

Abstract

Balance

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Balance, a three-song extended play album, was recorded in Nashville, Tennessee in March of 2017 and debuted during an evening length senior recital on April 15th, 2017 at Mount Holyoke College. This paper details the processes of networking, marketing, and recording I have undertaken to produce my first professional album in the country music genre. Throughout this year, I have explored entrepreneurship in a new light and seen firsthand the issues that come along with the music industry. Using strong networking skills that I have developed, I have crafted my own solutions to said roadblocks. I have utilized new apps to quickly grow a supportive fanbase and interviewed fellow artists of differing levels of success searching for advice. In addition, I have emailed, phoned and met face-to-face with industry professionals as well as produced three radio-quality original songs while working seamlessly with highly accredited engineers in Nashville. Reflecting upon this year-long adventure will provide me with useful insights as to what worked and what did not work in regards toward advancing my professional music career. In the years to come, I hope *Balance* will spark other recording projects and be the stepping stone for me to become a successful songwriter in Music City.

BALANCE

Eva Snyder

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I would like to thank...

My Dziadziu and Babciu for providing the music that accompanies my life
My family for instilling music in me since before I could walk, constantly
encouraging me to pursue my dreams and showing up to every show even if
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12 BAR INTRO

*“Her hands are scratched from catching her own falls.
She only knows the taste of alcohol.
Crumpled days fill her past which she don’t remember,
whiskey tries to remind her.
How can she balance? Can she balance?”*

*“Balance”
Eva Snyder, 2013*

“One, two, one two three four,” said Miles over the talkback simultaneously as the morning coffee seeped into my veins. It was already mid-afternoon, two out of the three songs had been cut and we had moved onto “Balance.” Upon hearing the drum sticks hit the muffled snare, the bass slide all the way down to the first fret, the B3 organ’s Leslie speaker spin and the guitar strum a familiar sound, I could feel the tears well up in my eyes. This moment, precisely these minutes, I had been waiting for since I first took the stage at three years old. The music I had spent years writing and perfecting had taken on an entirely new meaning once played by some of Nashville’s best.

What follows is a narrative which has been writing itself since some of my earliest memories. Throughout this paper I will talk about myself and my music and give a detailed account of the process I have gone through leading up to the recording of my first extended play (EP) document. It is my hope that

this paper will inspire others to record an album and in return tell some of their stories through music. For my own benefit, this paper will act as a reflection tool to help me grow as an artist and provide insights that could positively change future recording sessions and songwriting projects.

To begin, I will discuss music's presence throughout my life. For as long as I can remember, I have been surrounded by music: listening to polka music on Sunday mornings in the kitchen, practicing my violin when I was not tall enough to use the microwave and singing along to the radio in my car seat. I grew up in a household saturated with the iconic 2/4 meter of polka music. My *dziadziu*, the Polish word for grandfather, was the lead singer and trumpeter of his own Grammy-nominated polka band. He has released over 35 polka albums, cassettes, 45s and 8-tracks to date,¹ and even has die-hard fans with tattoos on their skin honoring his band, Happy Louie and Julcia. He retired the year I was born and as a result I have only had the chance to perform with him onstage a handful of times.

My mother started me on the violin with the Suzuki method² when I was only three years old and since then, music has been running through my blood.

¹ See Happy Louie and Julcia's personal band website for more information about their records. "Happy Louie and Julcia's Polka Band." *Happy Louie and Julcia's Polka Band*, www.happylouie.com/Bio/. Accessed 5 Apr. 2017.

² A teaching method developed by Shinichi Suzuki which focuses on "parent responsibility, loving encouragement [and] constant repetition." Programs for the violin, viola, cello, bass, flute, harp, guitar and piano have been developed and used around the world. "About the Suzuki Method." *Suzuki Association of the Americas*, suzukiassociation.org/about/suzuki-method/. Accessed 17 Apr. 2017.

Violin is the instrument that I have been playing the longest and was my first introduction to classical music. I believe that beginning to learn an instrument classically as opposed to diving right into a specific style, benefits the player and provides them with a sense of perspective. My music teachers growing up always used to tell me that I have to be able to play a scale before I can fiddle.

I began writing lyrics in fourth grade when I was nine years old. I can remember re-writing the words to famous songs and performing them for my class during lunch time. In time, that grew into journaling song ideas in old notebooks I found under my bed and experimenting with simple rhymes. In seventh grade, I decided it was time for me to pick up the guitar. I got my dziadziu's old plywood guitar that had not been strummed since the 1980's, sat down in my room and played until my fingertips were bruised. I would write everyday after school, a sound my mother would later tell me she missed hearing when I left for college. In 10th grade I wrote my first song, "Unforgettable", when a boy broke my heart. The words I wrote in the beginning were largely inspired by young storytellers like Taylor Swift, but as I found out that I could twist stories and manipulate life, my songwriting began to evolve. What started out as a fun way for me to express myself became the only way that I could tell stories.

Learning how to tell stories effectively naturally drifted me into country music. I quickly developed a fondness towards words that stretched common understandings and stories that touched something in me that other genres of music did not come close to reaching. The honesty stemming throughout country western music ever since its birth in the 1920's connected with me much more than contemporary independent and popular artists such as Avril Lavigne or Green Day ever could. Writing and singing heart-wrenchingly beautiful lines confessing love or hatred and admitting secrets never told, felt natural and doubled an adrenaline rush for me. Once I began writing country music, I could not stop. I fell head-over-heels for the honest, force to be reckoned with, queen herself, Miranda Lambert's writing when I was only thirteen. To this day, Miranda is one of my largest songwriting influences providing an exceptional example of down-to-earth writing without any suppressed emotions. Other early influencers within the genre include Johnny Cash, Kacey Musgraves, Natalie Hemby, Shane McAnally and Brandy Clark.

A few years later, I was a first-year student in college, eager to major in music. However, as much as I loved music, I soon realized I wanted the security of a more stable job. Thankfully, the relatively flexible schedule of computer science offered me a solution and granted me the ability to work a well-paid job and fund my music production on the side. In addition to providing me with stability, computer science has allowed me to grow

substantially as a leader in the field. I have long been interested in pursuing leadership roles but have struggled finding prosperous opportunities...until I explored computer science. Within the computer science field I have been able to found a hackathon, HackHolyoke, at Mount Holyoke College. HackHolyoke has taught me how to run a team of a dozen women as well as how to plan a 200-person event. I have also had the opportunity to be the host of a web series titled SciTrends, which is funded by the National Science Foundation, that encourages young teens to enter into STEM fields. Being on camera with SciTrends has improved my public speaking abilities as well as made me more comfortable in new situations. These strong leadership traits will prove critical when networking in the music industry.

It is because of a number of computer science summer internships, I have been able to produce my first album and explore the entrepreneurial side of music as a thesis. With the help of these internships, I have been able to fund the production of *Balance* independently and have gained experience in the workforce as a strong individual. As a graduate with a double major in music and computer science, I hope to continue this interplay between skills and interests. After graduation I will be moving to San Francisco to work full time at YouTube as an engineer, and I plan to continue writing and recording. While at YouTube, I am hoping to harness ample opportunities to work directly with

artists and professionals to increase my connections within the music industry as well as improve my marketing experience through observation.

CASE STUDIES

“I can hear the rain pit pat on the roof, back-drop for a black-tie ballroom. Floor-length love calling, diamonds keep falling.”

*“Let The Night In”
Eva Snyder, 2017*

In this chapter I am going to explore the different routes to fame that varying sources suggest to developing artists. Just like any other career path, there is no clear-cut solution to becoming successful as a performer in the music industry. However, unlike the majority of other careers, successful performers in the music industry are constantly in the spotlight. By means of this persistent public awareness, there are many opinions on the “best” way to achieve one’s goals. While there are thousands of viewpoints to consider, many of these frames of reference will not be relevant to oneself as an artist. At any rate, it is still meaningful to research the various pilgrimages other artists have taken in their respective journeys.

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM: NASHVILLE

There is an unwritten rule that in order to become a successful country musician one must move to Nashville. Then, once one has moved there, one

works a day job, is kind to everybody one meets and eventually he/she makes it. Keep in mind that here, “eventually,” means roughly five to ten years. Five to ten years is a long time if one is working a minimum wage job and living in a talent saturated city. It is widely known in the city that heads of big labels and companies go out to dinner at the same restaurants the tourists frequent. Mount Holyoke alumnae I had spoken with who live in Nashville, as well as a few music industry professionals with whom I spoke, all attested to this fact. This fluidity and visibility within the walls of Music City accomplish the opposite of discouraging emerging artists from moving to the city. On Nashville Homes,³ you can learn that roughly 82 people move to Nashville in a single day. With its rich history of country and bluegrass music, it remains the place to go to find fame in a bar.

In April 2016, *The Tennessean*, a Nashville newspaper, discussed the supply and demand of live music in Music City.⁴ Accompanying the waves of incoming musicians, smaller concert venues are beginning to be squeezed out by major companies who had previously only been concerned with accommodating the crowds that follow big-name musicians. Companies like

³ See “Why Are So Many People Moving to Nashville?” for 2016 Nashville housing statistics. Crutcher, Marcus. “Why Are So Many People Moving to Nashville?” *Nashville Area Real Estate :: DeSelms Real Estate*, 1 June 2016, www.nashvillehomes.com/blog/many-people-moving-nashville/. Accessed 10 Apr. 2017.

⁴ See “Is Nashville's Live Music Scene Oversaturated?” for more information about the topic. Rau, Nate. “Is Nashville's Live Music Scene Oversaturated?” *The Tennessean*, 24 Apr. 2016, www.tennessean.com/story/money/industries/music/2016/04/23/nashville-rock-clubs-brace-battle-live-nation/81862428/. Accessed 10 Apr. 2017.

Live Nation, a large corporation with a strong online presence mainly used as a promotional tool for live concerts,⁵ are pushing the smaller event promoters, local clubs and bars out of business. As Live Nation purchases smaller clubs, these venues are worried that Nashville is reaching its tipping point and independent clubs will soon disappear. Chris Cobb, a local independent club owner who decided not to sell his music venue to Live Nation, says “I don't know when it ends, but I do know we are at saturation now.”⁶

Since I have been pushing my music out into the world more, I have begun to experience the ephemeral joys of strangers messaging me to offer advice. At first, it is exciting, because it feels like people are noticing your music, but it is soon clear that they are just trying to sell their own service or business. I have had tens if not dozens of persons try to offer me advice saying if I would just check out their website and subscribe to their business that it will really help my music. For example, I received a facebook direct message from a random person who saw a post in a group saying:

“Hello Eva, nice to make your acquaintance. Listening to music and helping guide artists and writers is actually what I do for a living, but if you are coming to Nashville, will be glad to try and make it where you

⁵ See Live Nation's website for more information on the business.

“Live Nation Entertainment.” *Live Nation Entertainment*, www.livenationentertainment.com/. Accessed 17 Apr. 2017.

⁶ Rau, “Is Nashville's Live Music Scene Oversaturated?”

are performing. I am all over the town and easy to find. Just come up and see me. If you want some more personal advice, you can email me at [] and it makes it more personal and responsive to you.

