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MPA – ISP
Linkin' Park – Numb
Research Paper

The song I chose to cover in my ISP is Numb by Linkin' Park. It's a very powerful song in both lyrics and instrumentation. I'm a big Linkin' Park fan and when their album *Meteora* came out in 2003, Numb was by far one of my favorites from the album and still is today. It's one of those songs I was able to connect with emotionally and musically. The tune is catchy and I think the overall production and arrangement of the song is excellent. I liked the idea of finally having a go at recreating my own version of it with this project, so that's why I chose this song. Initially, it was a toss up between Numb and one of LP's other songs "What I've Done" from their *Minutes to Midnight* album. Don Gilmore produced the album *Meteora* that included Numb. Most of it was recorded at NRG studios and Andy Wallace mixed it.

I couldn't find very much on Mr. Gilmore for some reason or other, but the information I did find on him was that he's an American music producer and he not only co-produced Linkin' Park's album *Meteora* but he also produced their first album *Hybrid Theory*. Some of his other credits are as follows: Duran Duran, Good Charlotte, Eve 6, Avril Lavigne, The Veronicas, Peal Jam, Trust Company, Trapt, Bullet For My Valentine, Hollywood Undead. He has much more credits but these are some of the more famous ones.

There wasn't much personal information available online about Don Gilmore, but from some of the interviews done with bands he worked with and their experience with him, it's safe to say that he is one of those producers that takes his time out to know about his artist, who they are and what kind of sound he needs to get out of them. The interview with Linkin Park, shown here on YouTube is an example: <http://youtu.be/bWiIq5FSgII> Because of Don Gilmore's producing style, he's well known for being able to manipulate the artists he works with in a way that pushes them to create results they probably didn't know they were capable of. He's not afraid to tell them when he thinks something is terrible and he also pushes, even though they may get angry, until everyone is able to achieve desired results. According to Gilmore, he looks at his method of pushing out the full potential he can from his artists as a "labor of love" and it shows. It's important for the song to have the right depth that can resonate with the listener. I think if he didn't push Linkin' Park in the studio to rewrite lyrics and perfect their art in the best possible way, *Meteora* wouldn't have had as big a success as it had. In its first week alone, it sold around 830,000 units. From the Linkin' Park interview, I also learned that Don Gilmore is a bass player.

Numb by Linkin' Park is a rock song in the key of F# minor. The key signature is in 4/4 and the tempo is moderate at about 108 BPM. The chord progression in the song flows smoothly. There are also power chords used throughout the song. The chords used in the song are as follows: *Intro* – F#5, D5, A5, E5; *Verses* – F#m, D, A, E; *Choruses* – F#5, D5, A5, E5; *Bridge* – D5, E5, F#5, G#5, A5, C#5. The melody of the song is very

catchy and clear. It goes well with the chord progression and stands out nicely in the production. The melody falls between the ranges of A3-A4. A3 appears to be the lowest note Chester sings and I think A4 is the highest. I believe Chester has a tenor vocal range. From the research done about him, it stated that his range is from A2 – F5. The vocals for Numb are very well done. You can hear the harmonies when the vocal doubles up in the chorus and bridge sections of the song, which gives a fuller sound. You can also hear Mike's vocals in the background during the pre-chorus sections as a sort of response to Chester's vocals. I think the lyrics fit perfectly with the music. Everything matches and is blended nicely. The lyrical content also meshes with the instrumentation. The aggressiveness of the lyrics and the choruses fit well. The subtleness of the verses also stands out and the eerie feel to the pads in the verses gives it an almost underwater kind of feel. I think it matches well when Chester sings about the pressure he's under and being 'caught in the undertow.'

The production of the song was very well done. The synths, pads, keyboard, drums, guitar, bass, turntables and vocals were blended nicely. The reverb and EQ was subtle and did the trick in giving the vocals and instrumentation presence. The underlying synth pad sounds have great reverb that helps create depth. Since Linkin' Park is a rock band, the live performances of the musicians were tracked in the studio with the use of Pro-Tools. In the song, you can hear a lot of layering especially with the guitar parts. The guitar also appears to be panned out left and right so the vocals sit nicely in the center. As a result, the song has a wide feel to it in terms of space. The vocals are smooth and crisp and are doubled up with underlying harmonies in the chorus and bridge sections. The overall compression was also subtle but good. Overall, the song and mix were very well done. It had a good vibe; it was filled with energy and had that element that allowed you to connect emotionally to the content. I think the musical arrangement was geared towards the middle and high-mid frequencies. I also think the song was properly balanced. The different instrument parts fit nicely in their frequency ranges without competing with each other or drowning each other out.

References:

<http://youtu.be/bWiIq5FSgII>

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<http://linkinpark.wikia.com/wiki/Meteora>

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