, Ed Sheeran, Hayley Kiyoko, Kehlani, Lizzo, Melanie Martinez, Missy Elliott, Sabrina Claudio, Sia, Tayla Parx, Ty Dolla \$ign, Wiz Khalifa, etc.

5. SONGWRITING

5.1. OTHER ARTISTS PROCESSES

5.1.1. **Amateur singers and songwriters**

- **Núria Galan**

She is a 17 year old girl who has just finished the performing arts “batxillerat”. She enjoys singing and also posting covers on her “Instagram” page. Earlier this year she released her first EP “Fanciful” on “Soundcloud” as a part of her research project (which she later deleted). Next, I am going to explain her songwriting process and what it means to her:

The procedure depends on the song, yet she has a recurring process: she writes during the day, she’s not a night worker, moreover, she usually starts by making a sequence of chords with her guitar, even though she says she just knows how to play the basic chords, but normally the pop songs always use the same ones, so, that works perfectly for her. Following, she keeps on playing the chords and starts coming up with melodies. She also has an artist’s notebook where she writes any ideas or lyrics that go through her mind and so she then adds those lyrics to the new melodies. When she doesn’t have the notebook with her, she does voice recordings with her phone to preserve the ideas. On the whole, she uses the guitar a lot, hence her songs have a sweet pop/R&B style. In general, while she’s composing the songs, she has ideas about what she wants in the instrumental (synths, second voices, etc.) and she then explains all those ideas to a friend of hers who has a home studio and produces all her songs. Normally, when she has a

really clear concept and she feels inspired she writes her songs so fast, yet it's really up to her mood and her level of inspiration. Even though some lyrics can take a few months to come out, the song itself is written so fast and, later she takes her time to go through it.

She says that writing is a way out for her, as it is for a boxer hitting the boxing bag, therefore, writing songs works that same way to her. Even it's just formulating a sentence, when she has a thought or feeling in her mind, she feels the need to capture it in her notebook. As a consequence, her tracks are always based on personal experiences, basically she always treats personal topics and she takes them to the limit. On occasions she looks back to past feelings to make her songs, and sometimes she writes when the occurrence happens with the fresh emotions, even so all her songs are about love.

She would define her songs as experimental tracks, her EP is formed by almost all the songs she had written when she put it out whereas she had a few others that didn't make the cut. She doesn't have a determined style yet, therefore, she is still playing with different types of music and trying to see which one she likes better. Additionally, she has a large number of unfinished songs and lyrics, that she considers are not too good or she didn't have enough inspiration to finish them. At times she thinks about possible visuals for the songs when she composes them.

○ **Júlia Cervera**

She is a student from second of “batxillerat” in “L’Escola d’Art de Vic”. She is an actress and singer who has taken part in a ton of plays and musical theaters. Furthermore, she writes her own songs, nevertheless, she has not posted them anywhere.

She basically composes with the guitar. Then, she has two options: sometimes she starts from a poem she has already written and just adds music to it, yet, in other occasions, she looks for rhythms and chords with the guitar and, after that, she adds lyrics on top. Nevertheless, what she always does is improvise, and progressively, she ties the lyrics and melodies together until she has a song.

She essentially uses a blank paper, the guitar and her phone. If the poem is already written, she just writes the chord that fits every verse the best. If the lyrics are not done, when she comes up with a melody, she records it with the mobile phone and then she looks for lyrics that can fit that theme the best.

She does not have a certain timetable which works the best for her to write, however, most of the songs she has written were made during the daylight. Still, when she is the most inspired is at night. Consequently, she cannot say which time of the day she prefers to write.

The time she takes to write a song relies on if she is inspired or not. However, normally she takes a maximum of one hour to write a song, besides, another hour and a half to add music to it. Yet, if it is a poem she has already written, it takes 30 minutes for her to add music to it.

She has practically finished all the songs she has started, even so, if one day she is not inspired, she leaves it.

To compose she bases on personal experiences and emotions. For instance: her song “Just You And I” is for a person she loved so much,

“Ella” talks about the same more or less and “Say No” is about what she feels towards feminism and women.

She is a person who, in the one hand, remembers good memories with a lot of joy. Still, in the other hand, bad memories really hurt her. As a result, she has no problem on writing about experiences when they have happened a long time ago, since she feels the emotions the same way she did when things had just happened. As a result, she tends to write songs months after she lived what the track is about. Although, if there is a really strong experience and she starts writing, she can make the song at the moment it is happening. Nevertheless, in most of the cases, she writes the pieces a while after experiences.

The emotions that inspire her the most are: love (being in love), sadness, fear, freedom, ambition, etc. Mostly drama, she is not a person who makes really happy and joyful songs.

Seeing that, she thinks her songs are really cheesy. She considers they are really seductive, in the sense that you play them to somebody and he/she falls in love (to put it in words).

She does not have any intentions while she is writing a song. Yet, if she had to say one, it would be to express her emotions, like if she had the person who she is writing about in front and she sang her feelings to her/him. Maybe, sometimes she has the intention to sing it in a stage, but it is not the main intention. In fact, she does not think about how she would like the piece to be produced, etc. She just writes songs seeing that it makes her happy.

Writing songs is a way for her to express herself and to tell somebody how she feels and what she feels, as a result, writing is a method she employs to articulate her emotions.

○ **Charlin**

She was born in China, nevertheless, she lives here now with her husband, who is Catalan. She works as an English teacher, and in her free time she is the singer and songwriter of the band “Milefo”, which was formed not a long ago.

She writes all ideas the ideas that come to her mind on her phone or on a notebook: words, phrases, etc. After, when she gets home, she takes the guitar and starts composing. Yet, another method she uses is playing random chords, and then she gets inspired by the feelings the chords give her. As a result, she comes up with words that fit the emotion those chords are delivering.

The time she takes to write a song is never the same. Sometimes she can write a song in 20 minutes, although, in other occasions, she says they take forever.

She gets really inspired by her dreams in the writing of her songs. Even so, there are other topics that inspire her, such as other people's emotions she has discovered by observing.

She does not have any intentions while writing the songs, she just lets herself be guided by the process to enjoy it.

She also has a lot of unfinished songs, if she does not feel inspired to keep writing the song, she does not force herself to go on with it.

She thinks a lot about visual images when she writes songs. She is a really visual person, consequently, when she writes she has a lot of images in her mind, like if a movie was playing.

The thing she loves the most about writing, is when people resonate with the feelings and messages she wants to deliver. Meaning, when people connect with her art and feel identified with it.

Writing for her, is a way to express herself: what she feels and what she sees. She considers it is an escape for her the same way it could be painting, drawing or dancing, for example.

5.1.2. Professional singers and songwriters

○ Paula Valls

She is a young singer from Manlleu who started her career with a song called "[Years](#)", which gave her the recognition that she has now. She has been touring all around Catalonia since then. Moreover, she has released two albums: "[Black And White](#)" (2016) and "[I AM](#)" (2018).

She does not have a certain order in songwriting, when she writes it all usually comes together, for her because one thing leads her to another. Even so, in punctual occasions she has found the melody and a bit of the lyrics and then she has finished it or the other way round. She tends to compose with the piano since she has a reharshing room which is her "bunker". She commonly has always a notebook with her, if not, she uses the mobile phone note pad full of writings and messy ideas. In fact, she has ideas everywhere: on different notebooks, on the mobile phone, on the computer, on the edges of some books...

She works way lot better at night, she says during the mornings she is not a lot of a person. As a result, she does not mind staying up late to work because it is when she is more productive.

She says every song takes its time. On the one hand, there are some songs that she has done in one afternoon, and on the other hand, there are some songs that need a few weeks to have their vibe found. Nevertheless, she tends to finish them fast when she closes herself in the "bunker" to write.

She generally writes about what happens to her. Things that have broken and hurt her, seeing that, she finds it a lot easier to write about topics that have marked her life, both now and then. She also likes writing about more melancholic things too. Besides, if she can, she tries to take it all out in the instant it happens or she tries to find a moment to close herself and write it.

Her way to get over happenings and take all the things that ache her out is with music, what's more, she has always felt more inspired by sad songs. Her music wants to be sincere, honest and organic. Writing means liberating a certain thing to her, the need of saying it and taking it out.

- **Ferran Orriols**

He is the singer, writer and guitarist of the group “Nyandú”, with Roger Orriols (drums, percussionist and chorus) and Rubèn Pujol (bass and chorus). Their songs mesh pop with folk music and rock. They took part in the 2011 edition of the contest “Sona 9”, where they got the first position. At the moment, they have released three albums: “[L'origen de les absències](#)” (2012), “[BUM!](#)” (2015) and “[Fernando Rogelio Estévez](#)” (2018).

He does not have a certain way to work. Sometimes, when he comes up with a new melody he records it with the phone to work on it later, in contrast, if his idea are lyrics, he writes it on a notebook. He writes when he is very relaxed. Frequently, when he drives he gets lots of ideas and he develops them mentally. In the case he is at home, he takes the guitar and does it on the fly.

He tends to make songs with voice and guitar, and so, he works armony (chords), structure and lyrics. He has lots of unfinished ideas and he never tends to look back to them. The songs he has released or finished are probably a 10% of the music he writes.

He can wake up or go to sleep and get a full song all in one go. In his elderly years (and now still) he played with this, with closing his eyes and making songs. For him it is like pressing the play button and letting it sound. Occasionally, he tries to shape the idea with the guitar and the computer, but in other cases it stays there and he forgets it

Every time he takes more time to write the songs, seeing that he is more demanding. First, he makes it at home and afterwards he shares it with his band mates. He considers the songs are finished when you record the album, since then they stay recorded in a lineal way. In the meantime, he is able to change little details and this can take months or even years.

He used to be really contained talking about him in the songs. Now he still does it, nevertheless, he does not disguise talking about others. He gets inspired by what he lives and sees. He genuinely likes to reference other singers or writers, changing some phrases they have said or sung. His lyrics are a mesh of the things he likes with others that are meaningful to him, yet most of the people do not realize it (seeing that they are really concrete), he gives a more superficial story so it makes sense. What he actually likes is giving that deepness that he only knows, and that at the same time each person can interpret it in its way.

Writing means full freedom to him, home. The intention he has when writing is making himself happy while he makes people that can listen to it happy too. Above, all the close people: friends, familiars and the ones who like the music they (he and his band) make.

He listens to his songs with the band when they are already produced. He tends to get ideas, related to visual things for example, when the music is already done. Production-wise he envisions the tracks already finished, completely produced, but never like a definitive thing, since he likes to be surprised by the rest of the band and letting them contribute with their part.

What he likes the most about writing is the joy and freedom it gives him. It is always there, the music and the writing. It is a place where he can do whenever he wants and embody it in any way. "Nobody directs your ideas, your songs. The ones who we are married to music, we have immense luck."

○ **Núria Graham**

She is a singer, songwriter and guitarist who was born in Vic. Being 23 years old, her discography consists in 2 EPs: [“First Tracks”](#) (2015) and [“In The Cave”](#) (2016). And two albums: [“Bird Eyes”](#) (2015) and [“Does It Ring a Bell?”](#) (2017). She is one of the pop sensations here in Osona, with a large career singing and even being the presenter of radio programs. Moreover, this year she has started being the guitarist of [Amaia](#), the winner of “Operación Triunfo 2017” and she has written some of the tracks. In addition, her upcoming album comes out next February.

She does not have a certain method to write. Nevertheless, she actually thinks that is her technique: “the method of no method”. In spite of that, one thing that she always tries to do is writing every day, even when she is not inspired, she plays the guitar and starts singing or writes a melody with the piano. In addition to it, suddenly sometimes she is walking on the street and she comes up with a melody. In these cases, she records a voice memo with the phone and goes home fast to write it. Sometimes she finds the melody and the lyrics at the same time, and in other occasions not. Even so, she thinks what is important is to be always working, to be opened to inspiration being constantly being productive.

Her favorite songs are the ones she has written in minutes. On the one hand, for instance, she has a song in her new album she wrote after waking up from nap, and she composed in a moment. On the other hand, there are songs she has taken one year to write, because they started with an idea she had abandoned and got it back in a while. In spite of it, as I previously said, her favorites are the ones she has written faster.

She used to write lots of ideas in a notebook, in fact, she still takes it everywhere. Nevertheless, she says now voice memos are so useful. Moreover, in her computer she has thousands of videos, which are ideas where she even explains those inspirations to herself. Her phone is, in truth, out of storage because it is full of ideas, which she has recorded while walking on the street most of the times.

She leaves a huge amount of songs unfinished, actually, she says that maybe the songs she finishes are the 3% of the ones she starts, and the unfinished are the rest that are left. Maybe there are some that have a huge potential, although, she has not found the moment to finish them.

She said that lately she tends to think more about visuals than she used to before. Her album is set in a really specific place, which is the west of Ireland, and she talks about her family from there and the landscape. For instance, the song she talked about before (the one she wrote after the nap), is clearly set in a particular Irish beach, furthermore, she even had the faces of the people there in her mind. Seeing that, she knew she had to record the music video there, and so she did it. It happens a really few times that she has it so clear, nevertheless, that time she knew she had to do it there.

She usually writes about her personal experiences, or sometimes, she writes about the people around her, or even about sensations she has and shares with other people. In her upcoming album, she even talks about family, where she analyzes the behaviour of her Irish familiars, talking about them, yet, reflecting herself a little bit in it. Therefore, it is not just about things that have happened to her, but also things that could occur. However, she frequently talks about things that are going on in her life or things that touch and make her feel some type of way.

She does not know which is the thing she likes the most about writing, since it has become her way of coping with everything. That may be good or bad, but it is her method to express how she feels and remember the good and the bad seasons. She always tries to write, as it is the way to communicate with her actual self, her past self and her future self. She really likes talking to N ria from other stages of her life, it helps her to see everything more clearly and get to know herself better. It means understanding what is going on in her life, as when she writes she is able express certain things that she had bottled up, which she can not do talking at times. It is a way of going to the therapist, a way of getting to discovering herself deeper.

