**Country & Eastern**

**Contextual and Cultural Mediation in the Recording Studio - Two producers, two artists, two cultures.**

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**Introduction**

The social and creative hierarchical positioning of the record producer in a studio context is determined by the technological and cultural dynamics within the studio and the relationship between the producer and the artist (Burgess, R., 2013:130-145). However, this relationship between the parties concerned seems to be weighted differently depending on cultural associations and cultural commonalities. Cultural differences appear to exacerbate incidences of insecurity and there are external, internal and stakeholder perceived pressures on the producer to meet diverse expectations. These same pressures exist within the framework of the same-culture producer/artist creative process, but there are elements of translation and interpretation removed from the transaction that are of additional concern to those outside of these parameters, (Frith, S. & Zigorski-Thomas, S., 2012:149-160). There is the constant questioning as to whether either party is understood and on a creative level, the creative ideas and influences, objectives and outputs are not necessarily articulated in a fully comprehendible form (Glossop, M. 2014). This can be a positive contributory element to the creative process but does inject an additional dynamic into the interactions. Kerrigan (2013: 111–127) posits that cultural transference is embedded into an individual’s understanding of codes and practices within a culture and that this then gets transformed into creativity*.* The practitioner’s understanding of the process is not necessarily shared with other collaborators and unless the codes and practices are clearly defined between the parties concerned at the outset of a project, there can be a confusion of objectives and approaches to the qualitative, creative or commercial assessment of the output.

The analysis of the functions and outcomes of the mediation process within music production, within a mixed cultural context, provides further insight into the required negotiations and methodologies employed in the recording studio between artist and producer. The following outlines some of those processes through an auto-ethnographic case study of an album recording. This may help future recording artists and their producers to understand the cultural motivations and circumstances that inform the expectations of both parties within the production process, which can then be applied positively to enhance the end product.

As I had explored, experienced and researched this dynamic from both sides of the relationship as a practicing bhangra producer in the 1990s and a researcher of South Asian production techniques, it became apparent that it would be an invaluable addition to the research to experience and evaluate the relationships and dynamics from an equitable stance as both producer and artist in a modern-day context. This could then be evaluated as to how or whether the process had progressed from both an external and internal perspective.

It was an accidental opportunity that allowed this further exploration. I had arranged for a concert performance of bhangra artists for students of the University of Kent. The musical director was my former associate and bhangra producer, Kuljit Bhamra, MBE, who had provided some research material via interview and with whom I had worked in the capacity of engineer and as a session musician in the early 1990s. We both worked with some of the same artists as producers in the past and this has provided an opportunity to compare styles, approaches and cultural interactions. It was during the programming of the event that Bhamra suggested that the two of us play together as an opening act to the concert. We had played on each other’s productions as session musicians over the years, overdubbing parts onto existing arrangements, but had actually never played together before. The idea was that I would play a style on guitar (my first instrument) that would sit comfortably within my musical lexicon and that Bhamra would accompany me on tabla and Indian percussion. To test the concept, we met at his studio where we played together, extemporising and moving in and out of Western and Eastern styles. Being so enthused by this, we decided that after the concert, we would record an album together with the working title of ‘Country & Eastern’. This would afford an additional opportunity to investigate from within, the relationships between the two cultures but with a balanced sense of production skills from the two protagonists, acting as both producers and artists. There was an awareness that this could create friction, however it could also create an intensity within the creative process that came from a position of technical and musical expertise with the possibility of creating a new genre. The success of this collaboration would depend on both an understanding of each other’s cultural influences and a tolerance, or acceptance of breaches of each party’s musical forms and the framework that surrounded this. The other contexts that needed to be incorporated into the equation, with a requirement for negotiation, mediation, tolerance and eventual consensus, were the technical procedures and habitual processes employed by each of the parties from a production perspective. Both of us were accustomed to different procedural methodologies when addressing our recordings and the differences could cause frustration or conversely, might be the interventions that could break both of us out of our technical comfort zones, creating new sonic vistas through non-familiar approaches to the production process.

As we sat and played together, we recorded our ideas. These recordings acted as a notepad for the musical concepts and structures that we could draw upon later when embarking on recording the album. The initial plan was to record basic backing tracks within the studio and then take the tracks away to our own studios where parts could be added on to the tracks. These additions could then be compared and adapted for the final recordings.