Since you are coming to Nashville, you would do yourself a favor to visit my web site, [] and read some of my [] and watch some videos which have a lot of information you can find useful.”⁷

I responded thanking him for his advice and for reaching out to me. However, I never checked out his website or sent him an email to further the conversation. I am wary when it comes to accepting advice from strangers without proof that they are experienced in the industry. Moving forward, I am sure I will receive much more of this unwanted advice, but I will weed through it and use it all as stepping stones towards advancing to the next level within the industry and as a writer.

JAMIE KENT

Ironically, one of the many things I have been doing this semester is cold emailing people, a term which I use to describe emailing somebody who has no idea who you are, whose expertise I see as valuable. Thanks to a cold

⁷ Barnette, Marc-Alan. Eva Snyder. Facebook. Web. 31 Dec. 2016.

email, I had the opportunity to speak to Jamie Kent, a western Massachusetts native hailing from Northampton, who is trying to become known in the country music industry. I was specifically interested in Jamie and his work because there are not too many Pioneer Valley natives seriously pursuing a career in country music. Most aspiring country artists come from the south and any advice I could get from musicians following a similar route to mine would be useful to me when planning my own path. After reaching out over email to Jamie and requesting a phone conversation in regards to his music and career path, he agreed to chat with me before I went to Nashville. Speaking with him provided perspective and a potential model for me to follow when entering country music.

Jamie Kent has been playing music most of his life. He grew up in Northampton and attended the Northampton Community Music Center.⁸ His journey through country music differs from what most people would generally assume and is very different from what I have discussed above. Jamie started off by finding an investor for his music through mutual connections and personal networking. This investor soon became much more to Jamie than just a source of funding and evolved into a business partner and advisor to his entire

⁸ Established in 1986 after many Northampton public schools dismantled music programs and located in the heart of Northampton, Massachusetts the Northampton Community Music Center is a hub for music lessons, after school programs, summer camps and workshops for community members. See their website for more information about the school. "Northampton Community Music Center." *Northampton Community Music Center*, www.ncmc.net/. Accessed 10 Apr. 2017.

image. In conjunction with his investor, Jamie started a campaign for friends and loyal fans to also invest in his music, The Collective.⁹ Jamie's Collective consists of every-day fans, friends and family who originally invested a small amount of money (\$25, \$50, \$100) and became business partners with Jamie. Being a member of The Collective means you help Jamie select which songs make it onto his albums and which photos should be used for his album cover, and it gives you access to exclusive content. With this invested money, Jamie was able to kick-start his music career.

Going against the popular trajectory, Jamie Kent did not move to Nashville right away. Instead, he remained in New England and waited to move until "Nashville wanted [him] there."¹⁰ He traveled to Nashville every month or so, played some shows in town and got to know the locals as well as the industry professionals. Jamie waited to move to the city until he had made some helpful connections to use once living full-time in Nashville. Now that he has moved, he is able to make a living from his music and do what he loves.

Getting the opportunity to speak to Jamie over the phone has provided me with confidence that there is more than one way to become a popular artist in country music. Hearing that he did not move to Nashville right away and rather waited to move after a couple years, reassures me that there is no rush to get to the city. In fact, his words comfort and encourage me to grow as an artist

⁹"The Collective." *Jamie Kent*, jami Kent.com/the_collective. Accessed 1 Mar. 2017.

¹⁰ Kent, Jamie. Personal Interview. 31 January 2017.

myself substantially before making the move.¹¹ As a follow up to this conversation, I went to see Jamie perform at the Academy of Music in Northampton, MA on April 22nd 2017 and was able to speak to him after the show. We touched bases in regards to both of our music careers and agreed to be in touch over the summer with hopes of finding a time to write a few songs together. Writing with Jamie would begin to provide me with a resume of artists I have worked with and continue to get my name out into the industry.

¹¹ In addition to Jamie's path, I have looked at the careers of some women in country music and their journeys throughout the music industry. See Gender Gap section for more information.

MY WAY

*“Darling, I think we both know this is falling through,
there’s only one exit left, on route 22
We’ve tried, everything we know to make this work,
sometimes the bottle doesn’t fit the cork”*

*“Minute”
Eva Snyder, 2017*

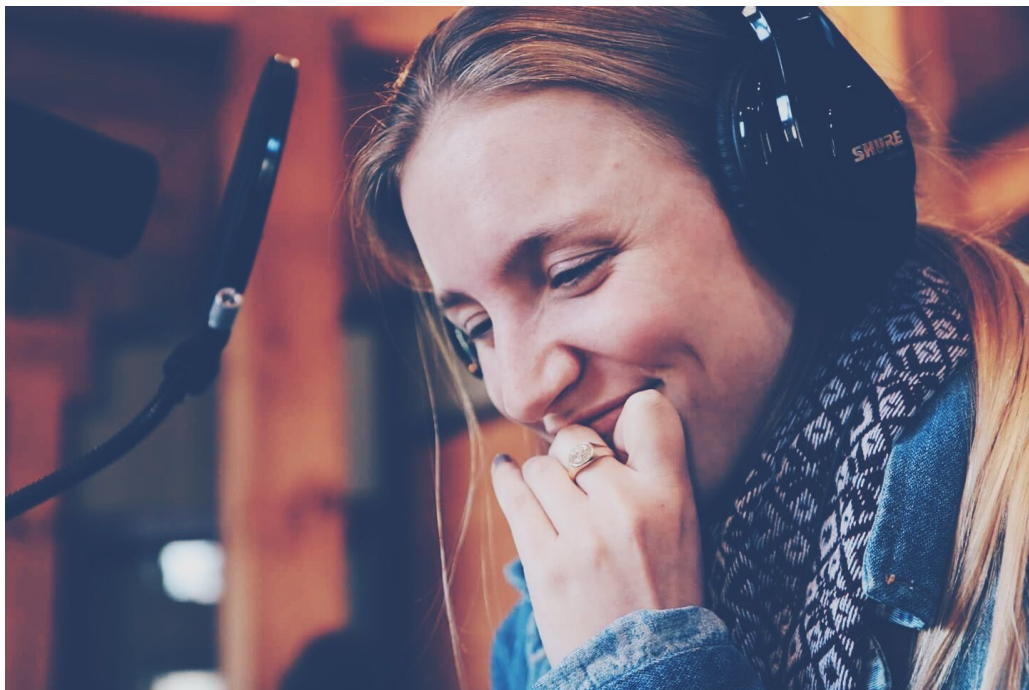


Figure 1

As Jamie’s story illustrates, there is more than one way to make it in the music industry. For me, this last year of college has been focused on

discovering my own potential path. Throughout this year, I ended up focusing on three different large entrepreneurial concepts: outreach, presence and the production of my album which has helped me navigate Nashville's competitive atmosphere. This chapter will discuss the different tactics I have used throughout the semester while searching for connections within the close-knit community of Nashville, TN as well as the production of my album there over spring break.

OUTREACH

In the beginning of the semester I was solely working with the music department for this EP. However, I quickly realized I needed advice on the other side of being a professional musician - the business side. With the help of Rick Feldman, my entrepreneurship advisor for this project, there have been a few outreach tactics I have been undertaking from my Mount Holyoke dorm room. I have primarily focused on emailing and calling industry professionals with hopes of securing connections.

Nashville previously was a locked down town only openable by artists who had connections. Now, with the internet, artists are able to become strong, independent entrepreneurs and reach corners of the industry they previously

could not. As Daniel B. Cornfield states in *Beyond The Beat: Musicians Building Community in Nashville*:¹²

Artist activists are re-creating a musician community in Nashville.

These visionary peers of a musician community are transforming their community as they enter a risky era of entrepreneurial music production and artist self-promotion. As their careers increasingly unfold outside of the unionized corporate confines of major-label artist, rosters, new generations of enterprising artists themselves bear the risks of production and distribution.¹³

This rise of independence within the artist community that Cornfield touches upon, has been the gas to the fire fueling my persistent networking. Throughout the next few sections I will discuss the different ways that I have attempted to professionally network as well as with whom I am trying to connect within the industry.

¹² Cornfield, Daniel B. *Beyond the Beat : Musicians Building Community in Nashville*. Princeton, New Jersey : Princeton University Press, [2015]., 2015. EBSCOhost, proxy.mtholyoke.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=c at00321a&AN=fivecol.014836770&site=eds-live&scope=site.

¹³ Cornfield 1

EMAILS

I have sent over two hundred “cold emails.” Frequently, one has to make the email “catchy” to grab the attention of the receiver. Think of this as the hook to a good book or a good song, *it is desired for the reader to keep reading.*

I am going into this recording process with no connections in the music industry. All I have is belief in my music and the power of my words. In order to find people with whom to network, I have been scouring the internet to try and find industry professionals who could help me. I was in search of a helpful and highly accredited studio, a successful producer, places I could perform at as well as general industry professionals (label representatives, creative directors at publishing companies etc.) In regards to selecting professionals with whom I wanted to work, I researched their past works, listened to recordings they had done if they were producers or sound engineers, and looked for potential similarities between myself and them. If I thought they would be a good entity to work alongside, I reached out.

SELECTING A STUDIO

The first email outreach I did was to find a recording studio. When the semester began I decided I was going to release my own EP and do all of the recording myself. The album was originally going to be an exploration into electronic music. This was because I assumed that I would not be able to afford a professionally recorded album. However, in one meeting with David Sanford, my music advisor, he suggested that I reach out to studios and see what the quote would be to record. I began looking up a large number of different studios in Nashville, TN and started emailing.

It was looking for a professional studio that prompted me to choose Nashville. Its music scene quickly reeled me in. I was drawn to the specific sound that emanates from the walls of Music City. The iconic slide of the steel guitar to the bright finger picking style of the banjo, the famous country western harmonies have been vibrating through my veins since I first heard them. In Nashville, the backing musicians are world class and the production level is higher than what I would be able to find in Western, Massachusetts. Granted, though the studios in Massachusetts would be much cheaper, I was after the classic Nashville sound.

I emailed a handful of different studios in Nashville explaining my album and when I was free to record. Surprisingly, a lot of studios got back to

me with varying quotes. Only one studio in Franklin, Tennessee offered to talk over the phone and wanted to get to know not only me but my music. I appreciated the studio's genuine interest and in the end decided to go with Dark Horse Recording Studio for the final project. Dark Horse Recording is a 4-studio complex that originally opened in 1993 and was expanded in 2009 by Robin Crow, an American author, recording artist and public speaker. They are the home to recordings done by major artists such as Taylor Swift, Keith Urban, Hunter Hayes and Neil Diamond as well as independent artists such as myself.

Since deciding to work with Dark Horse Recording, I have been in contact with them half a dozen times checking in, clarifying dates and getting prepared. The week before recording, I had a call with the sound engineer to go over what instruments I would like for the recording and general ideas of soundscapes I am drawn to. I provided artists such as Miranda Lambert and Maren Morris for sound examples and touched upon wanting to build something strong as well as smooth and clean.

SEARCHING FOR A PRODUCER

Typically, professional recordings are done with a producer instructing the engineer, musicians and even the singer. When discussing the need for a producer with my entrepreneurship advisor Rick Feldman, he introduced me to

a musician and Hampshire College alumnae, Erica Wheeler. Erica has been a professional folk musician for many years and I was able to talk on the phone with her in October to discuss her journey and get some advice. The main piece of information with which she wanted to leave me was to invest in a quality producer. When she was beginning to enter the music scene she tracked down her favorite producers and wrote to them asking if they would work with her. She wanted to invest in a producer who could make the music she was envisioning in her head a reality.

