

EARS CASE STUDY

ASYLUM Production Masterclass and Songwriting Camp

A case study into the event produced by the EARS Studio, Jan 19-20 2018



The attendees of the production masterclass (left) and songwriting camp (below), coming together for a presentation of the works created throughout the day.



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A part of my directed studies in digital composition is to find relevance into my community. For this, I pose the question: why would I spend several years studying an aspect of my craft that only a fraction of my total possible audience will receive it? Academia, for all the benefit contributed to western culture, does not represent all persons in our immediate surroundings. The Inland Empire is a region within Southern California that comprises parts or all of San Bernardino and Riverside counties (Rosenblatt). This region contains a large amount of historically underrepresented minorities, such as African-American and Hispanic populations.

The purpose of a camp like this, is to bring together all who are willing to learn, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, or social status by reducing the barriers to entry. Barriers were reported by attendees of intimidation by large institutions, lack of representation, lack of necessary tools and understanding to execute the craft, among others.

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The camp brought together 32 composers and music creatives from UC Riverside, and the surrounding community for two days of sharing and communal learning at the EARS Studio at UC Riverside. Producers and songwriters, all the way from Orange County and Fresno County joined fellow UCR Composers for this event, all with diverse backgrounds and experiences.

The Friday evening production masterclass featured mostly producers of the multi-day event, who demonstrated and discussed their in-progress instrumental tracks for the



EARS Studio Manager Ethan Castro talking to Seven Bailey, special guest speaker of Friday evening.



Two producers working on a project during a session on Saturday.

following songwriting camp, and accepted feedback from each other, before receiving critique from our guest speaker of the evening. Seven Bailey, our guest speaker and world renowned drummer/audio engineer, gave specific critiques on every track that was showcased during the event.

Bailey, a Compton resident, also delved into aspects and possibilities of music business - a topic greatly requested by the attendees.

Seven’s background appeared to be relatable to the young producers who attended, and was well received by both amateur and advanced participants.

The following day delved into our songwriting camp, which brought others who were more interested in songwriting, or could not attend the previous day. I put pairs of producers with 2-3 songwriters into a session. The current capabilities of EARS allows us to run three sessions simultaneously, although the main complaint from my post-camp interviews and questionnaire was to implement more recording stations. By using auxiliary



Two UCR students-writers working with a professional songwriter during a Saturday session.

equipment and creative furniture multi-purposing, we were able to materialize a few more stations for groups to work at inside the studio. We allowed each group to have three hours to create a finished product - to the best of their ability. With this arrangement, we were able to create 15 songs and beats that were comparable in sonic tonality and creativity to released commercial music, while educating and empowering students and attendees to continue creating.

“We were able to create 15 songs...while educating and empowering students...to continue creating”

I sent out a follow up questionnaire, asking for feedback on the event, and received 19 responses so far out of 32 total attendees.

Works Cited

Rosenblatt, Susannah. "Inland' for Sure, `Empire' Maybe: Where's Boundary?" *Los Angeles Times*, Los Angeles Times, 27 Nov. 2006, articles.latimes.com/2006/nov/27/local/me-inlandempire27.