The element of trust was rooted in the target final product and the commercial viability of the project. We were both aware that apart from the research element, the end game was also profitability. The objectives outweighed any creative misunderstandings of form and by doing so, provided the creative tension and space required to create something bigger and better than either of the parties concerned could create independently. All parties had something to gain and it is partly this dynamic that mediated any of the internal power struggles that existed between us. Even when creative differences become untenable, there is still the end goal that can bring a project back from the brink of failure. In this particular case there was the basic understanding that neither of us were going to waste our time on just creative pursuits and that ultimately, we needed to generate an equitable remuneration for our efforts. World music producer, Ben Mandelson states that although he is always in a situation where he is looking to exploit the market through his artist’s creativity, he is always looking for a fair deal for all (Cottrell, S. 2010).

After much negotiation over time availability and diarising, I went to Bhamra’s studio, taking fourteen different guitars with me. The sole purpose of this was to have a palate of sounds that could employed if they were sonically compatible with Bhamra’s extensive tabla set up. This was not done consciously to be competitive, but in retrospect it was a way of setting one’s store out to show versatility. Bhamra’s studio houses over 100 percussion instruments and drums and it could be argued that I did not want to be outdone. It references the observation that musicians will jostle to claim geographic possession of space when arriving in a recording studio, often placing instruments or cases in awkward positions near the console to establish territory. Once the lines have been drawn and the session settles down, these areas in some way become a safe space for the musicians who will invade or wander into the producer’s ‘space’ in a form of territorial confrontation. This was not my intention during this writing session but there may have been an underlying personal agenda that even I was unaware of at the time.

Bhamra was initially unsure as to whether this project would really work and voiced his apprehension of bringing me into his world, at the same time recognising that I was intent on dragging him into mine. He played a few motifs on the harmonium and after listening to them, an instrument was selected that would best represent what he was doing. I copied the motif and he would assist me further by suggesting the bends and inflections that I should play to further incorporate the Eastern flavour of the music, even if it were to be played on a Western styled instrument such as a banjo guitar. It was too early to definitively state that we were creating a new genre, but it was obvious to both of us that something different and ‘magical’ was happening.

After six hours, we had over twenty collaborative compositions; some driven by my guitar constructs and some by his tabla rhythms melodies augmented with the occasional harmonium melody. We agreed to review these and reduce the output to 10 compositions, constructed so that they could be cut down or extended to useable lengths to support usage by moving image producers and editors – a key target market.

**The Studio Recordings**

Day 1

For the initial recordings I arrived early at the studio with my arsenal of guitars. Bhamra arrived two hours after the start of the booking so that guitars and amplifiers could be miked up in advance. When he arrived, we set up and miked his percussion instruments under his direction in acknowledgement of the experience that he had with recording his own instruments in his studio in Southall. There was much relaxed banter at this point which was a way of easing any tension of the impending recording.

By the early afternoon, we had reviewed the structures and musical arrangements that came out of our jam session and decided to try to record a couple of tracks. Most of the recordings were first takes. It was agreed that the tracks would benefit from additional bass, percussion, bansuri flute and guitar overdubs and that an organic approach to the recordings, by not using midi instruments, should be maintained. Both of our experience of years in studios was evident as the playing and approach was very relaxed. We were able to musically ‘bounce’ off each other creatively as if we had been playing together for many years, which was not the case. Nods and hand signals were instantly acknowledged and the whole experience was extremely enjoyable.

Day 2

On this day, we recorded four tracks. The arrangements were done ‘on the fly’ and we played the different sections of the songs by signalling to each other, knowing that should anything need to be changed at a later date, sections could be cut and pasted during an editing stage. Initially, there was a difference of opinion as to how to structure compositions. Bhamra veered towards repetition to encourage dance as per bhangra dance music, whereas I veered towards traditional Western A/B, A/B/C arrangements. A compromise was achieved very quickly as it was understood that there were opportunities for editing the individual compositions after recording. There are many examples where producers have not necessarily been able to agree with the artist or another producer on the final performances. In the case of Steely Dan (4 Comments, 2018), many different solos or performances by different musicians on a track would be recorded and then the decision as to which take to use would be made after much discussion between Donald Fagan and Walter Becker and their engineer.

Day 3

On this day we started with repairing some of the performances on the tracks that we had recorded. The microphones and instruments were still in place and so we were able to overdub any replacement parts with the same sounds. Most of the repairs were done as a result of my reviewing the recordings at my home studio. Both guitar and tablas were addressed. The arrangements were also edited; extending their lengths by cutting and pasting sections into the songs.