Upon receiving this advice, I started researching producers of my favorite albums. I looked up credits for all of Miranda Lambert's early works, Kacey Musgraves' *Same Trailer Different Park*, Marren Morris's *Hero* and many others. For these albums specifically, I am drawn to the natural, honest, and down-to-earth sound created while still staying true to country's homegrown roots. These women are all powerful songwriters and are able to create stories and images with beautiful words that I find inspirational. Even though they all have vastly different sounding bands from each other, they have all created their own unique sound within country music. To my delight, they stray from the typical banjo and the new-age electronic synthesizers found in many chart-topping male-sung country tunes.

I combed the web to find popular names and then began searching for their email addresses. Unfortunately, I found that the majority of famous

producers do not make their email addresses public. However, I was able to find a few addresses and quickly reached out. I sent the producers rough recordings I had uploaded on SoundCloud along with a brief bio explaining myself and my project. Surprisingly, I received a number of responses who appreciated my interest in working with them, but they all said they were too busy. To follow up, I wrote back asking if they had other connections to whom I should reach out but did not hear back.

Without having much luck, I decided to reach out to a fellow polka musician I have known for most of my life, Jimmy Sturr. Jimmy Sturr is extremely accomplished, has recorded dozens of albums and worked with Willie Nelson as well as other large names. He was able to give me the email address of an old Radio Corporation of America¹⁴ (RCA) Sound Engineer, Tom Pick. Having an impressive career, Pick had worked at RCA for 15 years and eventually went on to run Porter Wagoner's studio, Fireside,¹⁵ in Nashville before it shut down in 2014. I reached out to him over the phone and we ended up emailing back and forth following the initial phone conversation. While he

¹⁴ RCA Records is recording label underneath its current parent company, Sony Music Entertainment. The name derived from its former parent company, the Radio Corporation of America and it is the second oldest recording company in the United States. It houses all genres of music including, pop, hip hop, jazz, blues and country. A few artists currently signed to RCA include, Miley Cyrus, Britney Spears, G-Eazy and Justin Timberlake.

¹⁵ Fireside Studios was a recording studio owned and operated by Porter Wagoner, a famous country music singer who has 81 charted singles and was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2002. He was famous for his country music television show which aired from 1960 - 1980 and featured songs as well as comedic skits in between performances. It was the Porter Wagoner Show which first debuted Dolly Parton in 1967.

did not have anybody he could introduce me to at this time, it was beneficial to establish a connection with an experienced professional.

After having searched for months, I went into the recording without a producer. The studio provided me with a skilled sound engineer who mixed and edited everything together. However, with regard to style, that was all up to me. I was excited to make my music myself, however, I automatically lost the credibility of working with a specific accredited producer and the connections that they bring with them. With regards to future recording projects I will complete, I am interested in finding a producer to work with. I plan to utilize *Balance* as an example of my voice and style, with the hope that a producer will like what they hear and want to work with me. In addition to sending *Balance* out as an example to possible producers, the continuation of marketing and publicity of my music will slowly grow my fanbase, which will in turn, increasingly push my name out into the industry.

BOOKING SHOWS

In anticipation of heading to Nashville and releasing a recording, I tried to book as many gigs as possible in Massachusetts and Tennessee. I quickly discovered that booking shows in Nashville as a newcomer is nearly impossible. I phoned dozens of clubs and bars and emailed the ones that never

got back to me over the phone. I consistently received a quick “no.” In Nashville, the restaurants and bars rely on the musician to bring their own audience in for a show. Once it was made clear that I was not from the area, venues would not book me.

To combat this issue, I used Google Voice to obtain a “fake” phone number. Google Voice is an app that allows one to choose a phone number then attaches that number to the person’s Google email account. It can then be set up so that whenever somebody calls the Google Voice number it will secretly transfer the call to the person’s real number. This way, I am able to call venues and professionals in Nashville from a Nashville area code.

Booking shows in western Massachusetts was simpler, however, there are not nearly as many places to play. A lot of venues that advertise live music have outdated websites; the venues do not have live music nights anymore but they have forgotten to update their information. Thankfully, I was able to book shows over email at The Thirteenth Floor in Florence, The Root Cellar in Greenfield and the Thirsty Mind Cafe in South Hadley. Thirteenth Floor and The Root Cellar are both new establishments I have never played at before while I have played at the Thirsty Mind Cafe a handful of times over four or five years. Getting the opportunity to play at new venues is valuable because it is expanding my reach beyond markets I have already saturated. I have played at the Thirsty Mind Cafe so many times that I get a few regulars who always

come to see me perform. Having regulars is meaningful, but as a professional artist it is important to continue growing your outreach and not become stagnant.

In addition to live shows, I was able to secure a spot on a local news channels' morning talk show, *Mass Appeal*, for April 19th.¹⁶ During this segment I played two songs from the EP, "Balance" and "Queen." The program decided not to have me do an interview portion during the few minutes of airtime I was given because they thought it would be beneficial to showcase the music. I had played on *Mass Appeal* back in my junior year of high school and it was a surreal experience going back after having just recorded my first EP. Following this appearance, I have had a few new fans follow me on Twitter, like my Facebook Music page and provide positive feedback praising my writing and natural abilities onstage.

LINKEDIN CONNECTIONS

It just so happens that while I was reaching out to people in the music industry, Mount Holyoke was looking for a new innovation hire specializing in music technology and entrepreneurship. Mount Holyoke brought five candidates to campus and I was able to briefly chat with each of them. One

¹⁶ To see the full recording of this airing please visit Channel 22, WWLP's website at: Stutman, Seth. "Eva Snyder Performs in Studio 1A." *WWLP.com*. WWLP, 19 Apr. 2017. Web. 20 Apr. 2017. <<http://wwlp.com/2017/04/19/eva-snyder-performs-in-studio-1a/>>.

candidate gave me the advice that I should use LinkedIn to connect with music industry professionals. I have a LinkedIn account but it never crossed my mind to use it to network in the music industry. LinkedIn, for me, had always been a post-meetup connection tool. For example, if I just had lunch with somebody and it went well, the lunch would end with “let’s connect up on LinkedIn.”

I started to look for professionals with whom I could network through LinkedIn and there were a lot of results. I sent most of them invitations to connect with a short message along the lines of: “Hello! I’m an engineer looking to expand my professional music network and I’d love to jump on a call and chat!” And, surprisingly enough, it worked - at least once. I was able to connect up with Jeff Skaggs, the Creative Director at a music company titled Creative Nation. Following up with the LinkedIn connection, I sent him a Facebook friend request, which he accepted. On the heels of his acceptance, I quickly realized I was now one degree of separation from most of my songwriting idols.

In addition to LinkedIn, I also direct messaged songwriters and producers on Instagram. Before doing so, I researched the individual online to try and find contact information. If I was unable to find a way to get in touch other than Instagram, I decided to reach out on the popular photo-sharing social media app directly. Ninety-nine percent of my direct messages on Instagram went unread. This is mostly due to the fact that if the two individuals involved

in the message do not follow each other, the message sent will go straight into a “message request” folder without notifying the receiver. However, two people read the direct messages and responded.

Because of these messages, I was able to connect with Emily Landis¹⁷ and Emily Weisband¹⁸. They both agreed to meet for coffee while I was in Nashville. However, Emily Weisband never responded past a “yessss girl less do it” and Emily Landis canceled an hour before meeting me at the cafe. To follow up, I reached out to both writers, asking to reschedule. Unfortunately, both of them read my messages and never responded. Although these connections did not work out, it is clear that the music industry respects persistence. Knowing that, the next time I am in town, I am going to reach out again with hopes of grabbing coffee and networking face to face.

¹⁷ Emily Landis is a staff writer for Big Machine Music which is Big Machine Label Group’s publishing company. She attended Belmont University where she studied songwriting and currently lives and works in Nashville, TN.

¹⁸ Emily Weisband, who recently won a Grammy for a contemporary Christian song she wrote with the lead singer of Lady Antebellum, Hillary Scott, is a songwriter in Nashville, TN. She’s received cuts (see page 89 where this concept is explained) from Keith Urban, Drew Baldrige and more.

DEVELOPING A PRESENCE

At the beginning of the 2016 - 2017 academic year, I had relatively no internet presence for my music. I had roughly 700 followers on Twitter, only a couple hundred Instagram followers and around 100 Facebook music page likes. With the rise of social media, an artist aspiring to enter the music industry is met with more open doors. For example, if somebody is able to accumulate a supportive fan-base on social media platforms, labels will eventually hear about the individual - especially if the artist's following is able to stir up a buzz.

In this section I will go through detailed accounts of how I have been growing my social media presence across multiple platforms. I will touch upon the importance of a strong online image for artists as well as provide insights as to how I have made my e-presence transparent. I will analyze multiple platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as well as the importance of personal websites for artists and the need for a unified brand across all said platforms.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media, as we know it today, is the driving force behind almost every multi-million dollar start-up emerging from Silicon Valley. The internet

has changed how we interact with friends, family and even strangers. This constant connectivity can be overwhelming for some but is the fuel to musicians who are building their brand. To get a better understanding of the rapid growth of social media, Mikolaj Jan Piskorski, the author of *A Social Strategy, How We Profit From Social Media*,¹⁹ states that by 2013:

Facebook, the largest online social platform, had amassed more than 1.25 billion users, who made more than a trillion connections and uploaded more than 240 billion photos. Twitter-a U.S based social platform providing real-time communication between friends and strangers-had garnered 232 million users.²⁰

This massive network of immediate connections at one's fingertips has made the daunting task of formulating a following much easier. Although there are still struggles to be faced for aspiring musicians, the possibilities that social media brings to the table widen the entryway into success.

¹⁹ Piskorski, Mikolaj Jan. *A Social Strategy : How We Profit from Social Media*. Princeton, New Jersey : Princeton University Press, [2014], 2014. EBSCOhost, proxy.mtholyoke.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=c at00321a&AN=fivecol.014106756&site=eds-live&scope=site.

²⁰ Piskorski 1

FACEBOOK GROUPS

I joined a number of Facebook groups before heading to Nashville. The most prominent of these groups was YEP: Young Entertainment Professionals, Nashville Network. This group has around 19,000 members and accumulates dozens of posts per day by aspiring musicians, which range from looking and advertising for jobs to posting information about shows.²¹ When I first joined this group I introduced myself; since then, I continue to like and comment on posts that are relevant to me or my music. At first sight, it may seem like industry professionals are not present in the group because they are not active members. Instead, these professionals use the group as a place to monitor what is happening in the Nashville music scene.²² In the future, I will use this group to post about my shows in Nashville, to book writing sessions, and as a networking tool to get to know fellow songwriters in the industry.

²¹ In addition to aspiring musicians, other professionals in the arts post varying information about their own small businesses or general events in the area. For example, many photographers use the group to post information about services they offer (most of which lean towards shoots that would benefit aspiring musicians) such as headshots, offers to do music videos and live concert shoots for promotion materials. An example of a post from a member asking for advice is as follows: “Is it common for you to have to pay a record label in exchange for services, or do they just take a percentage of what you make?” Stewart, Kaylie. “Is it common for you to have to pay a record label in exchange for services, or do they just take a percentage of what you make?” 22 April 2017, 5:12 p.m. Facebook post.

