

Special Topics Study: The Ultimate Home Studio Set Up

Introduction

For my special topics unit of study, I will be researching how to improve my home studio to transform it into a creative and functional environment for writing and producing music. By laying the groundwork for renovating the studio this year, I'll be ready to undertake all future musical projects I pursue outside of WAAPA. This is extremely important to me as I want to make a career out of writing & composing music, for which having a space like a home studio is crucial. This project will give me a deeper insight into how I prefer to work creatively e.g. noticing my work habits, understanding what musically motivates me and how to facilitate that motivation when writing, recording and mixing in the studio, as well as helping to improve my organisational skills including researching, budgeting and planning.

A Brief Summary of The Project & Project Goals

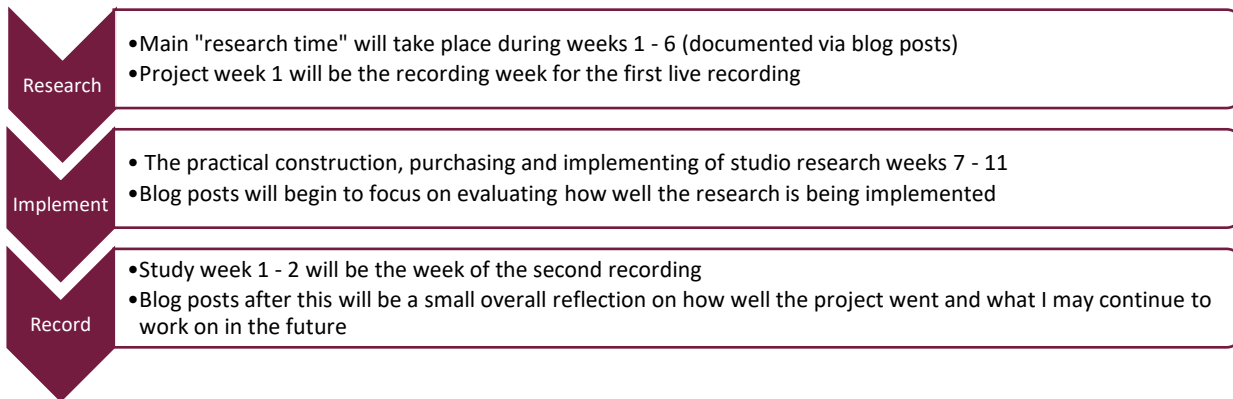
The goal of this project is to create the ultimate home studio that can compete with professional recording studios. It should also encourage me to work to the best of my abilities when I write, record, or mix music. To help me to understand what this will entail, I have a work placement organised with professional producer Lee Buddle at his studio in Perth, "Crank Recording". Lee Buddle is an internationally renowned music producer, having worked on tracks of international artists such as Kelly Clarkson and Justin Bieber. By working with him, I hope to gain a better understanding of his process and how he works within his studio so that I may be able to incorporate some of his methods and technical set up into my own studio.

The other half of the research section for this project will be self-conducted, doing personal research into Lee's suggestions for recording techniques and equipment, or researching other producers like Finneas O'Connell (famous for producing most of Billie Eilish's songs) and their personal "bedroom studios", to see what aspects of their set up I can easily translate to my own. This information will be documented as blog posts to my website, (<https://composerowens.weebly.com>) where I will strive to update it on a weekly basis.

The practical side of this unit will take the form of two live recordings; one recorded at the start of semester before I've had the chance to implement any renovations to my studio set up, and the other recorded at the end of semester when most of these renovations have been put into place. I will give myself 1 week to record, mix and master each track to the best of my ability. The differences between these two recordings will help to understand how the sound of the room has changed, how many instruments I was able to record for each track (and the quality of how they were recorded and mixed), and most importantly, the ease with which I was able to achieve this kind of sound within the given time frame. Being able to produce a decent track would be fine, but producing a great track in a shorter period of time is the goal I'm hoping to achieve by the end of this semester.

A “How-To” For Home Studio Recordings (Timelines and Key Criteria)

The timeline for this will mostly be affected by the schedule and due date of my other units. However, I will endeavor to post a blog of my progress / research every Monday and will strive to meet up with Lee at Crank Recording whenever he’s available at least once a fortnight. I’ve already uploaded my first blog post about potentially buying a new pre-amp that will allow me to expand the number of instruments I can record at once. Most of the practical work will be relegated to the latter half of the semester (most likely, during project weeks / study weeks / or mid semester break), as that’s when I’ll be beginning to focus on the implementation of these recording concepts and techniques. This means that the first “base line recording” won’t be subject to influence from any of my latest “renovations of the week” for my studio (see figure 1 timeline).



By setting a distinct timeline for the recording weeks, I’ll be able to ensure that I complete the recordings, since they will be the most important resources for evaluating my overall progress during this unit. Due to my ADHD, I know that self-motivated tasks can occasionally be difficult for me to manage, so by keeping myself to a strict timeline whilst giving myself room to breathe in between recordings, I can ease my own stress about completing this unit to a standard I’m content with.

The key criteria of this unit will focus on:

- Altering the room’s acoustics
- Researching innovative recording techniques
- Evaluating new and old equipment
- The organization of said equipment
- The overall atmosphere of the studio i.e. what will make it a nice space to work in for long periods of time

Zoning in on these five key points will help me to stay focused on what will help make the studio a better and more productive space. I’m hopeful for this project, and although I understand that this is a grand undertaking for one unit, I’m excited for setting myself up for success in the future.