Three new tracks and additional overdub percussion such as shaker, dhol drum, bell and pot were recorded. At this point it was agreed that two more tracks, along with additional percussion overdubs, would be recorded on Day 4, leaving Day 5 for guitar overdubs.

Day 4

The last two tracks were recorded and this was the easiest workflow in terms of agreeing on arrangements or finding the relevant percussion patterns to compliment the guitars. On reflection, we had now settled into a routine and the studio working environment was now more familiar to both of us. Perhaps we should have started the process of recording the first few tracks again to improve on the initial recordings but time allocation and other commitments did not allow for this.

All initial percussion overdubs were finished and this left the fifth day for some of the guitar overdubs that I thought would benefit from having been done in the studio rather than in my own studio. This included acoustic guitars utilising the ambience of the room and numerous microphone placements, and electric guitars requiring the use of the amplifier set up in the room, again with ambient mics.

Day 5

This day was attended by just an engineer and me. Again, there was a relaxed atmosphere but on reflection, the inclusion of an engineer in the session added another element and distraction to the process of my producing my own performances, something that I had grown accustomed to doing on my own in my own private studio environment. Some tensions started to emerge in terms of procedure of recording as I have very set routines in recording my own performance, but this was mitigated by my hierarchal position as the producer. We then completed rough mixes of all the material.

The initial recordings in the studio were deemed a success but observationally, much of what I needed to play involved syncopated rhythms and although it was easy to play all my guitar parts on my own or against a click track, as soon as the tablas were playing with me, I found it much more difficult to keep in time and ‘feel’. The musical meeting of East and West and the musical communication between the two musicians had elements of confusion from a very base level. This could be attributed to the differing cultural roots that not only contributed to the creative process, but also hindered creativity as it needed to be addressed at all times within the playing. This then highlights a possible situation that may generally permeate through to intercultural interactions within production and the basic forms of music communication and that they are impacted by these very basic understandings or misunderstandings; a sort of give and take.

The next step was to add the bansuri flute.

 **The Bansuri Flute Recordings**

It was decided that it would be easier if the bansuri flute was recorded at Bhamra’s Red Fort Studios in Southall, as it would be easier for the flautist to get to the studio and as Bhamra was to be in charge of this part of the recording, it would be more convenient and faster in his own environment. Part of the discipline of recording is negotiating the space and if one feels very familiar with that space, it usually eases the workflow of the recording. However, sometimes the familiarity aspect creates too much of a relaxed atmosphere and less is achieved in the allotted time. Gibson (2005) states that recorded music is a product of more that the artist-producer relationship. It is additionally affected by all the stakeholders and more specifically, the space where the recording takes place. The space is employed as an additional contributor to the creative process.

The bansuri flautist, Robin Christian (Robin Christian, online. n.d.) arrived with a collection of thirty-five bamboo flutes. I subsequently learned from him that they were built to facilitate different scales, flourishes and tunings. The tuning element was interesting as apparently, bansuri flutes made in India are either made during the monsoon season or in the heat of summer as the tuning will be affected by weather conditions. Although there was purportedly an adjustment made of any tuning inconsistencies through the choice of instrument, the flutes in question were all hand carved from bamboo and susceptible to warping, shrinking or expanding, relative to humidity and temperature changes and this needed to be addressed with the mild use of tuning software to ensure that the takes were in tune with the backing tracks and each other.

Bhamra was quite dictatorial with Christian and gave him exact melodies to play with very little freedom of expression. I intervened for the last two tracks and asked him to extemporise. This resulted in some interesting additions, some of which we kept in the final recordings.

The verbal reference to notes and musical descriptions that were used during the session related to the classical Indian scale and Christian kept trying to describe what he was doing in English to include me in the conversation. During the recording, if he was asked to change a grace note or flourish, he would then get another flute out. This was difficult as the sound of each flute was slightly different and we kept asking him not to change flutes in the middle of a song. This was to ensure that we maintained the integrity of the original flute timbre on the track. Bhamra kept making snide remarks about this in the studio control room out of earshot of Christian which seemed to

help Bhamra in dealing with the frustration of guiding the musician’s performance. This is a common occurrence that I have encountered in studios between producers and engineers whilst recording artists. It is a form of reinforcing the stature of hegemony and technical pecking order within a studio context. Although the artist is mostly unaware of this, it helps to alleviate the frustrations and tempers the approach from the engineer and producer in dealing with the artist’s demands, inconsistencies and moods. Most of the outward approach by producers and engineers is geared to ensuring that the artist or performer feels comfortable. The case studies in Farinella’s *Producing Hit Records – Secrets from the Studio* (2006) and Massey’s *Behind the Glass: V.2* (2009) document the approach of producers and the techniques used to alleviate tension and insecurities that the artist might be experiencing in order to get the best performance. However, there are producer and engineer stresses that are often bypassed when analysing the creative recording experience.

