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Introducing Alexandra Moniqué: A Journey Through the Music Industry

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at Syracuse University

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Science
and Renée Crown University Honors
May 2016

Honors Capstone Project in Recording and Allied Entertainment Industries

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Abstract

The music industry is a wide field with careers ranging from artist management, publicity, marketing, promotions, and music litigation to songwriting, producing, recording, and mastering. The list goes on and on; but there is a clear distinction between the artistic side of the industry and the business side of the industry.

This Capstone Project is my journey through the music industry both artistically and commercially. As a singer/songwriter, I wrote, recorded, and released an EP under my artist persona, Alexandra Moniqué. I then tackled the business side of the industry by promoting the album as a manager, publicist, and marketer. This is *Introducing Alexandra Monique: A Journey Through the Music Industry*.

Author's Note

All of the audio can be heard at alexandramonique.com. They can also be heard at soundcloud.com/alexandramonique.

Social Media can be seen at:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Alexandra-Moniqu%C3%A9-1067208846646909/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/missmayo29>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/alexandramoniquemusic/>

ReverbNation: <https://www.reverbnation.com/alexandramoniqu%C3%A9>

BandCamp: <https://alexandramoniquemusic.bandcamp.com/album/alexandra-moniqu%C3%A9>

SoundCloud: <https://soundcloud.com/alexandramonique>

Executive Summary

This Capstone Project is a journey through the music industry on both the artistic side and the business side. I have released and promoted an EP for myself as a singer/songwriter and pianist under the persona, Alexandra Moniqué. EP is short for extended play record; it is a short album generally consisting of four to six songs. EPs are used in place of albums for numerous reasons, but the main reason is as a promotional item. It introduces new bands and promotes an artist before they release a full-length album. The purpose of my EP is to introduce myself as a new artist and ensure that I have marketable material for myself in the future.

There are hundreds of career paths on the business side of the music industry. Those include, but are not limited to, management, artist and repertoire (A&R), agents, law, marketing, publicity, branding, events, touring, and more. Ironically, although the artists are more publicly known, an artist is just an artist. There are certain nuances that differentiate a few career paths, such as production, voice, instrumentation, and writer/composers; but ultimately the career paths available to artists are significantly limited compared to those available on the business path. Whereas the path of the artist is highly intensive and concentrated, the path of the business professional is vast with more unique, specific career opportunities. I was able to explore both of these paths in great detail.

I began this project as “The Artist.” As the artist my focus was completely on music. I wrote and composed all of the songs that are on the EP, recorded and produced them, had them mixed and mastered, and released them; but the job of the artist does not end at producing music. Generally, while an artist is expanding his or her career, he or she wears the hat of every industry professional. The initial goal of the artist is to gain enough traction to hire a team that handles booking, management, PR, legal, publishing, etc.; but until he or she has enough money and

traction, it is the job of him or her. The artist must also stay relevant in the public eye. I created and maintained numerous social media accounts for myself as an artist including a YouTube channel, Instagram account, Facebook fan page, Twitter account, and a ReverbNation page. ReverbNation is an online platform that provides tools and opportunities for artists to further their careers. Once there was a product and an artist persona to promote, I began my journey as a business professional.

As a businesswoman I acted as Alexandra Moniqué's manager, publicist, and marketer. Much of the marketing for this project took place prior to the release of the EP on my artist social media accounts. Once the EP was released, I was able to continue marketing and start to publicize the release to various media outlets. Each of my roles as a businesswoman and the details of each endeavor will be defined further in later sections.

Introducing Alexandra Moniqué: A Journey Through the Music Industry is just that: a journey. I spent much of my adolescence singing and performing, but the majority of my college career has been spent learning about the business aspect of the music industry. This project gave me the opportunity to combine my two loves and produce a product that has given me extensive experience within the industry. Executing this project from both the artistic and business side has given me a better appreciation and respect for both, while allowing me to promote myself as a singer/songwriter. This is that journey.

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Acknowledgements

My journey through the music industry stretches far beyond the execution of this project; it began the instant I stepped foot on the SU campus. I am grateful to everyone who has helped me through my journey. Every single professor, advisor, class project, and assignment has prepared me for the creation and execution of *Introducing Alexandra Monique: A Journey Through the Music Industry*.

I was able to successfully create an artist persona for myself and produced a four song EP that I have been able to promote. Following this project, I am going to be working on the business side of the industry, but I am also going to continue pursuing my music career as an artist with the assistance of my publicist, Angela Moore. I learned a great deal about the music industry and now feel prepared to conquer it post-graduation.

None of this would have been possible without the expert knowledge of all of my professors, their willingness to assist me and meet with me outside of class, and their support. Thank you to everyone who has been a part of my career here while at SU. This project would not have been possible without you.

Chapter 1

Reconciling Arts and Commerce: The Arts v. The Business

How does an artist ensure that he or she is being compensated for his or her work? How does a business decide how much creative freedom to give an artist? Will too much creative expression hinder sales? Will too much control and thought about business hinder creativity?

There is a fine line that separates art and commerce. Neither can exist successfully without the other, yet too much interference from one or the other can be detrimental. The key is finding a balance between the two.

The role of the artist is to create. Singer/songwriters focus their energy on creating new music, composing, and writing. They have a personal style that shines through when they create. Many artists' goals are to make money, but that is not what is most important. The most important thing is the product: in this case, the music.

The role of the business entity is to make money while bringing value to the artist as well. How can the artist's music be marketed and sold to maximize profit and exposure? The music industry can be broken down into numerous professions, but I am going to focus on management, branding, marketing/promotions, and public relations. Together these sectors of the business push an artist through the clutter of the industry to a spot that is noticeable to the public.

As both the singer/songwriter and as the business entity, I have learned to balance the artistic with the professional. In the following pages I will define each role in detail, how I executed each role, and the result both artistically and commercially.

Chapter 2

The Role of the Artist

Writing and Composing

Without the artist there would be no recording; but before there is a recording there are words and notes. The songwriting process varies from person to person. Some people start with the words, some people start with the melody, and others work on both at the same time. For myself, the process varies.

