

Kent State University at Stark

# **Music Production Portfolio**

[www.matildapablomusic.com](http://www.matildapablomusic.com)

Matilda Pablo

Music Production VI

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# Project I: “Limerence” *Orchestral Piece*



My goals for this project was to create a realistic sounding orchestral piece with all MIDI instruments. This project was a redo from Music Production IV. For my revisions, I honed more into creating definitive sections in the piece.

The first section opens with a moody violin that sets the scene for the whole song. Lots of editing was done to the first violin. I shorted the first note of every phrase to act as if the soloist was doing down-bowing. As the first section builds, contrabass, cello, viola and violin II are introduced, creating thick and dramatic harmonies. I had issues finding the vocal point when new instruments were introduced. I questioned myself, *did I want a new instrument to be the focus or did I want there to be a main instrument carrying the song?* I decided that when new instruments got debuted, I wanted that to be the new spotlight of the song. During this section I struggled with the overall balance between the higher and lower strings. Sometimes the lower strings would overpower the higher strings and vice versa. Much automation was used to fix that issue. On the viola, I had to choose two

different plug-ins for the staccato notes and legato notes. I used the Opus Hollywood strings.

Oboe, French horn and clarinet are later introduced in the first section. The Opus Hollywood French horns were extremely sensitive in expression and velocity. I used a lot of automation to make it sound more natural.

The woodwinds section of the theme contains oboe, two clarinets, flute, timpani and vibraphone. I chose these instruments because they blended well together and helped fill each other out in the timbre that they were lacking. I used two different flute plug-ins, one for the first staccato notes and the other for the more legato phrases.

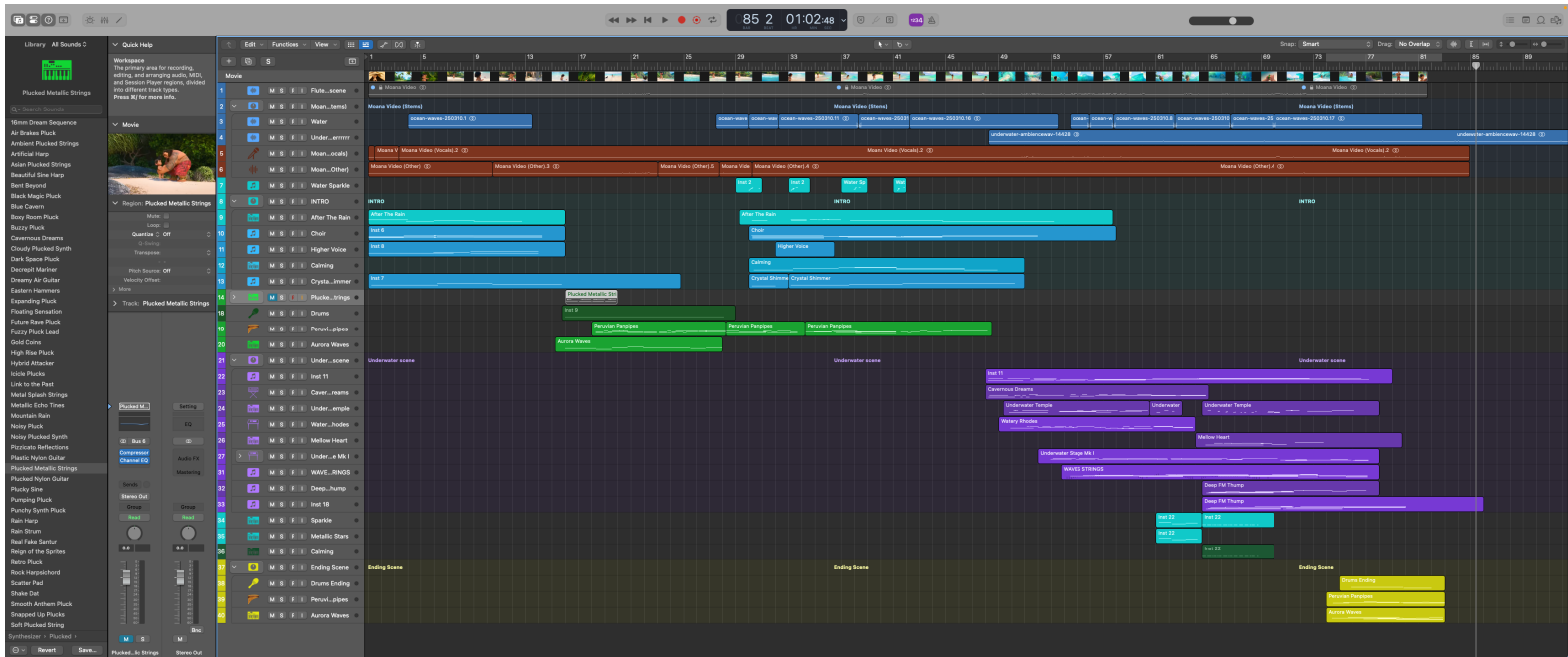
The next section was my favorite. Inspired by “Rey’s Theme” by John Williams, much of my instrumentation reflected that. Claves, violin, viola, cello, contrabass, bells and vibraphone were all used during this section. During Music Production IV, this section was originally a choral to fill the requirements for class. To fit the piece and overall theme, I changed the harmonies to strings and added the rest of the instruments. All of the tracks had their own reverb or they were being sent to an aux that had a reverb via a bus. The clave had its own reverb since I wanted it to sparkle and reverberate like it would in a concert hall. Contrabass is brought in at the end of the section to connect that section and the finale together.

