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MUSIC

T A L K S



Turn your hobby into a profession.

Angelos Mavros

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Music Talks: Turn Your Hobby Into A Profession

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About the Author:

The evolution of Angelos Mavros' music began with organ and harmony lessons at a very young age, way back in 1991. His productive career began in 1999, when he started making music on his home computer. For more than 2 decades, Angelos kept on releasing electronic music under the aliases "OutSid3r" & "Open Source". In 2020, he flexed his creativity and pulled down the walls between "electronic" and "organic" music, adding live instruments to amp up the cinematic feel of his pieces. His lifelong passion for instrumental music flourished, as he began releasing orchestral music under his real name and a fresh label.

Book Description:

All live talks that Angelos Mavros aka Open Source gave from 2018 to 2020. Most of these talks can be found on his youtube channel with video footage. Angelos mostly talks about music making, music promotion, music marketing and in general how to survive in the music industry & turn your hobby into a profession.

Talk #1

10 Music Production Tips For Beginners

Panning

Panning is the spread of a monophonic signal in a stereo sound system. This is crucial for making up correct stereo imaging. Panning adds space in a mix through placing the sounds a bit at the left or a bit at the right.

The most common mistake newbies make is to have all instruments playing in the very center. Only the kick and the bass should be positioned in the very center. All other sounds should be folding a bit at the right or a bit at the left. Especially drum-sets should never be in the middle. Imagine how a drum-set looks like; some hats are located to the right side and some to the left. You have to imprint the natural drum-set feeling on your mix by placing some hats a bit at the left and some a bit at the right. In that way you trick the human brain into thinking that the instrument is organic and not computer-generated.

Voluming

Balancing the volume of your sounds is a fundamental procedure for every mix. You need to keep all channels of your mix at a balanced level. EQ and compression, although extremely important, don't help at all if your balance is out of whack.

A typical mistake young producers make is to have all sounds playing on the same volume level. You simply can't have all your instruments at the same volume. You need to do what I call "scaled voluming". Pushing up and down the faders and getting a balanced mix is essential. To put it very simply; some of your sounds must be playing less loudly while the loudness of others should be increased.

EQ-ing

Equalizing is the ability to boost or reduce the amplitude in specified frequency ranges. There are many different types of EQs in use today in many widely varying applications, but they basically all do the same thing.

Nobody can teach you how to EQ your sounds, it is a matter of experience. However if I can teach you 2 things, those are:

#1 If you have 2 sounds playing on the same frequencies, reduce the shared frequencies in one of the 2 instruments. If it doesn't sound good, reduce the shared frequencies of the other instrument.

#2 Add a spectrum analyzer on your master bus. If you have a gap somewhere, create a sound that plays in this gap or else on those frequencies. Your goal is to spread frequencies to the whole range that is detectable by human ears. Fill in the

gaps with the missing frequencies and then your composition will sound FULL. But remember NOT to have many instruments playing on the same frequencies. If that happens, cut some of them out.

Environment

Listen to your mix in different sound sets. Try it with speakers, in cars, in clubs if possible, in home studios. This will grant you great expertise on how we absorb and listen to music and you can adjust your sound accordingly. It will be hugely important in training your hearing and will eventually add quality to your outputs. Remember that a good painter is one who can see well; who can notice the small details and recreate them on his paintings. The same applies to music production; the good producer is the one with good ears. He who can detect with his ears what others cannot and incorporate those details into his music. So train your ears in different sound systems.

Use Your New Self

Use your new ears by leaving gaps between studio sessions. The other big mistake new producers make is to rush, since they are in a hurry to show off their abilities. That is probably the biggest mistake you could make. **Don't rush.** Take your time. Surprise everyone. There are literally a billion guys out there with a laptop making music. You are competing not only with them but with all the previous producers before them. Because, let's say that you have created something good that has been created in the past by others, could it succeed today? It couldn't. The world always needs new music, new trends. You can adopt some influences from previous decades but still you need to adjust them according to the present trends.