To further research this, Mike Paxman, producer of Judy Tzuke and Status Quo, was asked how he related to the stresses of recording with insecure, demanding and non-compliant artists, and what techniques and interventions he used to address the producer’s frustrations, insecurities, self-doubt and having to deal with difficulties in the studio. He revealed that he knew of some producers who would go home after a session and drown their frustrations with a bottle of wine, but it was interesting that he avoided his own personal and emotional reactions to this and deferred to the methods employed in dealing with the artist in order to achieve the best recorded results.

The 'producer's vision' can be a contentious area. The producer's planned direction for a recording's outcome has to be in most cases, fluid, and you have to allow for some wiggle room; otherwise you're always going to be frustrated or displeased with the outcome. Recorded music, as live performance, has a life of its own and invariably the way to get the best outcome is to direct things as much as possible then allow the piece to grow of its own accord. This of course means that you must always be prepared to change your mind or to adapt if something comes up that looks like it will change the course of things for the better.

I don't often suffer from self-doubt when in the studio, but I have various techniques to deal with periods of tension and frustration. The good thing about being the one 'in the chair' is just that… you can make decisions to shape the project, not that your approach will ever be the 'only' way to approach the task at hand, but if you proceed down the path of your choosing with a degree of skill, confidence and belief, hopefully that will lead to a good outcome. It's really important to be well prepared, to know the music you are working on inside out and to have more than one option in mind.

(Paxman, 2019)

In contacting other producers, even more evasive or deflective answers were given that addressed the outcome of the recording and the qualitative results achieved, but revealed little about their own well-being and dispositions. It is perhaps the role of the producer to remain impersonal and private in order to get the best results in the studio, and this then is reflected in their outward public facing, even with people that have a commonality of experience. My own method of relieving the intense frustration of working with some artists was to go home and play guitar very loudly and aggressively.

**The Bansuri Flute Edit Process**

The next process, after having recorded the bansuri flute at Bhamra’s studio, entailed a further act of trust. Many different takes were recorded and Bhamra was left to choose the best performances and phrasing. He then provided me with an edit which I could import into the original recording software project. The editorial control, at this time, was entrusted to him which relied on his in-depth understanding of the South Asian approach to flute performance, phrasing and tuning. When Bhamra had finalised his edits, he sent the files over to me with the proviso that I could further adjust the placement and timing of the files to best suit the overall track. What was refreshing in this case, was that there was a total understanding of the technological process between us and that this did not interfere with the creative process. The choice of performance was left to Bhamra and the overall decision on timing placement was left to me. This method of remote collaboration, with the use of three different studios highlighted the change and malleability of localisation of the technology but also supported the idea that the creative cultural collaboration needed to include a large element of trust. That trust can be evaluated in terms of the cultural expertise and understanding of the parties concerned. The more cultural expertise that exists, the more artistic freedom and relevancy can be exercised. Cultural metacognition, is used as a benchmark and indicator for the success of cultural collaborations within business contexts. The greater the understanding of the other cultures participating; the greater the chance of success, (Chua, R., Morris, M., and Mor, S. 2012). Although there was also a cultural assimilation of technology for the implementation of creativity, the main focus was on the creative collaboration itself and the technology was simply a facilitator.

**Overdubbing Additional Guitars**

The next step was to take the amalgamated project files to my own studio and overdub additional guitars. This enabled me to experiment without any time or financial pressures. I was aware that I did not want to ‘over cook’ the production by layering the recordings with too many instruments and was careful to not dominate or obscure the percussion on the tracks which played such a key part of the compositions. The idea was that on completion of my recordings, Bhamra would have a right of veto of any of the additional guitar parts subject to negotiation. Again, a sensitivity of the cultural integrity of the project and the knowledge that some creative and cultural negotiations would ensue, influenced the creative decisions taken in putting additional instruments on the tracks. In this instance, it was Bhamra’s turn to trust that I would make the correct decisions in the parts that I put onto the individual compositions and that I would not corrupt the initial creative dynamic that existed when we originally recorded just guitar and tabla. During this process, there was a sense of self-reflection as to my validity as a cultural expert exerting my own cultural influences on the recording and performances, much as I had felt when producing bhangra recordings in the 1990s. There were times when I tried to emulate South Asian phrasing but pulled back from this approach as I felt it was inappropriate and not authentic. The question of two completely different creative cultural influences meeting in the middle brought up the question of authenticity. At what point would my approach, or even Bhamra’s approach be considered not authentic, as the end product was to be, in effect, a new genre? I decided to take a less contentious approach and follow the route of being true to my own cultural roots, letting the music evolve through the confluence of strong Eastern and Western influences finding common ground in an almost combative fashion.