²² As a complete surprise to me, in my meeting with Jeff Skaggs while I was in Nashville he recommended I join YEP. After I said that I was already a member, I asked him if he was a member himself and he said “yes.” He then went on to state that a lot of industry professionals are in the group even if they are not active. Jeff also said that the group is a resource I should use to find meetups in the Nashville area between members and industry leaders. While the meetups do not happen frequently, when they do occur they are well attended.

FACEBOOK MUSIC PAGE

I have had a Facebook music page for six years but I was never very active on it. This year, I've tried to post weekly and I've begun to keep the page more active. I invited all of my friends to like my music page and encouraged them to share the page with their friends, and soon after the community slowly started to grow. However, unlike other social media platforms, Facebook is not 'discoverable.' Compared to Instagram and Twitter, for example, where the users can search hashtags to find things they may like, with Facebook, people log in to explore their previously curated group of connections and interests. In 2004 when Facebook was launched, co-founder Mark Zuckerberg said "People already have their friends, acquaintances and business connections. So rather than building new connections, what we are doing is just mapping them out."²³

In order to combat the limitations of sharing content on Facebook, one can use Facebook Ads. Using the ads tool, I ran a seven-dollar ad promoting my cover of 'Down' by Marian Hill over the course of seven days. In addition, I shared the video to every group I was a part of on Facebook. Before the ad even started running, the video had reached 10,000 people within my network alone. That week, I gained 14 likes on my music page and the post reached over 20,000 people, which was encouraging leading up to my album release.

²³ Piskorski 68

TWITTER

Twitter is the best social media platform for musicians. Not only is it easier than any other platform to correspond directly with fans, but also the outreach and visibility are astronomical. Twitter has many communication functionalities and has substantially grown as a company since its launch in 2006. Specifically, I as a musician use Twitter to correspond directly to fans and celebrities, and to keep an eye on who is talking about my music.

Building a following on Twitter is the first step toward generating a supportive fanbase. According to Piskorski:

It can be fairly awkward to initiate an interaction with someone for fear of our advances being rebuffed. On Twitter, however, it was possible to start such an interaction without any fear. A user could simply follow another to indicate interest in that user without worrying that the target would refuse to provide the information or reject the advances.²⁴

This ability to spark conversations and build connections without fear is Twitter's leading advantage against other social media platforms. However, it can be tricky to find what users one should follow and communicate with to begin stirring up a buzz. In September of 2016, I began using an app called

²⁴ Piskorski 59

“CrowdFire” to build a following. A benefit of CrowdFire is that it generates a unique list of Twitter users that are more likely to follow you back if you follow them first. When I started using Crowdfire, I had 700 followers and by using the app for a few months I was able to reach 1000. CrowdFire also allows you to set up and automatically send a private direct message to your new followers. This direct message is completely customizable and can be set by the app user. I have used a variety of direct messages such as: “Thanks so much for following! My debut single “QUEEN” will be out April 10th! Would love to keep in touch!” This prompted fans to write back if they would like to keep in touch and allowed me to connect with passionate fans. While I have stopped using CrowdFire to grow my fanbase, I still use it to send automated messages as well as monitor my following.

As the release date of *Balance* approached, my desire to build a substantial following increased with the hopes of creating a supportive fanbase that would spread the news of the release. To do so, I started to run a daily one-dollar Twitter ad. This ad was comprised of five or six tweets that would be shown to five to six hundred users every day. As a result of this ad, I gained at least two or three followers daily. In addition to using CrowdFire to connect with new followers, I began using a desktop app called TweetDeck. TweetDeck is “the most powerful Twitter tool for real-time tracking, organizing, and

engagement.”²⁵ It provides customizable columns for easy visibility to better keep track of twitter functionalities such as new followers, mentions, and tweets including a specific word. An article on AdWeek written in 2009 examined the pros and cons and concluded that “the relative few disadvantages of TweetDeck are far outweighed by the enormous range of options and control the software gives to the user.”²⁶ In addition to using TweetDeck to keep track of people tweeting about me or my music, I also use it to publically tweet individuals, thanking them for following me and telling them about *Balance*. I was hoping that my new followers would be more likely to re-tweet these introductory tweets as opposed to posting a tweet they wrote themselves after being prompted by a CrowdFire automated direct message.

INSTAGRAM

On the heels of quickly growing a supportive fanbase on Twitter, I decided to branch out to Instagram. Based on the success of my Twitter ads, I had high hopes for running ads on the popular photo-sharing app. However, I did not get the results I expected. For example, I ran an ad on a photo of myself

²⁵ See the official TweetDeck website for more information about setup and usability.

“TweetDeck.” *Twitter*, Twitter, tweetdeck.twitter.com/. Accessed 17 Apr. 2017.

²⁶ See the AdWeek article for more information on specific pros and cons.

Bennett, Shea. “TweetDeck Makes Twitter Better. Why Aren't You Using It?” *Adweek*, Adweek, 24 Feb. 2009, www.adweek.com/digital/tweetdeck/. Accessed 5 Apr. 2017.

in the recording studio promoting my soon-to-be released album. Unlike my Twitter ads, this photo only reached roughly 700 Instagram users over the course of a week. In addition to ads reaching a smaller audience, Instagram functionalities make it harder to build one-on-one connections with fans. Instead, I have decided to focus more on visibility than accessibility. In doing so, I have found the best action to take to expand a following is to keep posting regularly on Instagram and post an abundance of relevant hashtags.

Recently, I have begun posting videos of myself singing on Instagram and that seems to consistently pull in a lot of attention. I post short, one minute clips of myself singing a cover song on the guitar with many related hashtags such as:

#timmcgraw #mcgraw #tim #faithhill #humble #and #kind #cover
#coversong #song #singer #songwriter #music #musician #instacover
#guitar #acoustic #taylorguitar #taylor #guitar #igmusician #instasong
#instasongs.

Unlike Twitter, Instagram has no character limit allowing the addition of as many relevant hashtags as seem fitting. These hashtags allow new fans to stumble upon my posts when looking at photos by other users containing any of

the same hashtags. The number of hashtags may seem overwhelming, but with Instagram it is impossible to provide too many ways for people to discover you.

PERSONAL WEBSITE

At the present time, every artist should have a website. An article written on *Art Business* by Alan Bamberger titled “Artist Websites: How to Increase Your Online Traffic and Keep Everyone on Your Site Longer” comments upon how to drive traffic to your website, stating that:

One of the greatest advantages of the Internet and one artists consistently overlook is that complete strangers can land on your website or discover you and your art entirely by chance or accident. [...] No matter who they may be, the more people who are able to land on your website and see your art, the greater the chances of ultimately advancing in your career, receiving invitations to participate in shows, getting gallery representation, being included in exhibitions, making sales, getting commissions, being featured on blogs or art websites, and more.²⁷

²⁷ For more information on this topic please see the entire article at: Bamberger, Alan. “Artist Websites: How to Increase Your Online Traffic and Keep Everyone on Your Site Longer.” *Art Business*,

An artist's website should be catchy, thought-provoking, visually inviting and convey their business model to potential strangers. To ensure the best possible design, businesses should spend ample time researching best practices for retaining visitors' attention. Designers should make note of favorite color pallets, concepts and generate mockups before beginning to create a palpable product.

I have had www.evasnyder.com purchased and live for years. However, with the release of this EP I knew it was time to redesign my entire website. Entrepreneurs generally need a quick and easy way for buyers to figure out who they are. In addition, the website should act as a hub toward where traffic is directed across all social media platforms. Depending on the type of business, one could decide to make the traffic hub a Twitter account, Facebook page or another platform. However, on a personal website the user writes their own rules. One can customize the pages to be exactly how they would like it, can easily link to every social media account, and not have to worry about content restrictions.

Thanks to my computer science background, I was able to program my website by hand. However, it is very difficult to make sure that the website looks good on every possible viewable platform (e.g. iPhone 7, iPhone 4, laptop

screens of varying sizes, android phones etc.) Third-party websites such as Squarespace, Wix, and Weebly handle formatting for mobile and desktop viewing much better than I can. The only drawback in regard to using a third-party website creation tool is that they are an additional expense on top of general website charges.

UNIFIED BRANDING

Tying directly into a well designed website comes a need for unified branding across all public facing platforms. Whether it is a unified color scheme or the same profile picture or cover photo, there should be something familiar to visitors upon landing at any platform.

After spending a lot of time researching artists of varying degrees of success, I chose to have the same profile photo across all platforms: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. This way people who are already following me will recognize other accounts tied to my music and be more inclined to follow on different media. Having a unified image across all online presences naturally develops a sense of professionalism and will encourage people to support your business.

ALBUM COVER

An article published by *MarketingProfs* in 2014 written by Jason Cieslak about brand management touches upon the importance of a centralized brand concept across all platforms and interactions between the user and product.

Every encounter—viewing a commercial, visiting a website, chatting with a customer service rep, reading a confirmation email, and receiving a product in the mail—is an opportunity for your brand to deliver on its promise and convey its purpose. Those encounters can strengthen the overall brand experience.²⁸

The article then goes on in depth about how to develop a brand inline with your business' premise. For my music, in addition to my website and social media platforms representing my brand, the album cover for the EP was just as important if not more so. I spent a lot of time discussing different album covers with my advisors and photographer trying to find one that reflected the message

²⁸ Cieslak, Jason. "Why Your Company Needs to Offer a Unified Brand Experience." *MarketingProfs*, 3 Nov. 2014, www.marketingprofs.com/opinions/2014/26388/why-your-company-needs-to-offer-a-unified-brand-experience. Accessed 5 Apr. 2017.

of the word *Balance* as well as a cover that was visually appealing and different.



Figure 2

Jesse Ditkoff, my photographer, is a graduate of Hampshire College so we were able to use their photo studio for the album photography sessions. When I decided I needed to re-brand my website, I knew I needed a good set of unified images to display. I had a vision of a good headshot as well as some type of image that looked like I was balancing on a tightrope. I decided to dress in a simple black dress to maintain simplicity and minimalism throughout my website and we ended up taking hundreds of photos and left with some good ones which I later edited in an app called VSCO.



Figure 3.

Focusing more on the album cover itself, I wanted to create a thought-provoking image that did not fall under the “typical” category for country music: a picture with a guitar, on a backroad or on a truck. I ultimately decided I wanted to hand-paint the word “Balance” on the back of a denim jacket I found at a thrift shop. The results were incredible and I instantly knew the jacket had to have a massive influence on the album cover. When we returned to the photostudio we worked on images which primarily displayed the jacket before it showed off myself.



Figure 4

While I loved the photo above I wanted something more unique. Using photoshop, Jesse and I started discussing different digital manipulations we could do to the photo and ways that we could reflect the word “Balance” without merely displaying it via text. This brainstorming resulted in what would later be the final album cover design.



Figure 5²⁹

I felt as though this image tackled all of the different struggles I was facing when creating a good album cover; I needed the title of the album to be displayed, my name somewhere visible, an image so new fans would know what I look like and the image needed to convey “balance” somehow. This

²⁹ To see the album cover for “Queen” see Appendix A

photo happened to accomplish all of that. The overlaid images provided a sense of balance in the reflections of my body, “Eva Snyder” is placed in the upper left-hand corner and the title of the album “Balance” is visible on the back of the jacket in my reflection.

Not only is a unified brand across all front-facing technologies crucial to building a public image, but so is developing a brand which reflects your message. My album cover is my profile photo on all of my music social media pages and the cover highlights everything necessary to an emerging artist as well as generally being an intriguing piece of artwork.