The Factor Of Fortuity

Leave something to chance. Add random sounds. Be spontaneous. Don't plan everything. Music is alive. It is essential to include the factor of fortuity. Use random automations. Let your mouse cursor leaf through options. Adding random sounds and notes is something that will help you proceed when you don't know what else to do. You would be surprised if I told you that all the melodies that I have made, were made by chance, by accident. I pushed a few random notes that I liked and then continued to finalize it into a melody.

Less Is More

That which is less complicated is often more easily accepted and more appreciated. **Simplicity is preferable to complexity.** Brevity is more effective than verbosity. Simplicity and clarity lead to good sound design and development. By reducing your sounds you are actually making your sound more clear and thus more easy to listen to. Be careful here not to decrease your channels, I am talking about reducing the sounds playing together. Don't have multiple sounds playing simultaneously but have many sounds playing at different times!

Infinite Development

Nothing is ever over or finished. Probably the most important mistake that newbies make is this: They are in a hurry to release their new output and show to the world how good they are. The problem is that only the newbies are impressed. In order to impress the world you need to create something really extraordinary. Your output needs to be very special. So always try to improve it. You can always work more on it. Let it mature. Leave it for weeks, months. Forget about it and then work on it with new ears. It will then be like your alter ego hears your mix and tells you what he thinks of it. By using your own suggestions, from your new self, you can take your mix to the next level.

The Illusion of Modern Sound

In reality, there is no “advanced” or “old-school sound”. How we absorb Music is only subjective and based on trends and experience. Modern sound has nothing to do with the software or the hardware. All synths are built on the same principles. We can produce a track that sounds “modern” with the software that we had 15 years ago. So when you hear a song and you say "oh this sounds fresh", what you actually mean is, that it complies with the contemporary trends and production techniques.

For many years I used to think "Oh if I had those samples from Ace Ventura, I would create something similar.". “If I had the samples of Astrix, I would be on the same level.” That is totally not true. No matter if I gave you all the projects of Astrix in open DAW format, you would only be able to ruin them and not create something on his level. Because you lack experience. You lack all the steps that will get you from level zero to the level of Astrix. On the contrary, if you had the experience you would be able to create something spectacular without any ready-made sample or special software. In music production.. the studio, the samples, the acoustics, none of these matter. Only one thing matters; **the expertise of the producer.**

Respect Established Artists

My last tip for beginners: Everyone respects artists that he likes, but try to respect successful artists that you don't like too. It's a step to self-completion and higher awareness. Try to respect popular music that you don't personally like by realizing its value. I've been struggling to understand why some artists are so popular when they create such bad music. Their music literally sucks. It's bad from every technical or theoretical point of view. But those artists are famous for a reason. People like their music for a reason. You must understand that in the music industry your opinion or my opinion does not matter. What matters is the opinion of the masses. The opinion of the crowd. How much the big audience likes a track is important, not how much individuals like a track. So pay some respect to established artists that you don't like. It will help you experience music from a new perspective.

Talk #2

A Brief History Of Psytrance

Psychedelic Trance or Psytrance derives from the Greek word "psyche" which means soul and from the word "trance" which means ecstasy.

One of the very first terms used to describe the genre was "Goa trance", because this music was first played in Goa India where the Hippies went on vacation during the 60's and the 70's. The hippie way of living postulated natural environment, virgin beaches, low cost of living, religious beliefs, spirituality and drugs. All of above were available, and still are, in Goa, India. The gathering of the Hippies and the parties that took place in Goa drew there the most popular Psychedelic Rock bands of the world including the Pink Floyd, The Doors and others.

In the late 70's and early 80's we had the industrial revolution of the electronics and Goa was affected by the electronic dance music just like every other place on earth. Instead of live bands, we had DJs spinning records. People applaud the medium (the DJs) instead of the musicians, for the first time. Lyrics were chopped, beats got harsher, melodies were looped, speedy bass-lines and filtered effects were added. Those new tracks were presented to the public as Trance music. New horizons opened for people who took part in the new mutant hippie movement. It was the Era of the disc jockeys. And through them, the trance scene picked up a pulse of its own.

