CHAPTER 8

The Relationship Between Swedish Music Producers and Music Consumers During the Past 50 Years

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In recent decades, advancements in media technology have drastically changed the relationship between music producers and consumers. Digitalization has transformed music consumption, leading to new ways of listening and new opportunities for music production. With the help of digital audio workstations (DAWs), individuals can easily create and distribute professional-grade music, surpassing the performance of most of the specialized equipment used in the past.

The availability of IT and media technologies has improved over the years, allowing more people to access audio equipment and music production software. This has led to a significant increase in the number of individuals producing music. According to the Swedish Composers' International Music Agency (STIM), membership of this organization has

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increased sharply in recent years, with approximately 1 per cent of the Swedish population registered as members, including composers, lyricists and arrangers (Stim, 2023).

It is not only the production tools and techniques that have evolved but also how people listen to music. Music consumption has undergone a significant change over the years. With the advent of streaming music on the internet, people have access to new tools for music consumption, resulting in new music listening patterns. One such pattern is the use of interactive web-based systems for streaming music, enabling music users to interact by sharing playlists. Additionally, listening to music using algorithm-controlled systems has become more popular, and this has changed the conditions for music production. In many ways, this development can be seen as a kind of democratization process, as streaming music gives listeners a lot of choice thanks to the extensive music libraries available. On streaming platforms like Spotify, listeners have access to music from all over the world. Since its establishment in 2008, Spotify has seen almost 800 Swedish artists individually accumulate over 50 million streams. More than 25 Swedish artists have surpassed one billion streams on Spotify (Andersson 2023; Johansson 2023).

The development of media technology in recent decades has made music production tools better, cheaper and more accessible to people. But it has also brought new challenges for music creators. In the past, music publishers, record companies and TV and radio had significant control over what music was published and made available to the masses. It was a challenging task to publish music in the past. Due to technological advancements, the process of making music available on the internet has become much easier. The challenge now is to reach the audience amidst the abundance of new music worldwide. The shift towards digital music has caused a change in the way the music industry is controlled. Record companies are no longer the main gatekeepers, as this role has been taken over by a few major global streaming services that cater directly to the end users. These streaming services do not operate as gatekeepers in the traditional sense but rather assist listeners to navigate their way through their extensive music libraries by offering helpful tools such as playlists.

Music producers in today's music industry adopt various approaches to their work. While some prefer working in teams, others prefer working individually. This can make it difficult for an outsider to understand the roles and responsibilities of different individuals in an ongoing recording session. The tasks and roles of a music producer are often intertwined, and

responsibilities are commonly shared in different ways. It is not uncommon to see individuals taking on multiple roles. Music producers are involved in numerous aspects of music production and can take on various roles, such as songwriters, musicians or arrangers. Many music producers also function as entrepreneurs and can handle multiple roles or tasks. They have a variety of responsibilities, including making artistic decisions, conducting sound engineering assessments and managing administrative tasks (Burgess 2013, 7–25; Hepworth-Sawyer et al. 2019, 59–76; Molde 2024, 149–161).

Music producers play a crucial role in ensuring that a production is completed within the given budget and timeframe, and it is one of their main duties that has mostly stayed the same over time (Burgess 2014, 177–179; Schmidt Horning 2013, 208–221). This is particularly important when dealing with external clients, such as record companies or music publishers. To perform their role successfully, the music producer oversees all aspects of the production process, from selecting songs and performers to mixing and mastering the tracks. The goal is to deliver a high-quality product that meets the client's expectations (Gullö and Thyrén 2019, 189).

Although music producers have financial and administrative responsibilities, their primary focus is on the artistic and creative aspects of music production. The role of music producers has evolved significantly over the years:

> Over the last fifty years, the philosophy and technique of music production have undergone a major transformation. As the activity of recording has widened in scope from a primarily technical matter to a conceptual and artistic one as well, it has assumed a central role in areas such as instrumental arrangement and the sculpting and placement or audio samples. (Moorefield 2005, xiii)

Moorefield notes that music production has evolved from being a technical task to an artistic one. Today, music production aims to create an artistic work rather than just to record great performances. This can be achieved by using the advanced technology available for music production, which enables producers to be regarded as just as important as composers.

