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Musical Connections

Music producing is a multi-billion dollar industry with some of the most famous people in the world engraved into the name. When I hear music producer, in my mind, the first face that appears is Kanye West. Kanye West is a famous rapper and a more famous producer who have worked with a countless number of artists. He is my favorite producer in the world because he shows versatility, growth, and that experiences will only make a person better. Inspired by Kanye West, I someday would like to become a major beat producer. After being a Kanye fan for so many years musically I tend to incorporate some of his habits into mine. For example, in one of his songs, *Heartless*, he used an 808 kick, and for the next five beats I made I used an 808 kick. I took on a student's mentality trying to understand why that 808 kick was used. I began learning the words of music and how it speaks metaphorically to different people. For example, one of Michael Jackson's singles *Gone Too Soon*, was a very emotional song to thousands. That song made millions cry because the song speaks to them causing an emotional attachment. Another example is *Summertime by Kool and the Gang*, this song provides a comfortable feel at night as if the listener is filled with peace and serenity. I gained this knowledge through the community of music.

I put everything into my music; I breathe it, love it, and live it. Being around music my whole life is one of the best things that have happened to me. Ever since I was little I have been constructing music that appeals to me. Trying to make rhythms was habit from a very young age, about three or so to be specific. My parents tell me stories all the time about how I would cry and they would give me a wooden spoon with a pan. I could bang on them for hours at a time with a

proud smile on my face because I was making music to my ears. To my parents it was just racket and a tool to shut me up, it grew into more. I reached the age of five and I never let this embedded habit go away. In retrospect, by the age of seven I considered myself musically inclined (having a natural talent for music, being able to grasp and/or learn quickly). At that age, I have beaten on pans, walls, and desk so long I began imitating the different beat patterns from songs. This action got me in tons of trouble year in and year out. My teachers began telling me not to beat on desks in class but by that time it grew into a serious habit. Elementary was kind of difficult because of my addiction to beats but lighten up in middle school. In middle school the students around me started liking me beating on the tables and most importantly wanted in on the fun. Sometimes we would make one giant beat pattern until the school staff told us to quiet down. We laugh about it later but emotions were drawn out of us just through a simple beat. At that moment, I was accepted into my first musical community.

My musical community absolutely transformed during the transition from middle school to high school. The aspects of music I have obtained up to this point were basically tripled due to the diverse thoughts within the schools. When I entered high school I was still banging on tables so people that were into to music like I was just came to me. It was like producing a beat that attracted artists together. Soon, it became sort of a ritual at lunch time. Each day for the next four years I would start a beat on the table and someone would add to the beat, rap, and/or sing. Just through similar musical backgrounds we shared a passion that the teachers and principals understood. A mutual bond no one in the world can break; similar to Negro spirituals but not as deep though. In my experiences at lunch, I met people who were talented in many different areas but the beat producers I met helped mold my current ideas about music today. During high school I have encountered two beat producers that have helped me directly. The first producer

goes by B Frye and he was the first person who showed me how to use a beat program. The beat program he showed me how to use was FL Studio. I went over his house and he showed me a little bit and then I got familiar with the program myself. The second producer name is Big Q and he showed me how to construct my thoughts musically. He did this by giving me an artist name and I would have to produce a track that the artist would most likely rap/sing to. This method helped my musical ear a lot. Often beginning producers will make a beat not noticing clashing sounds that appear in the product. Looking back, I became a real producer at this time because I was willing to do the extra work for fun; I found and realized my passion.

In high school I found my passion so now it is time to execute. The summer after my senior year I focused on my beat 24/7. I could not get away from my computer. I began to think of all types of sounds in my head to put together on FL Studio. The steps of producing beat pattern started coming second nature. I decided to attend college looking forward to pursuing my dreams. The first step to completing my dream was becoming a student of producing. So I researched different producers for hours trying to figure out how they became relevant to the world and I learned so much. The fact that researching was fun scared me because I never thought I would encounter that experience. Becoming a student was key in my growth as a beat producer/artist and still is to this day. YouTube is a great source when it comes to FL Studio because they have their own page. It is a primary source so why not watch it right? As a result of learning so much I began reading articles on the FL Studio website and I hate reading. Music has been the connection to my reading all along. If I read without music I will fall asleep with my face in my book. I need music I use it to pass time, a comfort device, write this paper, etc. Music is a vital part of my life.

Often I feel like an outcast when talking about the latest beat producing equipment to people that is not familiar with producer terms because the conversation becomes awkward. I would mention abbreviations like MIDI (musical instrument digital interface), VST's (virtual studio technology), or DAW (digital audio workstation) and the conversation would spiral downhill even though that is basic terms. And because I am so passionate about this subject I want to teach people who do not know these terms so they can feel the way I feel sometimes serving as a teacher. The most frequent question people ask me when I tell them I make beats is, "what's that thang off of *Hustle and Flow* with all the buttons?" I would reply purposelessly, "MPC (midi production center)", knowing they have no idea of what I am talking about. It is a language between the producers most can understand if the time is put in but talent is what separates the community from the culture.

In conclusion, throughout this paper I have explained different ways my peers and I have communicated through words, metaphorical speech, and self-expressions. Sometimes people do not understand me when I talk about the equipment because they are not a part of that community where we can talk for days about music, equipment, and software. Other times people do understand like B Frye in high school where he taught me the first program I have ever used. Unlike actual words, people who love music often experience the metaphorical speech music gives off. There is nothing like eight to ten people getting excited in one area through one beat. The experience is outstanding and seriously, it is like a movie when looking from outside the action. As a beat producer/artist taking pride in the work made is almost priceless. I imagine myself everyday being able to make big money off of beats over the internet. Going to meet with different artist and producers to negotiate prices and talk about music. That dream links so many people together each day like a fraternity in various locations. For example, I have made instant

bonds with individuals across Central Michigan's campus because I said I make beats.

Communication and literacy is the ticket to advancing to where you want to be as well as

becoming a better beat producer.