

The 1975-If You're Too Shy (Let Me Know)

Production Breakdown

'If You're Too Shy (Let Me Know)' is one of my favorite songs by The 1975 (an English pop rock band). In this article, I will be deconstructing the production of this song, with the breakdown and analysis of individual tracks and the techniques used in production.



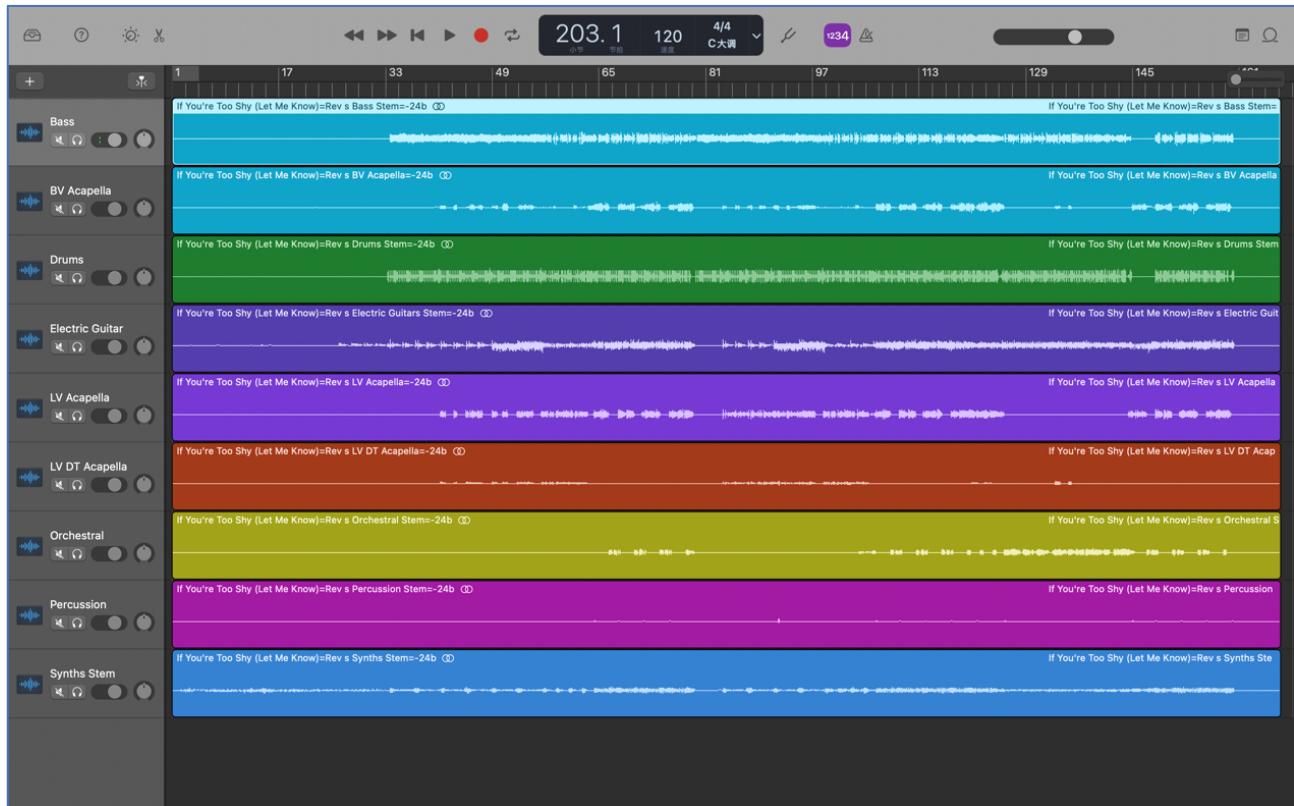
‘Too Shy’ was released on 23 April 2020 as the sixth single from the album ‘Notes on A Conditional Form’. The song was produced by George Daniel, Matthew Healy (drummer and lead singer of the band), along with producer Jonathan Gilmore. The 1975 is known for its experimentations with different music styles. ‘Too Shy’, in particular, was composed in a style that draws heavily from the music of the 1980s, with an intro section featuring an ambient style (*Ambient music is a genre of music that emphasizes tone and atmosphere over traditional musical structure or rhythm*) and a verse inspired by Tears for Fears. Speaking to Ryan Dombal from Pitchfork, Healy compared “Too Shy” to a “jigsaw puzzle that took time to put together”.