The responsibilities of music producers have evolved significantly over the years. For instance, in today's music production, the terms "topliner" and "producer" are used together to describe two distinct roles. A topliner

provides the melody while the producer creates the backing track (Auvinen 2020, 161–177). But sometimes a topliner is called a songwriter, and producers who make tracks is referred to as tracker-producers, trackers or programmers, and this can be a bit confusing. Given the dynamic nature of the music industry, though, it's reasonable to expect that the scope of a producer's responsibilities will continue to change (Molde 2024, 149–161).

How Did Music Production in Sweden Get to Where It Is Now?

Sweden has a long-standing history of successful music exports. Notable examples include Björn Skifs' "Hooked on a Feeling", which became the first Swedish song to reach number one in the American *Billboard* charts in 1974, and the international breakthrough of ABBA in the mid-1970s. Since then, many Swedish music artists and producers, such as Avicii, Ace of Base, Zara Larsson, The Cardigans, Roxette, Europe, First Aid Kit, Robyn, Swedish House Mafia and Max Martin, have achieved international success. Swedish music producers and songwriters have also made significant contributions to the success of many international artists. This success highlights the importance of music production in Sweden, which has led to an increase in the export of Swedish music (Johansson 2021; Gradvall 2024).

Sweden exports more music than it imports, and this success is mainly due to the hard work of the many music producers who have been instrumental in the achievements of the music industry. There are three main ways in which Swedish music producers and composers have been successful. Firstly, they have created popular music for Swedish and international artists, resulting in top-selling records and songs with high numbers of downloads and streams. Secondly, they have focused on making music for films and TV. Lastly, Swedish music producers have tapped into the growing computer game music market (Flintberg and Nylander 2023, 17). But music producers are not limited to producing records and creating music for films, TV and computer games (Nyman and Rödblom 2020, 26). Their expertise has also been utilized in various fields such as advertising, radio and podcast production, theatrical and musical production, fashion shows, art installations, education and instruction, meditation and relaxation music, audiobooks and voice recording. Due to their ability to create and manipulate music and sounds, they are in high demand in many areas

beyond music recording and entertainment, as shown by some of the interviewees who were interviewed for this book.

The widespread interest in music production and music making in Sweden today can be traced back to political decisions made in the post-war period. These decisions aimed to preserve Swedish traditions and classical bourgeois culture in response to the commercialized youth culture that had emerged primarily in the United States. For a long time, music education neglected popular music, including music production, due to cultural and political biases. For instance, the Swedish Parliament made a cultural policy decision in 1974 to counteract the adverse effects of commercialism in the cultural sphere. Ironically, this decision was made in the same year that ABBA won the Eurovision Song Contest and Björn Skifs & Blåblus topped the US singles chart with "Hooked on a Feeling"—two events that were significant for the emergence of successful Swedish music exports. Music production in Sweden primarily developed outside of government-funded institutions, resulting in the popularity and significance of Swedish music domestically, but also internationally, which led to a growth in music exports (Kulturutredningen 1995, 77–102; Forss 1999, 18–21; Arvidsson 2007, 18; Svegfors et al. 2023, 9–13).

The Democratization of Music Production and Distribution Through Technology

For many years, music production required expensive equipment and technical expertise. However, with the advancement of technology, particularly digital technology, new creative tools have been developed, making music production more accessible than ever before. These tools allow music producers to focus on the creative aspect of music production, from the initial idea to the final product. With contemporary musical technology, producers can manipulate various musical parameters such as rhythm, tempo, harmony, melody, instrumentation and dynamics. As a result, music producers have become critical players in the music industry, with their creative and artistic input often being as important as that of composers and artists. The increasing accessibility of music production equipment has led to more people dedicating themselves to producing music. Furthermore, digitization has enabled anyone to publish their music and reach a global audience (Hepworth-Sawyer et al. 2019, 135–139, 257–258).