She considers sometimes the more you write a song to help yourself, the more it helps others. It happens a lot to her that she is listening to a song and realizes that is exactly what is going on in her life at that moment, she sees herself reflected in it and it helps her, as a result, she gets obsessed with the album and it “saves her life”. Consequently, she will forever have a good memory of it. She indeed thinks getting to reach someone thanks to music is the best that can happen.

A few days before the interview she had done a concert in Portugal, where she met a guy that had discovered her in Primavera Sound. He was from the other side of Portugal, still, he had gone to Lisbon to see her concert. He told her he had connected a lot with her music, as a consequence, he actually said that it had saved him. He had been severely depressed and thanks to her songs he had felt like writing again. She considers that is the best gift she could ever receive.

○ **JU**

Judit Puigdomènech, artistically known as JU, is a catalan singer and actress. Her formation includes music, dance and performing arts. At the moment she has published two albums, the first one released in 2016 under the name of [“El Món Es Mou”](#), and the second one was put out in 2019 and is called [“Bandera Blanca”](#)

Generally, she first comes up with a melody, and after, she looks for the chords. For example, she made her first album with piano and guitar, meaning that she created a melody and then she searched for the chords with one of these two instruments. However, for the writing of her most recent body of work, she has used Logic X (a software created for audio edition and MIDI, only available in macOS, which has become an Apple product after the brand bought in in 2002), as a consequence, she starts the songs with the production. First of all, she starts off by looking for a rhythmic base with drums, subsequently, she progressively adds instruments such as bass, etc. In addition, she comes up with the melody after that. This shows there are various processes depending on the instrument or tool used for the writing of the tracks.

She has left some songs and ideas unfinished. Things she starts and that after listening to them in a few days, she does not feel like going on with them, since she prefers to experiment with new things.

When she makes a song, she always thinks about the arrangements and production she wants for it, she specifies thinks like: “here I imagine electronic drums, here strings, here an intro with acapella voices, etc”. She keeps envisioning things and constructing the songs, moreover, using Logic X it is way lot easier to make that. In addition, she also thinks about music videos and images.

Her first tracks were basically about personal experiences and emotions, nevertheless, in her most recent album, she has incorporated that unease that goes further than just oneself, that is to mean, social and

political worries. She thinks, in the end of the day, the values and ideology each person has end up being visible.

Sometimes she writes the songs in the moment she lives the experience and feels the emotion related to it, because of that need of taking it off and clarifying the emotions inside. However, in other occasions, things change with time, and so they are seen from a different perspective, therefore, it is interesting to explain them from another point of view.

She started writing songs as a fun activity. In her free time she enjoyed creating tracks, moreover, it was also a therapy. After a while, she felt the need to transfer that into a staging and making it get to the people who wanted to listen and connect with it.

She composes because she likes it, besides, there are a really few things which can make hours go fast for her, and writing is one of them. She likes looking into new sounds, singing, doing concerts, connecting with people, etc. Getting famous can be a consequence of it, but she does it mainly because she enjoys it.

The thing she likes the most about writing is that it is a purge for herself, a way to feel better about what she experiences and how she feels. One way or another, it has helped her to be able to take it out and put it in words. And with melodies (which she considers an act of transmission the writer does, which is born from the insides of somebody to the outside) she is capable of connecting with her feelings and to transmit them.

Writing, in lots of cases has meant understanding a little bit what she undergoes, what surrounds her and what intrigues and worries herself. What's more, the act of putting it all in words and then reading it, clarifies everything. It allows her to arrange her emotions. In lots of cases it is really therapeutic, because it helps her to take a lot of things off her chest.

5.2. MY PROCESS

Everything starts with an experience I live that leads me to feel something. As a result, I need to pour this sentiment into a melody, which normally comes up with some lyrics. After that, I document the idea with an audio recording app so I do not forget it, owing to the fact that ideas leave as fast as they come. Sometimes, these voice memos are already a full song; nevertheless, it is not always the case. It can be just a phrase or a specific part of the song, even though I always push myself to imagine a full song for the recording so when I write it I remember what I was thinking at the moment, and which direction I wanted the song to take. Once I have this, I go through all the material and if I am inspired I select the bits I like the most to turn them into an actual track, seeing that sometimes I make multiple versions of the song to have a good quantity of melodies to choose from. On some occasions the final result is a reliable picture of the original idea, even so, on other occasions, it experiences a reorganization or sometimes a change of almost everything, yet, always keeping the original concept of it.

The definitive lyrics are always a difficult part. A huge amount of artists take artistic licenses, which are alterations of the conventions of grammar or language for artistic purposes, in short, making incorrections to make the words fit or rhyme, most of the times in order to make the process easier and faster. The thing is that I never take them, since I think that they will make people think I do not know enough English, or that my knowledge of the language is straight out bad. I worked too hard to let people think that, I was not born in a home where it was used, like it happens to most of the people here, as a consequence, I have had to learn everything outside from home, and I do not want people that have English as a first language language to believe that I am not valid to sing or write in it. Therefore, I have to spend endless hours to come up with correct things that fit and rhyme, it can get really hard to find the exact words, seeing that, despite I have the level of English to defend myself in most of the situations, it's not my first language and I have not had time to learn all the vocabulary I would like to since I'm 17. I spend the biggest part of the writing

using websites like *Wordreference*, *Thesaurus* and *RhymeZone* to find synonyms and rhymes for the sentences. On the one hand, this process is a little bit frustrating when you don't find the right words to state what you want to say. On the other hand, I enjoy doing it a lot as I get to look into myself and pour feelings and emotions that I had kept inside and, on the way, discover things I didn't even know I felt. This pushes me to look for new feelings and emotions to put in the song when the ones I wanted to put do not fit, that allows me to explore myself deeper. In addition, I always learn new vocabulary which is obviously awesome. Finishing the lyrics is always so gratifying because it means the song is basically done.

In the end I put the chords. It is not a difficult part, however, I personally struggle a little bit with it. I used to play the violin, therefore, I don't know how to play the piano or guitar. As a consequence, I am not so fast in this part of the process and I do not enjoy it so much.

This is my usual process. However, it varies depending on the topic and the situation. Some songs can be written in less than an hour and others can be left half done and finished in a few months or in a year.

Writing is my therapy, and the way to express things I do not know how to put in direct words. It helps me to understand myself and what I feel. It is a trip inside myself and my emotions. In fact, composing has helped me to go through countless experiences and stages in my life. It is the method I use to say all the things I cannot express in real life.

I would say that in my songs I am more real than in any other place. I like to separate my daily life persona of the one who appears in the compositions. I would say that, unconsciously, I am more freely myself in my tracks than in my daily life. There are a lot of things that for respect and to avoid messing things up we do not say in our regular life, as a reason, music gives me a platform to denounce things I am not able to in any other way.

That is why I consider somebody can know me better listening to my songs than talking with me for 30 minutes. That is because in them I treat deeper topics, which are not usually introduced in regular conversations. I see them as a talk

of myself with my emotions. Where they unfold and tell me how I am really feeling inside.

Negative feelings are the ones that inspire me the most: sadness, anxiety, loneliness, anger, jealousy, hate, etc. It is my way to get over episodes which have hurt me, to learn from them and make a valuation of what they have provided me. Writing means forgiving, it pushes me to pardon people who have wounded me, in addition, sometimes it even helps me to forgive myself.

5.3. CONCLUSIONS

I did not expect this, but I have realized we all have similar writing processes. Nevertheless, I have not been able to talk with singers who write with a team in the studio, since those are already so famous. Obviously, their process is absolutely different to mine and the one from the singers I have talked to, despite that, I am going to focus on the processes I have been able to collect, due to the fact that, as I said, the singers who have this different process are already so unattainable.

One thing that is so remarkable, is that for everyone music comes from feelings. This is one thing that has surprised me, seeing that music is becoming everytime colder and meant for the sales. It is interesting to see how everybody uses songwriting to heal in lots of cases. This proves how curative it can be, even though it is not clinically considered a therapy in itself.

Another really curious thing is that nobody has a certain process. Which shows how spontaneous songwriting is, and how it is a natural process to everybody who does it. It proves that it is a thing which cannot be forced. An example of it, is how JU changed her process absolutely in each one of her albums, that avoids the songs to sound the same, I consider it is a great idea.

The help of the technology is really notorious in this case, since it is visible that everybody who I interviewed makes voice notes to keep ideas. This makes the action of songwriting even more casual. Technology has made everything faster and it has become a great tool for musicians in this sense. Before this research I thought I was the only one who had the phone full of voice notes. After this I have seen we all have more things in common than I expected. Voice notes are the way to keep all the ideas fresh and ready to be developed.

The unfinished songs are a big part of everybody's process. I think in the same way painters have lots of unfinished paintings. Actually, like I said, music is a really spontaneous thing, therefore, songwriting has to be done in a moment when the artist feels it has to be done. Meaning, it cannot be forced, and an

artist can not make a song if he/she does not feel like doing it. That leaves a lot of unfinished songs and it remarks the naturalness of creating art.

Even I said we all have similar writing processes, we make them in different orders. Everybody finds a way to write, and it is amazing to see how the process can slightly change from person to person. This, in a personal level, has encouraged me to alter the order of making songs. Exploring different ways of writing has helped to know if the way I was using was the best for me. It personally think it was, however, it has been cool to be open to new ways of writing. In my point of view, it is good try new developments to avoid the repetition in songs.

One great thing Núria Graham said in her interview is that she tries to do something creative every day. Establishing a goal helps to go in a certain direction and to keep your mind active. Making something music-related every day is good, since you keep your head ready and opened to music, moreover, you stimulate its creativity. Another good fact about it, is that, as one of my music teachers said, if you write a 100 songs, maybe there are 3 that are really good. Meaning that you have to have a lot of ideas before finding a good one, and Nuria's method applies that.

One of the things everybody said is the time varies a lot. This emphasises in what I talked about earlier, music is so spontaneous. Songs are created by inspiration impulses, and when that impulse dies it is not good to force it, and it is notorious that nobody tries to do it. In all the cases, the time that is invested in the writing of a song is so imprecise, and there is not a certain time it takes to write for anybody, sometimes it is minutes and other times it takes months or years.

Notebooks and voice memos are the most used methods to preserve ideas. Voice notes for melodies and notebooks for lyrics. Other tools like instruments and partitures are used but in a really minor scale. These two methods are significantly the most effective ones and the most used by singers and songwriters.

Like I said, feelings are the impetus which lead the most people to write songs. Nevertheless, there are other topics and inspirations, such as people and landscapes. Núria Graham, for instance, described her familiars in lots of her upcoming songs, a really different inspiration than feelings. A thing all these incentives have in common is, they have to attract the writer in a way. They have to have touched the feelings of the person who has written the song, or stimulated the subject's curiosity. That is a prove that art has to come from inside, and that it has not a rational process, songs cannot be made just to sell.

In conclusion, songwriting is a really personal process. There cannot be established rules for it, and there is not a right and a wrong way to do it, since every artist uses the process he/she feels the most comfortable employing. There is not even a regular process for any artist.

This study has proved music comes from the heart, and so it is so unpredictable. There is no way of making a standard way of writing. Obviously, if I had received the answers of this questions from 100 people, for example, I would have discovered lots of other processes. Even so, that would not have changed my conclusions about the topic a lot. Every person is a world and so it is his/her songwriting process. I could have perfectly done a conclusion of each person's process separately, since they are all unique in their own way. I think art is going back to its beginnings, to the emotions and feelings, and the audience is looking for deeper songs. This has made the songwriting processes go back to an inner research, as a result, this makes it so difficult to establish a certain conclusion.

Art is becoming so diverse, consequently, the ways of doing it are too. It has been a pleasure for me learning about some artist's way of writing. It has opened me lots of doors. I am proud to say that I am able to create this type of art, where I can clearly see how everybody feels free to create and express themselves or their feelings.

It has been also so surprising seeing that nobody forces the writing of songs. It is something I did not expect, as a result, I am happy to see people is feeling free to create with time.

Songwriting is complex, as a consequence, understanding it too. I hope this part of the project has proportioned a wider insight to this particular world. To conclude, I invite everybody to listen to the music of these amazing artists I have had the pleasure to interview.

6. THE SONGS

I will not talk about the songs I have not been able to record yet. It would make no sense as in the recording, lyrics can change. I do not like to consider a song is finished until it is fully recorded.

The splash of watercolor there will be next to the title of each song is the representation of the color the song is, since I consider every song has a color.

6.1. POSON



6.1.1. The process

This is one of the most special songs for me, since it is the one that has experienced the biggest changes throughout the years, moreover, at the moment it is the oldest song there will be in this body of work.

I had the first idea of this song the 3rd of June of 2017 and I registered it with the little IPod that I had *Songs folder - Nueva Grabación 22*. The idea made no sense and it was based on a different concept the actual song ended up having. One of my best friends was in a toxic relationship, and when I tried to warn her, the boyfriend made her take distance with me, as a result, I made this first voice out of the frustration that gave me, and the feeling of knowing I could not help her. As you will see, I do not usually sing well in the ideas I have for my songs and the lyrics in general do not make any sense. Out of that audio I took the first part that made the verses of the final song and the hook that in the final song ended up being the bridge.

A couple months later, one night that I could not sleep I was going through the voice notes of the IPod, and I thought that one had potential. Therefore, the day after I started developing a song with that, and I had an idea for the chorus *Songs Folder - 22*. At that time, the thing with my friend had luckily ended and so I did not feel inspired to write about it anymore. Nevertheless, I had recently

gone through a really toxic friendship breakout which I am going to talk about during the lyrics explanation, and that inspired me to make that song.

