

Selling out in the music industry should stop

Written by Chris Chipman, Columnist
Thursday, 07 February 2013 13:05

If somebody were to turn on the radio to 103.5 Kiss FM and listen for about an hour or so, what would that person hear? That person would hear a collection of generic pop songs that possess boring lyrics backed by unoriginal pop drum beats.

Every time I turn on the radio (or listen to music that has cracked the top 40), I ask myself, "Why does it ALL sound the same?"

I think it is because the music industry of today cares more about profit than the content of its music.

Depending on what an individual defines as "success," one can gauge success based on how much money he or she has earned.

Sadly, I believe this is how the music industry measures the success of its artists. The need for record labels to be "successful" is leading to the manipulation of artists' original work in order to appeal to the masses.

Music is best when the artist is emotionally involved in what he or she performs. When record companies force artists to create what the radio wants to hear, the magic that music is supposed to produce is lost. How can artists be emotionally invested in their work if it is constantly being changed?

Along with the manipulation of music, major record labels create biased contracts for independent musicians in order to pocket as much money as possible. Gluttonous record labels will do anything for increased profit.

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Some artists and bands have noticed this trend and have publicly protested major record labels, refusing to conform to their greedy ways.

Streetlight Manifesto, a punk/ska band from Brunswick, N.J., publicly boycotted Victory Records on its official website because, "Victory [Records] has a long-time reputation of pocketing all of the proceeds from a band's music and merch, with shady accounting and generally bully-ish behavior."

Streetlight Manifesto also asked its fans to refrain from buying any of its merchandise or music from any well-known stores or online distributors to prevent any more unnecessary money from entering the pockets of Victory Records.

Hopefully, because the defiance of major record labels is well known among the music community of today, artists will begin to choose their record label wisely. Record labels that have been started by band members usually do not have a greedy reputation because they understand how difficult the music business can be. Plus, they would be completely uninterested in creating music that isn't a representation of who their artist is as a musician.

I feel music is being affected by greedy major record labels, when money should be on the back burner when it comes to priorities in the music business.

Artists create music because they want to, because they have an idea. Music is entirely too personal to be in the hands of money-hungry men in suits.

Because of this, I believe mainstream music is becoming far too unoriginal. Granted, I'm sure there are people out there who actually enjoy what we nowadays consider mainstream music, but personally I would be lying if I said the same. Music is completely relative, and I understand that, but I think original ideas are being lost in the chaos. I have difficulty differentiating between

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songs on the radio because of the lack of originality.

I do not know whether it is because artists are generally becoming increasingly incompetent as songwriters, which I really hope isn't true, or major record labels are buying them out.

Either way, the music industry needs to change. A world with unoriginal, monotonous music is a world I do not want to experience anytime soon.

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