My music is an extension of myself; I write from my life experiences. Sometimes I feel an emotion so strongly I simply start singing and the words come to me. This was the case with my first single, “No More.” “No More” was written in fifteen minutes. I was having a conversation with an ex-boyfriend that we have had numerous times before. He frustrated me so much that I just could not deal with it anymore. I was mad, sat down at my piano, and started singing my emotions while playing. Fifteen minutes later a song was born.

Although “No More” came effortlessly, not all songs are born with such ease. My second single “Heart Remains the Same” took weeks to complete. Again, I was having a conversation with an ex-boyfriend that sparked a mixture of memories and unease. I realized that although I knew nothing of the details of my ex’s current life situation and although he is not the same boy I used to date, he is a man now with the same heart and values. That revelation that he was the same, yet different all at the same time is what sparked “Heart Remains the Same.” The lyrics for this song came easily, but the piano took a little longer. The message of the song meant a lot to me, so I spent weeks making sure that the phrasing was right and that the piano matched the tone of the song. Although the words are about hope, the piano displays more of the trepidation I felt about the situation. The combination of the two perfectly catches my feelings at that moment in

time. This perfect combination of music and lyrics is part of my definition of a successful song. I write music with a purpose. When that purpose is successfully conveyed in every aspect of the song, the song is a success.

There are times when I write collaboratively with other artists as well. “Time to Move On” is a song I wrote in Professor Robert Halligan’s songwriting class with fellow student Linda Gorman. The day the song was written, JinglePunks, a music licensing and publishing company, told our class that Verizon Wireless needed a song similar to “Home” by Michael Bublé for a commercial. Linda and I decided we wanted to create a song for consideration. With a little over an hour to work, Linda played her ukulele and I played my piano to create “Time to Move On.” JinglePunks loved it; so we went to Professor Halligan’s house and he helped us record our first song together. Although Verizon did not use the song, it was still a great experience working with another songwriter, and it is currently in the JinglePunks database. I loved the jingle and its upbeat appeal, so Linda agreed to let me include it on my EP.

“Bliss” was slightly harder to write and compose. The lyrics and melody were simple. My friend and I were having a conversation about cheating, so I began to think about what my reaction would be if I found out my boyfriend was cheating on me. I prefer to know if my boyfriend is cheating, but my friend said she would rather be ignorant to the situation. Her reaction to the situation appealed to me because it was different than my own. It is also something that I believe many people in my generation might agree with; so I sat down and started writing. Although the melody was quick to form, I wanted something different from my usual piano ballads. I used Apple’s GarageBand to produce a beat that is more akin to R&B music and one that I could easily imagine on the radio. It turned into a simple beat that focuses completely on bass, synthesized sound, and vocals. I had zero beat production skills prior to this

endeavor, so producing a beat proved difficult, but not impossible. It took weeks to accomplish, but eventually I came up with a song I love and am extremely proud of.

All of the songs and their instrumental counterparts can be heard on the EP included or on alexandramonique.com.

Recording, Mixing, and Production

Writing comes naturally to me, but recording is a completely different ballgame. Initially I tried to save money by recording my songs myself. My songs mostly consist of piano and voice, so the production is not excessively difficult; but I found myself lacking equipment. Whereas most studios use ProTools for editing, mixing, and mastering, I only have GarageBand. GarageBand is a great tool for beginners, but I still could not get the professional sound I so craved. The other problem with in-home production is the microphone. Finding the right mic is half the battle with recording. Different microphones bring out various tones in the voice. Whereas a condenser microphone might be great for one voice type, a dynamic microphone might be better for another. I own two microphones, a Blue Microphones Yeti USB Microphone and a Samsung C01U Pro USB Studio Condenser Microphone. Both are great microphones, but I have a powerful voice; one that easily overpowers the capabilities of both of my microphones. Everything I recorded had clipping, the static sound that comes from singing too loudly into a mic. This led me to a professional studio.

I originally looked into using a recording studio on campus, but the studio is always booked and difficult to get into without the right connections. I determined that it was more beneficial to invest in professional studio usage while home on Winter Break. After extensive research in the Charlotte, North Carolina area, I ended up at Catalyst Recordings. Catalyst is a one-man recording studio located in the basement of the owner's home. Initially I was hesitant to record with him, but after extensive conversation and a trip to the studio, I found that I loved it. The owner, Rob, knew exactly what he was doing and he clearly had a passion for music and a strong desire to help me succeed. With him I recorded both "No More" and "Heart Remains the Same." During the mixing process he heard flat and sharp notes that I never would have noticed

and was able to correct those pitches with vocal retouch. He also added reverberation, the prolonged, resonated sound that is added to vocals, to give it a more refined finish. We spent an hour perfecting the two songs and finding the perfect balance between the vocals, piano, and reverberation. By the end of my three-hour session, I successfully recorded two songs that I absolutely love.

As stated earlier, “Time to Move On” was recorded last year with the help of Professor Halligan, but I recorded “Bliss” with my own equipment. After spending more time familiarizing myself with GarageBand and my microphones, I was able to create a song that sounded almost professional. After finishing the song on GarageBand, I used a website, LANDR, to professionally master the song and add the finishing touches to make it sound professional. For only \$10, I created a song that sounds just as professional as the ones I created in a studio.

Having various types of writing techniques and recording experiences gave me a more in-depth knowledge of the music industry from the artistic side. Writing, composing, and recording are not easy tasks. My main instrument is my voice. Not only do I have to ensure that I am writing for my vocal capabilities, but I also have to make sure that I am always taking care of my voice. I was ill and lost my voice while recording “Bliss.” “Bliss” was the last song to be recorded on the EP and I only had a week to record it before the EP release date. Recording took a lot longer than it normally would have because I had to keep taking breaks to allow my voice to rest and recharge. Something as simple as losing your voice can be detrimental to an artist, so it is important to take care of how you use your voice regularly. I have always respected artists and their work, but I never realized how many issues could arise while recording and trying to release an album just from voice loss. Thankfully, I was able to finish all of the recordings and release the EP on time.

Chapter 3

The Role of the Business

Management

There are many different kinds of managers a musician may have. There is the personal manager, business manager, road manager, tour manager, production manager, and the technical manager. At the early stages of my career, I have been acting as personal manager and business manager.