At that time I was listening to Melanie Martinez a lot, consequently, I had developed a dark style that marked that song. I decided to talk about how I was feeling during that distancing I had finally taken from a “friend” who had been really toxic, and how I was still really debile and dominable. Despite the song looks really “strong”, the fragile undertone is visible. I remember it took me a few days to finish that song, in fact, if you looked at the notebook I wrote the lyrics in, you would see I wrote it with lots of different pens and pencils.

As I previously said, I changed the structure and melody of the original audio a lot. I kept the verses, nevertheless, I moved the hook and made it the bride of the song, since I thought it would be better like that, and I had lots of ideas for the lyrics of that melody, therefore, as a hook it would have been too long. I did not keep anything else from the original idea, moreover, as it was visible in the last reference, I made new chorus and then a new hook/pre-chorus.

When I had finished the song’s lyrics I recorded it with my mobile phone to remember it. I recorded this short one for myself *Songs Folder - Poison (Short)* and one of the full song for a friend *Songs Folder - Poison (for a friend)*. There are some really strong mistakes in the lyrics such as “I putted all my confidence in your heart” and “Cause I feel bad yet” which I corrected later on, in addition to it, I planned to have a little voice instrumental after the chorus which I took off later.

I had a few doubts about the title, consequently, I sent some options to my friends to let them chose, some of them being: “Blesses”, “Bad Yet” and the one I stucked to, “Poison”.

A few months after having written Poison I started taking classes with [REDACTED] who I had shown some of my songs to previously, and she had always been so supportive about them. I sang the song to her and she actually made the chords for it. I remember I was really excited about the chorus because I really liked them, as a result, when I sang the song with chords for the first time

I got goosebumps with the part “But I pretend not”, moreover, I almost cried of joy.

I have always had a really strong connection with that song since it was the first full song I wrote I felt strongly emotional about. *Songs Folder - Poison (with [REDACTED] 1) and Poison (with [REDACTED] 2) *. You will notice that in all the files I have attached until now my voice is not great. It was when I was diagnosed with a mucous cyst on my vocal chords (a little quantity of mucous that could not be processed by my body during a cold and so it got stuck in my vocal chords forming a cyst) and that gave me dysphonia. The cyst can be just removed with an operation that you cannot take until you are 18, due to the formation of the larynx, consequently, I have not had surgery yet, and I had to learn how to sing again with the new conditions on my vocal chords. It was a really frustrating moment, as cysts are the only vocal lesion that is not produced by a bad use or abuse of the voice, which means that I have no fault on having this issue and it just appeared by itself. During the course of these voice notes it will be noticeable that my voice gets healthier and stronger after training and learning new vocal techniques, however, the first months were complicated and it will be notorious in these first audios you may have heard.

In January I sang Poison in my singing lessons audition (a little concert that we do [REDACTED], to show them what we have done in the lessons) *Songs Folder - Poison (Audition Rehearsal)* and the song progressed a little bit. I changed the “putted” in the beginning (which was really wrong) for “put”, besides, [REDACTED] made little changes in the accompaniment.

A few months after that, we did a festival at [REDACTED]. I prepared a performance for Poison and I tried to make it as crazy as I could with what I had. I painted a folding ladder, which was 2 meters high, in red and I started the performance up there. I also composed lines for some instruments and I showed them to my combo (1 small band, in this case, the band is made by the music school and it is a subject we take there to learn how to work with a team, there, we usually cover songs, that year we were directed by [REDACTED]. We recorded an audio of the instrumental we had made

for the song with a mobile phone *Songs Folder - Poison (mobile phone instrumental)* and at home I added some instruments with Audacity, which is a really basic music program, and a keyboard I have at home which has lots of sounds, despite all that, it ended up being great for the resources I had and it sounded good in the performance *Songs Folder - Poison (instrumental I made)*. It was obviously not what I was looking for the song at all, but I did not have any way to make it more professional, furthermore, it was a beautiful performance which I remember with a lot of affection. One month later we played it with the combo too in one audition *Songs Folder - Poison (combo)*. The song received great reactions, therefore, that made me love the song even more.

Almost a year later, in February 2019, I finally started recording the song professionally. After lots of months looking for a producer that I liked and who wanted to work with me, I finally found a guy who had worked on some of my favorite songs, who was from Barcelona and wanted to work with me. I was so happy and my parents were and are so supportive. Despite not having a lot of money, they put all their effort on being able to pay my first song (seeing the first song was way lot more expensive than the other ones), and drove me to Barcelona the first months of recording, what's more, they waited outside for 2 hours every time. The new experience was amazing (in spite of how disorganized the producer is). I sent him an audio of Poison and the chords of it, in addition to that, I told him my concept for the song and how I imagined it in my head. After listening to the song a few times he started making the instrumental come to life in front of me, and I remember almost crying like the first time I had sung it with chords.

At that time I had shown the song to [REDACTED] (my English speaking teacher), and we had corrected the lyrics. I recorded a reference voice for him to keep working on it and I ended up having an instrumental for my song. I remember at first, I did not get used to the chorus, since the rhythm changed so much from the one I imagined and I told him to change it several times, but he said "I will do whatever you want, but trust me that you will like this concrete part like this" and indeed, I do really like it now. He gave me the absolute freedom to tell him to take off or add anything I wanted in any part, and that was amazing.

After that, it was finally the time to record the vocals. I was so nervous about the fact that those vocals would be the ones that anyone who listens to the song will hear. I thought I would not be comfortable recording them, although, at the moment I started singing, it felt so right and I felt so good that stopped thinking about anything. He let me record the vocals lots of times until I really liked them and then we did the vocal perfecting and tuning part where I was super demanding since I wanted the song to be perfect.

After lots of changes from my part, we sent the song to the mixer. A few months after I received it and listening to it was the best feeling I have ever felt. I still listen to it every day and I do not get tired of it, I am so proud of the result and the song itself is to me.

6.1.2. General meaning

Poison is a song which basically talks about lies. I wrote it after getting out of a toxic friendship I had been closed in for 3 years.

I was giving so much and I never got anything but pain back. I was like a puppet, I would do anything she wanted me to do and, yet, she managed to make me believe I was doing it because I wanted. In addition to it, she started making me go away from most of my friends so the only thing I had was her (in a kind of way). She always did things that hurt me, or that made me look bad in front of others, besides, she used to make up stories about somebody saying things about me just so I was angry with that person and I trusted her even more.

Furthermore, when I tried to take distance, she always came back saying that she had changed and asking for another chance. She was like the leader of the group and I used to be her most loyal "servant". During those years, a few people left the group and had arguments with her, moreover, they tried to tell us how bad she was, but we were all blinded.

Even she did the worst things to me I appreciated her so much and I would keep defending HER, because when she talked about the discussions she had with other people she made it look like she was a victim and everybody was against her.

She after started doing the things she did to me to a friend, and I saw it. That was for me the point where I said: I have had enough. I was the only one that defended that friend and we were a big group, the rest just acted like they did not see anything. When we argued they did not say a thing and just looked observed the floor or watched from behind her, in contrast, when she left, most of them told me I was right. Nevertheless they did not dare to say something in front of her, as a result, they left us absolutely alone.

We ended up being a long time that friend I defended and me alone, and sometimes still hearing the bad stuff that girl was spreading about us. I was so hurt, and seeing my friends saying nothing made me realize that I used to do the same, or even jump to defend her during some altercation. It was so frustrating to see how unsighted I had been. Besides, seeing people you love leaving you for somebody who hurt you and used you in that way, abusing you psychologically and eating your mind to use you, was so damaging.

I realized I should not be dependant and that I could not believe everything I was told in this world.

6.1.3. The lyrics

(verse 1)

I put all my confidence in your heart

And I ended crying on my sofa alone

Finally I saw you didn't love me

That you were just playing with me

(verse 2)

Now you've found another boy, stupid like me
He would do everything to make you love him
So I'll let you play quietly with your brand new toy
'Cause your old play-thing is tired of you girl

(pre-chorus)

Hmmm I think I've tasted enough, babe
Hmmm enough of your poison
Hmmm I think I drunk too many lies
Hmmm I think I'm gonna die

(chorus)

Still bad
But I pretend not
'Cause if your snake eyes saw that they would come to eat me another time
He will suffer
But I won't mind now
'Cause my new mind told me once that I have to think only 'bout me

(verse 3)

He defends you cause I am the bad one
But he doesn't see that you are so mad
'Cause he has a bless that covers his eyes
But you know that blessings fall with the time

(pre-chorus again)

(chorus again)

(bridge)

Omg omg look at her face

She's an angel coming from the hell

Omg omg she really loves me

She's the best actress I've ever seen

Omg omg I am the one

But how many like me before?

Omg omg I cried a lot

I was addicted to her love

(final chorus)

When I talk about another boy in the song it looks like I am talking about love, but the boy I talk about in the song is a representation of my group of "friends" and the future ones she would have. That was to say that now that I had left and I had seen who she really was, I was sure she was going to find somebody to take my place and who would do everything she wanted to feel loved and accepted, seeing that she was so convincing, and she did indeed. So that boy I talk about in the song was not just a person. I was talking about a group of friends, and I chose to make it a boy so it was a reflection of me, because I was reflecting who I was in the past, explaining that circle that never ends, since when she loses somebody she really does not care, she just goes for another "slave" to do the same job the one who left did for her. All in all, it was a representation of my group of "friends" but at the same time of myself in the past.

Then in the pre-chorus, I talk about those lies, that poison, because it was the main thing. She lied really well, therefore, she lied to us about literally everything Now if I think about it I do not know which parts of the things she told

me were true and which ones not. With her lies she could do anything she wanted with me.

Once, I heard when the ancient kings wanted to poison somebody they had to drink it, therefore, they drank a little portion daily of it and increased the quantity progressively to become resistant to it. I felt this parallelism, since she kept increasing the quantity of lies she gave me until three years after, I became immune to them. Even so, at the same time, when I realized she was lying to me I was drowning in the sea of deceits, choking. As a consequence, I asked if I was going to die (metaphorically), since I did not know if I would handle all that.

In the chorus I talk about pretending to be feeling good, as I wanted to look strong and over her so she thought she couldn't come for me again. Seeing that I knew if she came saying she had changed again I would forgive her, because I was still a little bit blinded. However, I really didn't want to go back to where I was, since it was a really unhealthy place, where I knew she was going to eat my mind again.

Finally, I talk about knowing "he would suffer" but that my new mind had told me to think only about myself. In that part I talk about how even I warned my friends that they would be hurt by her they did not listen and just kept following. I saw I could not do more, and that by saying that I would just make them be more distant from me. It was up to them to be hurt as it was to me, they needed to learn the lesson. In addition, I saw I had been not thinking about myself at all, I had focused on other people too much, until the point I did not know who I was. Therefore, I decided to start thinking about healing myself instead of trying to warn them, because the only way to learn was by being hurt by her. It seems a little bit cruel but that was after a ton of times trying to get them away from being bruised. I realized I had to find myself and my individuality again, a lot of my opinions had been blocked and cancelled and I needed to think about me and who I was. It was like a breakup from a really dependent relationship, she had been a real big part of my world for a long time and that gap needed to be filled before she came trying to get it again.

In the second part I talk about that thing I said, she played the victim role so she made everybody who was not by her side look like a bad person, and managed

to always get people to fight for her. Consequently, I talk about the blesses, about how blinding her lies were, they consumed us. And I say that blesses fell with the time because my bless fell, I stopped believing her lies and if I did and other people had done it before. Consequently, I knew all my friends would do it sooner or later. And yes, two years and a half after all that, the people who used to be friends with her have all split ways. All my friends ended up seeing how bad she was and now all of them have gotten distance from her because she started doing the things she used to do to me and the previous friends to them. They ended up leaving one by one the same way I left. So I guess the truth always comes out, even sometimes it takes a lot of time. Therefore, this part has even more meaning now, because the affirmation I did has come true.

Finally, the bridge basically talks about what I have talked before. About how she looked so trustworthy and innocent and she was practically evil. The fact that she acted really well until the point we did everything she wanted. Making us believe we were really important to her, and better than the rest of the friends. It was a competition to see who she loved and supported the most. And if we did not do what she wanted, she made us feel bad. I was too attached to her, she was able to pull my strings as much as she wanted. Getting myself out from that was a really big life lesson.

In brief, it is a song that talks about the toxicity of some relationships, in fact, it can be applied in a huge range of topics and situations. This song is so important to me, seeing that it is the closure of a really big chapter in my life. Besides, it is the first song I wrote from the ones I included in this body of work, and it has had a huge evolution. In addition to it, I got to sing it in a stage where she was in the audience which was so therapeutic and felt so good, even she obviously did not know the song was about her.

This song is visibly immature. It was really evident that I was still really insecure. It is a great of the growth I have experienced throughout the songs included in the EP.

6.2. STAY STRONG (INTERLUDE)



6.2.1. The process and general meaning

As I previously said this part is going to be really different from the other ones in this project, and the information that I will be giving away in it is extremely personal. I am writing this feelings are really fresh and I am using this as almost a therapeutic thing owing to the fact that I really don't know how to cope with it. This is a research project, I am aware that it should be written in a more rational way. Even so, as the song is a tribute to a special person, I wanted to make these next pages a tribute to her as well, as she really deserves to be remembered.

First of all, this is not a song, it is an interlude which is a composition that fits between other musical or dramatic entities, such as acts of a play or movements of a larger musical work. Now interludes are included in a fair amount of albums, and they are shorter songs (normally they last less than 2 minutes) which sometimes are used as a linker between songs. However, in other occasions they are just another song but too short to be considered a full track.