**The Harmonica Session**

To further the cultural mix, I wanted to try to balance some of the bansuri flute with another Western instrument for three of the songs. I thought I would attempt to use harmonica on these tracks and contacted harmonica player, Tim Staffell. I had produced two albums for him in the past. Staffell was the original singer and bass player in the band Smile, introducing Freddie Mercury to the band which then became Queen. His character and one of the songs we recorded, ‘*Doing Alright*’, is featured in the Queen film ‘*Bohemian Rhapsody*’, (Nolasco, S. 2018).

I invited Staffell to come down to the studio and suggested that we make this an informal social occasion. Above and beyond the social interactivity, having worked with him in the past, I knew that this was an almost guaranteed method to get him relaxed in anticipation of recording in the studio, in order to achieve the best performance.

The difficulty I encountered in the session was that of the rhythmical feel of the track from Staffell’s perspective. Even though the three tracks he was playing on were of a Country or Blues root, he found it difficult to play against the syncopated rhythms of the tabla based percussion. Whereas on the whole, I felt comfortable with this when I was playing guitar, Staffell would drift and lose focus as to where he was within the bar relative to his musical phrasing. The solution to this was to give him a ‘four beats to the bar’ click track, playing in addition to the other instruments, so that he felt more grounded in a Western musical environment. This was surprising as Staffell is well versed in jazz and syncopated funk rhythms, but he felt uncomfortable with the Eastern approach. This gave me further insight into the creation of cross-cultural genres. Each contributor must feel comfortable in their own creative cultures but must also feel comfortable in those creative cultures that come from being immersed in another musical background. It is more than just an intellectual understanding of the ‘other’ genre, it is also an emotional and creative cultural adaptation that is required for the cross-cultural interaction to be mutually acceptable and ultimately successful.

**The Review Session**

In reviewing the final recordings and compiling the harmonica takes in the appropriate tracks, I then tried to step back from the process in terms of my creative contribution and reviewed the tracks with a view to their commercial viability rather than just the enjoyment and reflective analysis of having played on the recordings.

I then embarked on a first mix. This involved careful scrutiny of instrument volume levels, EQ, panning, effects and some judicious editing of instruments that might be interfering with other instrumental performances. One of the main technical difficulties was the sonic interference between the bass tabla or ‘baya’ and the bass guitar. Both of these instruments occupy a similar frequency bandwidth and as the bass tabla has a sustain that is not found in Western musical genres with bass drums or other percussion instruments, it created an unpleasant bass tonality when playing with the bass guitar that was not easily addressed though equalisation or side chaining, a compression effect used to limit the volume of one instrument when another is playing. This effect is often employed when mixing bass drums and bass synths or guitars in dance music. My solution was to use a multipressor that compresses only certain frequencies of an audio signal. This had the effect of taming the bass guitar on the frequencies that clashed with the tabla.

The mixes were completed and then checked on many different audio systems. This. part of the process included an assessment of the sonic continuity and compatibility between the tracks. After some adjustments, to ensure level, equalisation continuity, the tracks were then sent to Bhamra for his comments. Some of these were contained within an email as follows:

Hi Richard

I think it all sounds fantastic!!!! Here are some notes, which I think will help to create some contrasting textures and narrative arcs.

TRACK 1:

I find the flute overpowered by the **guitars** during the 3 main themes.

It could be that the **guitars** need to be lowered and the flute raised in volume.

TRACK 2:

I love this track!

Again, I find the flute too low (or not present enough compared to the **guitars**).

TRACK 3:

I love this track too!

It's a bit of a shock when the **guitars** first come in.

TRACK 10:

Lovely and soothing!!

Again, I think that the flute is fighting to be heard above the **guitars**… Is it possible to remove the **sitar/guitar** until 1:03? (sorry!)

.. and then perhaps one of the other **guitars** 3:24 - 4:02 and then at the outro 5:42 onwards..

I feel that the layered **guitars** could be structured so that they're not all playing at the same time throughout ..

