*MUSI 1002 – Issues With Popular Music (Summer 2014)*

**The Effect of Technology on Popular Music Production and Reception**

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How computer based devices impacted the process of recording, processing and producing music to be convenient for listeners?

**Abstract:**

Listening to music was a social activity before the discovery of computers, people used to listen to music as they go to a theatre where a singer or a band or an opera play music live in front of people, this way of listing to music had its own advantages and disadvantages, some of the advantages were that you get the chance to meet people who listen to the same type of music and gain new friends with similar interests, you also get to listen to high quality sound coming out of such enormous speakers and you get to actually see the singer in person which is more of “living the moment”, on the other hand, you can’t play this song anytime or anywhere you want or pause and play it again.

Nowadays, due to the advances in the information technology industry, singers and composers have the ability to record their music using computers, producing high quality and convenient products that can be played on the fly by the listener, you can store your huge music library that 50 years ago would occupy a whole room filled with cassettes and CDs, on a device that can rest on the palm of your hand, you just need to plug your pair of headsets and you are good to go, people adopted this technology because of its convenience, cost and great quality.

This new technology convention resulted in a whole new way of listening to music and how its received by people, as (Leman, 2007) started his book stating that digital media handles music as physical energy, but humans consider music as beliefs, interpretations, experiences, evaluations, significations and intentions.[1]

Referring to Lemans’ point of view, it’s obvious that music now is different than music in the previous century, its different in the way it reaches its audience and the its different in the actual music matter, as now days music is a physical energy stored in specific type of a digital storage, this new technology changed the terminology of popular music in the current century, as an example people who now listen to music using cassettes or music box or other old music playing equipment, its directly considered that the music that they listen to is old and not popular because popular is defined as something that is contemporary and accepted by the people during a period of time or depending on their geographic location. And nowadays popular music is usually defined as the music accessible throw YouTube, iTunes or other internet based music provider. Figure 1-1 in the appendix illustrates how digital recordings are increasing in rate each year.

Technology didn’t only affect the way music is received but also it changed the way its composed and made by singers or composers, as an example DJs and Music Production Studios, basically DJ party is impossible without a computer and Music Production Studios wouldn’t be able to produce such high quality songs without the help of electric instruments and computers.

In fact, Electronic music is now usually considered popular, as technology continuously keeps permeating into our society and in our everyday life, and so far from this point of view technology offers a reliable and convenient ground for music industry, this paper will breakdown in depth how technology play a huge role in the music industry.

**Music Consumption and Technology:**

Technology provides many ways in which we can listen to music and each day new ways are developed, and these technologies get intenerated into our social life and in our understating to music, the process of which people listen to music changes from time to time, each occasion has its own special kind of music and sometimes we link such song to a thing that we did or a special moment in our memory. (O’Hara and Brown, 2006)[2]

Sixty years ago around 1958, people were listing to music throw LP players, where they buy an album recorded on a huge black disk and put it on a playback device often made out of wood or metal, and enjoy the music which was not as affordable but more convenient at that time, later on 1965 where the first cassette player was made available to public which caused a huge boom in the music industry and changed how artists think about their music and how its recorded and accepted by people, In 1978 the Sony Walkman device which provided the portable experience, few years later the CD technology came to public as albums were recorded on a disk that can rest in the plam of your hands with an incredibly light weight, In 1995 MP3 was introduced to the public which is a compressed form of digital sound which until now is leading the recording industry.

In the past 20 years music was produced, consumed and shared among people in the society as files having the extension “MP3”, MP3 files became popular because of their small size and high quality playback sound making it the leading trademark when it comes to listening and sharing music, MP3 files are basically recordings of music stored as a digital data inside the computer, it can be accessed in a legally buy buying it from an official online stores such as iTunes and can be illegally accessed on the internet which are called pirated music as in 1990 the application called Napster (music sharing app).[3]

iTunes is now the most popular electronic music library, it contains a huge number of songs and almost every new artist or old artists depend on iTunes to publish their music and making their music easy to reach for their listeners, iTunes is powered by Apple which is the same creator of many famous products that are used for listening to music such as iPod, iPhone and iPod Nano which all support syncing with iTunes to transfer the library to any apple device you have making it handy and easier than ever to access your music library.

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**Reference List:**

[1] Leman M. (2007). Embodied Music Cognition and Meditation Technology.

[2] O'Hara, K., & Brown, B. (2006). *Consuming Music Together: Social and Collaborative Aspects of Music Consumption Technologies*.

[3] Hracs, Brian J. (2011) Restructuring and risk in the digital music industry.

**Appendix**

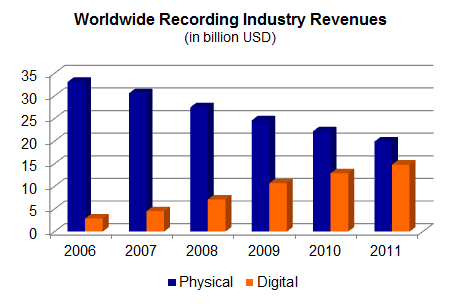
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Figure 1-1

<http://subrealism.blogspot.ca/2012/12/the-impact-of-technology-on-recording.html>