This was absolutely out of the blue. I did not create this being aware that I was making some usable material. I had just gotten the news that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who had been also our [REDACTED], had terminal cancer after fighting 10 years. This really weighted in me, and I did not even know how to process that information. The day I started this I was just sitting in front of my computer trying to distract myself, when I decided to open a online app where I record my covers and I just started singing what I would say to her. At that moment my mum was taking her to a doctor almost every day, consequently, I was receiving a lot of news about her state and I hanged out with my friend to try to distract her a little bit from everything, therefore, I had lots of thoughts that I wanted to say to her. Yet, I really did not feel strong enough to go and visit her and tell her everything I wanted without crying.

She had always been a really kind person, who enjoyed her life as much as she could. Besides, as she could not work because of the illness, she devoted those ten years on being with her children and they had a really strong connection. She looked after me during summer days so I didn't have to go with my grandparents every day, and she drove us to endless places. As a consequence, I did not feel capable to see her in the state she was and my mom did not want me to either. After singing some random lyrics that were going through my head I started adding voices to it, and the result were the chorus of the song and I was really impressed with it, therefore, I kept on making the song longer.

The program offers different instrument sounds which I used to make the instrumental. I had never done anything like that. I had never felt capable to produce a song, due to the fact that it evolves a lot of things that I still have to learn, yet, everything was improvised and fluid and so I ended up having a full instrumental with vocals and lyrics on top of it. I just did the song by parts, until I didn't have a part finished I didn't make the other. The melody and lyrics were absolutely not premeditated and neither corrected like in most of my songs, I just sang what I felt in the moment imagining that I was singing it in front of her.

I made a little song in less than 3 days by my own and I could not believe it. I kept on listening to it and I really liked it. As it was short I decided to make it an interlude. I played it to my mom and told her what it was about and she was really happy with it, I also sent that to some friends in that case without telling them what it was about. I ended up being really excited by the song, and as a last-minute decision I dropped it. I made a cover for it and a video with the lyrics and I posted it on SoundCloud and YouTube. I really did not expect people to like it and I thought nobody would listen to it. On the contrary, I started getting messages from all my friends telling me they really loved the song so much. In addition to it, it reached six thousand listens on SoundCloud and I could not believe it.

Despite all the love the interlude received, I decided to take it out from all the platforms two weeks after its release. I felt like I was milking somebody's

tragedy, even I obviously did not. I made that song with my best intentions, and as a kind of message to the universe, nonetheless, I tend to overthink a lot and I did not want to make any kind of profit from the situation. As a result, I erase it. It was a mistake because that little interlude is just made out of love. Seeing that, I decided I will put it in the EP to honor her since she sadly passed away by the end of July.

I still cannot understand how somebody that has just fought so much and has just brought so many joy and happiness to this world has had to suffer so much. Maybe a lot of people will not understand why I feel like that, but she was just too kind and too pure to leave so soon and it was so painful to know that she has gone through so much even she did her hardest to stay for 10 years. She was such an angel, and I know people always says that when somebody passes away, but she really was. Seeing her family so devastated was the hardest thing I have ever seen, I had just lost my [REDACTED] before and I was six years old, therefore, I did not remember how it felt to lose somebody, and I cannot imagine the amount of pain that her family is feeling. Knowing that you cannot do anything about it makes you feel just so impotent. Just knowing that the kids will have to keep growing without their mother is devastating. A lot of memories of her are just going through my head, small memories that I never thought would become so meaningful for me. And now I wish I had played the song to her, and told her everything I wanted, I know it would not have changed anything but maybe I could have helped her even it had been just a little bit. She has just showed me the most valuable lesson I could have ever learned: to keep living my life until the last day and never give up, to smile always and that being positive really helps. She was really strong and brave, she was a fighter.

If it is being hard for me to move on I cannot imagine how it will be for her family, for her kids, who spent full summers with her, and who were extremely close to her. I just can do a thing and it is learning from her and living my life as much as I can. I have just seen we worry for really stupid things. Now I listen to my love songs and I cannot help feeling they are not important at all. I hope I can spread her message as much as I can and that this song, even nobody will know it, can be a beautiful tribute. And the most important of all, I wish that whenever she is now, she likes it.

I am happy she is now getting the peace she deserved, and I just can say that heaven or whatever happens after death, has gained a really beautiful soul. I hope one day, even if it is in a lot of years, she can hug her family again and they can be happy together. She is now an angel and I am sure she will protect her children as much as she can. I just hope I can help my friend to go through this, which might be the hardest time of her whole life. Life can be really unfair sometimes, but she said that even she was angry with the illness, she was grateful for it too because it had given her 10 years to be just with her children. She also said, the only thing she had asked for 10 years ago, was to see her children grow and she had already accomplished that, and so she was so grateful for it. Therefore, she has shown me that we can always find the positive side in everything, and I have to see it and I will try to find it always.

I truly apologize for this really emotional speech in the middle of the project, I hope it is not considered unnecessary, seeing that it is the part of these document that will contain more feelings and will represent the body of work I am creating the best. I am trying to be as transparent as I can in this part, owing to the fact that the only way to make my songs be understood is by explaining why they are like that. This little text was written 2 days after her death, consequently, it has a lot of emotion in it. I hope I made the reason why I decided to add this as a tribute to her in the album is clear and that I can be a beautiful memory of hers.

6.2.2. The lyrics

(chorus)

Stay strong

I know you can

You're strong

Don't let it win

(verse)

They say the petals fall

But you'll be fine, I feel it in my heart

Don't give up

Don't lose your hope

(chorus again)

(instrumental)

(outro)

You don't deserve all this pain

Please stay, we need you

I promise you'll go through this

You don't deserve all this

In this case, I will not break down the lyrics since they are self-explanatory and they do not contain any metaphor or thing that can have a double meaning. They are just something you would tell somebody who is going through an illness like that one.

6.3. SURPRISE



6.4.1. The process

This song had a really fast process. It was really therapeutic and I made it with the impulse. In fact, all the parts of the song, in exception of the bridge, keep almost the exact same melody I created in the audio of the first idea for the song.

I recorded that audio after receiving really hard news. At that moment I still felt like it was not real, consequently, my first impulse was to make an audio about it. *Songs Folder – Surprise – First Idea*

After that one, I instantly recorded another one polishing what I had just recorded, in that one it is visible that I was really emotional. *Songs Folder – Surprise- Polished First Idea*

I actually do not have more audios for this song. I had some more in my IPod, since I wrote that song at night, yet, I lost all the files from my IPod since it was too old and it stopped working.

Nevertheless, these two voice memos are the first idea of the song, and I did not do a lot of audios, since these ones are already really accurate of the final melody.

I did the bridge in the studio, seeing that I had the lyrics for it but I wanted it to fit in the song well, that is why I decided to write the melody until the rest of the song was done.

6.4.2. General meaning

The main topic in this song is death and the fugacity of life, since it is a shocking reality.

It is really difficult to admit death, and more when it comes too soon. People can tell you it will happen a thousand times and, even so, it is impossible to internalize the fact that somebody will not be here anymore.

In this song I wanted to talk about how avoiding things just delays what is unavoidable, and how the impact and hit that it supposes is way lot worse then.

This year has been a year of deaths, and it has all been so weird and confusing. This song particularly, comes after the death I talked about in the previous track.

It is almost impossible to be ready for something like this, even if you have tried your hardest. Nevertheless, I was not ready for this loss in particular, since I had convinced myself that it would not happen. Consequently, the knock was really big and hard.

In spite of the reason I personally wrote this song, it can be applied to various situations, seeing that life can change in a minute. And we tend to avoid facing realities, without being aware that the only thing we gain with that is a really strong hit. As a result, this song can be taken to the area and topic the listener is experiencing at the moment of the listening.

6.4.3. The lyrics

(verse 1)

Run away from destiny

Swimming in these trouble seas

But it cops me

Nightmares came to reality

I open my eyes down here

And it's all blurred

(pre-pre-chorus)

Trying to

Assume it all

This cold gulp

Got stuck and chokes

(pre-chorus)

It's unrealistic

Like a cruel joke

I can't believe it

Life changes too quickly

I don't even know how I feel

(chorus x2)

This surprise

This surprise

Is too much

Is too much

Take me back

Take me back

To my mind

Where's my mind

(verse 2)

All the things that I unsee

Water became ice with chill

And it all stopped

Floating here I have to admit

All this silence feels so weird

After that storm

(pre-pre-chorus 2)

In the end

It all shrinks

shrinks

Some goodbyes

Change all you think

(pre-chorus)

(chorus)

(bridge x2)

Will I ever stop thinking about it

Every minute of my life?

I am drowning while the waves take me

And now the impact is worse

(pre-chorus variation)

It's unrealistic

I don't even know how I feel

(final chorus x2)

This song in particular presents a really clear image since the beginning. It is an ocean. The ocean can be a really dangerous place sometimes, besides, when storm came formerly, ships could drown easily. That is why I decided to use the ocean as the metaphor of the song, because it is really unstable and mysterious

and it can be really dark. The waves can easily take you with them, and nowadays, with all the conflicts that some countries are going through, it is still a grave to lots of people who are trying to escape from that.

We start off the song with the image really clearly represented. I am swimming in the sea, trying to escape from destiny, meaning, the unavoidable. Owing to its inevitability, soon or later it ends up catching me. Even if I had swum the fastest, the waves would have managed to get to me, there is no way to avoid that from happening.

That means that the things that I avoided, the things that I was running away from, came to reality. When you flee from something it is because you are scared of it usually, which means that reality was one of my worst nightmares, something I thought that was not possible.

The waves have finally taken me and I am underwater, lost in this dark place. And when I try to see something down here it is all blurred. That is to mean, when something happens really fast (really fast for you), your mind has a hard time processing and it all gets really confusing. Bad news are almost claustrophobic. Looking in front, to the future, is overwhelming as it looks all so bad. Negativity makes it all be obscure. All in all, this part is to mean how it is difficult to see anything else than that thing that has shocked you, how life gets perplexing. All the pieces come apart and it is impossible to see how to put them back together. That is why I say I see it all blurred, as nothing makes sense at all.

This song, before the chorus has three parts instead of the typical verses, pre-chorus and chorus. After the verse there is a part I decided to consider the pre-pre-chorus. Here I talk about, like I said, how it is hard to internalize that the certain thing is a reality, that it has really happened. It is hard to tell yourself that it is true. In addition, that blow, that gulp, can be cruel. It can be really cold. And I wanted to represent those news as that cold gulp that chokes, that gets stuck in the middle, since it is so out of the blue that it is impossible to fully swallow. Bad news are impossible to settle directly, that is why I felt it like when a liquid or something goes the wrong way in your throat, and you experience that

sensation of choking while you cough, because it is so frustrating, hard to take off completely and sometimes even scary.

Next, there is the pre-chorus. This part keeps the lyrics of the original audio I made. It talks about how it all felt like a pitiless joke. It could not be real, it was so hard to think that it was life and reality and not just a parallel truth. It felt like after going to sleep and waking up, everything would be normal, however, it obviously was not like that. That new situation had me so lost. I had a really strong mixed emotions, I could not even put in words how I felt. It was just a mesh of seeing it was a reality and thinking it was impossible it was real. The moments where I realized it was true, I fell in a deep hole it was so difficult to get out of.

The chorus is really simple, yet, really explanatory. When I say surprise, I am referring to the fact I turned what should not have been a shock into one, seeing that I spent all the time before it happened running away from it. This made it so uneasy to process and it was too overwhelming. That was the consequence of not facing the reality slowly before. Here I wanted to express this.

After that, I talk about taking me back to my mind. This part talks about how sometimes you feel you are not in your mind anymore after a strong impact. You lose yourself in that sea of doubts and sadness, it feels like the world has stopped and you just can think about that certain thing. It is like floating through life without feeling a certain feeling or emotion, just emptiness. Having no direction and just going around looking void. It is difficult to get back to the regular mind set after that.

Next, there is the second verse. It first references what I talked about before, the action of trying not to see what is unavoidable, leading you to a strong hit. Straightaway it talks about how it all stops. That is to say, how when you have some reason to be so sad or feel something really strongly, as you can just think about that, it feels like if the world had stopped. Consequently, when you see people outside going on with their lives it feels impossible, it is a feeling like if the world had stopped, nevertheless, the only world that has stopped is the one inside yourself.

After that, I keep talking about the same thing. How after an accumulation of chaos and stress, and overall lots of feelings, it feels weird to have calm suddenly. It is so empty, a really vacant feeling which is impossible to fill. After getting used to the stress, it appears really weird to have a peaceful time, it looks like it cannot be real, like if it did not belong to your life. The silence and quietness hurt.

In the ensuing pre-pre-chorus I had a lot of thoughts in my mind, even so, I needed to put them in a short lyrical space. Firstly, I reflected on the way we want to make big things, to feel important and loved, and overall complete in life. However, it all reduces, we all end up in the same place, in spite of how important we were. No one can avoid that, it comes soon or later. It all turns to dust, and the only thing there is left are memories. Where do all those nights studying to get the best mark in a exam go? We stress over really ridiculous and tiny things, that complete our little world, but one day they will not matter. We leave people aside to focus on our personal projects, on our studies, on our jobs, without thinking we will only keep being alive if we are kept in people's hearts. It is important to leave memories, moreover, the most stupid and tiny ones sometimes are the most memorable. I think we (and I include myself strongly) should enjoy life more, and be more present, instead of always being so worried about the future, which we will not even live maybe. And most importantly, focus on our relationships with other people, which make us grow and be richer emotionally.

Finally, I say some goodbyes change all you think. Meaning, sometimes the loss of some people mean the most valuable lessons, since they leave their thoughts on earth, and when advices are given by somebody who is not here anymore, they are listened more carefully. The brevity of life, like I said in the last paragraph, is also a thing you can just realize saying goodbye. It is actually really difficult to learn to say goodbye, we do not use to get a lot better at it with time. I have learned really big lessons with the experiences that lead me to write this song, as a result, I wanted to capture that in the track.