During the finale section, there is a new theme introduced that involves all the instruments. This section was extremely difficult to find room for everyone without making it too busy or muddy. I made sure every instrument involved, was playing a part that contributed to the song. I used the Orchestral Chamber Reverb from ChromaVerb on the stereo-out. I automated the reverb to grow as the song progressed, but used about thirty percent towards the end to help the end of the song feel bigger.



While writing and mixing, I turned off all the effects and mixed the song as best as I could with out any reverb or delay. I believe anything can sound good with lots of time-based effects, but making it sound great before adding the effects will help the song's overall production.

## Project II: “Moana” Movie Film Scene



This project was a redo from Music Production V. I chose to revise this project because I thought it would be a great addition to my portfolio to showcase my movie/film scoring skills. When I first watched this scene from Moana, it inspired me to create that feeling of being a kid again and experiencing life for the first time. Everything is new and the possibilities are endless. Moana is one of my favorite Disney movies because I am a big fan of the ocean and the message the movie tells. I wanted to invent that feeling of longing for something even though the world may be against you having it, it is your *destiny* to have it. I started with the opening scene. I practice lots of yoga, and the type of music that

they use in yoga classes inspired me to use lots of pads, synths and drones to create that feeling of meditation and ease.

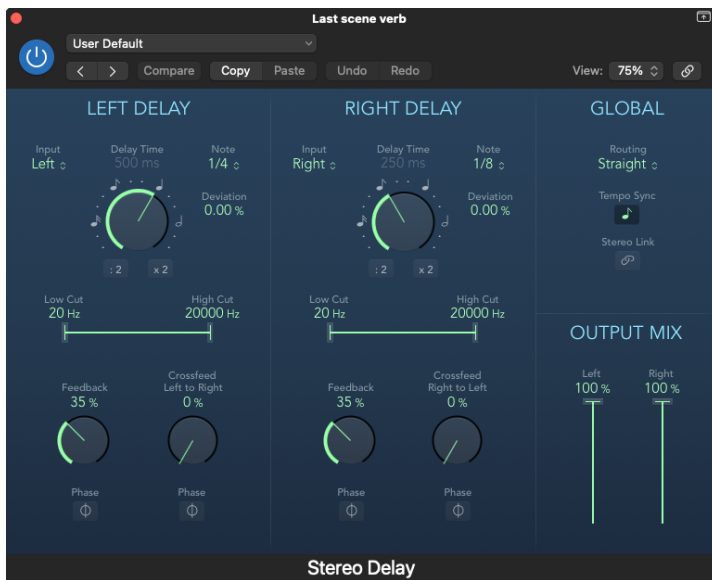


A part of the scene that I really struggled with was when Moana is protecting the turtle from the birds. I did not want the scene to be empty, but I did not hear any pads or synths because she was distracted from the magical element of the ocean. I first started with the Native Instruments “India” drums and used the patterns from that. I heard a simple melody in my head, and at first I tried to put it on guitar, but I ended up switching to a wooden flute that sat better with the drums. Once she returns the turtle to the ocean, the magic of the ocean starts to appear. Another thing I struggled with was connecting the turtle scene to the shell scene. I ended up using a flute to help transition those two scenes and make it feel more natural.

