

WRT 205
Professor Luther
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Project Statement

Audience	<p>When I started planning the album and started to make music choices I did not really envision an exact audience. I thought it would mostly be for anybody who enjoyed music and music history. I also thought that it would mostly directed to musicians in New Orleans, people from New Orleans or people who wanted to remember the music that was born and written about New Orleans. However, as I continued to research and put the project together, I saw this album more as a way to remember. Instead of being something that was sold on an iTunes it would be in memory of the musical culture in New Orleans and would feature not only the greats of jazz music that thrived from New Orleans but it would include songs written about Katrina from other artists and would feature reaction songs written after Katrina. This album could be something that could be sold to benefit musicians who were displaced during the Hurricane or have not been able to get back into music because of the hurricane. That way, music is being used to uplift and bring a community back together. Music that had once started an entirely new genre is coming full circle to help out those musicians who need the most help. In addition, this album would not just be for those attached to New Orleans, it would be for anyone who wanted to help bring the New Orleans musical community back together while also listening to a musical reaction and history. Though my main idea had changed my goal was to make an album that was accessible to all and would inspire and serve as a musical memory.</p>
Assembly and Planning	<p>Originally, I had wanted to create an album sleeve with an insert about the songs I had chosen and include a CD as well. However, as I began to plan and assemble this album, I found that creating an actual album sleeve with the resources and artistic ability I had would be very hard. Instead, I turned my idea into an actual album with a CD. This was a listener could hold a tangible item that lists all the songs and lyrics while also have a separate CD. In my creation, I used canvases and acrylic paint and decided that I would divide the songs I chose by chronology. I painted three separate canvases one for the origins of Jazz in New Orleans that would feature music by Louis Armstrong and Fats Domino who were New Orleans natives and had written many songs about the city. The next canvas was Hurricane Katrina, which included songs from other artists who had written songs about the hurricane. The last canvas was the post hurricane musical reaction that includes songs written that, voiced people's feelings after the hurricane. These canvases were then bound by a ribbon and made into an actual album. Afterwards I glued the lyrics to each song on the back of the canvas, that way a listener could follow along and understand the meaning of each song. The assembly of the lyrics to the back of the canvas may seem scattered and unorganized however this is on purpose. After the origins of jazz canvas, the lyrics are placed fairly nicely with bright colors. This symbolizes the way music had been. The second canvas symbolizes music about Hurricane Katrina and the lyrics are glued and taped in a very chaotic fashion. This is because during the hurricane it was almost like music was being destroyed. The paper is a little crumbled and it may seem disorganized but that is because it is assembled to mirror the way life and music was during the hurricane. The last canvas is a bit chaotic like the second</p>