To conclude, there is the bridge. This part is a summary of the lyrics of the song. In the first lines I allude to that thought, the one that says that it will be

impossible not to think about it every minute for the rest of one's life. This is a thing that always happens to me when I experience something that is really strong and heavy to digest. I think I will never get over it and that I will be affixed to the thoughts related to that forever.

In the end, I talk about how the waves are finally stronger than me. That makes me choke and the impact is really strong, due to the fact that I have been trying to avoid it for a long time instead of facing it. This line is visibly a recap of the rest of the song. I wanted to conclude with it since I felt it was special to show that suffocating feeling that I had been talking about during the whole song.

6.5. SELF-ESTEEM



6.5.1. The process

If I have to be honest, I do not know where the first idea of this song came from.

The first part of the song I had an idea for, is a part of the singed rap of the bridge. It was not actually for this song, it was for a song I wanted to call “Drama” which talked about really different things. One thing I noticed is I say the “f” word lots of times during the audios of the ideas, consequently, I guess I was mad. *Songs Folder- Self-Esteem Folder - Bridge (First Idea 1)*, *Songs Folder- Self-Esteem Folder - Bridge (First Idea 2)*

The idea of the song itself did not appear until longer than a month after that bridge rap idea. The first thing of the song that appeared was the chorus. That part was not going to be a chorus, I just decided to pretend I was a rapper for fun, however, I ended up adding some lyrics to it and I liked it. *Songs Folder- Self-Esteem Folder - Rap First Idea*. My plan was just to make an ironic describing how I was as a kid, since I had always been so criticized for doing things that are usually attributed to girls. My idea was to reflect those differences in a good way, since I never felt ashamed for being who I was.

That was around February. The same day, I developed the rap a little bit more, consequently, I ended up liking it a lot and I decided to make a full song with that idea. In these past years there have been a lot of hits with talked chorus which I liked a lot, that lead me to try to make that rap the chorus of the song. I started playing with some melodies. Those are absolutely different to the ones the song has now, nevertheless, they have the same color, meaning, the same minor tone. *Songs Folder- Self-Esteem Folder - First melody idea*, *Songs Folder- Self-Esteem Folder - Second melody idea*.

The topic started being about bullying. It was a huge part of my life for six years and I had never talked about it, as a consequence, I felt it was time to do it. Not as a sad song, just saying it was hard and all those things we have heard a thousand times. I needed to put it in an upbeat song. I did not want it to be a

song to try to make people feel bad, it is unnecessary. It was more of: look where I am now. There I had the first sketch of the definitive melody, and it is where I also recovered that idea for that singed rap named "Drama" and decided that it would be the bridge of the song. *Songs Folder- Self-Esteem Folder - Bridge (Second Idea 1)*, *Songs Folder- Self-Esteem Folder - Bridge (Second Idea 2)*, *Songs Folder- Self-Esteem Folder - Closer to the melody 1* and *Songs Folder- Self-Esteem Folder - Closer to the melody 1*.

I had this song in my head for months, nevertheless, I did not start really writing it until April. Personally, they were the hardest lyrics to write for some reasons.

Firstly, I did not want the song to be sad, nor victimize myself in it, I wanted to encourage people to be themselves and to not listen to the people who tell them that they are not enough. Therefore, I wanted to show my emotions about it and my growth from that experience, still, without making the listeners who are going to a similar experience think they have no escape. The song is absolutely the opposite, it shows that the people who are suffering from these cases, will be better in a future, better than those ones who despised them.

Secondly, the song is so fast and it needs to rhyme to sound well. As a result, it was so difficult to make it all sound good. I had to look for rhymes for the last words of the sentences all the time, therefore, it was so challenging to make the lyrics not be stupid, yet, still rhyming. It was hard a process and the lyrics suffered tons of changes. Especially the chorus and the bridge. Those parts are so fast, as a result, some of the lyrics I had written were like tongue twisters for the union of some complicated syllables, consequently, I had to look for combinations of words that were easier to pronounce. One example is in the chorus, in the part I say "I used to love dolls and I wanted to sing", I said "I used to play with girls and dolls were my thing". Feeling better playing with girls more than boys was one of the things people judged the most about me. However, the union of girls and dolls in that fast verse was impossible to pronounce perfectly, seeing that, I had to replace it.

As I said, I wrote the lyrics in a week, despite the fact that, after that, I made a few corrections. I wrote them during some classes where I did not have to take notes.

The impetus that lead me to write the lyrics was an experience that happened on [REDACTED] I did my first concert in [REDACTED] in front of [REDACTED]. There, a man stopped to listen to me with his wife. My mom heard them saying that they were really enjoying the concert, consequently, she turned around and she saw that the man was the principal of the school I went to during my childhood, where I suffered all that bullying. That man always told my parents I had to change. They wanted to take me out of that school, but they could not do it because of their jobs and timetables. He told them I had to play football and stop doing girls things. That it was normal that I was insulted by the other kids, because I deserved it for being so weird. He even had fights with my psychologist. That man did not recognize me and he was listening to me singing, a thing he told me not to do.

My mom said to him "Don't you recognize him? He's [REDACTED]. After that, his wife told my mom that he really liked the concert, although, after knowing who I was, I suppose her felt really embarrassed, consequently, he left.

That made me feel so good. It showed me a lot of things, and it finally proved that the problem was not mine, that I did not have to change, and that I had to celebrate my differences. That made me feel so empowered to write the song, and that pleasant feeling was the motor of the writing of the lyrics. I decided to make that song dedicated to my past self and to all the kids and people who do not follow those limiting gender roles strictly. When I finished my almost definitive version of the lyrics, I recorded an audio to remember how I had to sing them. *Songs Folder- Self-Esteem Folder - Audio with lyrics*.

I added the chords to the song in [REDACTED] one hour that I had between two classes, and in a week I showed it to the producer to start recording it. He asked me to make some parts longer, consequently I fixed a few things. And after a few touches and changes and the whole process of recording, which was really long, the song was done. I actually had to record the singed rap from the bridge a lot of times, since my spelling did not convince me at first, and I improved it until I liked it.

6.5.3. The lyrics

(verse 1)

Sit down, you'll see here comes my revival

All shit I kept is going to a final

Clear out all this, I'm keeping the vital

My mind is cleaning for the new arrivals

(verse 2)

Chin down, scared of words and all their power

All day hearing crap from all those cowards

Grown ups didn't do a thing to stop that

I was too weird to have some respect and all that

(pre-chorus)

They shouldn't say being ourselves is bad

It chokes in a way that can change our lives

But we're more than all this

They won't bring us down

(chorus)

A guy who liked pink, what do you think?

I used to love dolls and I wanted to sing

I didn't play football and I wasn't thin

They yelled at me all day hurt my self-esteem

Hurt my self-esteem

Hurt my self-esteem, yeah

I was way too different to fit in their minds so they didn't like me

They didn't like me

They didn't like me, yeah

Talking a lot 'cause I didn't feel bad being who I wanna be

Who I wanna be

Who I wanna be, yeah

Talking a lot 'cause I didn't feel bad being who I wanna be

(verse 3)

We all shouldn't be made of the same mold

Without difference we all would be so bored

Don't give up because they say you're not worth

Bright days will come and they'll wish they had been better

(pre-chorus)

(chorus)

(bridge)

They lead me to the lows in life

Now all that shit is in my mind

I tend to hate myself so bad

I know I owe me some regard

Ended up believing that I wasn't valid

That I was so sick

And I should be fixed

I like my difference and I feel good in it
So I don't care if they look
Looking at me all day
Fuck all the shit that they used to say
They payed some issued they had with me
They haven't grown a bit in these years
Do what you want
Show them that you are more than they thought
Look at the boy that you used to harm
He's doing better than them in life

(final chorus)

The first verse, references the fact that my brain has erased almost everything of that time of my life. It is normally related to traumas, which I think is the reason why it happened, yet, I wanted to see it as a good thing. When I ask my mom, she tells me things that happened to me I do not remember a lot. I barely remember the faces of most of the people who went to that school.

I do not think it is bad. In the song, I say my mind has no space for that negativity and I like to see it like that. All those memories are not useful for me at all, they just mean pain and create a lack of self-confidence. Consequently, I am happy that I do not remember anything. It is good not to cling to the past traumatic events, moreover, I think our brain erases that because it does not want us to get stuck.

These verse also says how I am getting better. "You'll see here comes my revival", it is like saying, you will see that I am getting better and that I am being happily myself, a thing I had not been able to do for a long time. It shows how I am trying to be proudly myself, the way I did it when I was a kid and I had not heard about those outlines and stereotypes, that is why I say revival.

The second verse references my life at that time. While I was writing these lines I was seeing some images of myself looking into the floor while I was walking on the corridors or getting in the bathroom, wishing that nobody would see me and that nobody would say anything to me. I was so sick of hearing words like “maricón”, “gordo”, “nenaza”, “t’agraden les barbies”. That broke my heart completely. I started to remember the faces of people yelling those words, along with other ones on daily basis. I saw how scared I was of those words, in spite of the fact that I knew I would hear them a thousand times more. This left a scar in myself, and now I am still scared to hear those insults and others every day, even I have not heard them in years.

Straightaway, I talk about the adults. [REDACTED], who did not listen to me, or who told me I had to play football or that I had to change. I remember putting on Disney Princesses costumes when I was three and they let us dress up, and teachers telling me that was so inappropriate, and telling my parents that I had a problem, as I picked “girls” costumes. Fortunately, my parents always defended me and allowed me to be myself at home, they were the ones who kept me strong and avoided me to try to be somebody I was not, in this sense I was so lucky. In addition, I never defended myself and I just kept quiet while people insulted me, although, when I got older my mom told me to respectfully defend myself. I just told people when they insulted me to leave me alone, and [REDACTED] put that I was violent towards people in the informs. Which is crazy, seeing that the only thing I did was asking them to leave me alone while they despised myself, yet, I was the bad. I did not have the right to ask for respect, as I was too weird and too different to deserve it.

Like I just said, it says “I was too weird to have some respect and all that”. Referring to those times [REDACTED] told my parents it was normal that I was bullied, since I was too weird and a danger for the other kids. It is crazy how that old mentality is still so rooted. The irony in this line shows how I am just laughing at those things which used to hurt me. That proves the growth I have been able to experience.

In the pre-chorus I start the direct dialogue with the listener. First, I thought about directing to all the people who hurt me, on the contrary, I finally decided that I was going to direct to the hearer like if he/she was going through something like that. I did not want to make a dramatic song victimizing myself because that would show some vulnerability respect those ones who disrespected me like that, as a result, I decided to make a team with the audience. To make this song a supporting song between people who have any “particularity” and are not scared to show it. This is why it says being ourselves should not be considered a bad thing.

It also allusions the trauma that some of those judgements leave. “It chokes in a way that can change our lives”, that means that those experiences make people feel so bad for being themselves that it leaves a lot of insecurities in them. That is why nowadays there are tons of self-confidence problems. People is louder about those opinions and the internet gives them a platform to express those “opinions” without facing consequences. The eating disorders are increasing and the origin of them lots of times are critiques those patients have had to suffer.

The pre-chorus finishes with “but we’re more than all this, they won’t bring us down”. This means that we do not have to let hate win, and that we do not have to fight hate with more hate, since this is the unhealthy way to solve things. This is the antecedent to the positive chorus. A statement which affirms that those arguments will not get to us. Instead of making an advice “they shouldn’t let us down” I wanted to say it firmly, to convince myself and the listener of it, as a sign of empowerment.

After that, we get to the chorus. This part is a celebration of individuality, a breaking of gender roles. There, I decided to describe myself as a kid. I wanted to say it loudly and proudly, owing to the help that it supposes for those little kids who are “different” seeing people who are “unusual” like them and are feeling good and confident about it. When I was a kid I hope I had listened to a song of somebody who was similar to me and was feeling good about it, consequently, I hope I can be that person for somebody. There are still a lot of

little girls who want to wear a tracksuit and a beanie and have to wear dresses, and little boys who want to get a doll for christmas and are judged for it.

The first part of the chorus is more ironic, saying the things that scandalized people around me. I even say “what do you thing”, like a way of challenging. It is, like I said, a celebration of being myself, and an exclamation saying I do not care what anybody things anymore.

The second part of the chorus i still really ironic, but this time showing the consequences that expressing those things I liked supposed. The things I faced for being loud about my taste.

Overall this chorus is an explanation to the hearer who I was and the reasons I lived what I lived. Like I said, I hope that people who is feeling bad for not being like others can listen to this and think “look, he is different and he is confident about it, he is making fun of all those things they told him”. That is why I wanted it to be funnier. Just me ridiculizing all those situations I was put through because of some retrograde mentalities.

Next, we have the third verse. Which is more of a statement. It looks like there is just one absolutely valid model of person: the white straight male. Throughout history those had more privileges than anybody, and that mentality is still instilled in people. Therefore, a lot of people think the closes you are to that standard, the better you are. It is sad, thus, I decided to make this part expressing how it is good that we are different. That is to mean, if we did not have differences between each other, if people were not individually distinguished the world would not have evolved in any way, although, a lot of people do not understand that. As a result, society cuts the wings of a lot of people. But imagine all of us being the same and liking the same things, it would be horrendous, yet, some adults still try to standardize and neutralize children.

Here I introduce a direct message to the listener again, “don’t give up because they say you’re not worth”. Essentially, this phrase is related to the last one in the pre-chorus. It tells the hearer not to give up even if people tell them they are

not enough and that they have to change. Meaning that they just do not have to listen to that.