When Moana starts to walk out into the ocean, I wanted to create this surrounding feeling that you are underwater. I used virtual instruments that sounded like they were muffled, kind of like when you talk to someone underwater. The feeling of curiosity creeps in when the strings are introduced and the wave appears. During this section, I had to do a lot of “Mickey-mousing.” For example, when the wave touches her hair or when the stone starts to get closer and closer. I couldn’t use a lot of the dialogue from the scene since the stem splitter included some music in with it. I also had to do some searching on FreeSounds for wave audio files since most of the water noises were merged with another musical element.

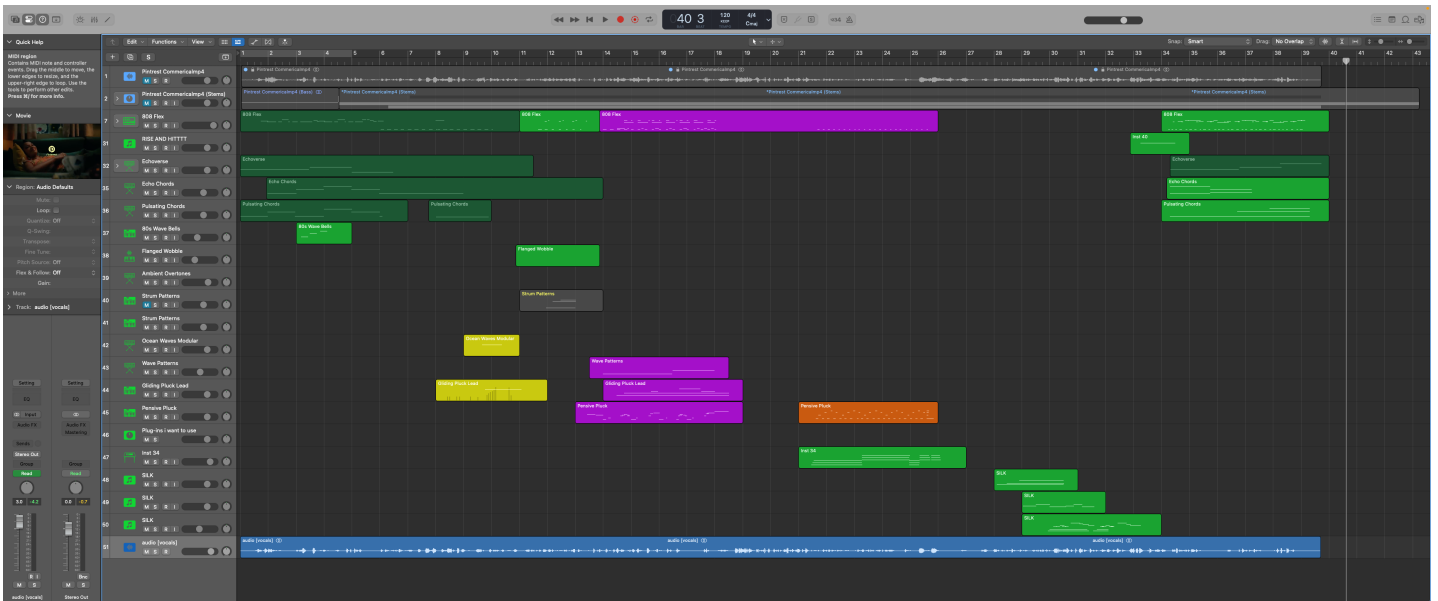
Once Moana gets returned back to land, the magic starts to fade away and the flute and drums return again. The flute and drums represent how real-life can sometimes distract you from the enchantment surrounding you.

Along with individual reverbs and delays, all effects were being sent to a master effects aux via a bus. I chose to do my delay first because I did not want the reverb to effect the delay, I wanted the delay to sound bigger than it was.