The role of the personal manager is to oversee all aspects of the musician's musical career. This could involve recording, publishing, merchandising, touring, licensing, etc. As stated earlier, I completed my recording at Catalyst Recordings in Charlotte, North Carolina. Publishing deals are generally for established writers who have signed with a publishing company. Although I am not yet established enough for a publishing deal, as a songwriter I do have an ASCAP account as both a songwriter and a publisher.

ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors, & Publishers) is a Performance Rights Organization (PRO) created to protect the rights of its members through licensing, collecting, and distributing royalties. When I recorded "Time to Move On" and began working with JinglePunks, I registered with ASCAP as both a songwriter, Alexandra Moniqué, and as a publisher, Alexandra Moniqué Publishing. This was a huge step in my music career because it legitimized me as an artist. Registering with ASCAP as both the songwriter and the publisher ensures that I am getting 100% of the royalties for my music whenever it is sold, played publicly, or licensed for use. Although my career is not far enough along to see such revenues and none of my music has been licensed, being registered now sets me up for success in the future.

As the personal manager I was also in charge of various appointments for Alexandra Moniqué. I needed professional photography I could use for the press kit, social media sites, and album artwork, so I reached out to a few photography students I knew. My sophomore year I stood in as a model for a student with Yax Photography. It has been two years, and those are still some of my favorite photographs, so he allowed me to use them commercially as long as I gave him credit. His work is now in use as the cover of my EP (Appendix A). At the beginning of my senior year another photography student offered to help me with my career and took my photos for free at LightWorks. Maximus Orphanides Photography is responsible for many of the pictures I use on social media, and the pictures I have used in my press releases (Appendix B).

The role of the business manager is to manage both the income and expenses of the artist. I have taken the role of the business manager in dealing with the budget. At the start of my project I estimated that I would need \$2000 for photography, studio time, videography, distribution, publicity materials, and promotional items. Although my request for Crown-Wise Funding was denied, it has forced me to budget and be resourceful. To assist with some of the finances, I had the opportunity to sign with Marshall Street Records (MSR), one of Syracuse University's two student-run record labels. Through Marshall Street Records I have been able to order Alexandra Moniqué business cards, be featured on the MSR website (marshallstrecords.com), and be featured on MSR's social media accounts. It has been a great platform for exposure.

Outside of Marshall Street Records I have purchased a website and domain name (alexandramonique.com) for \$90.06 from GoDaddy, and I purchased three hours of studio time at Catalyst Recordings for \$80. ASCAP has a \$50 registration fee both as a songwriter and as a publisher, but I was a member of ASCAP prior to this project. Photography also could have been

costly, but I was able to reach out to friends who were photographers. Marketing materials and publicity could have cost money, but I found free ways to promote myself that will be detailed in later sections.

Branding

When people hear your name, what do they think of? What words, images, and emotions do people associate with you? That is your brand. It is what separates you from everyone else and is one of the most important things for an artist.

Ask yourself:

If someone judges you by your cover, what do they see? What type of image do you put out? Does your image reflect how you want to be perceived by the public?

Would you be a fan of YOU? (B, Breezy).

Using my musical influences, *8 Steps to Building Your Music Brand*, and *Artist Branding 101: Things that Affect Your Brand*, I developed my personal brand.

Branding mixes style, voice, personality, cause, etc. I've combined everything that I admire about my favorite artists to create my sound, and ultimately my brand. Alicia Keys is known for her sophisticated, chic style and skills on the piano. Sara Bareilles is known for blending piano and voice in a way that is simpler than Alicia Keys, but the mixture creates an amazing emotional appeal to listeners. Adele is known for her soulful and honest lyrics. Etta James is known for putting her life experiences to song in a bluesy way that impacts the audience. The impact that each of these artists has on music is the effect that I want my music to have on my audience.

I have gone through the *8 Steps to Building Your Personal Music Brand* by Clyde Smith of *Hypebot* and tailored them to meet my music and personality.

1. Create your personal brand vision

- I want to be known as someone whose lyrics have meaning. So many people now are focused on sex appeal and appearance; I want people to focus on my music. I want others to see me as I am: a laid-back girl whose passion drives her music.

2. Define your target audience

- R&B/Adult Contemporary lovers male and female age 16-50+
- Fans of: Alicia Keys, Christina Aguilera, Etta James, Adele, Sara Bareilles, etc.

3. Build up your online and offline assets

- Online Assets: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, ReverbNation
- Offline Assets: Press Kits, business cards

4. Build your brand through outreach (providing value to others so they'll help you out in return)

- Angela Moore (APM Public Relations)
- NaTasha Richburg (Jeremiah's Kall)
- Shanti Das (The Hip Hop Professional)
- Bandier/Syracuse Alumni
- Family and Friends
- Binta Brown (Fermata Inc./Big Mouth Records)

5. Get free press coverage

- Angela at APM Public Relations
- NaTasha at Jeremiah's Kall
- Media Contact lists acquired through various internships (with their permission)
- Blogs
- The Daily Orange

- Marshall Street Records

6. Connect with mentors

- Angela Moore (APM Public Relations)
- NaTasha Richburg (Jeremiah's Kall)
- David Rezak (Bandier)
- Julie McKinstry (Voice Professor)
- Bob Halligan Jr. (Syracuse University Professor)
- Shanti Das (Hip Hop Professional)
- Cassandra Mayo (Mother)

7. Monitor your brand

8. Be yourself

I have also taken into account what affects my brand from the article *Artist Branding 101*:

Things that Affect Your Brand. Those things include:

1. Your music and lyrics

- professional sound
- lyrics represent who you are and what you stand for
- does your music stand out?

2. How you use social media to interact

- engage with people and properly promote
- don't spam
- build a loyal following

3. How "up to par" your online presence is

- Custom website (alexandramonique.com)

- Marshall Street Records website (marshallstrecords.com)
- Facebook fan page (Alexandra Moniqué)
- Twitter (@MissMayo29)
- YouTube (Alexandra Moniqué)
- Instagram (@alexandramoniquemusic)
- Professional photos
- Custom graphics/logos (“No More” artwork created by graphic designer Jeffrey Watson: Appendix C)

4. Your stage presence

- Crowd interactions
- Attract fans to performances

5. Your music videos

- Quality
- Visuals

6. How you dress and appear in images

- Does image reflect who you really are?
- Represent yourself in a good light

Branding is heavily reliant upon crowd interactions. Fan bonding when off the stage builds a loyal fan base more than the music; it is all about mingling and building relationships. Off the stage my most loyal fan base includes friends and family, but I have also had the opportunity to network and meet other musicians and fans at shows who I have a continuing relationship with. Gauging audience response also plays a large role in crowd interactions. As a singer, it is important to pay attention to the vibe of the audience. Simple observations such as

this make it possible to plan future shows and order the set-list in a way that keeps the audience more engaged.