THE ALBUM

*“Mystery unfolds with the secondhand
Clockwise it ticks, clockwise I can’t surface from the quicksand
I’m breathless in Mission”*

*“Breathless In Mission”
Eva Snyder, 2017*



Figure 6

On the morning of March 11th, 2017 I boarded a plane bound for Nashville with my Taylor K22ce guitar in one hand and my dreams in the other. Arriving at Dark Horse Recording in Franklin, TN felt like a dream that I never

wanted to wake up from. Upon walking through the front doors I immediately knew that I had made the right decision. The walls were lined with gold and silver records from history-making artists who have all spent time recording at this wooden music escape-house. Everywhere I looked there were wires running from room to room showing-off the impressive recording capabilities architects had clearly and carefully thought through. Music seeped through the walls and ceilings every hour of the day and, unlike late Saturday nights on campus, I never wanted it to stop.

This section will examine how the songs on the album were written and what inspired me to write them. In addition, I will discuss my trip to Nashville in its entirety. I will reflect upon the recording process and everything I took away from it, the post production time spent in Nashville networking as well as the release of *Balance* and the celebratory concert.

COMPOSITION

Partially due to my choice to record in Nashville, the expense of music production limited me to recording only three out of the dozens of songs I have written. Choosing what three songs would make it onto the EP was difficult. I wanted to include songs that showed diversity as well as ones that highlighted my writing capabilities. I have been perfecting my lyric writing for years in an attempt to push myself to the next level.

Typically, when I sit down to write a song, the melody comes hand-in-hand with the words. I could begin from a phrase I heard that I liked or even from a single word that captivated me. I have written a song solely based on feelings from before and I have written songs that stem from a single moment which I have bent into a completely different scenario. Being a good songwriter means being able to write based on events in your life. Being a great writer means being able to write about anything, real or imagined, and harnessing emotions from experienced events.

I find that I tend to write “up.” By that, I mean I write sounding older than I actually am. I am in love with the word “whiskey” even if I do not drink it that much and I use imagery in my songs most twenty-one year olds have not experienced yet. I think this stretch in age in my writing draws in a larger audience and allows more people to connect with my words. Fostering a

connection between listeners and myself is the most important aspect of songs to me. I actively work hard to separate my entrepreneurial business goals from my songwriting.

BALANCE

Going into my recording, I knew that “Balance” would make it on the EP. “Balance” is a song I wrote in my senior year of high school and it holds a special place in my heart. I have sung “Balance” in dozens of bars and on handfuls of stages, and it always silences an audience and draws them in.

“Balance,” to me, is the first song I wrote that propelled my writing to a place it had never been before. I spent hours writing this song and perfecting the lyrics so that they spoke words that previously never left my lips. The concept of this song stemmed from the best lyric writing book that I have ever read, *Writing Better Lyrics* by Pat Pattison.³⁰ I was given this book as a birthday present in high school and could not put it down upon first receiving it. There is a chapter in it that explores the creation of a question, then examines the changes of the question after removing the first word. From this exercise I generated “How can she balance?” as the question then “Can she balance” by

³⁰ Pattison, Pat. *Writing Better Lyrics : The Essential Guide to Powerful Songwriting*. Cincinnati, Ohio : Writer's Digest Books, [2009], 2009. EBSCOhost, proxy.mtholyoke.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=c at00321a&AN=fivecol.015075913&site=eds-live&scope=site.

removing “how.” I fell in love with this slight change of words and the intense, one-hundred and eighty degree rotation of meaning. From there, the story of “Balance” was born. I explored a lot of different routes to take it, and eventually decided upon writing it through the eyes of an onlooker. The narrator of the song tells the story of a woman living a tattered life. She eventually goes down in the town’s history as the only runaway the town has ever seen. (To read all of the lyrics of “Balance,” see Appendix B)

QUEEN

Prior to arriving in Nashville and since the start of November 2016, I was writing new music every day. I learned how to stretch boundaries which I previously had never approached with my lyrics and I plunged into new territories in an attempt to push myself to write songs which would be more “radio friendly.” “Radio friendly” is a term I use to refer to the music that is constantly played on the radio. Most songs are very repetitive, not very engaging and can be sung along with pretty mindlessly. I have never been able to write something I consider completely “radio-friendly.” However, “Queen,” is arguably one of the closest songs to this idiom I have written while still remaining true to my songwriting goals.

The song began with the line “I wear my crown around my middle

finger.” I had that line written for a few weeks and tried to put it into a myriad of other songs I was working on but was not able to find the perfect fit...until I wrote “Queen.” “Queen” is a song that fights back at the misconceptions of how women should act and be treated. A quick look at the lyrics and you will see that it is a feisty song which embraces women being strong and independent. (To read the lyrics, see Appendix C.)

The inspiration from this song did not come from a specific time and place. To this day, I am still not sure where this song came from inside of me. I knew I wanted to write something about royalty,³¹ most likely a queen, but how the song was born is still a mystery to me. Once in a blue moon, I will sit down to write a song and it will come pouring out from a place that is unknown to me. This is what happened with “Queen.” I sat down one afternoon with the one line I had written and a few hours later the song was finished.

BARTENDER

The last song that I decided to include on the EP was “Bartender.” The inspiration for “Bartender” came after a night out with my friends. That night, I noticed that a lot of college women flirt with my significant other, who happens

³¹ It should be noted here that “Royals” (a seven time platinum single) released by the New Zealand pop-sensation Lorde, did not have any influence on my desire to write about royalty.

to be a bartender. Being an artist I felt this was the perfect topic to bend into a song.

Naturally, there are a lot of country songs about bartenders, however, I saw this as an occasion to take the song in a non-traditional route. Before I settled on the final concept, I did a lot of brainstorming. The resulting song settles exactly around how I felt in that situation, annoyed but secure in my relationship knowing that at the end of the night I am the one who gets the bartender.

I think this new take on a stereotypical country bartender song is empowering and different. I hope that this song reaches other young women and teaches them that they should not be insecure in relationships, a common thread in bro-country.³² (To see the lyrics of Bartender, see Appendix D.)

³² To read more about bro-country see the Gender Gap section of this paper.

PRODUCTION

The experience of recording *Balance* was one I will never forget. The four days in the studio went by in a flash and I stubbornly left Franklin, TN already trying to figure out when to return. On the contrary to what most people would think, myself included, the act of recording professional music is a relatively quick process for most artists, done in either a professional studio or at a computer in one's home. I chose to record professionally in a studio because I did not have any connections with engineers who own an in-home production complex. However, many bands prefer recording at home and particularly cherish the freedom that an in-home studio brings with it. In an interview in Cornfield's *Beyond The Beat*, Martin (a member of an award-winning country music band) mentions how:

...the open and casual environment of home recording, unlike the impersonal, structured and walled environment of a large commercial studio, allows for spontaneous and creative artistic expression by the band.³³

³³ Cornfield 37

The advantages to an in-home studio are clear and I eventually would like to have the freedom of no time-constraints as well as the added comfort that comes with a house one is familiar with. However, as I mentioned above, I had to go with the connections I made and that resulted in recording at a professional grade studio without having to worry about finding skillful musicians.



Figure 7

NASHVILLE MUSICIANS

As stated previously, Nashville musicians are the primary reason I decided to record my EP in Tennessee. However, I had no connections with any session musicians in Nashville prior to recording. Thankfully, Dark Horse

Recording handled all of the logistics. Booking the musicians for a recording is a typical procedure for a professional grade studio. Most studios have pre-determined “usuals” they phone in whenever an independent project is scheduled. Even if I had known talented musicians prior to recording, I still would have preferred the musicians my studio booked. These musicians, Justin Schipper on guitar, Matt Pierson on bass, Miles McPherson on drums and Randy Harper on keys, have most likely all played together previously in other recording sessions, which allows them to sync up faster than a group of musicians playing together for the first time. I was rewarded by their experience with effortless sound and seemingly uncomplicated melodies stemming from years of recording on hazy Sunday afternoons.

On my first day in the studio, the musicians came in to record. Nashville session musicians will only work in three-hour segments. For example, industry standard for sessions are 10:00am to 1:00pm and then 2:00pm to 5:00pm. In addition to working in three-hour segments, session musicians will only read charts³⁴ written out in the Nashville Number System. To follow the Number System, the key of the song is noted at the top of the page and the chords are written out in numbers. This way, the musicians can easily change the key and still have the same charts from which to read. In music theory, we learn this

³⁴ During the recording process, Nashville musicians will only read music from charts. These charts are a straightforward way to display the song without having to read from a music staff. To see the charts used for my recording see Appendix E.

concept as “Movable Do” while practicing sight-singing.³⁵ Even though I understood the Number System, I had the guitarist write out the charts for all of the musicians. This ensured that the charts would be industry standard and helped avoid losing any time to record with the musicians.

Before the musicians arrived, I sent my engineer, Dave Hagen, acoustic recordings of the three songs on the EP. Dave and I chose a song to begin with, played a bit of the acoustic iPhone recording and then the musicians did a cut. For “Bartender” and “Balance,” the first cut by the musicians was more than I ever could have hoped for. The A-list musicians immediately mastered the feeling I had envisioned prior to recording all the while exceeding any expectations I had. With “Queen,” I felt the musicians were not creating the soundscape I had entered the session wanting. Prior to the recording session, I originally imagined “Queen” as a dirty song with rough edges and a full sound. However, I did not have the time to work on the changes that would be necessary to bring it to where I had imagined with only three hours to record all three songs. I tried to convey what I was feeling and that resulted in the drummer doing an additional cut with less syncopation to make the song feel less bouncy. I later realized that I was not alone in regards to musicians not

³⁵ Sight-singing is a skill all music majors must learn to do before graduating. When sight-singing, one is given a sheet of music with a line or two (or longer) of music written out. Without much time to look over the music, the starting note is played on a piano and it is up to the singer to accurately sing the rest of the line without the help of an additional instrument. This skill teaches the different pitch intervals as well as it helps develop a general sense of individual note tones so in the future, the artist might one day develop strong relative pitch.

creating the exact reflection of a song I created in my head. *How Music Works*, written by the lead singer and guitarist of The Talking Heads, David Byrne, discusses how when the Talking Heads first entered the studio the music made was drastically different from what the band had envisioned.

When we eventually made our first proper record, *Talking Heads: 77*, it was by and large a miserable experience. Nothing really sounded like it did in our heads, or like we were used to hearing ourselves on stage, although that might say as much about our heads, our expectations, or our sound as we imagined it as it does about how the recordings turned out. Or it could just have been bad mojo.³⁶

Before my recording session, I had no idea what I might have to tell the musicians to get them to build the song that I imagined. Thankfully, Nashville session musicians are so talented that they do not have to be told specific licks or exact notes unless you have specific instructions in mind. In my case, I had no idea what I wanted for licks and runs³⁷ but Justin the guitarist took the song and ran with it. He sat down with his dobro, pedal steel, and three different

³⁶Byrne, David. "How Music Works." *How Music Works*, McSweeney's, San Francisco, CA, 2012, pp. 141–141.

³⁷Licks and runs are terms used in the music industry to represent interludes between sections of a song. In addition to interludes, licks and runs can also be specific patterns and melodies that frequently return throughout the piece. Examples can be found in any popular song. Typically they appear in an introduction of a song or in a guitar or piano solo.

guitars and added ornamentations that fit in with my descriptors such as “dirty” and “old” with ease. He was the most talented musician that came for my session and his abilities brought the record to a new level.