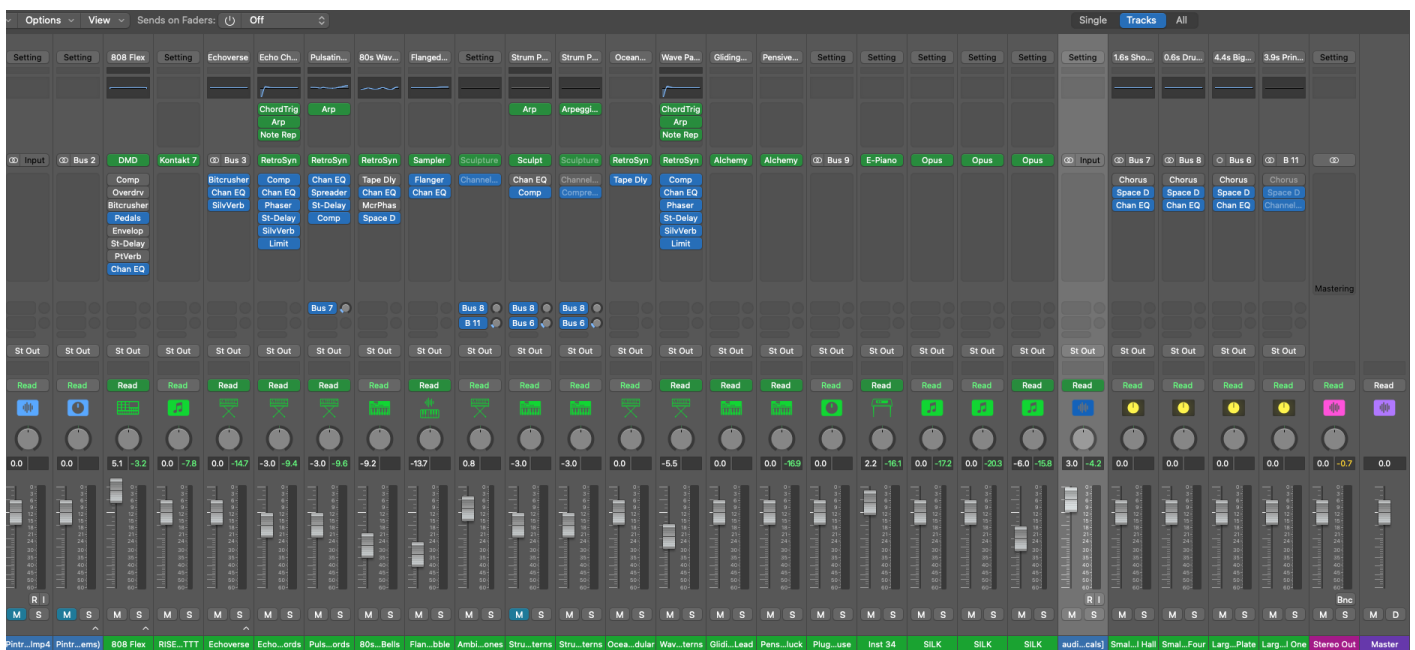
# Project III: Pinterest “You Might Just Surprise Yourself”

## *Commercial Score*



This project was the one I battled with the most throughout the semester. I saved it for last, which ended up making the process even harder because I was already dealing with burnout from balancing all of my other classes and projects. At times it felt difficult to stay motivated, especially when technical issues kept slowing me down. Originally, I tried using Logic’s built-in stem splitter, but every time I used it, it created a feedback loop that ruined the audio and made the workflow frustrating. I spent a lot of time trying to troubleshoot the problem before eventually deciding to switch to an AI stem splitter instead. Once I made that change, the results were much cleaner and easier to work with, which helped the project finally start moving forward again.

For most of the scenes, I began the scoring process with the drums because I wanted the rhythm to guide the pacing and energy of the commercial. I used Logic's 808 Flex drums as the foundation for the track. After establishing the drum patterns, I layered in the synthesizers and pads to create atmosphere and emotion. I wanted the sound design to feel modern and energetic while still being emotional enough to connect with the visuals on screen. The synths helped fill out the background and gave each scene a smoother transition into the next.



The first scene was one of the easier parts for me to score because the visuals immediately gave me a clear emotional direction. However, one of the biggest struggles throughout the project was figuring out where to place silence. The commercial itself is visually very busy, with quick cuts and a lot happening on screen at once. Because of that,

I had to carefully decide when the music should pull back instead of constantly filling every moment. I realized that silence could sometimes make a scene more impactful than adding another instrument.