In the past, music was mainly distributed through records with recorded performances on them, also called phonograms, and radio and TV. With the emergence of digital platforms, music can now be easily accessed and distributed globally. It is worth noting that Spotify, which originated in Sweden, has become a significant player in the music industry worldwide. Much of Sweden's music exports can be attributed to digitalization. However, sharing music through different media is not exactly new. Even in the late Middle Ages, when printing was first introduced, music was shared through various media. As paper production and printing technology advanced during the 1800s, many publishers emerged with significant publications of different types of music. This trade was not limited to professional musicians but aimed at a growing section of the urban middle class that was interested in music. People could buy sheet music and perform the music themselves. This led to an increasing market for sheet music and musical instruments. After the invention of the phonograph by Thomas A. Edison in 1877, which enabled both sound recording and playback of recorded music, a commercial market for recorded music gradually emerged. This led to the development of music technology being directed towards refining the forms of spreading mediated music. During the late 1800s, the music industry began to take shape due to technological advancements and industrialization. Business owners recognized the correlation between music, technology, the marketplace and commerce. Therefore, record labels invested in recording music in their studios and established marketing departments and talent scouts to create attractive consumer products. During that time and for many years, music producers primarily focused on creating live recordings. These recordings were occasionally made on location but more frequently in purpose-built recording studios. Skilled artists performed during the recordings, along with studio musicians and orchestras that specialized in making recordings. In most cases, the people who produced the music were relatively unknown, except those who were professionally active in the music industry (Culshaw 1982, 50–149; Burgess 2013, 7–25; 2014, 177–179; Schmidt Horning 2013, 1–10; 2020, 109–123).

Before the digital era, the recorded music market was divided between national and multinational companies. The global music market was dominated by a few record companies, mainly from the United States but also with a significant share owned by UK companies. Many smaller national record companies in Sweden had a considerable share of the Swedish record market but needed help achieving major sales success abroad. In

the end of the 1950s and during the 1960s, several Swedish artists enjoyed great success in Germany, but it was mainly in the other Nordic countries that there was interest in Swedish music. These export successes resulted from extensive strategic work by their respective record companies and music producers. The industry of recorded music has seen many technological advancements over the years, which have led to an increase in both quality and productivity (Forss 1999, 18–21; Björnberg and Bossius 2017, 1–9).

Technological Achievements That Have Been Important for Music Production

There have been significant technological advancements that have played a crucial role in the development of music production, particularly in terms of recording and distributing music. Compared to modern streaming technology, the early music industry relied on complex mechanical technologies. Nonetheless, recorded music quickly became very popular. The first-ever record to sell over a million copies was "Vesti la giubba" from Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*, sung by the Italian opera singer Enrico Caruso (1873–1921). It was recorded in November 1902 and released by the Gramophone & Typewriter Company. One of the most significant breakthroughs was the replacement of shellac records with vinyl records in the 1950s. Vinyl records were available in 7- and 12-inch formats, dominating music distribution until digital CD technology took over in the late 1980s (Burgess 2014, 18, 178–179).

Microphones and tape recorders are two essential inventions that have significantly transformed music production, enabling music producers, artists and musicians to record and create music with greater clarity and precision. Microphones are essential devices in music production, converting sound vibrations in the air into electronic signals for recording. Tape recorders revolutionized music production by allowing recording and playback on the same machine. Multi-channel tape recorders enabled the recording of different instruments at different times. The early multi-channel tape recorders had two, four or eight channels, while the standard of 24 recording channels dominated music studios by the 1970s. Analogue magnetic tape recorders had a limited signal-to-noise ratio. To achieve an acceptable audio quality, expensive advanced noise cancellation systems were required when many tracks were used in a recording. Introducing multi-channel music recording technology resulted in a higher level of

technical complexity and more time being needed to produce the music compared to older single-take recordings. But it also provided creative advantages, such as breaking up complicated productions into segments. Besides tape recorders, the equipment utilized was usually manufactured in small series and came with an expensive price tag, making music production an exclusive activity. Studios were explicitly designed for recording purposes, with musicians playing in dedicated studio rooms while technicians and producers worked in control rooms. As recording technology evolved, using multiple microphones allowed unique sounds to be created, turning recording studios into experimental environments for innovation. Therefore, technological advancements had a significant impact on musical expression (Théberge 2020, 69–87).

During the 1980s, portable cassette recorders such as Sony's Walkman became popular among consumers, enabling people to listen to music while on the move. During this period, cassettes began to outsell vinyl records in several countries. These technological advancements significantly boosted the music industry and allowed global music distribution in new markets (Du Gay et al. 2013)

Harry Nyquist, a Swedish-American mathematician, calculated a sampling theorem in the 1920s, which is still the foundation of digital sound processing today. Digital sound recording experiments began in the early 1970s, and by the 1980s, digital audio technology became more common in music production. The musical instrument digital interface (MIDI) became a worldwide standard for digital communication between electronic musical instruments like synthesizers, drum machines and professional music computer systems. In the 1990s, the development of computer technology led to digital audio workstations (DAWs) becoming the dominant music production tool (Hepworth-Sawyer and Golding 2012, 3–23, 269).

