‘The Future of Music’

Themes and Tendencies

Handout with references

Mads Krogh, Associate Professor, PhD
School of Communication and Culture - Musicology, University of Aarhus
musmk@cc.au.dk, http://person.au.dk/en/musmk@hum
Digitized music culture

In 2019, ‘streaming revenue grew by 22.9% to US$11.4 billion and for the first time accounted for more than half (56.1%) of global recorded music revenue.’


On the digitization of musical life, cf:


Streaming and digital music curation

With mobile media and digital music services 'ubiquitous listening' prevails, and music is regarded as a tool to 'enhance and improve every mood and occasion'.


On ‘ubiquitous listening’ and digital music curation see:


Datafication in the music industries

Digital music services profit from collecting, analyzing and selling user data. As music listening is intimately connected to everyday life, it is also regarded as a source of high quality data. Moreover, the music industries are increasingly relying on advanced data analysis and metrics for decision-making (e.g. with regard to playlist curation).


Media convergence and audio branding

The music industries have always collaborated with media and tech companies. However, with increased media convergence, music is integrated in an ever wider range of media products and commercial environments. This presents opportunities for audio branding and for developing artist brands – to the point, where this is mandatory for building a career. Thus, ‘popular music’ is fundamentally reconceived ‘as promotion’.


Live music matters

Digitization has spun counter-reactions in terms of vinyl enthusiasm and a resurgence to 'slow listening'. This may be conceived as an tendency towards 'eventification' of the listening situation, which parallels the rise in live music and, in a wider sense, music events such as concerts and festivals. Live music matters commercially while, again, pointing to the convergence of the music industries with other sectors such as tourism, food and design.


Covid-19 epilogue

While live music has been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 crisis, other areas of the music industries and of musical life have been less affected, and some have even experienced a boost (e.g. communal singing).

This illustrates the great diversity of activities and ‘forms’ of music within and beyond the industry. And, again, a significant reason is the thorough digitization of production, distribution and consumption, which allows for many musical activities to persist and even thrive despite demands of social distance.

The use of music in the Covid-19 crisis is currently the topic of research projects – see, for example, “Music in the time of Corona”.


[All images are from Pexels.com]