As I continued working, I decided that every character shown in the commercial should have their own musical theme or identity. I wanted each person to feel distinct while still fitting into the overall sound of the project. The first girl's theme becomes especially important because it appears not only at the beginning but also returns at the end. That repetition helps create a sense of closure and connection throughout the commercial. I thought this matched the message behind Pinterest really well. Pinterest is not necessarily about finding yourself once and staying the same; it is more about constantly reinventing yourself and exploring new versions of who you want to be. Because of that idea, I kept the instrumentation and melodic theme similar when it returned later in the project, but I changed certain elements so it still felt fresh and reinvented rather than repetitive.

## **Project IV: “Outgrown” *Original Song by Matilda Pablo***

My song “Outgrown” was written three years ago. I was selected to be the Bring Your Song feature of the month. The artist got to record a complimentary original song at RealGrey Records in Canton, Ohio. The drums, bass, acoustic guitar, strings and MIDI were all recorded in the studio at RealGrey Records.

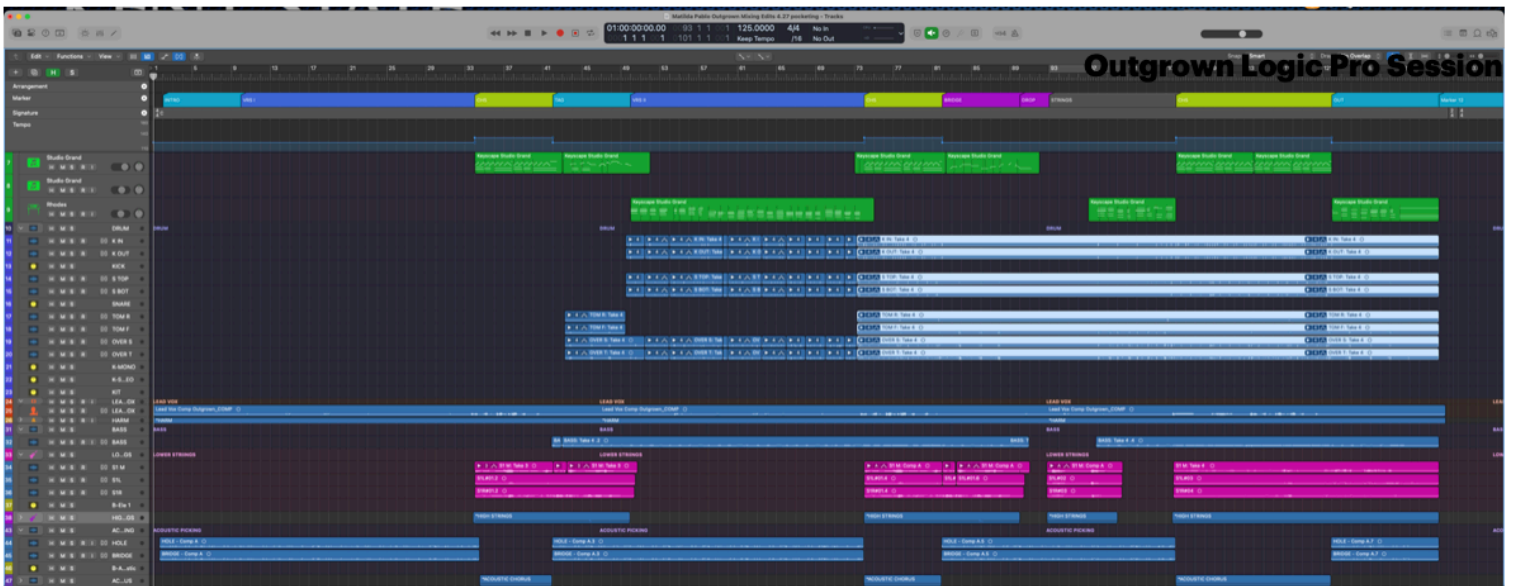
Two years later, I decided I wanted to rework the song and mix. I was not happy with the performance of my vocals, since I sing a lot differently and more maturely today than I did two years ago. With this song going to be released with my debut EP, I wanted to make sure it was the best representation of myself as an artist. I recorded new vocals in Kent State University at Stark’s Studio A. Julia Garaux helped engineer while I sang in the live room. With previous experiments doing microphone shootouts in Studio A. Julia and I both knew that the Mic Shop 47 suits my voice the best. I already have a very bright voice, and other microphones such as the Neumann U87 or the Flea12 extenuate that and make my voice brighter than it already is.



The Mic Shop 47 helps darken my voice while still providing the clarity and crispy capture that a condenser should have.