Instruments used in the song include electric guitar, percussion, synthesizer,

drums, bass, orchestral, and harmonious vocals. Two versions of the song have been released on Apple Music; this article will be focusing on the longer version.

“Too Shy” is composed in the key of D major, and it maintains a continuous level of excitement throughout its five-minute runtime. It begins with an almost one-minute-long intro section that features a combination of synths and reversed electric guitars, which creates a dreamy atmosphere and sets up the tone for the song. The verse is then introduced by a powerful-sounding drum beat and thick bass at the downbeat of the measure before (I personally just love songs with this design). The guitar riff also stands out here as the verse begins, and Healy’s distinctive vocal clearly adds more dynamics to the song. The bridge utilizes a saxophone solo, which Ali Shutler of NME described as “uproarious” and “perhaps the greatest endorphin release you’ll find this side of lockdown”.

Overview



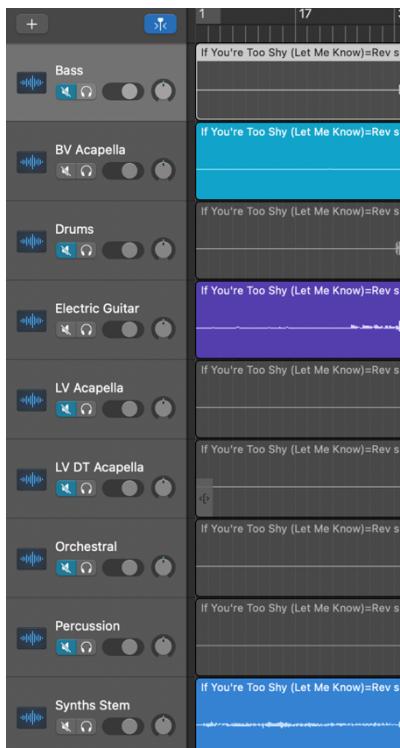
Production Techniques

When listening to this song, one might perceive a huge sense of space. As the song progresses, it unfolds with increasingly dynamic elements, effectively grabbing listeners' attention throughout its duration. These perceptions could all be attributed to the techniques they have used in production.

Reverb is the main technique used in the production of 'Too Shy'; the use of reverb affects how we perceive the environment of the song. The guitar part in the verses uses "a large reverb sound combined with a delay to conjure the sense that it's playing out into a huge space". By contrast, the drum track uses a much smaller reverb, which gives us the perception of a smaller space (Mix Perspective). Their reason for doing this may be to highlight the guitars as they deliver the main theme of the verses, whereas the drums are pretty much consistent. However, the distinction between these two reverbs does not steal too much focus from the drums. The two tracks work well together and maintain a sense of balance throughout the song.

Introduction

The Introduction features an ambient style, which often incorporates electronic and synthesized instruments and strives to create a sense of timelessness. In his

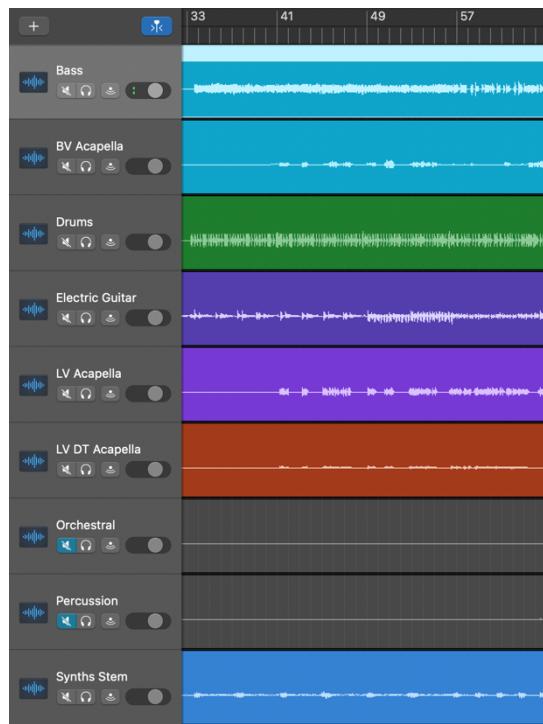


interview with Pitchfork, Healy mentioned The Durruti Column as an inspiration for the intro section. Additionally, they used a sample of an opera singer (BV Acapella), which adds to the "ghostly" mood of the section.

The primary element in this part is the synthesizer, which is characterized by repeated celestial arpeggios that create a mysterious mood and flowing motion. The synths track is accompanied by a weird-sounding guitar track that is reverbed out and then reversed (Constante), which works well with the synthesizers and the vocals.

