

ABSTRACT

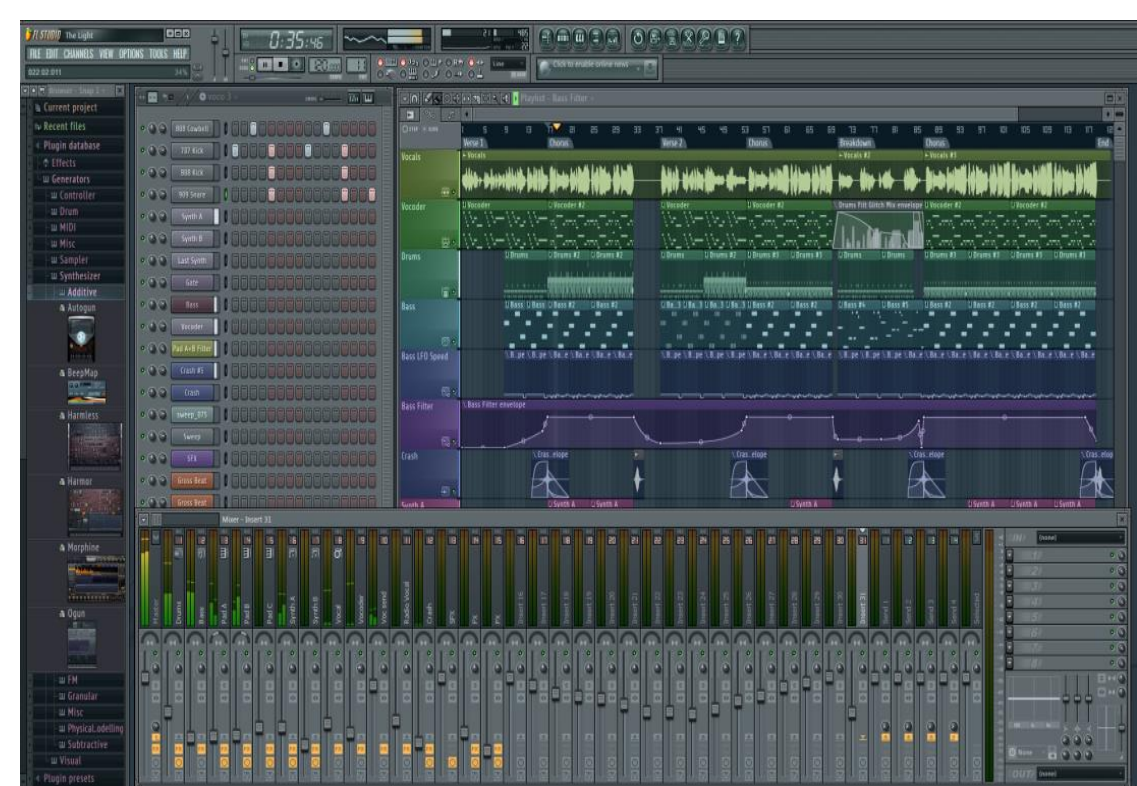
In hip-hop, beat makers are the driving force behind every major and local artist who enters the genre. There would be no groove, bounce, or genre for that matter, without the aid of the beat maker. In a world that is dominated by advancing technologies, music is progressing rapidly. My research aim was to evaluate if our definitions of what it means to be a musician and or a composer have progressed as well.

In understanding the process by which beat makers create their works, one can see that the differences between the two mainly lies between the acquiring of distinguished but similar skill sets. For those who used strictly live instrumentation and traditional instruments, the skill set acquired was the result of a traditional route, which entailed the process of mastering music theory along with mastering the techniques of an instrument. In the case of the beat maker, the skill set required to truly thrive derives from the mastery of your technology. Whereas the live instrumentalist becomes one with their respective instrument, the beat maker has the ability to access a wide array of instruments through their technology. Although this is ideal in most cases, this presents a situation where the beat maker grasps the concepts of multiple instruments but does not master them individually. Through the process of qualitative research, I will look into the perception and process of beat makers as the composers of hip-hop. I will also investigate and compare the contemporary creative processes of live instrumentalists to that of beat makers.

Composer

What is a composer?

"A composer man is someone who could take you on a musical journey. You know the intro of the song maybe starts off smooth then it just builds up into this climax thing. You have a lot of peaks and valleys you know what I'm saying? A composer. That's what a great composer does man like a Quincy Jones or... Stevie Wonder people like that that just make incredible music..." - Ski Beatz



Defining the Digital Musician

Is a digital musician a real thing ?

"Digital is a different type of creativity... it's a different skill set. It doesn't make it any easier. These are truly creative idea. It's taking this idea and translating it through a computer to get the idea...the computer has made it easy for everybody to be a musician...The good stuff that's out there I think is as creative as the people who are still playing on an acoustic instrument. It's just different." -Roger Arnold



Technology Vs. Live Instrumentation: Analysis of the Creative Process Behind the Beat Maker

Damani Piper & Dr. Patrick Rivers

Musicianship (The Creative Process)

Technology:

Understanding where Musicianship lies can be a difficult task when one looks at the technological aspects of music creation, but that does not mean it doesn't exist. For one to view musicianship in technology, one must look at different aspects of the creative process to notice the elements of musicianship hidden within the technology. This is not a crunching of numbers, but rather a process that is so musical that it should be considered on par with that of a live instrument. The way in which these beat makers tackle their music incorporates many of the same ideas that a live instrumentalist would use. (Learning Pitch, Time, Rhythm, Key etc.) What truly makes this process different though, is the process these beat makers have to go through in order to master their technology.