	<p>however; the words to each song are folded in, so that it is slightly more together. The purpose of this assembly is to show that even though the hurricane was over people still had many emotions inside that they did not voice until later. The folded assembly and slight disarray of the lyrics is supposed to reflect how people began to voice their thoughts and feelings through music. The listener/viewer may also notice that there is no back, no closure to the album and that is because music is still changing and still being built back to what it was. New Orleans was rocked by the hurricane and it destroyed much of the musical culture, music scene and history that were once there. There may be a beginning and start to New Orleans musical history but it has yet to have a complete story. There is constantly new music flowing from the city and there are still songs being written and performed about the hurricane and what the city and its people have lived and experienced. I decided it would not make sense to “close” the album. Instead, it leaves room for more additions, more change and more development of music and maybe even rebuilding and revival.</p>
<p>Meaning</p>	<p>This album was created after reading the first hand account a New Orleans native and musician named John Boutte’s who retold his Katrina Experience. As a musician born and raised in New Orleans his life and career had been completely flipped after the Hurricane had hit his home. Being black and poor most of his life, his opportunities were limited, however he always loved music and knew that was what he wanted to do with this life. Though he was not in New Orleans because he was playing a gig somewhere else, his sisters did not leave and he recounts his story and the emotions he felt through his journey back home and trying to contact and reunite with his family. However, what struck me the most about his story was not the actual hurricane, but afterwards when he shares his reconnection with music in New Orleans and peoples feelings towards music and how powerful it had actually been. Boutte tells his story about his first gig back in New Orleans, “The electricity was still on and off. We were doing it almost acoustically. In this little club. And it was packed. People were amazed that somebody was doing music. It was packed. They were singing along. And musicians—the ones that I knew who were there—I just invited up on stage. We started doing a weekly thing there. Not for any money. I think somebody videoed some of that stuff. I’ve got some video of that somewhere around. Right after the storm. Very, very very intense. It was like church. I got everybody—you know, it’s hard to get people to participate, sometimes, to sing along, whatever. When I’d open up, the first thing I’d do is, I’d make everybody stand up and I’d say, now I want you all to do me a favor, I want everybody to scream as loud as you can. Whatever you wanted to do, just scream. It’s very therapeutic. People would just get up and aaaaaahhhhhhhh! It was like this enormous roar. Get up and do it again. They’d scream again”(Boutte). The roots of community lay in the hands of musicians like John Boutte who played a small gig in a dirty club with no power just to inspire and motivate the people who were there. This album serves to remember and give inspiration to musicians like him who never stop playing no matter how hard the times had gotten. In addition, this album serves, as a way to remember some of the greatest musicians who lived and started their musical careers in New Orleans, without their influence New Orleans would never have been the city it was before Katrina and is today.</p>
<p>Jazz Origins</p>	<p>The songs I have chosen for this category are all from artists born in New Orleans. These songs were also all written before the hurricane and were chosen because they were either written about the city’s culture, the city itself or aspects of New Orleans. In addition, these</p>

songs were also chosen to highlight the vibrancy of the city and the musical culture. The first song is entitled “Louisiana 1927” and it is written and originally performed by New Orleans native Randy Newman. This song is about the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 that left more than 700,000 people homeless in Louisiana and Mississippi. The lyrics of this song depict devastation and destruction by the floodwaters and touches on the irresponsibility of the government. I started this album with the song as a way of foreshadowing the rest of the album. Though this had been a time of rich culture it had also been a time of great pain and devastation much like it had been before and after Katrina. In addition, in the song, Newman sings “The river rose all day, the river rose all night some people got lost in the flood some people got away alright” (Newman, Louisiana 1927). Which may seem to mirror what some said about the floodwaters during Katrina. In addition he sings “They’re trying to was us away” which also reflects the way many people in New Orleans felt after they were ignored after the horrible effects of Hurricane Katrina. The next song “Boy From New Orleans” by Louis Armstrong, which retells Armstrong’s entire life story from the day he was born until the day, he performed it. This song is included because I felt like it is a small piece of New Orleans musical history. It does not tell a story about the city instead it tells a story of a musician in the city. The next song is “Going to Mardi Gras” by Fats Domino. This song simply shows the happiness of Mardi Gras the other song I included by Fats Domino entitled “Walking to New Orleans” also has an upbeat tempo like the other. These songs state things like “when I get to New Orleans I want to know what’s carnival for” from “Going to Mardi Gras” and in “Walking to New Orleans” he sings “New Orleans is my home that’s the reason while I’m gone, yes I’m walking to New Orleans.” Fats Domino keeps a light tempo and sings about how even though he doesn’t have much; all he needs is this city because it is his home. The last song is another song by Louis Armstrong, entitled “Stormy Weather”. Though this song seems dark and gloomy much like stormy weather itself, it may mirror New Orleans weather. Though I believe his intent was a lament style love song, I also believe that he could have been singing about his love for the city or New Orleans and what it was like when he left. All of these songs included on this page are songs that either show the culture of New Orleans, tell some sort of story or share a historical moment or foreshadow the music produced during and after Hurricane Katrina.