Music Plays a Crucial Role in Radio Broadcasting

Sound recording technology has given rise to various innovations that have transformed the music industry. Radio technology, for instance, was invented by Guglielmo Marconi in the late 1800s. It allowed for the wireless transmission of signals, including music, which was highly sought after by listeners. Radio also led to the emergence of new music radio professions like disc jockeys, who played the latest popular music. Radio quickly became a crucial medium for music producers and record labels.

Until the early 1960s, Swedish public service radio, Radiotjänst (1924–1957) and thereafter Sveriges Radio (SR), played a limited amount of music compared to today's standards. Radio programmes were well structured and regulated, with music carefully selected by the music editors of the radio stations. The purpose of the music was to educate the listeners rather than primarily to entertain them. At that time, there were no commercial radio or TV stations in Sweden, and the public could only access what was broadcasted through the public service channels. There was limited room for variation, and many popular songs and artists were rarely played on the radio (Björnberg 1998, 93–95; Östman 2018, 308–310; Gradvall 2023, 284–286).

In March of 1961, a significant event took place when Radio Nord began transmitting music 24 hours a day from the ship named *Bon Jour*, which was situated in the international waters of the Baltic Sea. This event was soon dubbed pirate radio by the newspapers. At that time, Sweden and its Nordic neighbours had a radio monopoly, and only the public service broadcaster Sveriges Radio had the authority to broadcast radio in Sweden. The arrival of Radio Nord was beneficial to the Swedish radio listeners, though. When Radio Nord started broadcasting music that competed with the music played on SR, the latter ran a trial programme called "Melodiradio". This programme eventually became its own channel, P3. Moreover, in October 1961, SR launched a programme called "Tio i topp" (Top Ten). It was a hit parade for teenagers and allowed the listeners to vote for their favourite songs. In May 1962, a new law was introduced that made it illegal to cooperate with pirate transmitters. This law was called the Pirate Radio Act, or "Lex Radio Nord". It prohibited Swedes from owning radio transmitters and banned broadcasts from international waters if they interfered with SR. Specifically, working on the ship that was transmitting, transporting goods to the ship, and advertising on commercial radio stations such as Radio Nord were all forbidden. As a result of this law, Radio Nord's broadcasts ended on 30 June 1962 (Björnberg 1998, 173–177; Kotschack 2009).

It is important to note that Radio Nord was not the first radio station in Sweden apart from SR. In 1955, IBRA Radio planned to record religious programmes in Sweden and broadcast them from a ship in the Baltic Sea, but the plan was never completed. The name of the first non-monopoly radio station in Scandinavia was Radio Mercur, a Danish

station. Skånes Radio Mercur followed closely in 1958, later changing its name to Radio Syd in 1962. At that time, there were areas of international waters in Öresund, commonly known as the Sound, which is a strait forming the Danish–Swedish border. This made it possible to anchor a ship with a radio station there and easily reach 1 million regional listeners. Skånes Radio Mercur could only broadcast over the southernmost parts of Sweden. As a result, Radio Syd had little impact on programming on SR, which had its primary operations in Stockholm, the Swedish capital (Johansson 1985).

In 1962 SR introduced two new programmes: "Kvällstoppen" (the Evening Top) which was a single top 20 parade show and "Svensktoppen" (the Swedish Top), which was a hit parade for songs in Swedish. At this time, English-language songs dominated the Swedish charts. Initially, "Svensktoppen" was primarily aimed at a slightly older audience than teenagers and mainly contained traditional schlager, Swedish versions of international songs, and new Swedish recordings. "Svensktoppen" was quickly appreciated by a wide audience and in the mid-1960s it became Sweden's most popular radio programme, providing a significant platform for Swedish artists to showcase their music (Smith-Sivertsen 2017, 37–46).