Seeking a following, more artists were constantly showing up, sharing their passion for Trance music. Like-minded individuals were gathered to share their interests, cultural beliefs, all in the famous Goa. Even celebrity DJs joined the movement and propelled Goa Trance further mainstream.

In the mid 90's the genre changed so much from its Goa roots that the term Goa Trance could no longer describe the variety of tracks being produced. A new term was coined, "Psychedelic Trance" or "Psytrance" for short, to refer to this new style of music. Now, it is common knowledge that the genre was mastered in Israel, by Israeli producers. Young kids with their home computers built on the idea, and they managed to take it to a whole different level.

Psytrance was initially made with synthesizers, that were all samplers for the most part. By the early 90's, samplers had become reasonably affordable for any artist along with inexpensive analog gear. Some of the most famous synths used for making Psytrance in the early 90's were:

- The Korg M1 synthesizer and music workstation manufactured by Korg from 1988 to 1995. It became the world's top-selling digital synthesizer of its time.
- The Nord Lead series of virtual analog subtractive synthesizers, manufactured by Clavia, released in 1994.

- The Yamaha SY99 synthesizer, combining frequency modulation synthesis and sample-based synthesis, was the direct successor to Yamaha's SY77, which was used for making electronic music the previous decades such as House, Disco, Synthwave and so on.
- The Roland JP-8000 is an analog modeling synthesizer released by the Roland Corporation in 1996.
- The Roland TB-303 and SH-101 although discontinued in 1984 and 1986 respectively were both widely used in making Psytrance during the 90's.

At the same time we had the trackers. The term tracker derives from "Ultimate Soundtracker", the first tracker software ever written, by Karsten Obarski, released in 1987 for the Amiga Commodore. Trackers were nothing else but a basic type of music sequencer for creating music.

During the 90's, tracker musicians gravitated to the PC as software production in general switched from the Amiga platform to the PC. Although the IBM and compatibles initially lacked the hardware sound processing capabilities of the Amiga, with the advent of the SoundBlaster series by Creative, PC audio caught up and eventually prevailed.

Popular tracker used during the 90's were:

- ScreamTracker 3
- FastTracker 2 on the PC and on Amiga Commodore 64
- Impulse Tracker on PC
- MED SoundStudio on Amiga and later on PC
- Symphonie Pro on Amiga that supported 256 channels!

A tracker's user interface is usually number based. Notes, parameter, effects and other commands are entered with the keyboard into a grid of fixed time slots as codes consisting of letters, numbers and hexadecimal digits. Separated patterns have independent time-lines; a complete song consists of a master list of repeated patterns.

New trackers were built for the world's dominating operating system; Windows. The tracker that was widely used in Greece and Israel for making Psytrance, Uplifting Trance, Nitchonot, and Trance in general, was "Mad Tracker".

What about DAWs (Digital Audio Workstation)? People did use DAWs in the 90's, but the few DAWs that existed until the mid 90's, like "Pro Tools", were mainly used by professionals. That is because the processing power of computers was not enough to handle the digital signal processing power that a DAW needs, and hard drives were not fast enough to stream audio in real time, so DAW systems required HIGH-END hardware. In 1991, "Pro Tools" was released, which was a DAW that could record and playback both MIDI and audio, with up to four simultaneous audio tracks. Pro Tools was the first widely popular DAW in professional studios. Home

computer users didn't generally use DAWs until the late 90's. Bedroom producers stuck with trackers, on the Amiga or PC.