Katrina

In the midst of the Hurricane and all the gloom that came including incredible destruction to many homes and neighborhoods with little support from the government, music helped to reconnect people and may even have helped to give some people hope when they had all but run out. However, this page stands as a solid reminder of how many musicians were displaced, unable to continue to play or passed away during the hurricane. Losing musicians in a city that thrives on them was one of the worst devastations. The songs I included in the Hurricane Katrina category are all songs written about the Hurricane or dealing with it and its effects. These songs are written by those who are New Orleans natives but also written by others as well. The first song is Stevie Wonders “Shelter in the Rain” though this song is dedicated to his wife who passed away; this song also may reflect the state of New Orleans after Katrina and music’s role in rebuilding. He sings “When the lights are down and the stage is bare and no more magic’s in the air there’s not a friend in sight to care I’ll be your comfort through your pain I’ll be your shelter in the rain...when the final candles flickered out ‘why me’ is all you can think about when all your joy has disappeared your future isn’t clear I’ll be your comfort through your pain, I’ll be your shelter in the rain.” These words directly relate to what many felt during the Hurricane when they had lost hope after being abandoned by their own

	<p>government. The next song, is performed by a New Orleans native, Lil Wayne and features Robin Thicke, this song is called “Tie My Hands” this song is lament and offers survivors a little bit of comfort he sings “my whole city under water, some people still floating...and if you come from under that water, than that’s fresh air. Just breathe, baby God’s got a blessing to spare.” I included this song because usually Lil Wayne does not perform songs that include any sort of political opinions and does not usually perform songs nearly this deep and thought-provoking. I found it very interesting that a performer like him produced a song like “Tie My Hands” which shows that even those who do not live there anymore were still extremely affected by it. The third song in the category is a song by the band R.E.M entitled “Houston” though this band does not have major roots in New Orleans; This song is about many of those who had to relocate to Houston. This song is a harsh reality of what Katrina destroyed by the lyrics “and some things, they fall to the wayside their memory is yet to be still, belief has not filled me and so I am put to test.” The song also gives a little hope when the band sings “Houston is filled with promise, Laredo is a beautiful place.” The next song I chose to include was a song by Wyclef Jean featuring Norah Jones. Wyclef Jean is very widely known for this music that touches on current events and politics. In this song, the collaboration is a not only something that may be personal but it is heartbreaking and recalls some of the images on the news of the destruction and sadness. He sings, “I head the engine on the boat, but ya’ll cant see me waving the flag, somebody please wave the flag.” This song shows how desperate the people were and how the whole world sat back and watched. The last song in this category is by an artist named Raphael Saadiq and is entitled “Big Easy.” This song tells the story of someone who is right in the middle of the tragedy that is Katrina. The person the artist is singing about is left to wonder whether their love is alive or dead because they haven’t seen each other in days. He sings “Somebody tell me what’s going wrong, I ain’t seen my baby in far too long...they say them ladies broke and baby’s gone.” I could never imagine having the fear of never knowing whether or not you will be seeing a loved one again and this song relates to so many that unfortunately experienced that horrible feeling. This category includes songs that truly express the feelings of those who survived Katrina while also provide some sort of catharsis to bring the community back together.</p>
<p>Post Katrina Response</p>	<p>In the Journal of American History’s online Article by Bruce Raeburn, on New Orleans Musicians, he states “there has long been an inclination to use music to mitigate the harsh realities endemic to a city that finds itself perennially in harm’s way. One can learn much about New Orleans by looking at how musicians respond to disaster and inquiring into how repertoire, the experience of exile, and the urban cultural environment have been affected by cataclysmic events, now and in the past. Catastrophe inevitably changes lives and forces individuals to adapt to unexpected and often painful realities, but it also affords opportunities for growth and discovery. Tradition, which always looms large in New Orleans culture, provides guidance and comfort, yet it remains dynamic.” I believe that it is very true that by looking at the city’s musicians and how they responded and how that shaped their music may show how the community is actually coming back together. I believe that through music and lyrics some musicians were not washed away but were able to have a sort of catharsis and bring the New Orleans community back together and bring music back to the city. The songs in this category are also not just performed or written by those from New Orleans. This category includes five songs that are a musical response to the way the aftermath of Katrina was Handled. Most of these songs deal with the lack of responsibility of government and ignorance of people after the hurricane. The first song in this category is by the John Butler</p>