Verse & Pre-chorus

The first thing to notice is that the drums and bass are very thick and heavily compressed. The drums are pretty much consistent throughout the song, and the bass line doesn't change until the pre-chorus. The introduction of these two tracks sets a lively and upbeat tempo for the song. However, the electric guitar is clearly the focus here. It is composed of repetitions of a four-measure chord progression, which serves as the main theme of the verses.

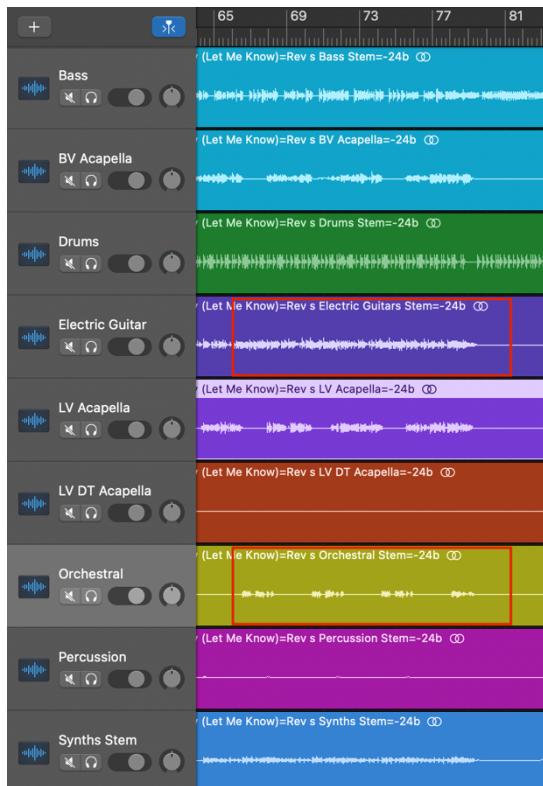


The synths track here is super busy but well-mixed. The most obvious element that we could catch is the melody part. It is mainly the repetition of a melody line that stays in the key of D major (D C# A F#). There are also some sparkling sounds going on along with the riff.

Healy's vocal is thick and powerful (LV Acapella). As it is doubled in a second vocal track (LV DT Acapella), there are clearly more dynamics added to the song. Additionally, they have employed some interesting techniques in the third vocal track (BV Acapella). The track is introduced with a reversed vocal sound and then expanded with rich vocal harmonies.



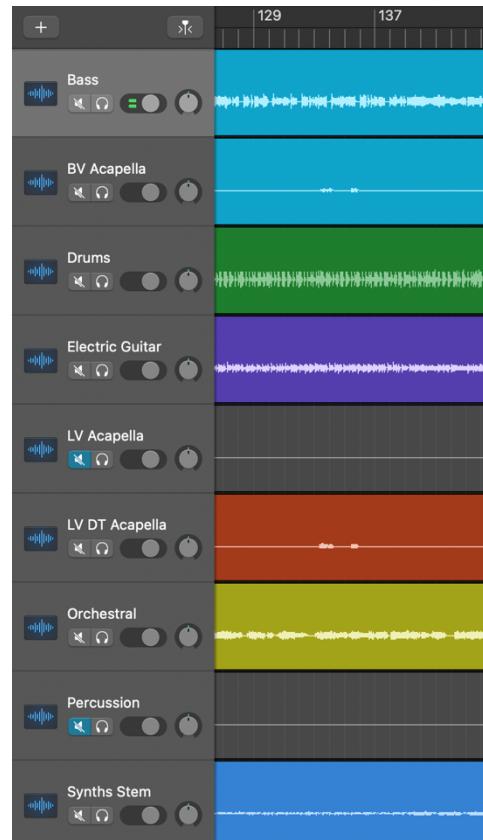
Chorus



All tracks are included in the chorus, except the percussion is hardly noticeable. A new riff (G G G F#) is introduced by both the orchestral and the guitar tracks. I really enjoy it, especially because it interacts super well with the vocal lines. I liked how the chorus is introduced by a telephone dial tone and a filtered speech line that goes “And then I spoke to her and she said”. It creates a little break between the sections and prepares your ear for the powerful kick-in of the vocal lines.

Bridge

The saxophone solo took center stage during the bridge, accompanied by harmonious background vocals while the lead vocal is temporarily eliminated. The main theme (chorus) is brought back after the bridge, ultimately carrying the song to its end.



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