In 1995, Cakewalk was one of the very few MIDI sequencers at the time. "Cubase" developed by Steinberg; the first version, which was initially only a MIDI sequencer that ran on the Atari ST computer, was released in 1989. "Cubase VST 3.7" in 1999 introduced a virtual instrument interface known as VSTi. This made it possible for third-party software programmers to create and sell virtual instruments for Cubase. The technology has become a standard for other DAWs, for integrating software-based instruments on the Mac and Windows platforms.

So DAWs did not become available to the home-user until the late 90's. And it wasn't until the early 2000's that VST started to displace DirectX as the most popular plugin format. "FL studio 2.0.1" released in 21 November 1999 supported DirectX plugins and live recording. And then we had the millennium.

"Ableton Live" was originally released in 2001. "Propellerhead Reason ver 1.0" was released in 2001. "GarageBand" was initially released in January 2004. "Reaper" by Cockos was initially released in August 2006. "Logic Pro", a very popular DAW for the macOS platform, was originally created in the early 90's by the German software developer C-Lab, later renamed to Emagic. It became an Apple product, eventually known as Logic Pro, after Apple bought Emagic in 2002. But we entered the new millennium and the rest is history as you know it.

Talk #3

The Importance Of The Social Media & My Basic Strategy

Why are social media so important? Social media are the perfect tool for marketing your music, building relationships with your fans and driving new sales. Social media lead to massive worldwide exposure and trigger a huge number of daily listeners. Social media provide a live feed from your fans which is extremely helpful for understanding your audience's preferences, respond to their tastes and adjust your outputs accordingly. In that way you will maximize your impact, expand your fan-base, increase your sales and eventually increase your income. Social profiles are the facade of your store. It is where people come close to your product or service and make up their minds about it. At that point you might think "Wait a minute, I am a musician and I want to be judged for my music and not for my digital appearance". I am sorry my friend but we are living in a transitional period of time. Allow me to explain.

The beginning of the music industry goes back to ancient times, when song scores were traded, bought or sold. The epitaph hymn of Seikilos is the world's oldest known song, whose lyrics and music are fully preserved. The song was written c. 200 BC by Seikilos the Greek, in the Greek language. (If you check on Wikipedia it states that the music industry began in medieval times. Wikipedia is a not trustworthy source. Many articles written on Wikipedia are inaccurate and often biased. In our case Wikipedia is wrong by at least 1500 years.)

During the music sheet era that lasted till the end of the 19th century, if someone wanted to hear a popular song, he had to buy the music sheet and play it with an instrument. It was only after the invention of the gramophone, in around 1880, that physical records went commercial. A few years later radio broadcasts spread across the whole world. Later on we had cassettes and afterwards compact discs.

Till recently all you needed to succeed in the music business, as a music producer, was... GOOD MUSIC. Other factors like outlook, appearance, dancing skills were important too, but if your music was good enough, the labels would sign you, record your music, play it over the radio and your career would lift off. What would happen from there was only a matter of how much the people enjoyed your music. If your music had a strong impact, you would start performing in public, touring, selling more records, and so on. As for sales, things were pretty simple till the millennium; 100% of the income was generated by the sales of physical records. After the millennium all that started to change and approximately in the year 2015 the compact disc industry collapsed. Almost no one buys cds anymore. You can find vinyls only in some exclusive retro shops. The music industry is dramatically changing making it harder for everyone but at the same time offering great opportunities. As I said in the beginning, we are currently living in a transitional period of time.

Producing good music is clearly not enough. Take a look around you. Everyone is looking at his mobile phone. The most important thing nowadays is how many people you influence. How many people you provoke to look at your pictures, watch your videos, listen to your music. It's all about your overall status, not the looks, not your music, not the dancing skills, not your character, BUT ALL OF THESE TOGETHER. And your social profiles are essentially responsible for making a good or a bad impression. For example, if someone likes a track of yours but goes online and sees that you have no engaged audience, he will assume that you are NOT as good as he thought. If a club promoter likes your music but checks your Facebook page and sees that you post pictures of you playing golf, which is totally irrelevant with your occupation (music making), he will instinctively assume that music making is not your main occupation.

