

MUSIC TODAY EUROPE

explains

# THE DOWNFALL OF MUSIC

*And: How Mozart turned into Justin Bieber.*

**About 250 years ago music has reached its climax. Brilliant composers were hired by kings and emperors to compose the most beautiful music humans will ever be allowed to hear. Alone the masterpieces of the German composer Mozart do fill 170 CDs. And none of these CDs is boring. Today we switch on the radio and listen to music by untalented writers interpreted by clueless industry marionettes that have everything but skills and charisma. What happened? The answer is simple but yet surprising.**

## FROM THE 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

The kings and emperors of past times had the highest standards. They wanted to be entertained on a very high level. Moreover, the artists they supported represented the creative power of kingdoms or empires during official occasions. That is why kings and emperors only hired the very best artists - superstars of a kind that we have never seen after this period again.

The hired artists, on the other hand, were brilliant allround talents who perfectly understood the theory of music. They did not just know the characteristics of every instrument and of sound itself but were often also able to play several instruments by themselves - to an extent of perfection. Most of these artists were, indeed, virtuosos. Just like Mozart, Vivaldi and Paganini. Either one was brilliant or one was not on the spot.

In these eras, music was luxury. Not just the brilliant composers but also the amazing orchestra musicians had to be financed. The music that has been written in these eras mark the climax in the history of music. This climax declines in the early 20th century.

## THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

The first recording studios occurred in the

beginning of the 20th century. They were very rare and incredibly expensive. Thus, studio time was highly limited and hardly affordable.

The first systems to play back music (Phonographs and Gramophones) were developed in the late 19th century and the first radio stations were evolving in the 1920s.

The possibility to record music and the possibility to air and to play back recorded music were the very starting points of the modern music business.

Because studio time was expensive and highly restricted, the bosses of studios did not focus on recording the untalented boys next door. They tried to discover the best engineers, composers, musicians and singers. They wanted to record outstanding performances and they wanted to make millions by entertaining and wowing the masses. Radio stations were crazy about new material and, thus, the few record artists became incredibly popular and rich (to mention a few: Zarah Leander, Elvis, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and The Jacksons). Everything was about quality: The quality of the compositions, the performances, the recording and the sound.

When Michael Jackson or Prince were on the rise they were successful because they were extraordinarily talented in every field of music. People looked up to them. They were unreachable. But today they would have no chance: No one can identify with so much talent and people do not want to admire god-like persons anymore. The reason: Such stars confront the audience with its own lack of skills. Suddenly, talent turned into a burden.

## THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

In the 1990s computers became broadly available and changed the music business to the worse: Out of a sudden the quality

was ruled out. Suddenly everyone deemed oneself a music producer just because one had a PC.

The lack of skills on the client's side has been recognized by the industry: It started to sell dreams and ready-to-use sounds ("samples") to millions of wanna-be artists that have no clue regarding music. As a result, millions of people sit in front of a laptop, press the play button and think they are composers or producers just because a beat or sound they have bought before is playing back.

The media industry recognized this situation and started to brain wash the masses by casting shows. Suddenly it was possible to shift the focus from rare talents and expensive top productions to cheapest electronic mass productions and throw-away-music performed by the untalented girl or boy next door: The masses can identify with the electronic sounds ("I have the same samples!") and the lack of talent ("if Justin Bieber can make it, I can make it, too!"). This is how Mozart turned into Justin Bieber; this is how the phenomenon of EDM, Techno, Rap, and House Music can be explained: Identification sells! MTE.