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| Student | FREEMAN, Michael |   |
| Assessor | Dr Antti Sakari Saario | |
| Course | BA (Hons) Creative Music Technology | |
| Module | CRMT120 Studiocraft | |
| Assignment | PORTFOLIO: Studio Production and written documentation (70% of Module Mark) | |

| Module Mark Matrix | | | 0-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70-79 | 80-100 |
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| Learning Outcome | Portfolio Element | Further Detail | Fail | Satisfactory | Good | Very Good | Excellent | Outstanding |
| Creativity | Demonstrate through practice, your creative approach to sound recording to support the aesthetic aims of a piece of music. | Musically sensitive and contextually appropriate application of creative production techniques and processes | | | x | | | |
| | Demonstrate creative application of recording techniques, technologies and production processes in a contemporary studio production context. | Project documentation and evaluation | | x | | | | |
| Critical Thinking | Demonstrate through practical and written submissions, a clear rationale for the artistic and technical decisions you have made in the development of your recording project. | Rationale for artistic and technical decisions | | x | | | | |
| | Evidence of critical listening and critical awareness and understanding of relationship between technologies, concepts, contexts and practices associated with studio recording. | Project documentation and evaluation | x | | | | | |
| Professionalism | Demonstrate through practical and written submissions, an awareness of best practice, as benchmarked against industry standards, in the technical, artistic and interpersonal skills needed to bring about your recording project. | Sound quality and adherence to professional production standards | | | x | | | |
| | | Overall project management and the quality and consistency of engagement with all production stages (pre-production, recording, mixing) | | | x | | | |
| | | Presentation of submission materials | | x | | | | |
| Research | Demonstrate the technical and artistic research undertaken in the development your portfolio submission. | Use of multiple and varied relevant sources to inform your production with correct use of Harvard referencing for all sources. | | x | | | | |
| Skills | Demonstrate understanding of, and competency in, a range of studio recording and production techniques. | Application of microphone and recording techniques | | | x | | | |
| | | Competency of editing, mixing and audio processing | | COMPRESSION | x | | | |

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| Note: All marks are provisional until approved at the Assessment Board. The mark shown does not take into account adjustments for issues such as late submission, Extenuating Circumstances, and academic misconduct. If you have a query about how your mark may be adjusted, please contact the Student Programmes and Achievements team. | | Overall Mark | 49 |
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| Feedback Comments | |
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There is good evidence of creative application of audio processing to add excitement to the arrangement and mix (e.g. the use of dub-stye delay processing in the end and use of automated delay on the guitar). You have clearly listened to the original piece of music carefully to internalise the meaning of the song and to approach your mix in a complementary manner.

You have made effective use of pitch correction plugins on the guitar and it is nice idea to seek to enhance the 'size' of the guitar in terms of its perceived stereo width. Do note that any pitch correction is (typically) best done first in your processing chain (or after any corrective EQ such as cutting unwanted resonances) as otherwise your pitch correction algorithm will be 'struggling' more to be able to correct the pitch (e.g. after harmonic distortion and spatial processing, in this instance). It is good that the final mix is provided in the specified 24bit 48kHz WAV format and that the submission includes screenshots of your DAW session. It should be noted that the audio examples do not include all of the original recorded tracks. In addition to the Florence and the Machine and Adele reference tracks. You might find that something like the very first album of Cardigans might offer some ideas for how to approach such soft poppy vocals (but with some dark undertones) as well as characterful guitar (albeit the album featuring a 'full band' with bass, drums, guitar, keys and voice).

The choice of microphones is good, apart from there is no real need to use the SM7B on the guitar, particularly if it is then not available for other duties (e.g. to have the same vocal mic for both vocalists which would have been the recommended starting point here given the amount of bleed the room layout produced on the voice). It is not clear from the report what the strategy was for the use of the two different vocal microphones C414 and SM7B and what did you mean by 'default settings' for these two respective microphones? Be as specific as possible (e.g. C414 on a cardioid polar pattern with no PAD or LPF engaged). The amount of PIANO bleed in the VOCAL recording example is such that it would warrant a different recording strategy (e.g. different room layout, microphone choice and positioning, vocalists in a different space, or overdubbing the voices after recording a guide vocal). Consider spreading the job of the vocal compressor between two compressors in series - one with a slower attack and the second with a faster attack.

The PIANO and VOCALS have good potential for developing. At the moment, the vocals sit too far into the mix and there is notable 'unmusical' dynamic motion between the different mix elements, particularly on the VOCALS, which is suggestive of any vocal and/or bus compression settings needing to be revisited. What I mean here is that the levels go up and down but not 'with' the music. Listen to how the VOCALS push and pull (i.e. levels suddenly drop). In general, try and give the VOCALS more sense of 'air', as now the focus is too much on the sibilance and the sense of mid-range "shoosh" and "honk" qualities of the voices. Do check the vocal attacks on "Cant go out..." section, as something unusual and clearly unintentional is taking place there.

In terms of the whole mix, focus on the idea of 'integrating' of the limited number of mix elements together. To help with this, listen to the sense of 'disparity' between the mix elements. Good place to hear this is with the very first guitar note, which 'sits' on top of the whole track and effectively pulls the listener away from the depth of the nice piano tone. If using the DI signal as a basis for a realistic guitar tone try and use an AMP simulator, in addition to any FXpedals emulations, as otherwise the tone will easily sound like it is 'stuck' on in the mix.

In general, sections 2.3-2.5 of the written report would benefit from more sustained and in-depth engagement. As is, you are not making the most of the available word count and the evaluation section (2.5) comes across as cursory. The quotes in the research section have clearly informed your practice which is good. Make use of the remaining (approx. 50 words) for more recording focused research materials. You have identified some relevant reference tracks for the production. Whilst different due to the 'full band' instrumentation, the 1995 album *Life* by The Cardigans might give you some interesting ideas in relation to work on in terms of working with characterful and highly distinctive tones in a manner than blends well and suits the 'soft' performance.

All of the EXAMPLE audio files have been edited to be very short making it hard to 'get into their respective tone and qualities. Whenever making audio EXAMPLES think about what the listener will be 'listening to and/or for' and edit the audio to lengths that give the listener suitable amount of time to hear what is needed (e.g. transitioning of a section, quality of an instrumental tone in relation to different instruments in the mix). The submission did not include an EXAMPLE of the second VOCAL recording. Always provide any multitrack stems as recorded, unless otherwise specified (i.e. MONO recordings as MONO files and STEREO recordings as STEREO files or as clearly identified .L and .R MONO files for the respective left and right channels). In this instance, all MONO examples were provided as STEREO files which effectively doubles up the required disk space, increases the track count of a session unnecessarily (if they were imported into a DAW). Also, what should have been a STEREO piano recording was effectively MONO despite being a STEREO file but is actually STEREO in your final mix. Do revise how to export audio from your DAW in any desired format.

Overall, there is good potential here. More time is needed on the depth of the written report and carefully revisiting your final mix.