Finally, the last line of this part says “bright days will come and they’ll wish they had been better. Here, I am explaining how those who judge so much do not use to get anywhere in life. I thought about some of the people who used to bully me the most during those years. In the one hand we see a lot of them them, who are all lost causes really messing up with their future. In the other hand, I saw myself, with clear. And I thought “they said I was so sick and it was them who were sick. A lot of them have relied on substances and on bitterness to hide all their issues that they cannot take out anymore blaming somebody for being weird. They may still think they are superior, in contrast, I do not care anymore about this superiority.

When I say “they’ll wish they had been better” I am talking about success. am talking about getting far in life and achieving big things, and then, all the people who used to disrespect you will wish they had not. The best revenge is success I think, and I do not mean just success in the sense of being famous, success can have a different meaning for everybody. Success is being happy for me, that is why I say everybody has a different version of success. Proving what you are capable of is the best way to make all the people who told you to change shut their mouths. In contrast, responding to hate with hate is the worst option and it should never be used.

Lastly, we have the bridge. This part of the song has a lot of topics in it, as a result, I am going to talk about them one by one.

Firstly, we see the duality that shows the progress. It starts talking about how those words made me really believe that I was not valid and I was not worth. After listening to it so many times I really felt I had a problem, that something was really wrong in me and that I had to change it. That is why in the next year I struggled a lot to feel slightly comfortable in myself and the way. Furthermore, it has taken me a lot of years to be able to express what I like absolutely freely again.

I say I owe me some regard saying that I am blaming myself for being who I am the same way the others did. I tend to say I hate myself, consequently, I owe myself the same apology all the ones who harmed me do. I have become my worst enemy and my worst bully. Besides, wishing to change (more physically though) is so unhealthy. I owe myself some respect. In the moment I understood that I saw that to be respected by others, you have to be respected by yourself first.

After that, it shows how I do not care anymore. I really like that I am different and I am actually really proud of me when I was a kid, for not changing and never stopping playing with barbies, and singing and being loud about it. I tried to learn from that kid. With time we grow, even so, we also lose really important things, such as imagination and the curiosity. After working on it, I am really delighted to be different and I will not hide it at all. I do not care what comments say. If you are mentally strong and comfortable it is more difficult for the comments to get to you. In addition, in the moment you show you do not care at all, most of the people will stop trying to put their energy on blaming you. I am getting to that point and I am so happy about it.

In the next lines I do not apply any new concepts. Nevertheless, I really like the line "they paid some issues they had with me". I am sure the biggest bullies have really big personal problems, and their way to take it out is making other people pay for their pain. Imagine how unhappy and insecure somebody must feel to invest all the time in letting others down. Then, it is when I fully realized the problem was absolutely theirs. I guess we all have different ways to take our pain out, and theirs was to generate pain in other people.

After that, I realized they all have not grown at all. I am still not really welcome in [REDACTED], and I can still see the faces of people who went to [REDACTED] laughing at me when I go there sometimes. Even so, like I said, I do not care anymore. It obviously makes me feel anxious, it is never funny to be laughed at. Yet, then I think and I realize they have not progressed. While I have changed and evolved a lot in the past years, even being able to forgive them, they are still childish. Then is when I see I have won. I have matured a lot while they still have the same prejudices, how sad it must be to be stuck with the same people and same habits you had when you were 12 years old.

The end of the bridge, on the contrary, is another direct to the listener. There is where I finally encourage them to literally be themselves. Saying all those things I had expressed from my point of view as an advice “show them that you are more than they thought”, since like I said success, in all its possible forms, is the best revenge.

It finishes with the lines “look at the boy that they used to harm, he’s doing better than you in life”. I thought this was a powerful way to resume and close this part of the song and to apply all I had said in just one line. It is actually one of my favorite parts of the song.

In brief, this song is about learning to love and respect yourself in spite of all the things that anybody can say. A celebration of individuality and differences, and a breaking of the gender roles. I really wish it can be a message of encouragement for all those kids and people in general who feel out of place for being who they are. Bullying causes a lot of suicides and disorders and I hope with this song I can make a little bit contribution to end with it.

7. THE ALBUM

I had a concept for this body of work when I handed in my proposal for this project, nevertheless, I have to say that even it keeps the same basis, it has changed quite a lot.

I was first planning on making a full album divided in chapters, I wanted every song to treat a different aspect of our lives (friendship, love, depression, anger...). If I had done that, it would have been a concept album:

A concept album is an album that has a larger meaning and/or purpose than just the single tracks, which means that they work collectively more than individually. This is done having a central narrative or theme which can be lyrical, compositional or even instrumental. However, there is no agreement between music critics of a criteria to establish what a concept album is.

My album is obviously not a concept album, even it has some characteristics that could label it as one. In fact, at the moment it is not even an album, it is an EP:

An EP (extended play), is a set of recordings which is too long to be considered a single and too short to be contemplated as an album. Initially, 7" vinyls recorded at 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ RPM were called EP. These could have a duration of 25 minutes maximum, unlike singles that could have a maximum duration of 15 minutes. Despite that, nowadays, the distinction between singles, EPs and CDs is arbitrary, and it is based in artistic and commercial factors. Still, generally an EP has a duration of 20-25 minutes at the most.

My first idea was to make 10 songs. At the moment I had that in mind I was not aware of lots of things:

Recording songs is really expensive. It was a hard process to find a producer. I looked for a producer for over a year, which means that I had been looking for producers for a long time before starting this project. It was so hard to find one, due to the fact that here in Barcelona there are not a lot of producers of my style, and the ones that are from here are extremely expensive. I talked with

producers from the United States, and my plan was to work by distance, but in a creative process like this one, it is impossible to work like that.

I was surprised with the budgets I had been given by most of the producers. I was asked from 1500 to 3500 euros for just a song. These are clearly amounts of money that I do not have and I cannot afford.

I finally found Miguel through "*Instagram*". He is the producer of the first songs of one of my favorite artists, Carly Gibert. I was really scared to ask him to be the producer of my songs, seeing that I had been refused by tons of producers and the others asked me for crazy amounts of money. One day I found his mail direction and I contacted him. I was really surprised when he said he was open to work with me. It was not cheap, but it was way lot cheaper than the other producers.

I started recording Poison in February, already planning that as a part of my research project. I had never been in a studio and the experience was really new for me. Fortunately, we connected really well and it was easy to work with him. There was and is just one issue, his organization.

I have been cancelled by him almost every time I had to go there, consequently, he always changed the days I had to go there the same day I was supposed to record. This made the process really slow. He works with a lot of labels, which have really hard timelines, but that is not an excuse for leaving me aside so many times. After complaining tons of times, he finally focused on my songs. He started being 100% focused on then in November, even so, it is better he did it late, rather than if he never did it.

It has been a hard experience because of this. He is currently working in 67 songs. This made me be so stressed during the creation of the album. I have really enjoyed the time in the studio and the recording of the songs. But it was really difficult for me to tie everything together. Moreover, I have had to run behind him a lot. This has actually boosted my organization skills a lot. I have had to make a lot of people move for this project and I have talked with a lot of people at the same time for different things. Organizing everything by myself and arranging everything first-hand, has given me a great insight of what the business is like.

I evidently looked for other producers to be able to record more songs, but none of them accomplished the characteristics I needed. All of them asked me for minimum 1500 euros per song, which is a crazy price that I cannot afford by far, in addition, this has been a difficult year economically wise at my home.

In spite of all of this, he has done a great job and he is a really nice guy, we worked really well together and I felt comfortable recording the voices which is important. I have to admit I am really perfectionist and he is too which was good. However, I was scared that I would not say my opinion about things, and I did completely the opposite. I wanted to make sure every song was perfect. Therefore, I said every single thing I did not like about voice tuning, the instrumental, etc. I tried to make sure the songs were representative of who I am and that they were a trip inside my mind. To me, every song has a color and visuals connected with it, consequently, I wanted the instrumentals of the songs to reproduce those visuals with sounds. Poison, for example, is black and “neon” green. One of the visuals I see for the song, is a person with a neon green fluid (the poison) dripping in his/her face upwards, meaning, from the chin to the nose, eyes and forehead.

Every song is a world and he has helped me to push them to the next level and to make every song soundically different, so each one can be an independent universe. My main goal was to make an album where none of the songs sounded the same to the other, seeing that I hate albums that have the same sound in every track, and I think we did it. Nevertheless, I still wanted the album to be cohesive.

Although, I had a concept for the project, I think the project made its concept itself. That is to mean, I had the concept of making that album about life and its parts, and the essence of it is still remaining in the project, but it has evolved with circumstances. It has turned into a darker body of work, where all the songs talk about different aspects, yet, without the pressure of trying to cover all the different parts in life. The album has a clear message that has appeared without me expecting it.

Hope This Helps is a warm hug, a moral which says that everything will be okay. I think the two tracks that support that moral the most are “Stay Strong” and “Hope This Helps”, which are the bridges between some tracks, the narration which leads the audience into this word. I see this production as a dark environment with some hints hints of light. An affirmation of what existence is and the emotions and feelings that it can bring with it. I think it is a great realization of the fact we all have emotions, and we all suffer at some point, and it is okay to open up about it, since bottling it up makes us hold back.

That is why I considered the possibility of this EP being music therapy, even it ended up being not like that. Still, I considered that option, since I see it like a healing set of songs, where I hope listeners can see themselves reflected, at least in one song. This EP will grow and transform into an album in a future, and it will contain more songs with more emotions. Even though, I am really proud of the project I am handing in and how cohesive it is.

Like I said, I want it to be a safe place for everybody, to acknowledge their emotions and feelings, and to stop hiding scars. I left my soul naked for this project, and I showed my real emotions during some experiences I have lived in my still short life. In a way, it is scary to put that out, since it is so personal and I show myself in a really vulnerable way, although, I am so happy to think that people may feel identified with it.

I wish people will understand the message and that I can help them throughout my experience. In my life, I have missed lots of topics in the songs I listened to, anxiety has started to be more present in songs, still, topics like genre roles and stereotypes have not been treated a lot in music, and I am glad to have talked about them.

The clear message I want to transmit with the EP is that even life gets hard, there is always a way to solve it or to make it easier to handle. There are things which unfortunately are impossible to get over, and this year I have seen that more than ever. Even so, we do not have to allow anything to make us lose our hope. It is absolutely normal to make life stop for a minute, to take a break to breathe, but we have to let time heal us so we can carry on. And there will be a lot of chains trying attach us to the past and to pain, it is so difficult to go on at

times, even so, we should not let circumstances make us cling to the past forever. And I am really nostalgic, consequently, it is really difficult for me to apply this, but this project has helped me with it.

Even the garden is absolutely dried up, flowers can grow back again, we have seeds to make them grow another time and water to take care of them. Living can be hard sometimes, moreover, the world is really unfair in lots of aspects, as a consequence, what decides if we will be better or not is the way we see things. The way we fight, and the way our mind processes everything. Facing reality is really difficult, in contrast, turning our heads and avoiding it is so easy. Nevertheless, the only way to surpass any bad memory or experience is confronting it. Our mind can be our worst enemy or our best friend, and in spite of some mental diseases, most of us have the power to decide which one of these roles our mind will play. I am aware that my life, compared to lots of lives out there, especially thinking about the third world, is easy, I am truly aware of it. Therefore, I know it is a really strong statement to make, but it is what I have learned with my short experience, and a conclusion I have made after overthinking a lot.

Bullying left lots of insecurities and flaws, and I have been incapable to love myself since then, without realizing the reason of my self-confidence issues for lots of years. I did not start to get better until I recognized my past experiences, which is difficult because my brain has erased most of the things I lived in those 6 years, nevertheless, the marks are still there. Yet, since I decided to celebrate my differences and express them openly, I have been able to boost my self-confidence, which is still ridiculously low, but not as much as it used to be.

This, along with other things, have proved me that opening up about certain things lived in life is the way to get passed feelings. This project is the representation of that lesson. It is constructed out of feelings and happenings, and it contains a lot of emotions. It has been a really healing process for me, and every single bit of the melodies, lyrics and productions tell the way I see or saw things.

I wanted it to be a dialogue between the listener and I. Of myself telling my experiences to them, like if I was talking to a friend. I see it as a loss

conversation between me and the person who listens to it. There are songs that are more specific, and that as I said, talk about events that people can feel identified with or not. Still, in addition, there are tracks, which are the connectors of the album, “Stay Strong” and “Hope This Helps”, which are a absolutely direct message to the hearer. Those two do not contain any limiting lyrics about the topic they treat. Therefore, they can be applied to any situation the person who is listening to them can be going through. That is why I feel, in this EP, I am taking the hand of the listener and offering a tour inside my mind, giving advice of what I have been able to learn so people do not have to repeat the same mistakes I made.

It is really hard to live in a society which is still so close-minded in lots of senses. Being different is still not respected in lots of situations. I hope this music welcomes everybody, without regard of their gender, skin color, sexuality, age, etc. I want to encourage people to be open about themselves seeing that the more we grow, the more we hide. I have seen we all have a weird side, the only thing is that some human beings have the strength to show it and others hide it completely. It is crazy how a lot of people hide their bitterness with criticism. Their insecurities and flaws are absolutely covered by fake courage. We are scared of what we do not know and of what we do not want to admit. Therefore, judgement is really present in our culture. And prejudices, along with standards, are a really big part of our lives. Because of it, I tried to welcome everybody and do not make my music feel like it belongs to a certain type of people or culture, I want it to be accessible for everybody.

All in all, this EP is an exclamation of individuality. A prove that we all have emotions and that we should support each other instead of trying to let others down. I considered it is really important to show that, since, like I previously mentioned, we are all humans, and we should not be ashamed to feel and to express what we feel. It looks like a really stupid thing, however, this stupid thing is not applied by a lot of people. Overall, it is a healing album, with dark music production, and with clear pop, hip hop, and r&b influences.