VOCALS



Figure 8

At Dark Horse Recording, I had the studio space at my disposal at any time for the four days scheduled, and the engineers were available for 12 hours a day. Even though it was late, after the guitarist had finished overdubs around 5:00pm my engineer and I jumped right into recording lead vocals. The studio

turned the drum recording room into a vocal booth and we hit the ground running.

Dave and I first attempted to record lead vocals for “Bartender.” However, we quickly decided to move on because Dave said he wanted to hear what the song would sound like if my voice was somewhat tired. He was looking for a raspy, honest sound which was not as easily accomplished with a ready-to-go voice. As Andrew West in *The Art of Songwriting* states, “To establish a foundation as an original songwriter, the key initial element is likely to be the discovery and exposition of an individual voice.”³⁸ With this in mind, it is important to capture a unique sound while not attempting to replicate previously developed uncommon vocals coined by famous artists. Dave’s decision to return to “Bartender” after singing for a couple hours mirrored his desire to build a sound from my voice that paralleled the story behind the lyrics. In doing so, we were able to focus on creating a sound of my own.

Moving forward, we progressed onto the other two songs on the EP. The next song on the line-up was “Balance.” Dave encouraged me to deliver the lyrics like a story instead of simply singing, so personality peeked through and in a few run-throughs we were done. With “Queen,” after five or six passes through the entire song, Dave said “now throw out everything you know about

³⁸ West, Andrew (Songwriter). *The Art of Songwriting*. London, UK : Bloomsbury Methuen Drama an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2016., 2016. EBSCOhost, proxy.mtholyoke.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=c at00321a&AN=fivecol.015180451&site=eds-live&scope=site.

this song melody-wise and sing something completely different.” So I did. In the end, we used some slight melody changes from this less traditional take for the final cut. Even though I did not have a producer to team up with for the recording of these three songs, Dave doubled as the producer. This coaching is an example of how he fulfilled a producer's job of pushing me out of my comfort zone as well as mixing and running the show.

After cutting “Queen” and “Balance,” it was late into the night and it had been a very long day. I was ready to go to bed when Dave said through the talk back “Do you want to try “Bartender” now? How does your voice feel?” So we decided to take another crack at “Bartender.” This time, my voice was a little more tired and feistier, which gave the song the kick it needed. The first day of recording ended with lead vocals for “Bartender.” At the end of the first day, I was surprised by how much can be accomplished with talented engineers and skillful musicians working seamlessly together.

COMP TRACKS AND BACKGROUND VOCALS

The next step after recording lead vocals is to create comp tracks.

Comps are the finalized lead vocal tracks that comprise the best snippets from the different takes the singer records. For example, for every track I cut roughly six or seven full run-throughs. Then, every track is analyzed line by line and the best sounding version is chosen for the comp. This process creates a “perfect” vocal. The rest of the morning was spent mixing, propelling the songs closer to a finalized product.



Figure 5

Once Dave began mixing the tracks, he and I moved onto background vocals. I came into the recording session having only a very rough idea of what I wanted for those vocals. I met with my singing teacher at Mount Holyoke, Cheryl Cobb, a few times prior to recording. We had gone over potential background harmonies but Cheryl and I were both shooting in the dark. Most of the background vocals, all of which I sang, came from Dave saying, “let’s try this!” and “hmm okay. Nope, let’s try this!” That repeated until we figured out what sounded best alongside the instrument tracks. By the end of the second day, we had completed all of the background vocals for the three songs. Even though there were individual notes I did not like, they could be hidden by mixing and manipulation later on if I decided I still did not like something after sleeping on it.

FINAL MIXING

The last two days were comprised of sitting in studio B for thirteen to fourteen hours mixing down and perfecting two days’ work. Dave was able to translate what I said needed to be fixed into an immediate correction that further improved the track. This fascinated me because I do not understand most of what he does in regards to the tracks’ balance as well as computerized

tweaks to sound and timbre. For example, with the click of a button Dave was able to make the keyboard sound like a synthesizer and change my vocals to sound like I was an aged male singer. With this aside, while he was mixing, I offered opinions about general soundscapes and levels. I would also listen every night to the finished product of the day on multiple mediums. In the morning, we would reconvene and talk about what we heard on different electronic devices and what needed to be fixed. For example, a recording needs to sound great both over a laptop speaker and through headphones. However, headphones are typically better speakers than those in laptops and recordings can sound too “hot” over laptop speakers. The solution for something sounding “hot” is usually to bring up the bass and bring down some of the higher frequencies in the drums.

Not many aspects of the songs were changed after the musicians laid down the instrumental tracks. However, one change that was made to “Queen” was editing a snap loop track used throughout the song. I thought the snaps in the loop sounded computer-generated, which I did not like. As a result, the engineer and I pulled the interns into the studio and recorded our own snaps and were able to swap those in within five seconds after recording them. In addition to the loop track, other small changes included manipulations to background vocals. For example, we brought the levels up or down in certain places or removed them if we thought they did not fit the next day. There were a few

lines throughout the chorus that I removed because I thought they rubbed³⁹ the lead vocal melody too much and in the end I am happy with that decision.

Once everything was wrapped up, the tracks had to be sent to an additional engineer to be mastered. Mastering⁴⁰ brings the sound levels of the recording up to radio standards. It is not too obvious but radio music is much louder compared to pre-mastered original recordings. From my mastering engineer, I received the full tracks, instrumental versions and TV mixes.⁴¹

NASHVILLE

Once the recording was complete, I had roughly five days to spend in the city and already had a few meetings set up. It is not a lie when the internet tells you that everybody in Nashville is chasing the same dream. Almost everybody I spoke to in the city was also a musician trying to get their big break. It was very intimidating and the competition was palpable.

³⁹ A term here used to describe a harmony conflicting with the lead vocal melody (too close in pitch so it is hard to distinguish between different lines, too dissonant lying directly adjacent to the lead melody etc.)

⁴⁰ Mastering is a post-production audio manipulation process which ensures the song is at a high enough quality to be duplicated, distributed and enjoyed. Learning how to master a song well takes years of experience and is a difficult task. Just as Dave and I did during mixing, the mastering engineer must ensure that the song sounds good on every medium on which it might be played. Every song on the radio and produced professional is mastered before being released.

⁴¹ Instrumental: a version of the song produced with no vocals.

TV Mixes: two audio tracks for one song. One track has just the instruments. The other has just vocals. This is specifically produced in this fashion to allow TV shows and movies to fade the vocals in and out depending on what is happening in the on-screen production.

The first meeting I had set up in town was with Jeff Skaggs, the creative director at Creative Nation.⁴² I asked him many questions about how he got started in the business and specifically how he started with Creative Nation. He has been working for a long time in the industry and is very committed to the artists he represents, some of whom he has been working with for over ten years. He asked numerous questions about my work and was very interested in the fact that I was also a computer engineer. I ended the meeting asking for clarification in regard to what he looks for in an artist, what he thinks my next steps should be, and if he knew of other industry professionals I should reach out to. In response, he talked about how he looks for a genuine artist who is a talented lyric writer and mentioned that he did not have any connections I should reach out to at the moment. His only advice in respect to what my next steps should be was to reach out to my royalty distribution representative, Broadcast Music Inc. (BMI).⁴³

There are multiple royalty distributors in the music industry. BMI and American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP⁴⁴) are just two but arguably the largest. I am a member of BMI and Jeff's advice was that I

⁴² Creative Nation is a music company that houses some of Nashville's best songwriters. The company was founded by Beth and Luke Laird in 2011 and partners with Universal Music Publishing Group as well as Pulse Music.

⁴³ Broadcast Music Inc. is one of the four music royalty distribution companies in the United States along with ASCAP, Global Music Rights and SESAC. BMI was founded in 1939 and works to protect the performing rights of musicians large to small. They act as the bridge between the people who want to play music and the artist who created the music.

⁴⁴ ASCAP was founded in 1914 and is also a music royalty distribution company that protects the performing rights of performers.

should get a hold of a writer's representative at BMI and pitch my music to them. If BMI likes my music and my writing they will pitch my music to different labels and publishing companies in the area. It is in their best interests for me to make money because that is how they bring in revenue. However, I walked into their headquarters while I was in Nashville and, according to the receptionist, all of the representatives were at South By SouthWest (SXSW⁴⁵) and she said to call back in a few days. So I phoned the morning I was leaving Nashville hoping that I could come in and speak to somebody face to face before my flight. Unfortunately, I got sent to voicemail the ten times I tried calling and I still have not heard back from anyone at BMI. In conclusion, the next big challenge for me is going to be pitching to a BMI writers representative.

⁴⁵ South By SouthWest is a yearly conference and festival founded in 1987 in Austin Texas, that celebrates the bridging of multi-media industries. It has become a hub for new technical start-ups, emerging bands and independent artists to showcase their business before it skyrockets.

POST RECORDING AND GETTING HEARD

I had to leave Nashville after only five days to finish up my senior year of college but I did not want to go. I left knowing that I was about to begin the tougher part to being an entrepreneur, pitching yourself. I did not have the final, mastered tracks until a week after I left Nashville but I already had some plans in mind to begin the process. I had an EP release



concert scheduled for April 15th, 2017 in Pratt Music Hall on Mount Holyoke's campus, I had emails of producers I was going to reach out to again after I received the music in hand, and I had a fire burning inside of me to receive some positive feedback in regards to my recordings. I laid out a plan for myself and began chipping away at it one step at a time.

POST PRODUCTION COLLABORATION HUNT

Once I had rough cuts of the songs from my engineer, I was able to start using those to try to find people who would want to work with me. The rough cuts served as proof that I am a serious musician and gave a taste of my writing and musical style. While it is not necessary to have a professionally recorded piece of music to be noticed in the industry, it helps immensely. As I mentioned before, I sent out many emails to industry professionals before recording in Nashville and hardly heard back from any of them. Now that I am able to send producers professional recordings, they are visibly more responsive.

I stumbled upon the website of Robot Lemon, whose real name is Reid F. Shippen,⁴⁶ from an Instagram post by a talented writer. Even though I had never heard of Reid before, I decided to look at his website and see if his work could be something that would blend well with my music. Upon reading through his website, I fell in love with his comical personality. I instantly thought that I *needed* to work with him and began crafting a cold email, which I hoped would catch his attention. I tried my best to match his sense of humor in my email to him with little words and phrases I thought he would like. For

⁴⁶ Reid has won ten Grammys over his years of producing and has worked with almost every major Country music artist as well as many famous Christian recording artists. He is based out of Nashville, TN and has a studio in his house which he runs from his business.

example, I titled the email “I’m not a robot...but kinda close? (Let’s make music.)” and then went on later to explain how I am a computer science major and so I technically “speak” robot. Upon sending this email, I was very excited to see that he wrote back the next morning. In his response, he said that he thought my songs were good and that he loved my voice. I wrote back with some thoughts on how we could collaborate in the future and even though he did not respond right away to my second email, he accepted my Facebook friend request, which seemed promising to me. After waiting a couple weeks for him to write back, I decided to send him a Facebook message with a video of me singing a new song I wrote, “Let The Night In.” I told him that I recently had written the song and I wanted to record it with him this upcoming summer. He immediately responded via Facebook and said “Yes! Let’s do it!” Right now, I am waiting to hear back from him in regard to when he is free this summer to record.

