Stanley Armstrong

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Essay 2

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Link in Bio

My phone buzzes, one of my friends texts me to tell me that one of our favorite up and coming musicians has made a new song and has released it on YouTube, Soundcloud, and Spotify. So many choices to choose from to listen to the same song. I'm thinking to myself, 'Do I want to watch a music video?', 'Do I want to see what other people think of the new song?', or 'Do I want to just experience it for myself?'. I choose the last option and I open Spotify and start listening to the new single, "You'll Survive", by Chewy. After the listen, I am curious of their process and where their process is coming from and how they got to where they are today.

Their music was too good to pass up on interviewing them about their creative process. I immediately took action for finding out how to contact them. I looked on their Youtube first since usually Youtubers leave their social media in the biography of the video. This move to find their social media proved to be unsuccessful as their music video was produced by a third party producer. I chose my second option, Soundcloud, to reach out to them. Soundcloud in hindsight probably should have been my first option to reach out to them. According to Dr. Chamberlain from the University of Nottingham's Computer Science department, this is due to the way Soundcloud enables "music producers and consumers a whole range of different ways in which they can engage, give/get feedback, promote, share, acquire, tag and make meaning of music". I agree with Dr. Chamberlain since when I reached out to them, they responded quite promptly

and that nature between artist and fan was met. We exchanged other contact information decided to meet up at the Kennedy Library on Cal Poly's campus. Unfortunately, when I went to the interview only J. Deluxe showed up and I had talk to Sweet T over Snapchat. Setting up this interview with them was a challenge, but it does not compare to the challenge of making your own music.

The creative process is something hard to describe since everybody has their own way of creating something. According to American poet Brewster Ghiselin, "[the] creative process is the process of change, of development, of evolution, in the organization of subjective life". Well that doesn't really clarify what it looks like. To both members of Chewy, Sweet T and J. Deluxe, that involves looking to other artist's work and incorporating that into their music and looking into how other artist's made their songs through videos on Youtube. Sweet T finds this creative process very liberating because "you get to do what you want to do". Their creative process is similar to what Pablo Picasso said, "Good artists copy, great artists steal". Chewy takes what they hear from other artists and incorporate their sounds. By doing this they are able to make sounds that are similar to other artists songs and make it sound like a good blend of sounds that they think that people will enjoy. In music, this is important because you are creating for someone else so you need to know that your audience will like your music. In order to make sounds that people would want to listen to, they take inspiration from other artists and use that motivation to make another song.

On inspiration, Chewy gets their inspiration from an artists like Mura Masa and Metro Boomin as well as current events. For instance, I asked them what they were working on currently and J.Deluxe said that he was working on a beat about the recent social media question

"Yanny or Laurel". When he showed me what he had so far, it was quite amazing because of the clip being so fresh to the general population. By choosing current events as a thing they take from inspiration from they are allowing for themselves to be found by people who are looking for remixes of social media events. By choosing someone like Mura Masa, who at one time had been placed on BillBoard's top 200 artists, to take inspiration from they envision themselves to have similar success as him. This envisioning tool takes directly from Ghiselin as they are developing sounds for people to listen to that are developed from ideas from other people.

For J. Deluxe he got his start in music at when he was only seven years old. His parents decided that he would learn the piano and learn classical music. He found this type of music boring and did not enjoy practicing the piano when he had to play classical arrangements. Instead, he started really enjoying music when he transitioned from classical to jazz. This shift in styles allowed him to be more creative as jazz music has improvisation at the core of the genre. This shift in music also shows the change of organization that he had to go through to make better songs. It was not until around junior year of high school that he got his start producing music for people on the internet through Soundcloud. He had been making a hobby of watching videos of how the song was made and produced by artists he took inspiration from artists. By watching these videos, it gave him hope and motivation to make new songs.

When it comes to releasing music, J. Deluxe would ideally prefer to release a single a week in order to get his music heard and out there. However, he realizes that this could be detrimental because he could oversaturate the market with bad music that is more focused around quantity of music over quality. The most important thing that he wants to be known for is an artist that makes great music and not somebody who makes a lot of music. A good parallel to this

idea of content creators choosing quantity over quality would be located on Youtube with two different genres: the daily vloggers and the channels who upload a video a week or even take months to make.

In the case of the daily vlogger they are releasing a new video each day, so they would be getting a lot of views at the price of the quality of content that they release on a regular basis. On the other hand, you have the weekly uploaders who usually take their time editing their videos making sure that everything is pristine and makes the video a treat for the viewer to watch. For music, if somebody was going to release a single a week the quality of the music would be relatively compared to that of the daily vlogger.

The longer he would be taking on the song, the more the music's quality would rival that of the weekly uploader. Realizing that to make quality music it takes time to produce and create, his timeline of releasing a new song about every month and then releasing a full album, that contains the songs that he previously released, about two months later. This approach that he chooses allows the audience to sample his music and give him feedback about the current work and gives him a chance to improve his album that he is in the progress of making. J. Deluxe is an artist that wants to continue his development as a musician. By taking more time on a project, he grows his musical talents and is able to grow more as an artist. Audience interaction is really key for J. Deluxe and Sweet T.

For J. Deluxe, he introduces his music to new people at what he would like to call a 'grass-roots' level. He calls it this because it has similarities to that of a political campaign that is trying to get off the ground. What he does at this level is control the music at parties. So while he is controlling the music he will put some pieces of his music on at the party to see the reaction of

the people at the party to determine whether or not people are enjoying the music after he has

stopped playing artists that people may already know. If the general vibe of the party has not

changed or is asking for more of his music, he considers this a success and then eventually tells

the people at the party the person behind the music they just listened to was him. To him this

seems like a better way to get listeners naturally versus advertising the music on to the listener

through the use of social media. J. Deluxe's comments about that were very brief, "Yeah, you

might get one or two more listeners, but it might be on accident, but by slipping in your music to

your audience you find out how they like it pretty much immediately". By seeing real in-person

feedback, he's able to adapt his music to what it might be lacking.

When asked about what his music might be lacking, he hesitated to respond as it put him

in an awkward position. After the hesitation though he responded pretty thoughtfully with a

response that many small creators have, which would be incorporating more into his music. He

believed that music is being limited by the software that they use to produce the music since the

only sounds they have access to are the sounds within the program. He also feels like his music

is missing a certain structure to their sound. This is something that any creator has to deal with

whether you are a Youtuber or Soundcloud artist. If there is no structure people tend to leave

from your creation because it lacks a certain familiarity to the consumer of the content.

The creative process is something that we all have inside of us when we make any type of

content and some people like J. Deluxe and Sweet T have found a way to harness their creative

process through watching videos to get to where they are today. J. Deluxe and Sweet T had to

make the first step to create their music. The next time that you are thinking of creating

something whether that be an app or music, just try doing it. The worst case scenario is that

people may not like it and that's completely fine.

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