The lyrics are really direct, nevertheless, they employ lots of metaphors to make the message clearer and stronger. I have a really explicit message and story I

want to tell in every song, and I do not want put lyrics just for stuffing. I like to play with that duality of talking to myself at the same time I am talking to somebody in the song. Since, like I said, despite this album is really introspective and I have explored myself it, it has the intention to help others and to let them be reflected in it.

8. THE COVER

8.1. THE ARTIST

For the cover of the EP and all the album design I have had the pleasure to work with Nathália Suellen.

She is a digital artist and commercial illustrator who was born the 20th of February 1989 and is based in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She is absolutely self-taught, as a consequence, she has developed a distinctive visual language, created by a high-detailed mixture of photo collage and 3d and digital painting.

Her artworks are full of symbolism, beauty and take the viewer to a haunting atmosphere, with a psychological horror approach. In addition to it, she explores a huge range of emotional and spiritual experiences employing a strong narrative.

Her creations are firmly inspired by the classical era, featuring surreal females which are often captured in scenes where something sad is about to happen, like if they were stuck in a bad dream.

In spite of her personal illustrations, Suellen is mostly known by her commercial projects with a remarkable clientele list which consists on musicians, photographers, best-selling writers and major companies, such as: Random House, Penguin Group, Harper Collins, Simon & Schuster, McCann Erickson, Bloomsbury, Scholastic and Harry N. Abrams Books, etc.

I found her through instagram. I had it really clear that I wanted my cover to be more than just a picture. I was looking for digital artists and I was rejected by some of them, this time because those ones did not offer personalized artworks. I suddenly found her profile and I felt it was a signal from destiny. I instantly connected with her art. It felt like my songs put in artworks. They were all full of symbolism and feelings, with a creepy touch. All the emotions they transmitted got me, consequently, I decided to contact her.

I would have never expected for her to accept to work with me. She has worked with really big brands and her art is so perfect that she felt unattainable. Therefore, I was really surprised when she said she was open to work with me.

We started talking about my ideas for the cover and we were quick to come up with some ideas.

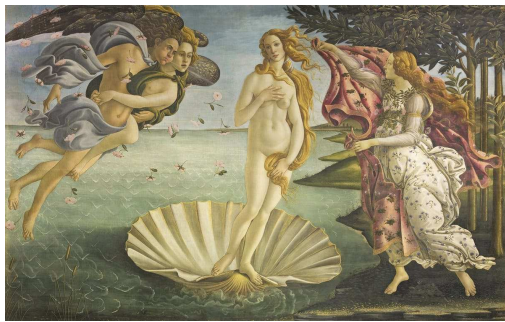
8.2. REFERENCES AND FIRST IDEA

I had really clear references for this album and I was looking for a really concrete aesthetic. These are the references I sent to the artist so she could have a clearer vision of what I was looking for. I will not add captions under the pictures since I already describe them, and most of these were taken from apps, such as “Instagram”, consequently, I do not know the origin of most of them.

- First of all, I put some of my favorite artworks from hers. Based on the metaphors they employed and the compositions and colors. Aesthetically, some of them have elements which are really close to what I was looking for:



- I also added some renaissance famous paintings and artworks, such as the Sistine Chapel, since the renaissance esthetic is my favorite and I am personally really into art history, and so this is really representative of myself. And these paintings contained a lot of symbology, as well as I wanted it in my cover.



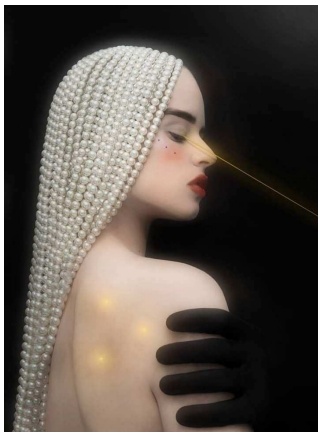
- I also added more renaissance ceilings and paintings, which are not that well-known. However, they absolutely showcase the environment I wanted to create in the cover. I love those landscapes filled with idealized nature and blue skies full of clouds (I guess it is because I practically live in the woods, consequently, that takes me home). The messy leaves and colorful flowers represent me a little bit, since I am so disorganized, and so I love that chaos effect. I also like the Roman and Greek architecture elements incorporated in artworks, such as columns and statues, since as I said I love art history.



- I also really like angels. I am not a really spiritual and religious person, however, I love angels. I believe when people die they become angels, not literal angels like the ones in the paintings, but I think they start willing for our safety and happiness from somewhere. This makes me feel so protected, and the angels are a metaphoric representation of my beliefs, therefore, they make me feel really protected. I especially wanted to have three angels in the cover, to represent three people who unfortunately left, and I wanted to make a little tribute to them in this cover. Particularly since death is one of the topics treated in the songs of the EP.



- I also added some images from the album “El Mal Querer” from Rosalía. As I said in the references part, she is one of my biggest idols and example to follow. Her album contained an illustration for every song full of symbology, made by an amazing digital artist named Filip Cusic. The images were a mesh of photography and digital art. This was the main reason I wanted my cover to be digital art. Those artworks were stunning and full of meaning and I knew that I wanted that for my album too.



- I finally added some other reference, without any kind of order or judgement, just to let her see my taste.



8.3. MY INTENTIONS WITH THE COVER

I wanted the cover to be a representation of everything the project embodies. Mainly, I wanted it to show the pain society leaves in us, meaning the way we all put capes and dress up so it does not look like we are in pain.

I wanted to show a bitter reality outside, which could represent the negative feelings we may have inside. In addition, I wanted the act of trying to cover that reality to be represented really clearly in the cover. The action of covering all the bad things up to show an unreal beauty. I wanted it to be a message for all this hard issues our society is having with social media.

Aesthetically wise, I wanted it to be really renaissance. With a cloudy sky. And the three angels, to pay the tribute. I also had really clear I wanted it to be in a natural landscape, in the woods, to represent my “roots”.

I wanted it to have lots of metaphors and hidden meanings, still, leaving free interpretation for the audience, so everybody could give it the meaning they wanted based in their livings, in the same way it can happen with the songs.

I had these ideas really clear, yet, I really trusted in the Nathália, consequently, I wanted her to be able to bring her essence to the cover. I really love her concepts and ideas, and so, I decided to give her creative liberty to do whatever she felt was right for the cover. Evidently respecting my concept and aesthetic, but I really wanted to be surprised.

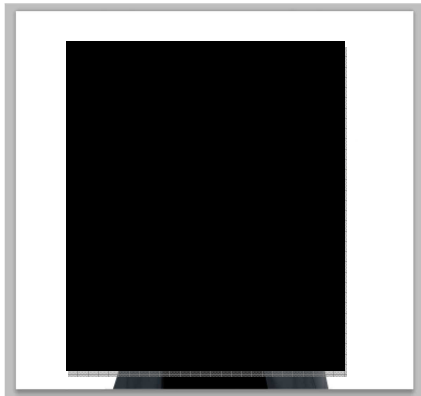
8.4. THE PROCESS

After talking a lot about my ideas and references, she sent me to drafts. These are the two main ideas she had, where we could start from:



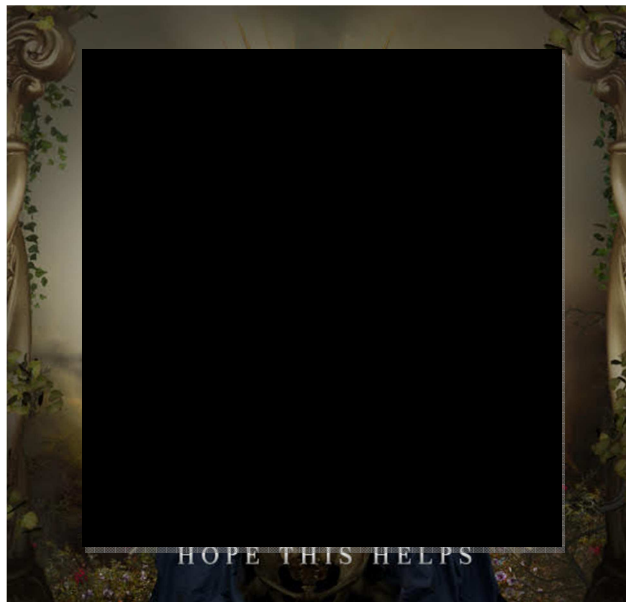
At first I was more predisposed to chose the mask one. I have always liked the concept of taking the mask off. Despite that, I got sent an advanced draft of the mirror one and I really liked it, so I decided to go with it. Besides, after thinking a little bit about it, I realized the mask concept has been used a lot and it is really typical, nevertheless, the mirror is much more creative and innovative, as a result, I ended up considering it was the best option, though I was a little bit scared about it. This is the second draft of the frame version:

It is notable that it still has a lot to work in, yet, it is a really good idea and it started incorporating the elements I asked for, such as the three angels and the renaissance influences. The figures were still really not well-done, since it was obviously a fast draft.



There was no background, therefore, it was difficult to imagine how the cover would be, even the shape and concept of it was starting to be clear. Finally I got a version with a backdrop and it improved a lot. The concept was clearer and the darkness was finally present:

The soft brown mysterious background gave it that curious touch I was looking for. It was still really unrealistic and it did not have shading at all. As a consequence, it was difficult to imagine it finished, however, it was going really greatly. One thing I decided was to send her a better quality picture of my face since that one was taken from my instagram.



After sending her the new picture of my face I received a really improved version of the cover with some of the things I had asked. I really liked the idea, however, I was not feeling the cover itself. I felt it was too overloaded, my eyes did not know where to look. The columns were really beautiful and they balanced everything, still, I felt they made the

composition be too overcharged. I felt there was too much golden and instead of making everything look more professional it made it look cheaper.

I did not enjoy the letters which said “Name of the author” either, again like the columns, I felt like they made everything look messy and shabby. I did not like the 3d they had and I did not like that they were golden either. All those elements were stealing the protagonism from the frame which should be the main element of the composition.

In spite of those two things, I was really into the new elements of the cover. The sleeves of the cape were beautifully done and made the hand fit in better. The new face was in a higher quality and it was more incorporated to the whole layout.

I was also really into the whole skeleton and the fact that it was golden, in that case I considered the use of golden was a good idea. I also liked that the heart was in the middle, since it is the signal that the songs are made from the soul and it is more visible than if it was in its right position.

I was also into the flowers because they gave the cover the meaning I was looking for, which I will explain in a bit. Nevertheless, I started doubting about the hands, seeing that I really liked them like that but they were not cohesive.

After some other sketches and versions I got this one:



It had changed for the better. Without the columns it was stunning. The new letters were amazing but a little bit too thin, in addition, they did not combine with “Hope This Helps. Yet, the skeleton was more visible, which I really liked.

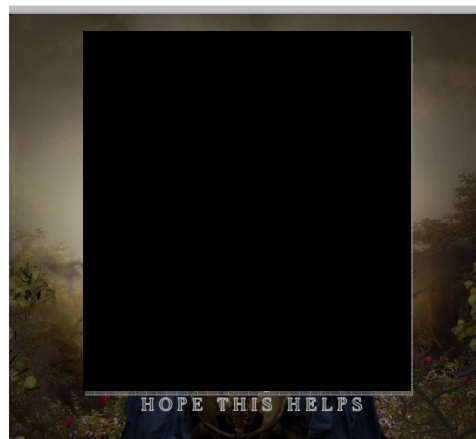
The new backdrop proposal was really good. Although, I felt it did not combine with the concept, since the idea is to make everything outside dead and dark and the inside of the frame full of life. Still, I do not discard it to make something with it in the future.

I finally received the full cover of the album, with the back included:

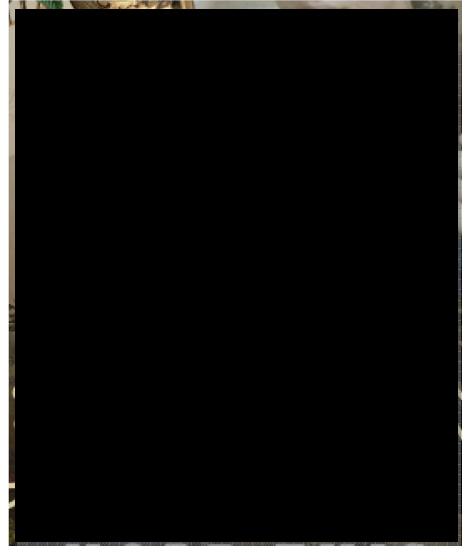
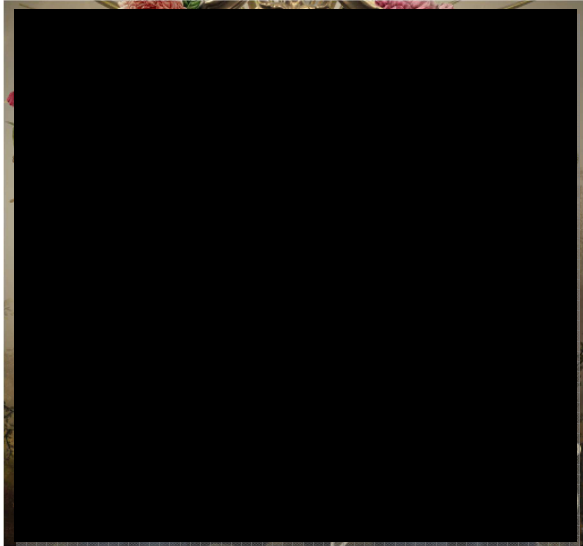


I loved how cohesive it was. It used the same concept and design than the front. In addition, I fell in love with the detail of the renaissance ceiling in the sky. She really understood my vision and she was taking it to another level.

I finally asked her to change my hands for skeleton hands so it made more sense. This was a difficult part, and the most difficult decision from the cover, because of the fact at first I hated the skeleton hands.