Background vocals were also re-recorded by Julia Garaux. We used the same setup for my vocal capture, for time sake, but also because we knew we liked that microphone on her voice and it would sit well in the mix with my voice.

The API 212L Pre-Amps were used since they provide a nice clear capture. Some confidence reverb was sent out to me using the TC Electronic System 6000 through an aux that was patched to an Aviom channel. Three passes of the vocal were captured and then I comped in ProTools from there. Once I was happy with my comping, I then bounced my vocal comp from ProTools to a wav file that could be brought into Logic Pro.



Ron Flack from RealGrey was kind enough to give me the song's Logic Pro session. First, I did some housecleaning of session (got rid of some aux sends and effects that we did not have such as the UAD plug-ins and FabFilter Pro-L 2). Then I started to go through the tracks and familiarize myself with the track names. I would also re-label tracks as needed.

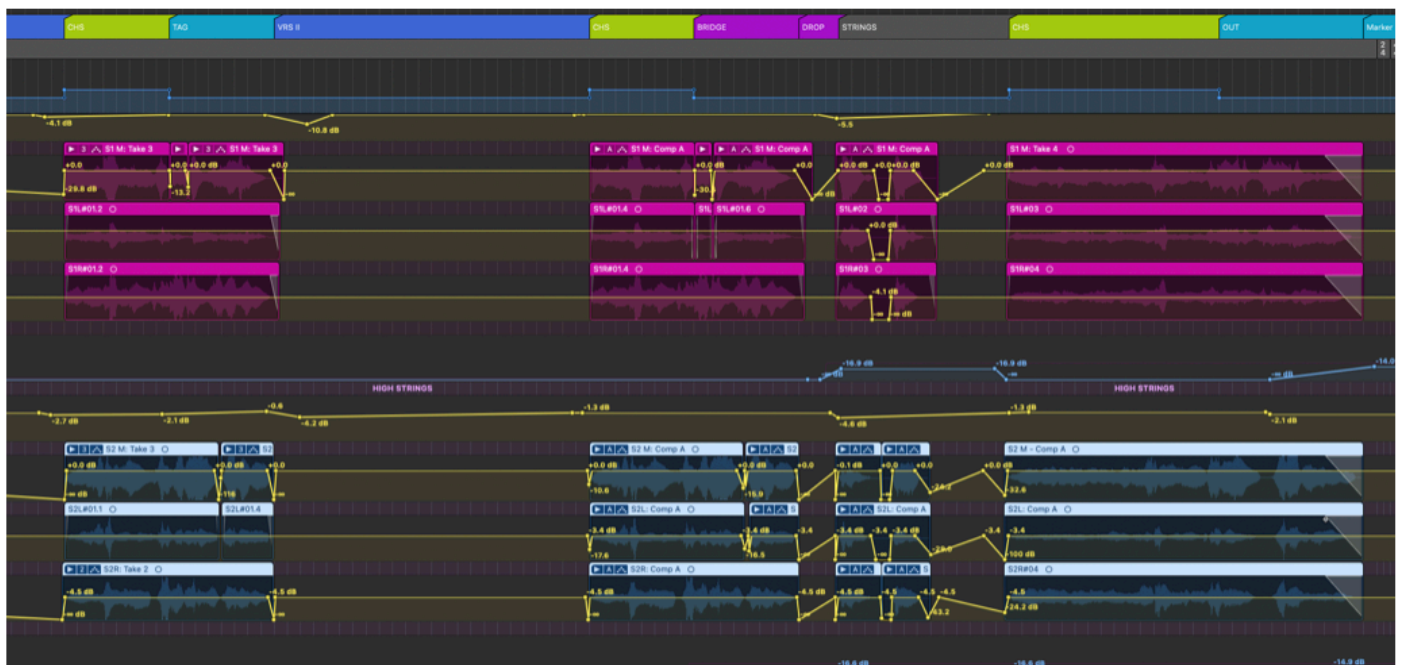
The instrumentation of the song includes violin, drums, acoustic guitar, electric bass, and MIDI Rhodes/piano. All instruments were recorded at RealGrey in May of 2023. Ron used Keyscape for the MIDI, but unfortunately, we did not have that at the school. I kept the same MIDI from the session but I changed the plug-ins. I used the on-board Logic E-Piano for the Rhodes and Grand Piano from Spitfire.