Outside of building a fan base live, my branding has also involved building a loyal fan base virtually. For the most part, my branding has consisted of weekly YouTube cover videos portraying my style and sound. The style I've embraced is "Boho Chic." I have always loved the bohemian vibe and feel like it accurately portrays my free-spirited personality; but sometimes it can be at odds with my music. My music tends to be a little more obscure. It is emotional and illuminates the darker side of my personality that is not seen as often. The mixture of these two things is how I came up with Boho Chic. I wear a lot of darker clothing with bohemian accessories and patterns.

I've also incorporated branding by setting expectations. Every Sunday at 7pm I release a YouTube cover video. Although it will take time, I want people to learn to expect that weekly video. That consistency and expectation is going to help build my brand. Many of those covers use instrumental backing, but I also post videos covering songs while playing piano so my range is visible. I also created a logo for myself that I use every time I post a video or send out a document so people start to associate that image with me (Appendix D).

Although all of these various aspects make up my brand, there are also problems I have come across with branding. The most prominent issue is balancing how I am portrayed as an artist with who I am. The artist and the individual need to be separate yet intertwined at the same time. My personality is very bubbly and energetic, yet my music is dark and emotional. I have been watching interviews with artists who have a similar conundrum, such as Adele, so I can view how to balance the two and answer questions about the music in an interview. Another issue with balance I have encountered is social media. I have personal accounts, but I've made

artist accounts so people know that I am serious about what I do. Building a new following from scratch has proven difficult, but I continue to use consistency as a tool to help generate a following via YouTube and Instagram. It will take time, but as I continue to release music and generate a following, I am confident that I will be able to portray my brand.

Marketing and Promotion

In preparation for the release of my EP, I continually posted on social media. Originally I had created an artist Instagram account (@alexandra_monique_music) to ensure I was keeping my artist-self and true self separate. But I found that two separate accounts are a lot to keep track of. I also found that if I posted the same thing on both accounts at the same time, I received more views and interactions with my personal account than I did with my artist account. With that in mind, I have suspended my artist account, changed my personal handle, and now use my personal account for everything. Now my Instagram account is simply @alexandramoniquemusic. The account contains 15-second snippets of my singles “Heart Remains the Same” and “No More” with their accompanying song artwork (Appendix E) and an unofficial EP cover (Appendix F). My everyday pictures are also on the account, so the world can see that I am a real person with music as a part of my life.

The day of the release I created different posts for my various social media accounts. Each account was given a new profile picture that matched the EP cover and a new header with information about the release (Appendix G). On Instagram and Twitter, I released a 15-second snippet of my newest song “Bliss” with the EP artwork in the background. On Facebook I posted a link to my album that is available for purchase and download at alexandramoniquemusic.bandcamp.com. I also ensured that my website was up to date with all of the release information, my SoundCloud page had the EP along with a download link, and my ReverbNation page was up to date.

Following the initial release date, the job of the marketer is to promote the album and get more followers. Much of this was achieved through working with Marshall Street Records. I used their social media platforms and website to get more coverage and ensure that I was staying

relevant in the public eye. Through them I was able to create business cards and use their following to post about the release and gain followers organically.

Public Relations

What is an artist if he or she does not have some sort of following? How does one get that following? How can an artist get the media to care? That is the job of the publicist. I began this project handling all of the public relations myself. I created a press kit (Appendix H) that includes my biography, photos, links to my music, and a one sheet with all of the information about me in one consolidated flyer. I intended to send this press kit out to various media outlets from lists I compiled from previous internships that include radio stations, newspapers, magazines, etc. I intended to do all of this, but I was blessed to find someone who wanted to work as my publicist. Now I am a client with APM Public Relations.

APM Public Relations is run by publicist Angela Moore in Atlanta, Georgia. I worked for Angela during the summer of 2015 as an intern and ensured I stayed in touch with her throughout the year. I emailed her my press kit and a single from my EP the week before it released so I could get her opinion and show her my progress; she responded in a better way than I ever could have hoped. Angela called me a few days after I sent the email and offered to work as my publicist for free for six months. She said that she was so appreciative of the work that I did for her this summer that she wanted to help me further my career. Angela working as my publicist is going to further my career significantly more than I would have been able to on my own.

One of the most important jobs of the publicist is to make the public interested in the artist. She is responsible for finding good "angles," creating "new hooks," and turning my persona into a good "story." My life is fairly average. I was extremely fortunate in my childhood to not have known struggles or hardships. Music never needed to be an escape for myself or my family to better conditions. It has not saved me in any dramatic way that would make a great

story; so how do you spin a story when there is none? Sometimes the best story is that there is no story. I have lived a fortunate life and began my music career while attending Syracuse University in the prestigious Bandier Program. That is my story. Angela and I have not yet discussed my story together, but I was recently interviewed by Pascal Garoute of *The Artist Inspired Show* and he loved my story. He was fascinated with how I have been able to blend my musical background with my music industry degree to start my career. His enthusiasm and interest about my story solidified my "angle" and I intend to discuss this with Angela for future stories and opportunities. My interview on The Artist Inspired Show can be heard at www.PascalGaroute.com/TalkShow.

Angela has connections within the industry with various magazines and online radio stations. She has agreed to reach out to all of them and set up various interviews for me. While she is doing that, I am still going to be sending out my press kit and music to various local publications, terrestrial radio, and blogs. Collectively we will be able to get my music in the public eye quicker than I would be able to on my own. I recently started working with Angela at the end of March, so I do not have many interviews or magazine features set up yet, but she does have a few online radio stations interested in interviewing me that we are working on setting up for early May. She has also released a press release that officially announces me as her client (Appendix I). I have sent out my press kit to a few different media outlets and have already interviewed with *The Artist Inspired Show*, so I am confident Angela and I combined will be able to see results in the near future.

