TELL ME - SUPER LOVE

https://on.soundcloud.com/Nq4tmP1Ts1WfVi51A

Produced, composed, and recording "Tell Me," a song that hits all the raw spots underneath the current tension state. The 7/4 timing of this track builds tension and emphasizes the frustration in the lyrics, taking you on an unapologetic search for reality.



ROLE

- Music Producer
- Audio Engineer
- Recording Engineer
- Mixing/Mastering Engineer

TEAM

- Vocalist
- Lyricist
- Musical Consultant

GOAL

Use 7/4 timing in an alt-rock-pop song as a tool to build tension and emphasize the unease of the song's theme.

> "Unsettling and irresistibly captivating"
>
> – HEAT WAVES MAGAZINE

PROCESS

Composition
- Used a complex bass groove, syncopated with an R&B beat and a steady dance beat to create contrast and tension. Used a static and triadic melody to emphasize the melodic hook.

Record
- Recorded vocals with **AKG C414 XLII** condenser mic in baffle and with pop filter. Vocalists within 6" of mic to capitalize on proximity effect.
- Recorded bass with **Shure SM57** placed 2" and off-center from the speaker cone. Also captured with direct injection through **Apogee Duet** with minor phase adjustment.
- Synth instruments selected from **AIchemy** and recorded as MIDI in **Logic Pro X** using **AKAI MPK 261.**
- Refined Logic Pro X virtual drummer by placing a neo-soul drummer on a classic rock kit. Added an additional kick drum using Logic's EDM drum machine and AKAI MPK 261's pads.
- Recorded electric guitar fills with SM57 set 12" from the center of the cabinet's best speaker.

Edit
- Sections from vocal takes were selected, precisely cut, arranged, and bounced. Used **Autotune Graph Mode** to give a precise, yet natural feel. Bounced again, then used auto mode of Autotune to smooth out remnants of being tuned.
- Edited MIDI notes without quantizing to retain a natural feel.
- Selected best guitar take based on interplay with backing vocals.
- Selected the two best bass takes and stitched together, as no one take was perfect.

CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

Composition
- To build the foundation of the composition with a bass groove in 7/4. Lyrics focus on the concept of reality being created from an emotion; leveraged a monophonic duet, alternating vocalists between sections, to bring together a shared perception and emphasize the reality of emotion.

Production
- To give a classic rock feel with a little dirtiness and analog hum. But with tighter, modern DAW precision to emphasize 7/4 timing.

Mix
- Carved out drums with **EQ** at 200 Hz to make room for the bass; boosted the bass at 200 Hz. Applied a **low cut (HPF) filter** to the bass to reduce muddiness in the dense mix.
- Boosted female vocals at 5 kHz for presence and above 10 kHz for air; applied a low cut filter. Reduced the male vocals at 4.5 kHz and boosted the electric guitar there to give the guitar its own place in the spectrum.
- Added a chamber **Chromoverb** to vocals for dimension.
- Applied a **compressor** to control dynamics: on vocals to tighten, and also on the fuzz synth so it wouldn't overwhelm the spectrum. Applied compressor and **noise-gate** on the bass to even out amplitude and remove amp buzz.
- Adjusted stereo panning to give instruments their own space.
- Balanced levels after applying filters, keeping VU out of yellow.

Master
- Compared my sonic signature against Logic Pro's **AI Mastering Assistant**. The Mastering Assistant was alright, but I preferred my own compression outcomes. Proceeded to master manually.
- Used EQ to find frequencies with extreme transients and narrowly reduced those spots. Applied compressor to make amplitude fairly even across the track and add to the rock-pop feel.
- The track got a 0 knee, 5.5:1 ratio, very fast attack and a longer release, and a threshold around -15 dB with a significant make-up gain, while keeping out of the yellow on the meter.
- Reviewed on a variety of sound systems. Found the bass was overwhelming and adjusting the level didn't fix; raised the compression ratio on the bass track only, resulting in a more balanced final output.
- Compared relative loudness to major releases on streaming services to ensure quality.