The shift towards popular music in SR broadcasts during the 1960s, including "Svensktoppen", increased the demand for Swedish-produced music. In the late 1950s, Sweden had only about 20 phonogram producers. However, by the mid-1960s, this number had increased to around a hundred. Phonogram sales in Sweden increased sevenfold between 1965 and 1975, and by the end of the 1970s, Sweden had the highest per capita record sales worldwide and most record buyers were between 9 and 24 years old. Over the years, the number of radio listeners also increased, and the music played on the radio was repeatedly cited in audience and listener surveys as an important reason why many people chose to listen to the radio (Sverige Konsertbyråutredningen 1971; Brolinson and Larsen 1981, 115–146; Statens kulturråd 1993; Björnberg 1998, 194–195).

In 1993, commercial radio was introduced in Sweden. Today, five major networks operate in the country, and SR, the national public service broadcaster, broadcasts four national and 25 local radio channels. According to the statistics, most of the Swedish population listens to the radio daily. However, over the last couple of years, more listeners have turned to podcasts instead of live broadcasts (Volgsten and Pontara 2019, 263–282; Facht 2023, 50–55).

Music Production for Film, TV and Computer Games

During the late 1800s, as sound recording technology was being developed, so was film technology. However, there were no reliable methods for synchronizing audio and video at that time. Therefore, during the silent film era, it was common for musicians to accompany the film. These musicians could be individual pianists or organists who would often improvise music for the film, or larger ensembles that would play music specially composed for the film performance (Brown 1994, 55–58). Armas Järnefelt (1869–1958) was the first composer in Sweden who received a commission to write music for a film, which was in 1919 for the movie *Sången om den eldröda blomman* (Knust 2016).

The first talkie, *The Jazz Singer*, released in 1927, was a great success. It is the first feature-length motion picture with synchronized recorded music and lip-synchronized singing and speech. Talkies helped to make cinema a mass medium that was hugely popular. Various techniques for sound and music editing of films were quickly developed. Many composers specialized in composing film scores. Other professional groups such as sound engineers, musicians, arrangers and producers also worked with music and sound on film. Even today, many composers and music producers primarily create and produce music for movies. Sweden has a rich tradition of producing impressive musical compositions for films. From the early works of Jules Sylvain (1900–1968) and Kai Gullmar (1908–1982) to those of classical composers like Lars-Erik Larsson (1908–1986) and Dag Wirén (1905–1986), many of Sweden's most accomplished film music composers, such as Björn J:son Lindh (1944–2013), Stefan Nilsson (1955–2023) and Ludwig Göransson (born 1984), have expanded their repertoire beyond the film industry. They have produced music for TV and record productions and have gained international recognition. Ludwig Göransson is a highly successful Swedish film music composer and producer who has achieved great international acclaim. He has won numerous awards for his exceptional musical talent, including the Academy Award for Best Original Score and the Grammy Award for Best Score Soundtrack for Visual Media for his work on the 2018 superhero film *Black Panther*, directed by Ryan Coogler. Göransson also composed the score for the 2022 sequel, *Wakanda Forever*, directed by Coogler. In September 2020, he won the Emmy Award for Best Original Score for his work on the 2019 Star Wars TV series *The Mandalorian*. In March 2024,

Göransson received his second Oscar for best original score, for the 2023 film *Oppenheimer*, directed by Christopher Nolan.

Since the 1980s, when personal computers became widely available, the computer game industry has grown more robust, with a growing group of composers and producers of game music. Much of the function of music can be translated directly from film, and many of the compositional and production methods used in film music production are also used when music is created for games. Game music, like film music, can convey different moods in different scenes, enhance the story and guide the player. But there is a crucial difference: in a film, the passage of time is predetermined, linear and the same every time the film is shown, while games have an open, non-linear form where the player's choices and actions determine how the game develops. Compared to the production of film music, the production of computer game music requires new technical formats and more advanced solutions. Technological advancements also impact the artistic and musical expression of game music. Sweden has a booming gaming industry that is closely linked to art, music and sound technology. Music and sound are vital for enhancing the gaming experience, making them essential components of game development. In the last decade, the Swedish gaming industry has grown significantly, creating job opportunities for over 1348 full-time employees in 2021 alone. From 2011 to 2021, the number of Swedish computer game companies rose from 145 to 745, the number of employees increased from 1,967 to 7,944, and the turnover grew from SEK 3.7 billion to SEK 27.5 billion (Nylander 2023, 2–3).