While I was in the studio in Franklin, I thought it would be a good idea to send some rough cuts to Tom Pick, an RCA sound engineer for fifteen years, and see if I could get him to meet with me in person. I sent him a recording of “Balance,” and he responded back saying that he would stop by the studio the next day. Tom came by around lunch time, sat in the studio for a while, and critiqued “Balance.” He provided suggestions in regard to the balance of individual tracks, suggesting that during parts of the chorus my voice was

muffled behind the electric guitar, as well as recommending that I bring up the steel guitar to make the track sound more full. Following that, we chatted for about an hour and I got to know him and his story. Towards the end of the conversation I asked if there was anybody he thought I should reach out to and he gave me the email address of Blake Chancey, a highly-accredited producer who won numerous Grammys while producing the Dixie Chicks.⁴⁷

I reached out to Chancey shortly after getting his contact information from Pick but did not hear back. A few weeks later I sent Chancey a quick “just want to make sure this was received” message and he wrote back saying that he has been swamped and would get back to me the following week. When he finally responded, he said the following:

[I] Listened to your songs and I listened all the way through (which rarely happens) I think you're onto something. I like the direction you are headed with the songs. Look forward to hearing more. Please feel free to send more.⁴⁸

This was an incredible email to get back from such a highly regarded producer. In the future, I hope to keep in touch with Chancey and continue to send him

⁴⁷ The Dixie Chicks are a country music band who have won 13 Grammys as of 2015.

⁴⁸ Chancey, Blake. "Re: Tom Pick Referral <> Eva Snyder" Received by Eva Snyder, 30 Mar. 2017.

new songs I have written. The motivation behind sending him newly finished pieces would be so that I can remain on his new-artist radar and hopefully he will introduce me to other industry professionals thus furthering along my career as a songwriter and artist.

ITUNES, SPOTIFY AND CDX

To make music available on iTunes, Spotify and other platforms, I use a third-party middle-man called TuneCore. TuneCore basically handles the distribution to all of the possible music platforms in one place. Once I had the masters, I immediately uploaded them to TuneCore and paid to get a single for “Queen” along with an album of all three songs together titled *Balance*.

The reason I made “Queen” a single was to line up with the distribution of CDX #646. CDX is a digital and disc radio delivery service which has been up and running for twenty-five years. It costs a set amount to get a song on the CD with fifteen or more other artists, then from there that CD gets shipped to nearly every country radio station in the country, multiple stations around the world and hundreds of industry professionals. Of course, it is a gamble because one does not know if anybody is going to pick it up, but I thought it would be a good way to get my name seen and my music heard. CDX #646 shipped out on April 10th, and I decided to put “Queen” on it and release the song as a single in line with the shipment.

As a result of CDX, I have received a few inquiries from internet radio stations in the United States saying that they have played “Queen” on their station through CDX. In addition to that, I have also received some inquiries from Europe, specifically London and France, saying that they would like to

play “Queen.” While I do not have any plans to travel to Europe and actively pursue an overseas market for country music, I will never turn down an opportunity to share my music with new audiences.

RELEASE CONCERT

On April 15th, 2017 at 12:01 am *Balance* was released on all music sharing platforms. In celebration, I held an hour-long concert on the McCulloch stage in the Pratt Music Hall on Mount Holyoke College's campus at 3:00 pm later that afternoon.



Figure 11

Getting the opportunity to perform a release concert was crucial to the distribution of my first EP. Immediate attention upon release of an album can separate the successful from the not successful artists in the industry. If a song is able to accumulate considerable amounts of plays in a short period of time, that song will most likely be placed on Spotify and Apple Music playlists. Both of those are extremely desirable playlists on which to be added, almost guaranteeing thousands of plays. Even though I could not sell physical copies of *Balance* during this release concert, generating a significant amount of news around the release would help the initial sales.

Preparing for this concert took a lot of time planning every detail down to the position of the walls on the stage. I decided to hold it on the McCulloch Stage within Pratt because the space is large enough to accommodate a crowd and the acoustics are full. However, the appearance of the hall was a little more “concert hall” than I was looking for, so I started figuring out ways to transform the space into a warm coffee shop. I purchased a tapestry to hang in back of me to tighten up the space, I used string lights and the green room’s floor lamp to transform the lighting in the hall, and brought flowers from the greenhouse over to display on the stage. To top it all off, I used a small, acoustic amp for my guitar and sat at the edge of the stage on top of a paisley rug.



Figure 12

With my “Balance” jacket in the back of of the stage I began the concert a little after 3:00pm. In the end, there were roughly 50 or 60 friends and family who attended. I played through ten original songs all written within the last five years and then left the stage to showcase the EP over the speakers along with a video produced by my photographer, Jesse Ditkoff.⁴⁹ I was rewarded not only with smiling faces of friends and family but with a standing ovation that brought tears to my eyes.

This was my first composition concert and, in reflection, I think my music connected with my audience and accomplished what every songwriter

⁴⁹ To see the program, flyers and table tents for the release concert I designed see Appendix F.

dreams about while carving secrets into melodies. Audience members had their eyes closed quietly absorbing my lyrics, feet were tapping to up-beat he-did-me-wrong songs, and a tears were shed during heartfelt ballads.

THE GENDER GAP

*“Your gypsy blood pulls me in, it’s midnight in the tattoos on your skin.
There’s whiskey in the air and trouble at the door
But they can’t find us if we’re silent put your lips on mine and talk no
more”*

*“Untitled”
Eva Snyder, 2016*

Turn on country radio for an hour and you will likely only hear one or two songs being sung by women. Google any major record label and the people in charge will most likely all identify as male. While Nashville is not trying to hide the massive gender gap, they certainly are not doing anything to fix it. According to Brittany Hodak in an article she wrote for Forbes titled “Inside Country Radio’s Gender Gap,”⁵⁰

The average number of women appearing on any single chart is three.

When factoring in chart positions, and the extra spins songs at the top of the chart get compared to those lower down, female voices account for less than 10% of all charted songs in 2016.⁵¹

⁵⁰Hodak, Brittany. “Inside Country Radio’s Gender Gap.” *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 26 July 2016, www.forbes.com/sites/brittanyhodak/2016/07/26/recent-pop-collaborations-highlight-country-radios-rampant-gender-problem/#6555d88b575e. Accessed 20 Apr. 2017.

⁵¹ Hodak, “Inside Country Radio’s Gender Gap.”

The quick comeback by most men in the industry to this statistic is that women who like country and western music favor songs sung by men. As a result, radio must tailor the music played to the audience listening. However, a quick look into pop music will show that strong female artists can not only hold chart-topping singles, they can be played on the radio alongside their equally successful male counterparts. Not only are strong female pop singers holding their own in the genre, male country artists are beginning to reach out to them for collaborations. The motivation here being that by combining popularity, both artists will be more successful. However, with few women country artists packing the same punch as pop, male country artists seeking out genre-crossing musicians is only perpetuating the problem. These collaborations stir up plenty of news within the industry, advancing the desire to team up with the leading artists in other genres. A few examples of duets that Hodak provides are as follows:

Two genre-crossing collaborations are currently on the Top 30 chart: Dierks Bentley's "Different For Girls," featuring Elle King, and Brad Paisley's "Without A Fight," featuring Demi Lovato. A third, a Kenny

Chesney/P!nk song called “Setting The World On Fire” will debut this week.⁵²

While I was aware of the gender gap in country music before heading to Nashville to record, I was unaware of the ways in which the gap would present itself to me. I am not at the stage of pushing my music to radio yet, I am not a successful enough artist to be playing big shows, and I am not pitching music to record labels. However, the gender gap made itself painfully clear when my musicians came to record and I suddenly became the only woman in a room full of almost a dozen men comprising of four musicians, two engineers, four interns and general staff for the studio.

As I stated earlier in the paper, during the recording of “Queen” I felt as though the instrumentals were not getting the vibe I had entered the room expecting. I wanted something which sounded rougher, dirtier and more harsh. When I tried to get my point across and guide the musicians in a direction that I desired more, nobody listened to me. I felt as though I was talking to a wall. For example, I said I wanted the beat to be less syncopated and less bouncy only to get no response from any of my musicians, all of whom I was paying to work for me. Dave, the engineer, repeated the same comment after realizing nobody

⁵² Hodak, “Inside Country Radio's Gender Gap.”

heard me and immediately got a response from Miles the drummer. Finally we cut the track with a less syncopated drum beat.

As I begin to enter the self-promotional entrepreneurship side of the music industry more so than I have before, I am sure the gender gap will continue to reveal itself in new ways. According to an article posted on *Lioness*, a website for the female entrepreneur, titled “Why “Act Like a Man” No Longer Serves Women”:⁵³

“In the long run, it won’t help you to view your peers as competitors or to focus on proving how much better you are than everyone else,” says Edward D. Hess, co-author of *Humility Is the New Smart: Rethinking Human Excellence in the Smart Machine Age*. (with Katherine Ludwig).

“Those who focus their attention outward on supporting, encouraging, and collaborating with others will find that it leads to more success.”⁵⁴

Thankfully, Nashville provides many opportunities for collaboration; artists have the chance to co-write together, record together and go on tour together. Once an artist is through “the doors” and able to make the connections to allow themselves to have prosperous collaborations, the opportunities are endless.

⁵³ “Why ‘Act Like a Man’ No Longer Serves Women.” *Lioness For the Female Entrepreneur*, 10 Apr. 2017, lionessmagazine.com/why-act-like-a-man-no-longer-serves-women/. Accessed 23 Apr. 2017.

⁵⁴ *Lioness*, “Why “Act Like a Man” No Longer Serves Women”

However, only ten percent of female country artists are even allowed through the doors.

Of these fortunate ten percent, not many of the currently successfully country women artists are doing much to help end this gender gap. Recent Grammy winner, Maren Morris, recently wrote an opinion piece about her experience within the country music genre and how women are treated. While she does not touch directly upon the struggles she has faced while she climbed to the top of the professional ladder, she discusses how she has felt limited within the genre in regard to what women can write about.

The frustration I've had with the perspective of women in country music is that you either have to sing about being scorned by a lover or sing about thinking a boy is cute and wanting him to notice you. That's about as edgy as you can get.⁵⁵

She goes on to talk about how country music is not about a banjo but rather the heartbreaking truth that comes along with skillfully crafted, honest lyrics.

While I agree with her that lyrics separate country music from other genres, I wish she discussed more about what she is doing within the industry to make a

⁵⁵ Morris, Maren. "Maren Morris Is Moving Country Music Forward." *Lenny Letter*, Lenny, 26 Apr. 2017, www.lennyletter.com/culture/a809/maren-morris-expanding-womens-role-in-country-music/. Accessed 27 Apr. 2017.

difference. Maren's career has skyrocketed this past year. She has won a Country Music Association Award (CMA), a Grammy, and an Academy of Country Music Award (ACM) all in this past year in addition to being nominated for nine additional awards. While this may seem like it has happened overnight, she has been a professional songwriter in Nashville for five years. Maren has worked her way through the system and has managed to become incredibly successful all the while inspiring young women around the world with her talent and words. She is in the perfect position to take action and do something to bring more women into the genre, yet she focuses more on how she is worried she will enter her sophomore slump.⁵⁶

One of the only female country artists that is actively working to encourage growth in the number of successful country women is Miranda Lambert. Miranda Lambert, has created a scholarship for Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee for women creators to help bring more young women into the genre.⁵⁷ Besides Miranda's efforts, there are not many platforms available to help women enter the cut-throat genre. Spotify, a music-streaming web application, has algorithmically created playlists they advertise which accumulate millions of followers. A quick look at the "Women in Country"

⁵⁶ A term here used to describe the typical decrease in album sales for an artist following the release of their second album.