Chapter 4

An End to the Journey (Reflective Essay)

Introducing Alexandra Moniqué has truly been a journey through the music industry. I began this project thinking it would be a walk in the park. I write music all the time; so why not create an album out of it and promote it? However, there is so much more that goes into the creation and promotion of an EP than I initially realized. There are few key reflective points I have already mentioned above, but I am also going to revisit those points here.

I have been singing since before I could talk, so *Introducing Alexandra Moniqué* truly has been a fulfilling journey both artistically and as a music industry student. I grew up singing and dancing, so performing has always been a passion of mine. My family raised me listening to the Motown greats such as Marvin Gaye, The Temptations, The Supremes, Stevie Wonder, and Diana Ross, as well as Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston, Luther Vandross, Prince and more. I started teaching myself how to play piano at age seven and began singing in the styles of Billie Holiday, Mariah Carey, and Alicia Keys when I began voice lessons at age eight. As I matured I found myself drawn to Alicia Keys and Sara Bareilles for their amazing mixtures of piano and vocals, Christina Aguilera for her powerful, soulful voice, and Etta James for her impassioned lyrics. I have always been a writer, so I found a way to blend the characteristics I admired most about each of these artists and create my personal sound.

When deciding what direction to take for my Capstone project I immediately knew that I wanted to do something that involved my own music. Prior to the project I was shy about performing my own music for others, so I decided to force myself to do so by creating an EP. To tie in my major and take that a step farther, I decided to promote myself and act as a manager,

marketer, and publicist. Thus *Introducing Alexandra Monique: A Journey Through the Music Industry* was born.

This project required me to blend everything I have ever learned about music both artistically and professionally. Artistically this project required songwriting, composition, recording, production, mixing, and mastering. The songwriting and piano compositions were the simplest to complete because I have been singing and playing piano my entire life. I have also taken songwriting classes while at SU and participated in numerous songwriting seminars, so I felt confident of my ability to write songs for the EP.

My strength lies in writing piano ballads, but that does not make for a very diverse or interesting album. I challenged myself to write something different and unusual for my style. That is how “Bliss” came into being. I have always prided myself on writing songs that have meaning. My lyrics are deep and honest; but I have been told that sometimes my lyrics are too deep and they can sometimes go over my listeners’ heads. “Bliss” was created more for mainstream radio. It’s about drinking oneself into a state of ignorant bliss. Rather than my usual piano background, “Bliss” utilizes bass and synthesized sounds. It is like nothing I have ever created, and because of that it is one of my favorite songs on the EP.

Prior to “Bliss” I had never produced a beat before. I sat down at my computer hundreds of times in the past and had tried to produce a beat, but nothing was ever successful. I watched YouTube tutorials and downloaded various apps and programs, but I never had the motivation to really push myself to learn. *Introducing Alexandra Moniqué* gave me the motivation I needed to learn this new skill. My first produced beat was a simple one, but now I feel confident in my ability to produce more beats in the future, and I want to explore my beat production software more in depth.

Recording, mixing, and mastering proved just as difficult as beat production. Before I went to Catalyst Recordings, I tried to record my music myself. After many fruitless hours of recording attempts, I determined I needed the help of a professional. Although I am glad I was able to have that experience at Catalyst, I still felt the need to record a song on my own and challenge myself. I locked myself in my apartment one weekend, forced myself to sit down and learn everything there is to know about my USB microphones, GarageBand, and how to truly utilize my recording equipment. I mixed the track to the best of my ability and then mastered it using an online platform called LANDR. All you have to do with LANDR is upload a WAV file of the track and the site does the rest. It mixes and masters it for you within minutes, and for \$10 you can download a high quality WAV file that is ready for use. After I finished “Bliss,” my EP was complete and ready for release.

Again, this project gave me the incentive to sit down and work through the hours of frustration I encountered. In the past, if I couldn't figure out how to use the recording programs, I would give up. I was just trying to figure out how to use the programs for fun, so there was no reason for me to actually learn. Having an end goal in sight - the final product of my EP - gave me that motivation not to give up. I was able to sit down and learn how to use GarageBand and LANDR so I can now use them in the future.

Within the Bandier program I learned a lot about how to manage and promote an artist's career. Without the knowledge from the Bandier classes I have taken, this project would not have been possible. By blending what I'd learned about management, branding, marketing, and publicity, I created the stepping-stones I need to further my career in the future.

This project reinforced what I have learned about balance. Reconciling Arts and Commerce is a class I took with Ulf Oesterle my junior year. In this class we discussed balancing the art and

the business; but it's tricky. Successful artists always have teams backing them. Although famous artists, such as Beyoncé and Macklemore, are knowledgeable about the music industry, they still have a team so they can focus on their music. I am not successful enough to have a team behind me, so I found that my focus during this journey was always split. I felt that while I was focusing on one, the other suffered. Although I was able to complete the project both artistically and professionally, the process would have been more efficient with a team.

The creation of my EP took longer than I originally projected. I have stacks of songs I could have recorded, but they are all piano ballads. I wanted an EP with different sounds and styles; but I found myself stuck and unable to create the EP I envisioned. I finally had a breakthrough with "Bliss," but the breakthrough was a little late. My EP was supposed to be released Wednesday March 23rd, but I had to push the date back to Monday March 28th because I did not have enough music. I wrote "Bliss" during that extra week, but I fell ill and lost my voice. I was able to record the weekend before the release, but it was not my best work because I was still not at 100 percent. If I had forced myself to sit down and write the song sooner, I would have had more time to allot to recording rather than rushing and being forced to record while ill.

As a first time writer and artist I found deadlines difficult. I work well under pressure, so I wasn't worried about timing or pacing myself. I was confident in my ability to produce work short notice; but unfortunately I didn't factor in various obstacles, such as illness. Failure to factor in such obstacles made accomplishing my deadlines challenging. Additionally, I set those deadlines myself without thinking they would affect anyone but me, so I didn't feel a sense of urgency behind them. This project taught me a valuable lesson in time management. I generally have decent time management skills, but I need to factor in various possibilities/outcomes; and I need to keep in mind that my actions affect other people. Pushing back the release of my EP affected my followers

who were looking forward to that release, and it made me look less reliable because I had to change the date with such short notice.

