
Senior Projects Spring 2022

Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

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On My Mind

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On My Mind

Senior Project Submitted to

The Division of Arts

of Bard College

by Baladine Mihriban Bourgeois

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York May 2022

Song List

On My Mind

Nicotine

Come Thru

I'm Just Bored

Piece of Mind

Laubali

Trippin' Bout You

Drone Piece (Interlude)

Different

Puzzle Piece

Medicine

Crave

Artist Statement

Writing and releasing an album of original songs is intensely challenging. For the past year at Bard College, I feverishly tinkered and perfected a set of songs that I eventually hoped to release to the public. Throughout the first semester of my senior year I wrote eight songs. A couple of them were born from skeleton ideas from years back. On this record, I wrote two songs that I consider to be very experimental; the others expand and perfect my songwriting method, which is a blend of R&B and pop (and sometimes folk).

When I turned 17, I decided I wanted to experiment with classic Middle Eastern music and find ways to artistically incorporate my culture into my music without it sounding forced. I began to sample classical Turkish songs where I layered oud riffs, however, it felt like I was just inserting random ideas into my R&B/pop pieces. When I got to Bard I decided to challenge myself: blend my R&B/pop music with traditional Middle Eastern undertones to make music that feels both authentic and meaningful. Though this process was extremely difficult to execute without sounding chaotic, it proved to be very rewarding. I've come to the realization that in order to write songs that express who I am, it's imperative that I incorporate my Turkish culture into my compositions; doing so will not only help me grow as a songwriter, but it will also help me look at myself as a Turkish-American. My Bard senior project has assuredly kickstarted a new journey, but I have a long way to go.

When I was a kid, I wrote snippets of songs and strung melodies and lyrics together; From an early age, I was utterly fascinated by commercial jingles and how they had the ability to hook the listener after only one bar. Then, during my teenage

years, I established the first version of my own songwriting procedure which I believe is a very personal process. After I decided that music was my area of study at Bard, I decided to focus on perfecting my composition as a whole and to slow down and take more time to think about lyrics. For me lyrics have always been the most challenging part of songwriting—the melody and the beat comes way more easily.

This album I created is hugely personal—it is the story of my emotional growth from a teenager into a young woman. It represents the first time where I pushed myself to be unafraid, honest, and vulnerable in my lyric-writing. I allowed myself to delve into a deep abyss of my emotions to understand the causality of my anxiety and mental-health issues. The songwriting process became synonymous with healing, with the post-pandemic lens adding an extra layer of self-exploration and meaning.

I really wanted to explore the feelings of mundaneness, specifically in my song “I’m Just Bored”, which is a slower-style folk-pop song. The starting point here was a feeling of being incredibly small and insignificant in a world that seems out of control. Like many of us in college, I struggled with the anxiety of not being able to find my own place in society. Of course, these are age-old, existential questions, and if listeners can relate to my lyrics, it’s perhaps the most rewarding feeling one can have as a songwriter. This is the reward that matters.

Mixing genres is very important, and I explored this in “Come Thru, Trippin Bout You” and “Nicotine.” Blending these genres of R&B and Pop was a new experience for me when I started my Bard studies. After working on these tracks and trying hard to push my writing to ensure that the R&B and pop elements blended together naturally, I realized that this particular style was one I enjoyed the most.

The younger self wrote more pop, and for this record I didn't want to completely abandon that part of me, so I wrote "On My Mind" and "Piece of Mind." Doing so reminded me that I still very much enjoy writing unabashedly true pop songs and find it challenging to discover new sounds or new-sounding melodies that are classical pop.

One of the many hardships caused by the Covid-19 lockdown was that live music was utterly erased. I, like many musicians, had to stop performing live, which in turn ramped up my anxiety around performing. Though live music is back, I am still struggling with this fear and am doing my best to resolve it quickly. Surely, the lack of practice has prevented me from putting myself out there and in front of an audience. In high school, I thrived on performing and was very comfortable on stage; I participated in plenty of open-mic nights in high school but none of them involved singing my original music. The listening party performance will be the first time that I have played my compositions in front of a live audience since 2012. I'm absolutely exhilarated to conquer my fears and leave Bard with an album that I'm incredibly proud to share to the world.

BALADINE'S SENIOR CONCERT

MAY 13TH

6:00PM

OUTSIDE!
CAMPUS CENTER
SOUTH QUAD