⁵⁷ "Applications Open Now for Second Annual Miranda Lambert 'Women Creators' Scholarship." *Belmont University News & Media*, 21 Feb. 2017, news.belmont.edu/applications-open-now-for-second-annual-miranda-lambert-women-creators-scholarship/. Accessed 27 Apr. 2017.

playlist curated by Spotify has 92,000 followers versus the “Hot Country” playlist which boasts almost four million. There needs to be a larger push by successful artists to have uncomfortable conversations and begin to change the normal perception of women in country. Until more artists begin breaking the silence that surrounds this issue, the statistics will remain the same.

The small amount of women in country music able to make a splash will continue to greatly impact how I proceed in my music career. It means that I will have to push harder to make connections and network stronger to get my music on the radio. My timeline of events leading up to becoming a successful country musician will most likely be longer than a similar male country artists’ and more difficult. While I have already felt some impact of the gender gap, I will surely experience it more so when I begin to attempt to get my music on the radio as well as when I pitch my music to professionals. I will try my best to combat this gender gap by promoting and supporting other female artists and ideally I would love to form a team of strong women in the business to work with (producer, sound engineer, manager etc.)

CONCLUSION

*“Now you’re calling me up playing some type of game
Whoa, you’re drunk and taking names
Now you’re coming over with the sunrise
Wearing whiskey eyes”*

*“Whiskey Eyes”
Eva Snyder, 2017*

Recording my breakout EP in Nashville was an experience I will never forget. Through this opportunity I have learned many things; I have learned how to network better, how to write stronger, how to work successfully in a studio and I have grown considerably as an artist. Thanks to my music classes at Mount Holyoke College I was able to understand the music theory behind what my session musicians were creating and I was able to easily communicate with them in regard to chords and charts. As a result of my computer science classes I understood what hardware was being used during the recording and for the mixing of the tracks.

Looking back upon this past year, I can reflect on everything I have done from large tasks to small with regard to *Balance*. This EP was a massive undertaking and, at many times, extremely stressful while attempting to balance a double major as well as general senior year events. Although it was stressful,

I would not change a thing were I to do this entire project over. Listening to *Balance* online and having friends, family and sometimes strangers approach me and say that they connect with the EP is a feeling I can not describe no matter how hard I try. I make music to reach people and I write to speak words that I believe others think but fail to say. Music, to me, is not about gaining a massive following and becoming famous; it is about connecting with people on a level most can not reach on a day-to-day basis after years of friendship.

In conclusion, I have completed a SWOT analysis on my music entrepreneurship in attempts to figure out my next step. I have detailed my strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within my music career and have come up with strategies to combat the weaknesses and threats. Moving forward from my senior year at Mount Holyoke, I plan on traveling to Nashville multiple times a year to network, and hopefully record at least once a year to continuously produce new music. I already have tentative plans in the works to head back to Nashville the summer of 2017 after I graduate to record with Reid and continue to make critical music industry connections. Down the road, I would like to become an active voice in the conversation regarding women in country music. I would like to develop solutions to some of the problems that come with mainstream radio and work on ways to encourage young women to enter the genre fearlessly. But for now, I will continue to work

on my writing and advancement toward getting my first cut.⁵⁸ Now begins the long road of professional “no’s” until I am lucky enough to receive my first “yes.”

⁵⁸ A “cut” in the music industry refers to when a songwriter is able to sell their original song to a label or a more successful artist and that artist then goes on to record and produce the songwriter’s song.

APPENDIX A

Final “Queen” Single cover



APPENDIX B

Balance

The rain beats on her widow and she wakes up
Cursing the wind
The sun hasn't shined
She falls back asleep to her red wine
The rains seeps through her cracked roof
The phone rings again
Dead flowers linger in her bedroom
She just can't toss 'em

[Chorus]

Her hands are scratched from catching her own falls
She only knows the taste of alcohol
Crumpled days fill her past which she don't remember
Whiskey tries to remind her
How can she balance?
Can she balance?

She walks a fine line on her tightrope
through this small town
Waiting for those sun-dried road signs
To lead her to Heaven

Chorus

Legend has it you can still see her walkin'
Down the edge of that old dirt road
Grandpa told me he saw her the other day
Kicking dust up this town's little runaway

Chorus

APPENDIX C

Queen

So tie your hair back, don't let them see you cry
 And wear your makeup, this time tomorrow night
 And sip your wine in secret, don't let 'em see it
 And darling I'll promise, you'll find a man to treat you right

And through the whispers, you'll hear the gossip now
 But don't you go running, your mouth around this small town
 And cook your dinners nightly, and don't be feisty
 Keep your legs crossed, you'll find a man to treat you right

[Chorus]

I was told I should find a prince
 Somewhere down the line, follow these steps and you'll be alright
 but there's just one problem I can see
 I ain't no princess, shit I'm a queen

I let my hair down, I drink my red in bed
 I curse on the hour, and twice more on Sunday mornings
 I wear no makeup daily, don't need no saving
 And darling I'll promise, my king's going to treat me right

And I crack good china at night, washing the dishes dog gone
 And I paint my nails, in my lace red chiffon
 Mama tried, she did a hell of a job
 And darling I'll promise, my king's going to treat me right

Chorus

And I wear my crown around my middle finger
 Don't think twice before I pull the trigger

And I wake up, looking like a million bucks
So throw another back, baby I'll toast to that
Darling I promise, my king oh he treats me right

Chorus

APPENDIX D

Bartender

On the run from another one, you found your way up here tonight
I can see right through your cheap perfume
Just a block down the other way, there's a bar with neon lights
With a lucky strike, that's a better fit for you
Sweet thing spitting fire, your singles say it's your day off
And you waste no time, calling the bartender
Before I can take my first drink, you're onto your second one
My oh my, watch out for the big spender

So keep talking my God just a little louder
And go ahead, lean in just a little further
Shoot it down your whiskey is getting warmer
And like ice, your chances are getting colder
Cause I'm in love with the Bartender
And Sugar, he's in love with me

It doesn't take you very long, to light the match you're holding
And count the flames, from your high horse
But I'll watch the smoke fade when I hear last call
Then I'll watch you go home and I'm not sorry at all

Chorus

I'll have a drink or two, on the rocks
Once the doors close again tonight
I'll kiss my baby once they raise the lights
Knowing that he's all mine come midnight

Chorus

APPENDIX E

Charts written out by my guitarist for the recording session.

Balance B

| | | | | | |
|------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----|
| I | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | |
| II | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | |
| | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | |
| | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | | | |
| III | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | |
| | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | |
| ch | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | |
| | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | |
| | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | |
| Turn | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | | => | |
| IV | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | |
| | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | |
| Turn | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | | | |
| ch | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | |
| | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | |
| | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>6-4</u> | C-1 |

Queen B

| | | | | |
|------|---|---|-----------|-----|
| I | 1 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| | 1 | 4 | <u>15</u> | 1 |
| II | 1 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| | 1 | 4 | <u>15</u> | 1 |
| ch | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| | 1 | 4 | <u>15</u> | 1 |
| Turn | 1 | 4 | <u>15</u> | 1 : |
| | 1 | 1 | | |
| I | 1 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| | 1 | 4 | <u>15</u> | 1 |
| ch | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| | 1 | 4 | <u>15</u> | 1 |

Bartender ID

| | | | | |
|------|----|--------------|----|----------------|
| IV | 1 | <u>674</u> | 1 | <u>674</u> |
| | 1 | <u>674</u> | 1 | <u>674</u> |
| | 1 | <u>674</u> | | |
| II | 1 | <u>674</u> | 1 | <u>674</u> |
| | 1 | <u>674</u> | 1 | <u>674</u> |
| | 1 | <u>674</u> | | |
| Ch | 1 | <u>674</u> | 1 | <u>674</u> |
| | 1 | <u>674</u> | 1 | <u>674</u> |
| | 1 | <u>67</u> | 1 | <u>67</u> |
| Turn | 1 | <u>674</u> : | 1 | <u>674</u> |
| B | 2- | <u>67</u> | 2- | <u>67</u> |
| | 2- | <u>67</u> | 2- | <u>67</u> |
| | | ↓ | | |
| ch | 1 | <u>674</u> | 1 | <u>674</u> |
| | 1 | <u>674</u> | 1 | <u>674</u> |
| | 1 | <u>67</u> | 1 | <u>67</u> |
| at | 1 | <u>674</u> | 1 | <u>674</u> . i |

ABOUT EVA

Eva is a senior at Mount Holyoke College, double majoring in computer science and music. She has spent her entire year producing her debut album, *Balance*, which will be released on iTunes today. After graduation Eva will be moving to San Francisco to work fulltime for YouTube and has industry sized plans for furthering her music career.

Balance was recorded in Nashville, TN this past March. Eva spent four days in the studio recording, mixing, and mastering the tracks to be ready for the album release. She hopes to return to Nashville soon to record more and enter into the country music industry.

SPECIAL THANKS

*David Sanford Rick Feldman Cheryl Cobb
Adeline Mueller Sandra Dennis Phillip de Fremery
Carol Wroblewski Dave Hagen Dark Horse Recording
Robin Crowe Diane Snyder Gordon Snyder
Gabby Snyder Vela Jesse Dittloff*



BALANCE

ALBUM RELEASE

Eva Snyder

April 15th, 2017

3:00pm

McCulloch Stage

Pratt Music Hall, Mount Holyoke College

APPENDIX F

Balance Release Concert Program

SET LIST

(all songs written and composed by Eva)

1. 88
2. Missy Lane
3. Highway Survival
4. Dancing To The Beat Of Your Heart
5. Minute
6. This Is The End
7. Untitled
8. He Thought He Owned Me
9. Breathless In Mission
10. Let The Night In
11. Bartender
12. Balance
13. Queen



ALBUM DEBUT!
EVA SNYDER '17

BALANCE

april 15th
3:00pm
mcculloch stage
pratt music hall

FREE!

ALBUM DEBUT!
EVA SNYDER '17

BALANCE

april 15th
3:00pm
mcculloch stage
pratt music hall

FREE!

Eva Snyder SWOT Analysis

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| | <p>Strengths</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lifelong musician 2. Dedication to writing and improving writing 3. Successful networker 4. Won't take "no" for an answer | <p>Weaknesses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not based in Nashville 2. No previous connections to the industry |
| <p>Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reid F. Shipp as a producer 2. YouTube as a networking tool within the industry 3. Ability to record professionally every year | <p>Opportunity-Strength Strategies</p> <p>Record yearly and continue growing as an artist while working with new people every year</p> | <p>Opportunity-Weakness Strategies</p> <p>Use YouTube as a networking tool to combat not living in Nashville</p> |
| <p>Threats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Massive amounts of competition all which lives in Nashville 2. Country radio not playing women | <p>Threat-Strength Strategies</p> <p>Push to get music on Spotify in an attempt to not need radio to spread my music</p> | <p>Threat-Weakness Strategies</p> <p>Focus on networking from afar. Avoid competition and feeling overwhelmed</p> |

APPENDIX G

SWOT analysis

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