The business side of this project proved difficult as well. In an era where social media is so popular, building an audience organically can be very challenging. I do not have large social media followings. I tried to spread the word about my music to the followers I do have in the hopes they might share it; but they did not. My family does not use social media much, so they were not excessively helpful; and my closest friends are lazy with social media and sharing so they were not much help either. I do have a few loyal followers who repost and share everything I do, but their followings were not enough to make much traction. In a world diluted with new data constantly being uploaded to the Internet, I found myself lost amongst the masses. The job of the publicist and marketer is to help separate the clutter and ensure that you are seen, but I was so preoccupied with everything else in my project, I was not able to dedicate the time and energy to promotion that I would have liked.

That is one of my biggest regrets with this project: taking on too much. In essence this project was a great idea: a journey through the music industry; but the music industry is large. There are too many jobs for one person to do: management, publicity, marketing, promotions, booking, recording and production, songwriting, composition, singing. It is all too much for one person to pursue. I wish I had focused on one thing as a businesswoman. After production of the EP as an artist, I wish I had just done publicity, or just done marketing. Instead I chose to do everything and was unable to execute anything well. I loved doing this project. I loved being able to have a hand in every single thing in the industry, and I loved having the opportunity to promote myself as an artist. I simply found myself stretched too thin. I should have asked for help more often than I did.

I have a horrible habit of refusing to ask for help because I think I can do everything myself; but that is far from the truth. This project has taught me the value of mentors, advisors, and colleagues. Although I did not ask for help as often as I should have, when I did ask for help the results were amazing. Talking to mentors gave me insight into the music industry I did not have. Talking to advisors gave me insight as well, but they also ensured I was staying on task and focused on my assignment. Talking to colleagues gave me a different view of the music industry; and various colleagues assisted me in tasks such as photography and marketing. I value all of the input and assistance I was given despite my inability to vocalize my need for help.

Introducing Alexandra Monique was created with the intention to truly be a journey through the music industry. The journey was difficult and bore different results than I expected, but I learned so much along the way. I expected to learn various ways to improve as an artist and as a businesswoman. I expanded upon everything I have learned within my major about management, marketing, branding, publicity, PROs, etc. What I did not expect was to learn valuable lessons about time management and seeking help or valuable skills such as music production. I learned that one person cannot do it all. There are different sectors of the music industry for a reason. When I graduate I will have no issues asking someone in a different department than mine for help or offering my assistance because I now know what it is like to be stretched too thin. I also learned a lot about time management and planning ahead. I set deadlines and dates for myself, but I also procrastinated which made meeting those deadlines more stressful than it needed to be.

Despite the stress and the struggles, I consider this journey an enlightening experience. The lessons I learned are immeasurable; and I was able to apply everything I have learned over my four years here at Syracuse. My sophomore year I took a course where I learned how to create

press kits and marketing plans. I applied that to the creation of my electronic press kit, website, and marketing strategy. My junior year I took a songwriting course. I used what I learned in that class to create my songs and ensure that I will be properly compensated for my music in the future both as a songwriter and as a publishing entity. There are many other strategies and tricks I picked up along the way from various guest lecturers and lessons that I was able to apply to my project as well.

This journey brought to mind everything I have learned while attending SU, but it also prepared me for the future in ways I never expected. I began this project thinking my music career most likely wasn't going to progress much further following my graduation; but I've made connections that have inspired me to continue my career. One of my closest friends, DK, is also a singer. Recently she and I have started performing together and have plans to write music together in the coming weeks. I also met a rapper, YS, at an event I was working and he wants to work on a project with me, so we have plans to work together in the future as well. Angela agreed to be my publicist, but only if I was sure I was going to continue pursuing my career. I agreed and intend to do just that: continue pursuing my career.

I never thought that I would actually see any traction with my music career. It is my passion and my love, but I also recognize that I am a stronger businesswoman than performer. This project gave me the confidence I needed to want to pursue my music career, and it gave me the confidence I need to graduate knowing I have the skills to succeed in my industry.

My journey through the music industry began way before the execution of this project; it began the instant I stepped foot on the SU campus. I have been able to apply everything I have learned while at SU into an amazing project that has furthered my career both artistically and professionally. I have learned countless lessons and gained immeasurable experience. *Introducing*

Alexandra Moniqué: A Journey Through the Music Industry was truly a successful and fulfilling journey that I am thankful I was able to make.

Works Cited

B, Breezy. "Artist Branding 101- Things That Affect Your Brand." Rap Rehab. N.p., 22 May 2013. Web. 08 Dec. 2015.

Smith, Clyde. "8 Steps to Building Your Personal Music Brand." Hypebot. Hypebot, n.d. Web. 08 Dec. 2015

Author's Note

All of the audio can be heard at alexandramonique.com. They can also be heard at soundcloud.com/alexandramonique.

Social Media can be seen at:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Alexandra-Moniqu%C3%A9-1067208846646909/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/missmayo29>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/alexandramoniquemusic/>

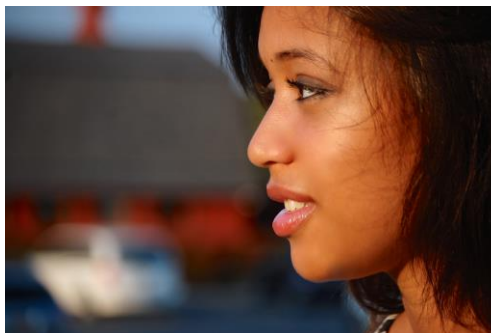
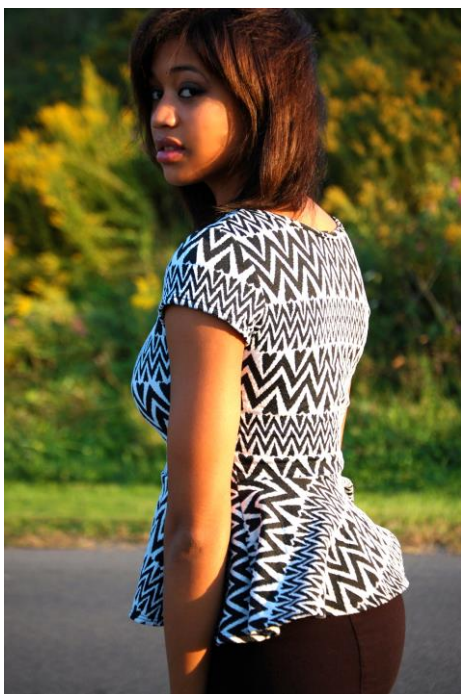
ReverbNation: <https://www.reverbnation.com/alexandramonique>