Anyway, I am NOT going to talk about your appearance and how your social media should look like or what you should say and what you should not. I am only going to provide a basic strategy on how to increase your traffic and your numbers. We are only going to create a small BUZZ around your social profiles.

But what you should go after are not the numbers but THE ENGAGEMENT of your audience. How loyal and how often your fans interact with you is what matters. What you need is a dedicated fanbase and not big numbers. And keep in mind that in every scene the veterans know each other. So DON'T overdo it. And never buy fake followers. Try to keep your numbers real and objective, close to your actual popularity. Because the veterans of each scene can pretty well guess where each artist stands. If you are a newcomer keep your numbers low. A newcomer cannot have 1000 followers on Twitter, or 5000 subscribers on Youtube or 10,000 followers on Instagram. Using prudently the strategy described below will help you grow your numbers and eventually get your music heard by a larger audience. Let's get started.

Facebook

Achieving organic traffic on Facebook is not that simple. It takes time. Back at the time when Facebook was founded, each new post on a page that had for instance 1000 followers could get 50 likes. Nowadays Facebook has become extremely greedy and a post could only get 1-2 likes on a page having 10,000 followers. That happens because FB is not showing your post sufficiently and thus forcing you to pay for your post to appear. So FUCK FACEBOOK. Don't put your money on it. Instead:

- Hire a professional graphic designer to create your image header and cover.
- Make regular posts with interesting material and add related tags. There must be variety on your posted content, you can't post only Youtube links. You must upload videos, images, all sorts of posts. There are 2 reasons for this:
 - a. You don't want to exhaust your audience with the same type of posts.

b. Facebook algorithm gives priority to those pages posting diverse content as it considers them as more interesting.

- Add friends of the same interest (EDM in my case) and invite them to like your page via any possible Facebook account that you can access.

- Create a group and link it to your artist page, leave it open for people to post freely.

Instagram

You don't have to put a single penny in order to create a decent Instagram profile. All you have to do is:

- Follow the limit which is 7500 people but be sure they relate to your music genre or topic.

- Upload regularly and add many tags. Your content needs to be:

- a. 50% Promotional material (videos, teasers, spots, covers, short clips, anything that has to do with your music or products)

- b. -25% Pictures of you and of your everyday life. People want to see who you are. They want to see something personal like what kind of food you like or how you spend your free time.

- c. -25% Irrelevant content that has nothing to do with you or your music. Post a flower, something that draws attention, a joke, an anecdote. Something light and easy to watch. After all, life should be carefree and easy, right?

- Interact with your audience. That will urge them to engage with your page. A small engaged audience is more valuable than a large inactive audience. It is better to have 100 interactive fans than 10,000 non-interested followers. In order to achieve that you must show them some interest. If you don't give a shit about them, they won't give a shit about you either.

- A trick for Instagram: When your traffic exhausts, instead of making a new post, add or change the hashtags of a past picture. The picture will re-appear in the feed and you will gain new likes and followers right after you save the changes.

Soundcloud

SC is my favorite social network. For one simple reason: You can't buy fake followers. It is the only decent and objective platform where you can really see the actual popularity of each musician. SC's team is required to check and delete fake profiles. I bought once 500 fake followers and after a few months they all disappeared all by sudden. What you can do is this:

- Follow the limit 2000. Some of them (10%) will follow back and some will even like/repost your tracks.

- Use repostexchange.com or a similar service. Through that kind of service you can trade reposts with other producers. Try it out, it works.
- Use a free download service like theartistunion.com. That kind of service requires from listeners to repost/like/share/comment on your track before being able to download it.
- Use hashtags. You can do a trick on SC and add your music genre in the title. (For example: Open Source - Space Kabloolie - Psytrance) In that way your song will appear in the results when someone is searching for this keyword (psytrance). I know guys that achieved monstrous numbers by just adding tags in their song's titles.