Although most employees are in the capital, game development companies are spread throughout the country. More businesses and employees are concentrated in areas with active regional hubs or cluster organizations that have actively promoted the industry. The expansion of the Swedish gaming industry has also resulted in an expanded job market for professionals such as sound editors, music producers and composers.

Exploring the Swedish Music Production Model and Its Development

The Swedish Music Production Model's development can be exemplified by two examples: Mariann Records and Cheiron Productions. Fifty years back, in the 1970s, music production and the distribution of music in Sweden were typically centred in Stockholm, with a few exceptions. In Skara, in Västergötland, Bert Karlsson founded Mariann Records in the

summer of 1972 with a straightforward business model: collaborating with the best available music producers, talented performers and musicians to produce high-quality recordings with a unique and memorable sound. Using top-class producers, Mariann Records experimented by trying out songs with various artists to determine which was best suited for each song, aiming for the optimal balance between perfection and charm.

Having established its products in the Swedish Radio Charts, "Svensktoppen", Mariann Records employed several in-house composers and music producers. Lasse Holm and Torgny Söderberg were the most prominent. Both achieved great success. New artists, mainly in the dance band tradition, emerged, and some began selling albums in large quantities. For example, Vikingarna sold 13 million albums in a country with a population of about 8 million. In 1983 and 1984, and again in 1991, Mariann controlled 35% of the Swedish records sales, which made it possible to contribute even more to promoting Swedish popular music—nationally and internationally. Mariann had over 250 songs on "Svensktoppen" and sold over 100 million records (Karlsson 2006; Arvidsson 2007, 120–158; Rylander and Karlsson 2016).

During the mid-1980s, a group of successful DJs in Stockholm started remixing music. Dag Volle (1963–1998), also known as Denniz Pop, joined Swemix. Initially, Swemix was a DJ collective, but it later evolved into a record company. At first, it released unofficial remixes under the label Remixed Records, and only professional disc jockeys could purchase these remixes through a subscription service. In 1989, Swemix started commercially releasing records with various artists it had signed. It played a crucial role in nurturing talent, and some of the artists it worked with significantly influenced international pop and dance music throughout the 1990s and beyond.

Swemix Records and Publishing was acquired by Denniz Pop and transformed into Cheiron Productions, located at Cheiron Studios in central Stockholm. The label's first release was "It's My Life" by Dr Alban in 1992, followed by Ace of Base's chart-topping hit "The Sign" in 1993, produced by Denniz Pop and his partners at Cheiron. The studio became a hub for many well-known songwriters and producers, including Martin Sandberg, also known as Max Martin, who joined the team in 1993. World-renowned artists and groups, such as the Backstreet Boys, 'N Sync, Five, Celine Dion, Britney Spears and many more, recorded at Cheiron and scored hits with songs written by the creative team of songwriters who produced the music at Cheiron (cf. Chap. 3, biography Andreas Carlsson).

After Denniz Pop passed away due to an illness, the activities at Cheiron came to a halt. The successful songwriters and music producers who had previously worked at Cheiron continued to create new music in different formations. Among them, Max Martin emerged as the most successful, receiving numerous awards for his outstanding work as a music producer and songwriter.

Denniz Pop and his creative team, first at Swemix and later at Cheiron, have significantly impacted music production in Sweden over the years. His approach to music production was deeply rooted in a genuine love for music. Although this aspect may seem obvious, it must be highlighted to truly appreciate its significance. Denniz Pop repeatedly used the principles of having fun together as a team and striving to do things in a way that was not banal, and this way of working was reflected in his music production. It is also evident that inner motivation played a crucial role in his work. Good teamwork was another central factor that contributed to his creative development and music production success.

Completing and publishing his productions was also a crucial aspect of Denniz Pop's work. Although he was not a talented musician, he was a gifted DJ and music producer who found various outlets to express his creativity in social and cultural contexts. He was intrinsically motivated, deeply passionate about music and always kept it as his main focus. He was never interested in becoming a public figure or an artist and believed that exposure and media attention would take him away from creating music. Because of this, he avoided the media and even used a stage name to try to remain anonymous. Despite his significant achievements, very little was written about him in the Swedish music press during his lifetime. He amassed great wealth from his music production career but remained humble and continued driving an old car. Instead of spending money on personal luxury items, he invested in new musical equipment for the Cheiron studios. His consistency in this regard earned him immense respect from colleagues and associates in the music industry. Aspiring creative individuals have looked up to Denniz Pop as a role model. He demonstrated that creativity comes from within and that intrinsic motivation is more critical than any other factor for producing music (Thyrén et al. 2021). After Dag Volle's passing, the Denniz Pop Awards were established: these music awards are given annually to new talent. Swemix's and Cheiron's creative teams developed exceptional music production skills during a time when digital equipment was replacing older, exclusive analogue tape recorders and other specialized tools. Their choice of tools