BandCamp: <https://alexandramoniquemusic.bandcamp.com/album/alexandra-moniqu>

SoundCloud: <https://soundcloud.com/alexandramonique>

Appendix A

Alexandra Moniqué EP Cover Photo and Other Yax Photography Samples



Appendix B

Press Release Picture and Other Maximus Orphanides Photography Samples



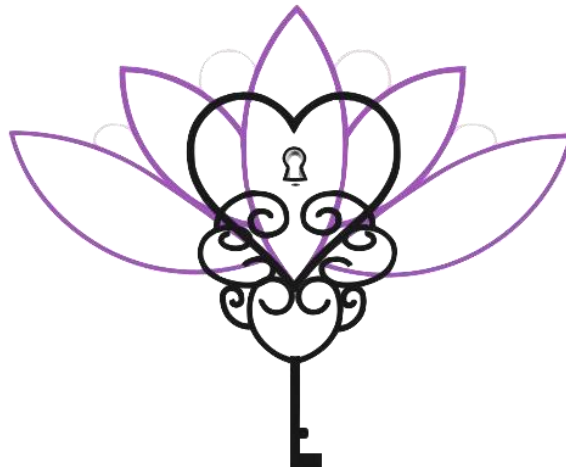
Appendix C

Original Alexandra Moniqué logo created by Jeffrey Watson. This graphic was later adapted and used as artwork for “No More” rather than as a logo.



Appendix D

Alexandra Moniqué logo that I created. This logo acts as Alexandra Moniqué’s signature and graces every video and document released.

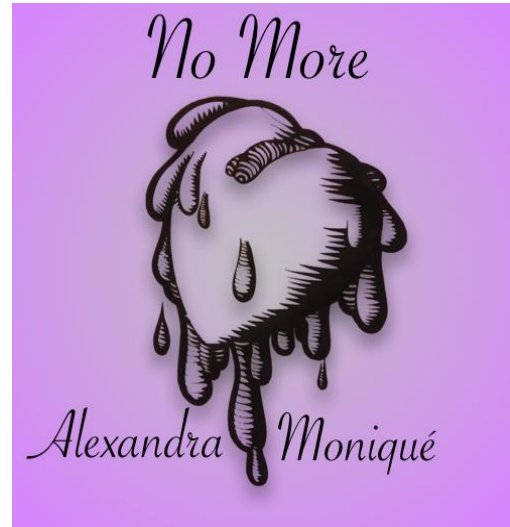


Appendix E

Single Artwork



"Heart Remains the Same" Artwork



"No More" Artwork

Appendix F

Unofficial EP Cover used for various Instagram posts.



Appendix G

Alexandra Moniqué EP Artwork and its accompanying Facebook Header.



Appendix H

Alexandra Moniqué Press Kit



*Alexandra
Moniqué*

Alexandra Moniqué

Full Name

Alexandra Moniqué Mayo

Date of Birth

January 29, 1994

About Alexandra Moniqué

22 year-old singer/songwriter Alexandra Moniqué could sing before she could talk and has been writing music for years; but, now she has officially sparked off her music career with her singles “No More,” “Heart Remains the Same,” and the upcoming release of her self-titled EP, Alexandra Moniqué.

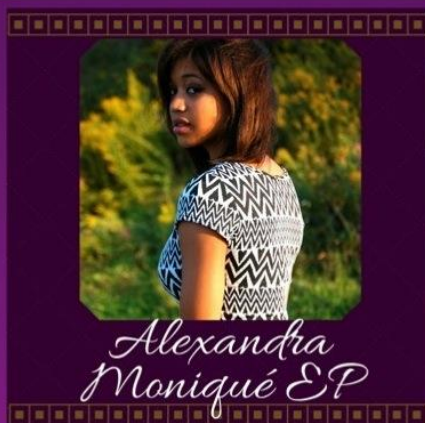
Raised in Canton, MI, Alexandra Moniqué always knew she wanted to be a singer inspired by a wide array of artists such as Etta James, Alicia Keys, Christina Aguilera, Beyoncé, and Sara Bareilles. She has performed in numerous competitions and pageants with her dance troop as both a dancer and a singer.

As she entered her teens, Alexandra Moniqué moved to Charlotte, NC and continued her involvement in music. She was involved in every choir the school had to offer and auditioned for every solo that presented itself. She then attended Syracuse University as a member in the Bandier Program. As part of a program that has an in depth focus on the music industry, she learned ways to build her brand on both the artistic and business level.

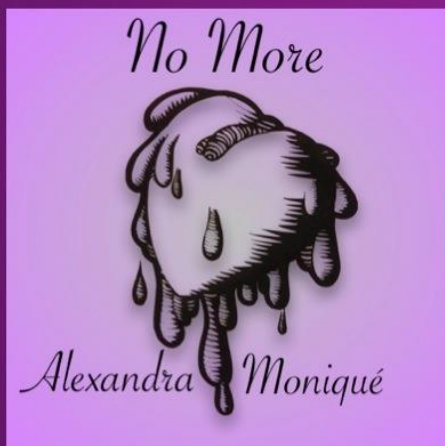
Alexandra Moniqué was a student in the René Crown Honors Program at Syracuse and was given the opportunity to combine everything she'd learned into her Capstone Graduation Project. Using the resources available to her, Alexandra Moniqué has been recording her debut EP, Alexandra Moniqué that is set to release soon.

