// A CREATIVE JOURNEY RETROSPECTIVE

Before enrolling in the IAP program, I was signed up for a bachelor's in English. I knew it was a placeholder for me to start college with, since I wasn't sure what made sense for me initially. I was mildly intimidated by the process of beginning my undergrad, and I knew I would have time to figure out things while doing my general requirement classes. Lo and behold, in the summer of 2021, I picked up the bass guitar, and in a spur of newfound joy and inspiration, began learning to produce my own music, something I had longed to do for years prior...

During a period where I had dropped out of high-school and struggled daily with depression and derealization, I tried messing with FL Studio demos, attempted to learn music trackers, and never got anywhere with it, which mirrored how I felt about the trajectory of my life. I say this not for sympathy, but to voice the desire I've had to learn tools and techniques I could use to express myself from early on.

Even as a kid, I grew up with a fascination towards hardware and software. Excited by computers, cameras, and editing tools, getting the Sunday paper with a Best-Buy flyer was like walking through the candy-store to me. I made stop-motion videos with point-and-shoots plus Windows Movie Maker. I was excited by animators using Flash to create cartoons, and stick-figure movies using Pivot Animator. I was amazed by photography that could look like anything with the editing power of Photoshop. I spent my time watching homemade action-flicks by YouTube channels like *freddiew* and *Corridor Digital*, learning about VFX, attempting to create my own firefights and

wacky scenarios in After-Effects. I wanted to know how to make some of everything, while only using the tools available to me.

On the musical side, I grew up playing in a church-orchestra, starting out by learning Cornet and transitioning to Euphonium, holding down the low-end, possibly laying the foundation for my affinity towards Bass. Participating in live-music was rewarding, but I was annoyed by the restrictions and routine of group practice. I can recall banging on boxes for two-days-straight when I became obsessed with rhythm, until my father got me a beater children's drum kit that I got nowhere with.

I remember being blown away by the sounds of electronic music. Growing up with SNES and SEGA Genesis consoles, their soundtracks gave me an ear for early soundchips. Then, I was amazed the first time I heard *Ghosts 'n' Stuff* by DeadMau5, sitting in front of our CRT monitor running Windows95, wondering what the hell "House" music even is while exploring radio channels on pandora.com (I still get the chorus chants to Kernkraft 400's *Zombie Nation* stuck in my head sometimes because of this). Later, Daft Punk's *Tron Legacy OST* impressed me, and you could catch me listening to an mp3 of it's single, *Derezzed*, on repeat too many times to count. Finally, playing *Super Meat Boy* in my teens, and hearing a fully independent project composed by Danny Baranowsky, I started to wonder about the possibility of producing my own computer music... It's only a handful of examples, but it's easy for me to say that I've had an appreciation of the medium instilled for a long time.

Flash-forward to now, and I'm immensely grateful that I've had the time and space to learn how to craft my own projects using the tools I've been able to acquire. I look forward to using my knowledge in a way that helps create experiences for others, bringing other artist's visions to life, while also fulfilling my passions and providing me endless creative inspiration. I'm dreaming of the day where all the skills that I've previously thought led nowhere can culminate into my own career. Interdisciplinary arts have provided meaning and motive throughout my entire life, now I'm just waiting for the day I can give it all back.

-- *E*