Trio and it is called "Gov Did Nothin." This title is very blunt and the song alludes to the fact that government was not focused on this issue but was distracted by the war over seas. In addition, the lyrics also send a message that there was serious racial inequality stating "do you really think the gov would do nothing if all those people were white?" This song shows how people outside of the tragedy still had hostile thoughts toward the government and were upset by how the situation was handled. The next song includes similar themes; "Wide Awake" by the band Audioslave also faults the government for failing to help the neediest of people in the worst of time. Like the John Butler Trio, Audioslave alludes to a distracted government. They state in their lyrics "the poor and undefended left behind, while you're somewhere trading lives for oil." I found it very interesting that so many bands (not just the ones I included in my album) had challenged the government through their music. It almost felt like because so many musicians in New Orleans had lost their instruments or had been displaced or even died, other musicians felt the need to stand up for them and fight for what was right. In this way it was not only the New Orleans community reuniting but also the entire musical community was on the same wavelength. The third song is very different than the previous two; this song "Breathe In, Breathe Out, Move On" by Jimmy Buffet is a song for after the storm and for the struggle of moving on. He sings, "Don't try to explain it, just nod your head, breathe in, breathe out, move on." This song is about moving forward as a community instead of trying to consistently blame the government for everything and staying in a place of hate instead of trying to rebuild. The fourth song is another song by Lil Wayne. In the song "Hollywood Divorce" he collaborates with rappers, Snoop Dogg and Outkast and together they give the public a piece of their minds. Though the entire song is not directly related to the hurricane and much more closely focuses on problems within our society. They sing within the first verse "The hurricane came and took my Louisiana home and all I got in return was a darn country song." This song shows a native response to the way our government and society handled the hurricane and showed how angry some of these lyrics and other songs like it turned. In my research through iTunes and YouTube, I found a song entitled "George Bush Don't Like Black People" that was a parody on the Kanye West song "Gold-digger" and his comment after the Hurricane regarding the president. Though I did not include this song in the album, this parody was the first song I found entirely dedicated to the disaster and the public's reaction to the way government and society had reacted towards New Orleans and the Hurricane. The last song on this album is a song I find very interesting. Entitled "Hell No We Ain't Alright" by the group Public Enemy. This song is not just an angry venting of an artist but it is a protest via song. It directly criticizes President Bush and his administration for his policies and his response to the hurricane disaster. In addition, like Audioslave and John Butler trio, Public Enemy blames this horrible response on the commitment of resources to the war in Iraq and points out that it is also due to the race and social status of the majority of victims of the hurricane. The chorus that repeats states "New Orleans in the morning, afternoon and night hell Naw! We ain't alright." They continue with profane language and anger when they sing, "Now I see we be the new faces of refugees, who ain't even overseas but stuck here on our knees. Forget the plasma TV, ain't no electricity. New world's upside down and OUT of order shelter, food, what's up yo? (Where's the water?). No answers from disaster, them masses be hurting. So who the f#\$! They call - HALLIBURTON?!

"Son of a Bush" how you gonna just trust that cat to fix s%#t when all that help is stuck in Iraq? Makin war plans taking more stands in Afghanistan. Two thousands soldiers there dying in the sand. But that's over there, right? What's over here? It's a noise so loud some of y'all