**Vocal Chain Processing**

With vocals being my first instrument, I often mix vocals to be at the front of the mix since they fit the singer-songwriter genre. My vocal chain consisted of Melodyne, on-board Logic EQ, De-Esser, a Pull-tech to help bring my vocals forward, De-Esser again, compression, more on-board Logic EQ and on-board Logic delay that was controlled via automation.

### Strings' Automation



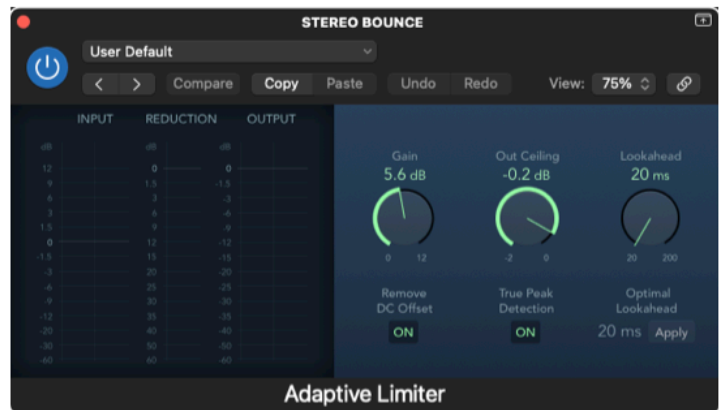
This was my first project with real strings which was super exciting. I love the timbre, dynamics and realness that it adds to the song. I had to do a lot of automation to each individual string part since she would often move or breathe in between phrases. There were multiple string lines played by one person so I organized it to be high strings

## 2bus Chain

verses low strings. I panned my lower strings to the right to act as more of a viola and the higher strings to the left to act as the lead violin.



My 2-bus consisted of a cut at 800Hz to get rid of some mud and make the mix cleaner, a limiter and Logic's on-board Mastering Assistant.



Something that I struggled with during this mix was that my voice had a lot of weird plosives. I had to do a lot of vocal EQ to get it out. Another thing I struggled with was that my acoustic recording was not very clean. I cut out a lot around 3kHz to get rid of some harsh string noise and clean up the guitar. I ended up splitting the chorus guitar and verse guitar into two separate channels so I could edit each one



accordingly. The finger-picked verses I wanted to have lots of delay and they needed to be brought up more in the mix since the strummed chorus guitar part was way too hot in the mix and needed to be compressed.

## Effects and Levels



During the stripped down verse three, I wanted the vocal to reflect a past memory. I added a delay with a ping-pong effect that would bring you to that feeling of nostalgia.

Overall, I am extremely content with the way my original song turned out.

## Lyrics

Verse 1:

*Mid-conversation, had a realization  
It crossed my mind, and it's something  
Thought I had the solution  
But I knew it wasn't meant to be anyway*

Pre-Chorus:

*Anyway, anyway*

Chorus:

*I've outgrown you and it shows too how were  
Walking along two different paths  
You've outgrown me and you know it be  
That were not meant to be, be*

Verse 2:

*You were there for me, though my moments  
We cried and laughed and sang our hearts away  
But we've both become different people  
And that's not a bad thing, I'd say*

Pre-Chorus;

*I would say, I would say*

Chorus:

*I've outgrown you and it shows too how were*

*Walking along two different paths*

*You've outgrown me and you know it be*

*That were not meant to be, be*

Verse 3:

*Past memories we hold on to*

*But it's all that we talk about today*

*Reminiscing on those moments*

*The ones that we think we crave*

Chorus:

*I've outgrown you*

*I've outgrown you*

*I've outgrown you and it shows too how were*

*Walking along two different paths*

*You've outgrown me and you know it be*

*That were not meant to be, be*

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this portfolio represents not only the projects I created throughout the semester, but also my growth. Each project challenged me in different ways, whether it was learning new techniques, improving the quality of the production, or finding creative solutions to technical problems. Through these experiences, I became more confident in my skills that I have learned not only this semester, but over the past four years. I also learned the importance of patience and experimentation during the creative process, especially when projects did not go as planned. While some projects were more difficult than others, the challenges ultimately helped me grow both creatively and technically. This portfolio reflects the effort, problem-solving, and artistic decisions that went into each piece, and it shows the progress I made over the course of these past four years. Moving forward, I plan to continue developing my skills and exploring new ways to create music that connects with people emotionally and creatively.