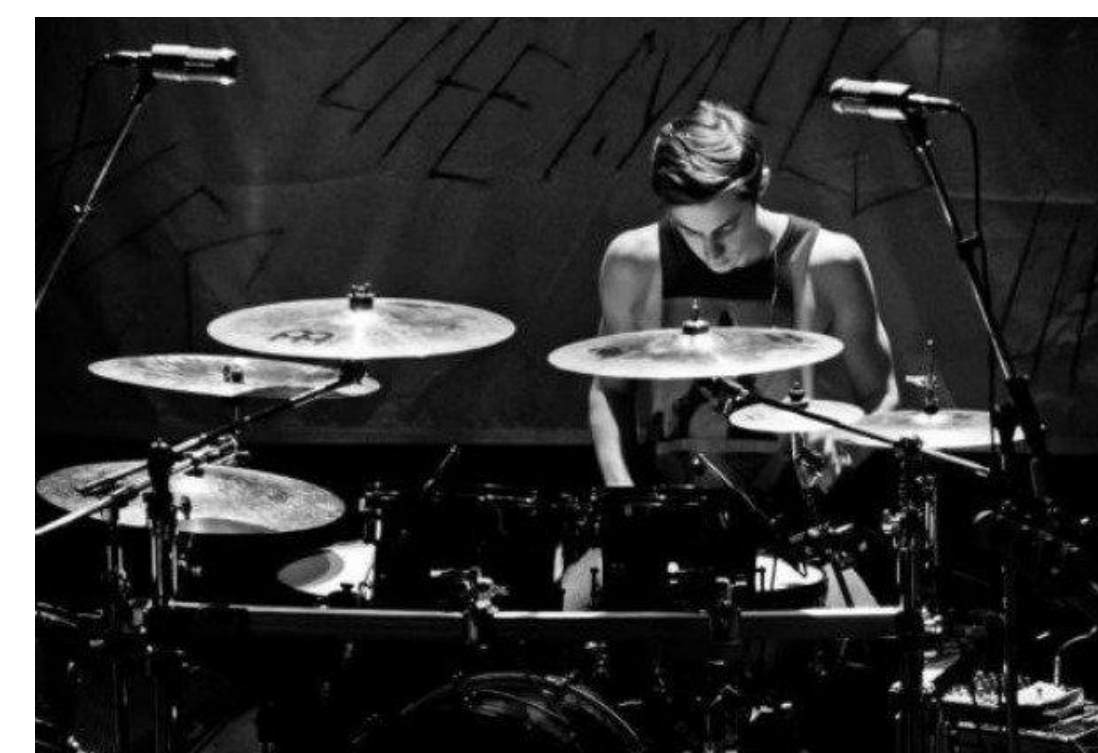
Live Instrumentation:

There is no shortage of phenomenal instrumentalist in the world and as we delve deeper we further comprehend the way in which these musicians craft their works. The process of becoming one with your instrument is something that we here all too often, but what it truly means to be one with an instrument involves an obsessive focus that not many can and are willing to achieve. Those who can force themselves to tread through the process of mastering an instrument can come out on the other side as victorious musician. Mastering an instrument is not only mastering the physical aspects of the instrument, but rather the theory behind the music. Not all live instrumentalist understand theory but nearly all professional musicians have to flirt with the concept.

Sampling,
Synthesizers,
DAW



Music Theory,
Ear Training,



Musician

What does it mean to be a musician?
Is this different from a digital musician?

"Someone who creates music...someone who can create and perform their original works of music in a unique way... In my opinion, a musician is someone who appreciates it as an art. Not so much as a hobby or a job...someone who takes the time to train themselves. Someone who loves music." -Teej.O



CONCLUSIONS

After conducting numerous interviews I was able to culminate an idea of what music professionals truly believe defines a musician, a composer, and a digital musician. When speaking with producers, both on an amateur and a professional level, I found that they all followed a similar notion. Although some of these producers began their musical journeys with little to no serious training, they all felt as though becoming more fluent in music theory was a necessary step towards becoming a better beat maker. Even those who had started out making music solely through technology had felt that mastering an instrument would better their musical ability as a producer. Surprisingly enough, these beat makers with no formal training did not shy away from the title of musician, as they easily believed they fell under that umbrella. They did however; tend to shy away from the titles of composer and digital musician. For some, the title of Composer was reserved for those who could create music through any medium, whether it is through sheet music or a Digital Audio Workstation. Conversely, those who did not produce, in example engineers, instrumentalist, choir directors etc. welcomed the idea of the beat maker being consider as a new age composer. Amongst the varying opinions, what I have found is that these two aspects of creation differ yes, but at their core live instrumentation and beat making share a common level of musicianship that is often overlooked.

REFERENCES

Books:
1)Schloss, Joseph Glenn., Making Beats: The Art of Sample-based Hip-hop. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.
2)Brown, Jake. Rick Rubin: In the Studio. Chicago: ECW, 2009. Print.
3)Hewitt, Michael. Music Theory For Computer Musicians. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.

Music:
99.9% by Kaytranada
Apocalypse by Thundercat
Reset by Flying Lotus
You're Dead by Flying Lotus
Purple Rain by Prince
Game Theory by The Roots
Illadelph Halflife by The Roots
Things Fall Apart by The Roots
Velvet Portraits by Terrace Martin
Songs in The Key of Life by Stevie Wonder