They looked like robot hands. They were too long and too thin and they did not feel like my hands. Nathália told me it was almost impossible to make them differently, as a consequence, I did not know if I had to stick to this ones I did not like or to the regular hands that I did enjoy.



We started trying some options that meshed the regular hands with the skeleton ones to pretend I was turning into a skeleton to see if we could get the shape that way.

I liked the shape of the ones in the left, therefore, I asked her to leave just the skeleton of that version since they finally felt like my hands but being a skeleton.

After asking for some changes, such as: making the heart less shiny, making the letters of “name of the author” and “Hope This Helps” the same color, take that pale effect she had put in my skin off because I looked like a vampire, etc.

I finally had the final cover, and it was all I could have asked for and more.

The final results are in the USB *Cover Folder*

8.5. THE MEANING BEHIND THE COVER

The cover actually contains the same meaning of the album. It is absolutely representative in lots of senses.

First of all, the mirror has two meanings:

People can get reflected in a mirror, the same way I hope they feel identified with my songs. That means that the mirror is the representation of my intention to let people feel identified with my music. A way to tell that even they cannot see it, they may be reflected in some of the lyrics the tracks contain. And it remarks my intention to help the listener.

The other function of the mirror is the one I mentioned previously. It is the mirror of beauty, the physical representation of the capes we put on to hide feelings and pretend everything is okay.

Everything outside is dead and brown. My body is a skeleton, which means I am dead inside. I have always considered that the more we hide things the more we are dead inside. I have always thought the people that want to be so normal and to fit in so bad. The people who spend their time criticizing the ones who are different may be really rotten inside. I love that it is represented in the cover.

We see a character who is desperately trying to hide pain. And the only thing that this is creating, is more pain and the person to be worse inside. This has been me at some points in life, and I am sure everybody has been like that one time. Hiding the dust under the rug just makes it gather.

Inside the mirror we see a really clear skin with shiny eyes. But the expression is still sad, which shows that the emotions are impossible to hide, that a lot of “makeup” will not be able to hide sadness.

I wanted this to be, as I previously said, a criticism to the way our society works. Where showing feelings is looked down upon socially and it looks like sensitive people are inferior. This leads to everybody trying to keep composure. And the

ones who go outside from that are crazy. That just makes the mental health of people get worse. Nobody is ready for when these emotions explode.

The frame is so beautiful to remark that. The fact that people try to look stunning in any situation trying to be inexpressive. I have always wondered the reason of this. It looks like sadness is considered a non-valid feeling to feel. And smiling all the time is seen as a good thing, yet, some smiles hide a lot, they hide broken people inside in some cases.

The fact that the heart is in the middle and it is so vivid is the representation that all the songs are made from there. It remarks the vulnerability and rawness of the project, since the organ is so unprotected and in reach of anybody. Showing the debility my ease to open up creates me sometimes, since it lets bad people in trusting in them blindly. That is a reference to Poison, which talks about giving a lot to a person who just gives you pain.

The three angels in the cover, like I previously mentioned, are a representation of three people who left, and I wanted to put them in the cover as a tribute, seeing that, they deserve to be remembered and I wanted to, at least, capture their essence in this cover.

The environment that is created here is so mysterious. Like the production of most of the songs, which lead to a dark surrounding, a confusing and scary place which is still a little warm. A little welcoming, yet, scary.

It almost looks like it is coming from a fire. Which is related to the track "Hope This Helps" which talks about putting the fire inside someone's life out and reconstructing what has burned. This means that it acknowledges the fact that there are things which are impossible to recover, still, there is hope.

Not all the plants are dead in the backdrop. The flowers are still flourishing. Which means that there is still light, even it can all look so dark. The hope should be there and we should let fear win. The flowers are the future, the new beginning, the ashes that have survived and that are capable of letting you start all over again.

This EP has meant the ending of a stage in my life. It has been the sove that pushed me to pass the page and forgive past things to be able to carry on. The songs are full of rancor, but that rancor has stayed in them, it has been the way to take it off me.

Behind me there is light which shows what I said, a fresh start a new path to walk. Everything around me is dark, yet, behind me you can see those light rays. That, in addition, show the brightness is behind ourselves. I really liked how Ariana Grande in an interview said her album "*Sweetener*" is about twisting things and seeing them differently. Which means that sometimes the only way to get over events is flipping the reality in our minds. The attitude is one of the most important factors in mental health. As the song "*Hope This Helps*" says "and I know maybe I can reconstruct what has burned, will make new buildings". That is the main message of the album and of the cover. The light means the hope of a new future.

Seeing that, the cover has three main elements: the frame, the alive flowers in the bottom, and the light coming from behind me. Those are the elements that show the concept the most.

The duality between life and death, aside from showing the covering of the personal issues and feelings, it also shows how fragile is the limit between these two realities and how blurred and scary is the limit between those two. This is a reasoning that appears a lot in the body of work, and so it is represented in the cover. Yet, the main meaning of it is the one I said before, the hiding of feelings and pain that society imposes.

Overall this cover is a celebration of individuality and of difference. It is really distinguished of the covers are usually seen nowadays. It represents the meaning of the album graphically piece by piece and I could not be happier about it. It absolutely incorporates my style and all the concepts and meanings the album has.

We see the pain, the skeleton and the poisoned body trying to pretend everything is okay (Poison). We have the dark and blurry environment which represents the confusion and anxiety (Messed Up). We have the ray of light in

the end of the tunnel telling us not to give up (Stay Strong). The messy and dry plants and the cloudy dark sky which shows that a storm is near even the character does not look prepared for it (Surprise). We can also see the mirror of pretending, of hiding the real personality and feelings to try to fit in to show how painful it is and the way people who decide to take that mirror off are seen as insane (Self-Esteem). And finally those alive and little colorful flowers that show that not everything is done and that we can take ourselves outside from this, even it may be difficult in the beginning (Hope This Helps).

9. CONCLUSIONS

Some of my conclusions have already been mentioned in these past areas of the project. Even so, I wanted to make a reflection of everything that I have experienced throughout this experience.

This project has meant growth in a lot of aspects for me. I have said it a lot of times, but when I handed in the proposal for this project I absolutely thought I had written all the songs for it. I did not think I would live so many experiences related to this body of work and related to my personal life.

Firstly, I have discovered what it is like to be an independent artist. Consequently, I have to recognize I would have never expected it to be so difficult. I obviously knew it would not be easy, nevertheless, I would have never expected I would have to organize myself the way I have had to do it.

Making this has meant coordinating a lot of people. People that were working separately in different parts of the project. As a result, trussing all those things up requires a lot of organization, which I thought I did not have. If somebody had told me a few months ago that I would move more than 5 people (actually way lot more than 5) at the same time, I would have not believed it.

This experience has helped me to develop authority, which I did not have at all before starting this journey. Furthermore, my planning and arranging skills have grown a lot. Being disrespected and not taken seriously professionally pushed myself to prove what I am capable of and to be louder of my needs.

I have realized how important persistence and professionalism are, and how they are really missing, at least in these artistic areas. When I got to work with people who made their work fast and efficiently it was so fluid and easy, in contrast, when I worked with people who took a lot of time to make things and who were not firm with their promises, the process got so difficult.

Discovering that notorious pyramid in the world of arts was hard. I knew it was truth, although, I think nobody expects how exaggerated it is. People who have more fame and more followers get a lot of advantages, despite if they are more

talented or more hard-working. Recognition means more respect. Those artists are always the preference.

When I started the album I thought professionals treated everybody the same. I was not aware of how this world works. I am sure that there are exceptions, yet, from what I have seen interests are always in front. Some people know who is going to give them more fame. What they do not know is that all the people on the bottom are potentials. Yet, at least there are some people who are different and are able to see that.

Feeling like the second dish has given me the strength to prove what I am capable of in a future. I see so many singers on top who make songs with mediocre lyrics and singers who really do not sing. They are becoming popular, and in spite of the low quality of that music, people know that it sells. That is because nowadays it is not all about the talent or the songs, the attitude and being creative are the most important qualities artists must have.

I remember when I was researching about the music industry, I saw that independent artists have more opportunities now, with the evolution of technology and the changes in the business. Even so, it is still so difficult to climb. There are so many unstable rocks that fall when you try to sustain yourself through them.

The more famous you are, the most facilities you have. That is weird, because all the opportunities go to people who already have thousands of possibilities, nevertheless, barely anyone will bet for somebody with no followers on Instagram.

This experiences have proved me how talent is secondary nowadays. It is sad to admit, but luck takes a big role in your future in some cases. I had been told that by so many people so many times, still, I did not believe it. Now I have seen it with my own eyes and I finally know what people talked about when they were giving me advice.

There are singers who have made little steps to get where they are, little and consistent steps. The perfect example is Rosalía, who became famous being 25 years old, which is considered late for the industry. This is why I admire her so

much, because she betted for her ideas, and she kept singing in tiny places and studying until she became a global sensation. She had seen so many things that she knew exactly how they worked.

That is why this project has meant so much for me. It has been life-changing, seeing that it has given me the opportunity to see the state of the world I want to be in from outside. That has let me observe and learn. I have learned how to move and how to be taken seriously. Consequently, I am really happy to have had the opportunity to experience what I experienced, as even I suffered, it has been worth it in lots of senses.

And when I say in lots of senses, I include the discovering of how much I love making music. Evidently, I had always known that, however, being so exhausted and sacrificing so many things but still loving the process of recording has confirmed this is my passion.

I have had to go to Barcelona almost every afternoon in this past month and a half. I have had to combine being there with [REDACTED] That is why I say I have been exhausted, because a lot of days I went to Barcelona until six in the afternoon, and then I had to go back to Vic because I had [REDACTED]. And I am saying that to show that even it has not been easy, it has been the confirmation that I needed to know for sure that I want to live from music.

I think that if I have been capable of making this EP in these conditions, if one day I get to have advantages I will value them a lot, as before getting there I will have lived and experienced what it is like to be mistreated and left aside.

And I am not saying it was a bad experience by a long shot. In fact, if I had had the most amazing experience, I would not have been able to learn all these lessons, which I know that will help me a lot in the future.

I am proud to say that my organization skills have become good, and that I can coordinate people. This is the job labels and managers do, and I have done it all by myself, which, like I said, showed me that if one day I get to have conveniences, I will know what it takes to get them and deserve it.

In addition, I have also discovered that I would like to learn how to produce songs, as I have seen it is better know how to do things by yourself. Being completely involved in the full song process will make me be able to express my ideas even louder. This has opened a lot of new paths and possibilities of things to study next year.

Emotionally, it has also been a really challenging year. I started this project in a more positive state, which has kept on going away and being replaced by a negative one. Even so, I think it has been a great lesson for me. I have learned to control my feelings and to cope with things in a really different way.

I am a really sensitive person, and so, feelings have always been conflicting for me. Being able to put all those emotions in songs has “saved” me. This has shown me that despite writing a song is not considered music therapy, to me it is really therapeutic. Actually, there is nothing that can heal me more than music. Pushing myself and searching for thoughts in my insides helps me to get over experiences.

Moreover, thanks to the interviews with musicians, I discovered we all feel the same way. Meaning that, we all use songwriting as a way to understand ourselves and to pour feelings we need to take out. That is really interesting, furthermore, it proves the therapeutic effects songwriting can have.

I am really proud of the concept of the album, I have always wanted to help others with my tracks. With that title I show those intentions, and that is good for me, seeing that, with this album I have tried to establish a connection with the listener. It is not just a set of songs, it has a clear intention and I have tried to execute it.

I can be really negative. However, I have been able to make that dark concept be positive through what I have learned during these past months. That is really beautiful, being able to transmit lessons you have learned to others through melodies and lyrics.

I have grown a lot since I started this project. I think about my first intentions with it and I really do not like them, they do not represent me anymore. I think I was trying to be pretentious saying: I have an album which is so deep and so

personal, and it talks about life... And now it is still a little bit like that, nevertheless, it is not forced. And by that I do not mean my songs back then were forced, as they were not at all. What I am saying is that the concept of the album was too artificial, it tried to be too alternative and conceptual. However, this EP is just natural, like if I had given a portion of my heart to the listener.

It is messy, yet, organized. It is myself in an album. It shows all those ups and downs. I consider it a full circle.

Moreover, the theoretical part has been really interesting. I remember that during my life, I always got really bored making these types of projects, since I was not able to choose a topic which could be interesting for me. However, with this project I have discovered a lot of things I am really happy to know. I have learned information about really confusing topics, such as music therapy, yet, I have enjoyed reading documents about it.

I have been able to disprove some theories I had made. And most importantly, I have been able to talk with professionals for some of the parts of this project, and listening to people talk about what they love is amazing. During the interviews I could see the love that all those people have for what they do, which is simply magical.

In brief, this album has been made from the bottom of my heart. I have done everything I have been able to with the circumstances, and I am really proud of the direction it has taken. I just wish this is the beginning of something more, which is to mean, that I wish that it can be my presentation in the professional world.

I am really happy to have had the strength to immerse myself in a project of this scale, since it has been worth it. I never tend to be 100% proud of what I do, however, I have to admit I am really happy with this result and I just want to keep creating more and more.

I am aware of the immense luck that I have, since my parents support me and my ideas as much as they can. Without them this project would have not been possible and I needed to say it before closing the conclusions completely, seeing that it is the minimal I can do for them. I hope I am making them proud with this and that one day I can fully give them back everything they have done

for me.

To close this project, I just want to say that this has been the most difficult and the most gratifying thing I have ever done. To be able to be proud of something we have had to put a lot of effort in is amazing. Every effort has its reward, and for me the reward is to have been able to make this. I still cannot believe the songs I write in a tiny notebook in my bed are being recorded, and that I will be able to put them out. It feels like a dream. It is never impossible to make things happen, and if you really want them you have to fight for them and it will be worth it.

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