significantly impacted the music they created, as they aimed to push the artistic boundaries of what was possible with the available technology. The arrival of digital recording tools opened up new possibilities for collaboration and allowed for the establishment of new roles in the music production process. These teams developed collaborative production methods that are now widely used among today's producers (Seabrook 2015; Thyrén et al. 2021; Wilsmore and Johnson 2022, 1–11).

An Insight into the Working Life of Swedish Music Producers Today

The digitization of the music industry has significantly impacted how music is produced and distributed. Nowadays, music producers no longer require expensive equipment to produce high-quality music, thanks to all the advances in digital technology. The production process has also evolved, with many successful music producers now adopting collaborative methods where producers, songwriters and artists work together instead of individually.

Sweden's music production is known for collaborations of specialists that are not very hierarchical and are collegial, yet they are still competitive (Thyrén/Gullö/Schyborger 2021). Successful studios such as Cheiron, where Denniz Pop, Max Martin, Andreas Carlsson and others worked, have been among the most prominent Swedish music exports, with a strong focus on collective production methods. Music production and distribution are now decentralized, which has transformed the creation and dissemination of music into a mycelia-like structure that has replaced geographical centres (ESDA 2004; Seabrook 2015).

The rise of the bedroom music producer is a testament to the technological advancements that have made music production accessible to everyone with creative ideas without the need for expensive equipment or studios. However, this accessibility has also led to a downside: more people have access to similar technical equipment and follow the same conventions for composing music, resulting in a lot of music that does not stand out from the crowd. Streaming sites such as Spotify are flooded with tens of thousands of new songs published daily, making it increasingly difficult to stand out. Despite this, songwriters like Max Martin, who has been active for over 30 years, continue to create music that reaches the top of the charts. His success is not just luck; it is due to a combination of talent and hard work (Thyrén et al. 2021).

Many of today's music producers work in teams. At least when they are working on producing popular music, it is also common for team participants to have different roles. Different concepts, usually taken from English, are often used to describe such roles. Topliner is one such term that describes the person who, during a production, may primarily work on developing the melody and lyrics, as well as on harmonization and the form of the piece of music. Often, a topliner works with a producer, who arranges and creates a form for the piece of music. This work usually takes place in a DAW. Other specialist members of the team work on, for example, mixing, which involves mixing different recorded parts and balancing how smoothly different instruments should sound and how the soundscape should be designed. The next part of the music production chain is mastering when final corrections will be made before the music is ready for publication. In addition to these roles, team members may have specific tasks, such as arranging vocal parts or writing special arrangements for upcoming string overdubs. Many such tasks in music production can be shared among team members. Alternatively, one producer could complete all of the tasks independently (Wilsmore and Johnson 2022).

The roles and responsibilities of music producers have also changed significantly due to digitization. Previously, music producers were permanent employees of record labels or were contracted for extended periods to oversee various productions. Today, producers work as freelancers, and artists themselves often take on the role of producer. The rise of streaming platforms has made it easier for aspiring musicians to create and publish their music. As a result, the music industry has become more diverse, and this has led to changes in the way producers work. Nowadays, new roles such as topliners and producers have become standard. With the advent of new technologies like AI-powered music production tools, the role of music producers may evolve further, rendering current practices obsolete.

Coda

Digitization has revolutionized the music industry, making music production more accessible and enabling remote collaboration. Today's digital technology means that music producers can now collaborate with performers, musicians and co-producers from anywhere in the world, even those in remote locations such as Öland, as described by one of our interviewees, Adeé, or in the deepest forests in Småland. Digitization has also enabled music producers to reach a wider global audience than ever before.

Additionally, music fans now have greater access to music worldwide. The relationship between music producers and consumers has also significantly changed over the past 40 to 50 years, thanks to digitization and new technologies, and this has made it much easier for people to connect with music in many different ways.

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