“I struggle to actually record and release my music once I've written it because I'm a perfectionist and I don't feel like my music is ever good enough. Music stems from my emotions, so it's nerve wrecking putting all that out there for the world to hear. I've learned that you just have to do the best you can and put it out there. There are always going to be people who put you down, but there are also tons of people who support you. I wouldn't have made it this far without my friends and family and for that I will always be grateful.” Currently Alexandra Moniqué is working on writing more music and collaborating with an array of artists. Her EP Alexandra Moniqué is set to release March 23rd.

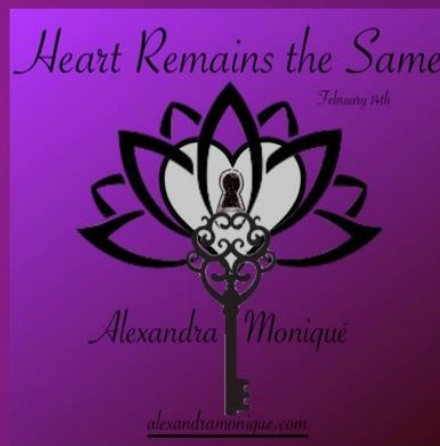
Music



Alexandra Monique EP



No More

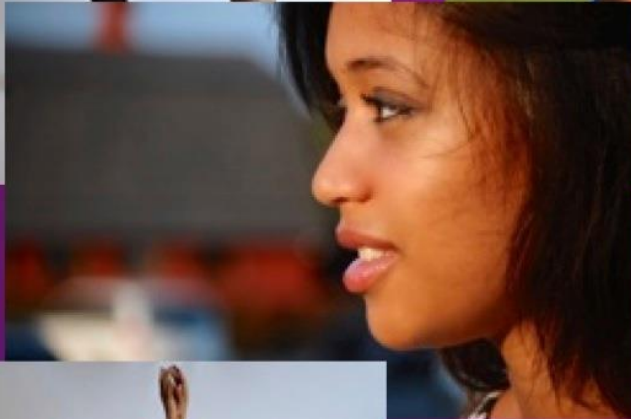


Heart Remains the Same



Heart Remains the Same

Photos

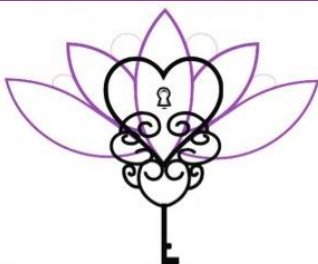


Available at alexandramonique.com.

Alexandra Moniqué



With her deep, bluesy vocals and intimate lyrics, Alexandra Moniqué has recently sparked her music career with the releases of her singles, "No More" and "Heart Remains the Same." Singer/Songwriter/Pianist from Charlotte, NC, Alexandra Moniqué's intricate blend of lyrics and piano conveys passion in every song. Signed to Marshall Street Records, her debut EP Alexandra Moniqué released March 28th.



Social Media

Personal Website

Facebook

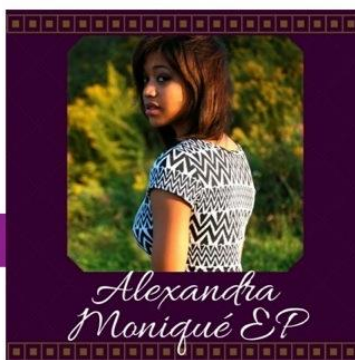
Twitter

Instagram

YouTube

BandCamp

Soundcloud



Contact

APM Public Relations

Angela P. Moore

angiepbiz@gmail.com

770-733-2600



MSR
MARSHALL STREET RECORDS

marshallstrecords.com

Appendix I

APM Public Relations Press Release Post and Press Release



Adult Contemporary & R&B/Soul Artist Alexandra Monique' Signs Deal With APM Public Relations

ATLANTA - April 6, 2016 - PRLog -- APM Public Relations, a full service public relations and communications firm, is proud to announce the signing of multi-talented Adult Contemporary & R&B/Soul Artist Alexandra Moniqué to a public relations agreement. Alexandra Moniqué partnered with APM Public Relations to assist with worldwide representation and to launch a publicity and media relations campaign to maximize her brand value to the fullest potential.

Signed to Marshall Street Records, Alexandra Moniqué released her debut EP, self-titled, "Alexandra Moniqué" on March 28, 2016.

With her deep, bluesy vocals and intimate lyrics, Alexandra Moniqué has recently sparked her music career with the releases of her singles, "No More" and "Heart Remains the Same."

Singer/Songwriter/Pianist from Charlotte, NC, Alexandra Moniqué's intricate blend of lyrics and piano conveys passion in every song.

Raised in Canton, MI, Alexandra Moniqué always knew she wanted to be a singer. As she entered her teens, Alexandra Moniqué moved to Charlotte, NC, and her passion for music continued. She was involved in every choir the school had to offer and auditioned for every solo that presented itself. In addition, she performed in numerous competitions and pageants with her dance troop as both a dancer and a singer. She will graduate in May 2016 from Syracuse University with a degree in Music. While at Syracuse University, she served as a member of the prestigious Bandier Program implemented by Sony Music. No stranger to the music industry, the program has an in-depth focus on the music industry and afforded her the opportunity to build her brand on both the artistic and business level.

A music-lover-at-heart, she is Inspired by Etta James, Alicia Keys, Christina Aguilera, Beyoncé, and Sara Bareilles. She is currently working on more music.

"I struggle to actually record and release my music once I've written it because I'm a perfectionist and I don't feel like my music is ever good enough. Music stems from my emotions, so it's nerve

wrecking putting all that out there for the world to hear. I've learned that you just have to do the best you can and put it out there. There are always going to be people who put you down, but there are also tons of people who support you. I wouldn't have made it this far without my friends and family and for that I will always be grateful."

Alexandra Moniqué is excited about her future. Alexandra Moniqué's music is available to purchase @ alexandramoniquemusic.bandcamp.com.

For more information, visit Alexandra Moniqué's Website www.alexandermonique.com.

Check out her music @ www.soundcloud.com/alexandramonique

Follow Alexandra Moniqué:

Facebook/AlexandraMoniqué

Instagram/alexandramoniquemusic

Twitter/MissMayo29

www.AlexandraMonique.com

To coordinate media interviews, please contact APM Public Relations @770-733-2600 or by email @ angiepr42@aol.com.

Contact

APM Public Relations/ Angela P Moore

770-733-2600

***@aol.com

End