THE MOON - SUPER LOVE

https://on.soundcloud.com/TMpLyAqMMBHAr6jv6

Composed and produced "The Moon," a melodic alternative mashup of Motown and late 2000s alt-pop. The unusual song structure keeps you tuned in while boldly breaking away from rock n roll expectations.



ROLE

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

TEAM

- Vocalist
- Lyricist
- Bassist
- Keyboardist
- Vocal and Musical Consultant

RESULTS

- **175k+** yearly streams on spotify
- **23+** playlists

GOAL

Juxtapose a static melody against the lyrical theme of motion, while leveraging valence and a melodic bass line.

> "Low and almost dreamy basslines and vocals that effortlessly exude a blondie-level of cool"
>
> – AMELIA VANDERGAST, A&R FACTORY

PROCESS

Composition
- Started with a bassline played to a modified jazz standard, accompanied with triadic hooks on the electric piano, one of which became the vocal melody.
- Deliberately omitted an electric guitar in favor of an electric piano.

Record
- Selected a motown-style drum kit from **Logic Pro X**'s virtual drummer, chosen because it would lock up with the melodic bass
- Recorded the bass with a **Shure SM57** off-center and 2" away from the speaker cone. Simultaneously DI'd with **Apogee Duet** with minor phase correction.
- Recorded two electric piano tracks using an **AKAI MPK 261**, captured as MIDI with a clean **Alchemy** plug-in for instrumentation. Maintained separate stems so they could be treated individually.
- Vocals were performed into an **AKG C414 XLII** chosen for a Freddie-Mercury-quality. Vocalist was 6" from mic, which was nested in a baffle to eliminate reflections with the intention of precisely adding reverb later through plugins. The vocalist had a mix of the piano going to her headphone monitors.

Edit
- Different sections of vocals from multiple takes were selected, precisely cut, arranged, and bounced together. Used **Autotune Graph Mode** to give the melody a precise, yet natural feel. Bounced and sent vocals through auto mode of Autotune for polish.
- Chose the best bassline based on emotional delivery from more than 30 takes.
- The AKAI MPK 261 captured the natural velocity of the electric piano performances. One track was quantized while the other was left natural. Did some MIDI editing to elongate, delete, and move notes to enhance the natural feel.

CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

Composition
- Showcase the strong lyrical message using a bass-led composition, inspired by Wilton Felder's melodic bass style, and utilizing three distinct melodic hooks to engage and hold the listener.

Production
- Leverage bedroom-style production to emphasize the musical simplicity so that the lyrical message can cut through.

- Selected different drum loops for the verse, chorus, and bridge; cross-faded between them.

Mix
- Boosted the kick drum at 400 Hz to add punch, and carved it out at 200 Hz to clean up the mud and make room for the bass. Applied **EQ.** Added **LPF** to the kick drum at 5 kHz to tighten the sound.
- Boosted the bass at 200 Hz and added a **low-cut (HPF) filter** at 80 Hz to further reduce muddiness.
- **Compressed** the bass with a low-ratio, sharp knee, fast attack, slow release, and a threshold around -20 dB with a little makeup gain to control dynamics and give it the right balance between fatness and punch.
- EQ'd the vocals, boosting the high end for presence and air. Added compression to even out the emotional performance. Applied a modified **Chromoverb** chamber reverb plugin to place vocals in a real space and add dimension.
- Adjusted stereo panning to give instruments their own space.
- Made minor adjustments to the levels after all filters were applied to perfect the overall mix and balance.

Master
- Refined with EQ to even out extreme transients. Applied **compression** to smooth the amplitude across the track and achieve a pop feel.
- Added compressor with a medium ratio of 5:1, 0 knee, medium-fast attack, slow release, and relatively low threshold with some makeup gain.
- Reviewed on a variety of sound systems, and based on observations, adjusted the mix levels, making the best compromises across all listening outlets. Reapplied the mastering compressor and checked again.
- Compared the final mastering's relative loudness to major releases on streaming services to ensure quality.