

When I first starting brainstorming for project 2, I had many ideas that attempted to connect my original piece (a blog post on the history of rock and roll) to my business degree. I began researching Ann Arbor's music and entertainment trends in hopes of writing some form of business plan or feasibility analysis for opening up a music venue in the area. I soon reconsidered for a couple of reasons. First, this document could not be targeted to a specific publication because business plans are only used externally in meetings to attract investors. Second, business plans are boring! I was falling asleep just thinking about it. After scrapping the idea, I asked myself, "If you're talking about music, why not create something musical? In this spirit, I set off to write an original song that somehow integrated rock history, either lyrically or musically.

I worked on many different musical arrangements over fall break while back home in Maryland; nothing I wrote seemed to have an obvious connection to the history I spoke about in my original project. I had found the passion that was missing in the business plan, but the idea seemed a little far-fetched. I worried no one but me would really understand that the song was meant to be a tribute to rock history. Clearly I had to give the project a little more thought.

Back in high school my band and I would perform at many venues in the DC area. While people seemed to enjoy our original music, there was always noticeably more excitement when we played cover songs. Through this observation, I concluded that an audience is more engaged when listening to something (or a form of something) that they already know. It is through this logic that I ditched the attempts at an original song and decided I would re-write the lyrics to an existing hit—preferably one that would be considered "classic rock." After scrolling through my iTunes, I decided that "We Didn't Start the Fire" by Billy Joel was a perfect template. It had lots of lyrics to tinker with and is famous for discussing historic events. This became the foundation of my final project: re-writing the lyrics to "We Didn't Start the Fire."

It was relatively easy for me to construct the majority of the song. I gathered all of the references to rock history from the blog project and arranged them into verses that rhymed and had the correct amount of syllables. I worked strait through until I reached the chorus, then hit a brick wall. What bands or songs were SO important that they should be repeated over and over in the song's refrain? This is when I added a little more depth to my project. I asked myself questions like, "who is singing this song?" "Why are they singing it?" and "Who are they singing to?" I was through these questions that I discovered my central idea. This was not just a catchy song that taught listeners about rock and roll, it was a blatant message that rock and roll is not dead; A letter from a young generation to the world. I knew the chorus needed to reflect this concept, and I feel that it now does.

Upon finishing the sheet of lyrics, I asked myself a couple more questions. First, I wondered if it would be value added to record the song and include it in an audio file. I posted this question on my blog and received multiple comments showing excitement toward a recorded version. I agreed and have included that into my project. Second, I was curious where one would go about publishing song lyrics. I

decided that Rolling Stone must do something a lot those lines, and so my research began. After looking through the entire website, I found no outlet in which song lyrics were published. Clearly, these lyrics would not be sufficient standing alone. I needed some way to incorporate them into an article format.

Originally I simply wrote an introduction and conclusion, sandwiching the song lyrics. They included a lot of important content that explained the reasoning behind the song, but it still seemed a little choppy; it definitely didn't read as a cohesive article. I also wasn't exactly sure how I was going to incorporate the project into a section of Rolling Stone Magazine. As I sat in class last Monday, while meeting with my project group, I had my biggest epiphany. I was looking at the "Spotlight" section of the online magazine where individual artists were discussed through biographies, interviews, recent news, and latest releases. I immediately had an image for my final project that I was excited about. I decided I was going to integrate the song into the "spotlight" of a fictitious band, whose biography and interview responses would actively discuss all of the content from my previous introduction and conclusion. I landed on the name "Same New World," and had a blast drafting their bio. This name is meant to showcase the timelessness of Rock, despite cultural changes. I now feel that the project has a cohesive feel and a place in Rolling Stone Magazine.

Link to blog post:

<http://writingminor.sweetland.lsa.umich.edu/2014/10/project-2-concern/>