	<p>can't hear. But on TV I know that I can see bunches of people, looking just like me". This song shows just how angry some musicians and others were with the treatment of people and lack of responsibility of government. Many used music as a way to convey their thoughts to the public while also bringing the people together in order to rally for something. Though sometimes these songs were extreme and may show that music has changed into something completely different than what it had been in the past, I believe that music is an effective way to bring change and a way to unite people together.</p>
<p>Colors Of Each Page</p>	<p>The colors of each canvas were not random. The bright colors of the title page are meant to reflect the bright vivid colors of New Orleans, then and now. In my mind I always associate the colors purple, green and gold with New Orleans and its culture. The second page or canvas, which is supposed to reflect the origins of the jazz culture in New Orleans, is also filled with these bright colors to also reflect and symbolize the rich vibrancies of music and the city when these songs were written and being performed. The third canvas, which represents music during Katrina, is much darker than the first two. The back is painted dark blue to symbolize the flooding and the destruction of the city. After viewing the footage during the hurricane from Spike Lee's film <i>When The Levees Broke</i>, all I could remember afterwards was the color dark blue and rushing waves and rainwater all over the city. This time during the hurricane before anyone could even imagine the aftermath or the destruction was extremely dark. In addition, the color of the word Katrina is purposely greyish brownish with white to symbolize the filth and darkness of the situation. In a first hand account from a New Orleans musician named John Boutte, he describes his first sight of New Orleans, as "My first image was the water line This black line, like someone took a big marker and wrote across the whole city with a paintbrush. A line. A nasty city dirty muddy shit that they just wrote on everybody's house everywhere. That's it. Cars upside down. Trees. Shit where it wasn't supposed to be. Things where they weren't supposed to be. It was just horrible. Everything was brown. There was not a speck of green in the city. Everything was brown. The whole city was brown. It was like a bad UPS commercial"(Boutte). This coloring and darkness is intended to reflect what most musicians wrote about during this time. The last canvas is painted red and black to show the anger, frustration and disgust that people felt after the hurricane and was voiced through their music. In my opinion, red is not only a color of anger but also a color of passion and I believe that musicians felt passion towards their city and wanted to write music and voice their thoughts.</p>
<p>Challenges</p>	<p>This project as whole provided me with some challenges. At first I was worried that my artistic ability would not produce a very clean version of what I had pictured in my head as the final product. In addition, when I came to put the pieces together and assembly my ideas, what I had imagined and what I produced were two very different things. I had imagined it to look like an actual record album but with lack of correct supplies, I used canvases instead and created almost like a scrapbook album. However, I find that this change brings the project more to life than just a record album sleeve would have. I was able to paint color and give importance to things I did not think were going to be as important. When I was finishing up my research and choosing songs for the final album I found it challenging to pick the best songs. Each song had its own story and its own meaning. I felt that by leaving out a song I was doing the album an injustice and I was not really sure which songs would be the strongest. However, in this challenge I decided to break the album down into somewhat of a chronological category to help explain how music had developed and changed through Katrina and the aftermath. By</p>

choosing the songs that solely focused on that I was able to see how certain songs played a bigger role in making people come together or how certain songs created a bigger public response. It was interesting to me that a song by Public Enemy had such an impact on the public and it was even more interesting to me that a parody of a Kanye West song became an internet sensation. My thinking throughout this project was always focused on the question how did music bring people together before the hurricane, during the hurricane and after the hurricane. Through those questions it opened doors to understanding the culture of New Orleans before the Hurricane and musical culture then, how music still played a vital role during the hurricane and how so many musicians had been impacted by the disaster and how even after so many people spoke out through music. Music has been a common theme and driving force in keeping New Orleans stable and "above ground" even after one of the worst Hurricanes in history; music stayed alive and is still helping to rebuild.

Conclusion I believe that my project is worth considering and is important because music is important, especially in New Orleans. However, I question whether this album has a strong impact on listeners and its audience. Would people buy it as a keepsake or just to support musicians out of pity? Would the album be used in the intended way a more than just something to keep on a shelf but as a memory and reminder of how powerful music has been and continues to be. Many things died in the Hurricane and many parts of New Orleans culture will never be the same because of it. However, music is one thing that everyone can enjoy and relate to. There will always be that gospel hymn or jazz melody or even now maybe a rap song that everyone has heard at least once. In John Boutte's story it's the one thing that brought back the life into New Orleans and gave him hope. In the Habitat Musicians Village it's the one thing that unites everybody. Music has also been a voice for the people. Performers both native to New Orleans and not have been able to voice their opinions through their music to convey a message that they way people were treated was not right. This project is important because it combines all of New Orleans musical culture into one book and CD. It is a visual way for people to read lyrics and listen to songs that have had an impact on the culture of New Orleans, helped those who needed hope through the hurricane and been a response to the horrendous treatment of government and other feelings that may have been felt after Hurricane Katrina.

maybe ^{mixed} sense is a limit too

great overall - thoughtful, deep, interesting -
great idea

lyrics a little odd seems contrived - but
otherwise cool

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