Hooray - it all sounds fab!!!

 (Bhamra, K. [email] 2019).

My reaction to this email was that apart from some of the constructive suggestions of more space and dynamics, Bhamra was now trying to exert some additional Eastern influence on the end product, whereas I had purposefully oriented the mixes towards a Western approach to meet, what I conceived to be, the market expectations particularly of film and television editors; my perceived key target market for this recording.

I replied in a friendly tone suggesting that Bhamra was doing what all producers do on sessions and use the familiar set routine of ‘I really liked that take. It was fantastic but could we just try another one?’ This was all done in the interests of comradery and collaboration but there was an underlying cultural power struggle here that exists within all producer-artist relationships and especially when there are two producers who are from differing cultural backgrounds collaborating.

When two distinct cultures merge to try to collaborate and both parties are not only producers but also the artists, the dynamics and relational roles from a technological, musical, hierarchical and cultural perspective become fluid. Within this scenario the boundaries that define the roles of engineers, producers and artists are amplified, questioned and redefined at almost every juncture. The subtexts of culturally diverse difference and technological prowess, create unspoken power struggles between the protagonists. The unspoken struggle for genre dominance within the production process seemed to come to the fore at the mixing stage. The race for the finish line seemed to exacerbate the tensions and inherent worries of both collaborators. This was the final negotiation and whatever happened at this point would be final and could not easily be amended. Our objective was to maintain the integrity of the output and ourselves as producers.

This tension and struggle for dominance was tempered by mutual respect but it was still there as an undercurrent to our interactions. It seems that all the jostling for position in the recording studio including territorial placement of instruments, along with taking control of the recordings at different junctures, were all precursors to the final unstated but most important negotiation; which side of the West or the East was the final product going to lean towards.

I phoned Bhamra to discuss this. He took a very apologetic stance, saying that these were not dictates and that I could ignore them if I wanted to. It was as if the negotiating balance had shifted due to some form of insecurity relative to the tracks submitted from the artist’s perspective and not the producer. Even with all the technological expertise, a lifetime of experience, shared values, collaborative intent, peer acknowledgement and successful past achievements, the artist/performer insecurities rise to the surface.

**The Final Mix**

I completed the mix incorporating Bhamra’s comments, using some discretion as I didn’t fully agree with every point, but I appreciated that his comments would have been initial reactions and that we would both have addressed this process in a similar manner. It has been my experience that the first reaction, rather than a laboured considered reaction to mixes is more intuitive, and although there may be inconsistencies in the comments, there is more validity to this than if it was tempered by consideration, review and polite protocol. I have also found this generally to be the case with numerous takes of one performance; the first performance in the studio needs to be captured as it is the most intuitive and expressive. It may contain mistakes, but that can be rectified. The essence of the performance is lost in the more calculated and planned ensuing performances, the more the performer retakes and rerecords.

The reaction to the mixes was positive. He expressed a deep emotional reaction to the overall sound, stating that he ‘loved it’ and was extremely proud of what we had done.

The making of this album was an entirely enjoyable experience and both of us were very happy with the results. The exchange of ideas, compromises and cultural referencing was both exhilarating and challenging and a number of unexpected musical interventions were required to enable the recording of this project. The exchange of musical cultures and the pure enjoyment of music making was enriching and – we may have created a new genre; Country & Eastern.

Country & Eastern served to further support the hypothesis that the confluence of two creative minds, and in this case also cultures, results in an output that is greater than the sum of its parts (Copleston, F.C. 1999). It also provided an opportunity to explore the artist/producer relationship and observed further that despite the experience and wisdom of, in this case, two record producers, artist insecurities will always surface during the creative process, but there is also the inherent stress element of the responsibility of the overall recording that is borne by the producer. When the producer/s are also the artist/s, this can cause an internalised conflict that needs to be addressed. The project also further underpinned the theory that a practitioner’s cultural expertise has a significant proportional impact on the creative success and implementation of a production. The creative contributions and performances are easier to facilitate and become more effective with a greater understanding and absorption of cultural values. To create a musical environment in which all participants are comfortable and interacting, within one set of cultural parameters, is often difficult. However, creating a unified and mutually acceptable collaborative result between different cultures, an activity often accompanied by tensions and disagreements, requires the negotiation and management of expectations and an acknowledgement and understanding of the different cultural values. Producers and artists should make further efforts to engage with the different cultural values as well as the mutual collaborative objectives set out when embarking on a recording.

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