I don't recommend uploading frequently because it takes time for a track to become popular. Instead, leave gaps between uploads and upload your very best stuff only! At some point you will witness your traffic drain. You will check your activity and nothing will be happening. At that point you have to restart the traffic; with a new upload, repost, unfollow irrelevant people and follow some new and so forth.

Youtube

Youtube is the most important tool for any artist. Especially for musicians. But most artists have not realized the importance of Youtube and don't even have a Youtube account. So for starters, create a Youtube account, with professionally designed headers, add your links and start promoting it.

What you should be after are the Subscribers because without a fan-base you won't be able to generate views. I will tell you a secret to encourage you while struggling to get subscribers. It is extremely difficult to get 1,000 subscribers but then things scale up pretty easily and much faster than before. Although you might need 1 to 10 years to get to 1,000 subscribers, you might possibly need the same period of time to get to 10,000 subscribers. Because your channel's exposure is based on a geometrical progression and is not cumulative.

So your goal is to get to 1,000 subscribers. How you do that?

- Number one issue: Consistency, upload frequently, at least once a week. If you upload one video today and one next year, your channel will never flourish.
- Add interesting thumbnail, title and tags. The title is the most important thing. I have seen forged videos getting millions of views because the title was interesting. For example everyone would click to see a video named "Who killed JFK" or "How to fly without wings".
- Share your links on all social websites including reddit.com, blogs, forums and everywhere else possible.

- Use google ads. Yes you need to spend some money at some point. You can't just conquer the world on zero budget. The cheapest views you can buy cost 0,01 cent. So with 10 euro you will buy approximately 1,000 views. You have to set the audience familiar with your topic otherwise you will get many dislikes. When buying views you get a few new subscribers too. My strategy is, when uploading a new video, to allow a few days for the video to gain some views organically, and then add up 2-3 euros to increase the views furthermore. The more views a video has, the more it appears at the side (where suggested videos are) and thus gains even more organic traction.

Twitter

Strategy on Twitter is simple:

- Create a nice layout including your Logo/Brand.
- Follow the limit, 5,000 people. After a while unfollow those not following you and follow some new. Retain your integrity by keeping following those who followed you back, do not unfollow them. When more than 5,000 accounts are following you, you grant the privilege to follow plus ten percent of the number that are following you. For example, if 10,000 people are following you, you can follow up to 11,000 people.
- Tweet regularly adding hashtags.
- Retweet, like, comment, interact with people of your niche.

Mixcloud

There is no limit on how many people you can follow on Mixcloud. Decorate your profile with some professional images and start following people. Be careful not to upload a mix that includes only your own tracks or it will be taken down. I've lost a few uploads in that way. Upload quality mixes with well designed thumbnails and catchy titles. Your goal is to get to the charts. There is an easy way to do that apart from by paying. In order to enter the charts you need a lot of listens and fast. You can achieve that by posting an embedded player of your mix on popular pages, like forums, blogs and set it to "autoplay". In that way whenever a page containing your embedded player is loaded, it will add up a listen.

Spotify

Even though Spotify is not exactly a social network but a streaming service, we will consider it as a social network for having followers & listens.

The most important factor on Spotify is your music to get listed in major playlists. You have 3 ways to do that:

- You can either create your own playlist and start promoting it until it gets popular.

- You can contact the people that own popular playlists. Some of them are curating playlists as a profession and some as a hobby. Some other playlists are owned by labels. Labels use them to promote their artists. That is why it is essential to release your music through labels. I have heard some theories claiming that you can release your own music all by yourself without a label. Sure you can do that but no one will buy. The labels own popular playlists, popular social media accounts and an established buyers club. Anyway, it is not difficult to find the owners of a big playlist. Some of them want to be found for their own reasons.

- You can pitch your upcoming release to Spotify's editorial team through your "Spotify for Artists" application. In that way the employers of Spotify will listen and consider adding your track to their big editorial playlists.

Keep in mind that Spotify pays about \$0.002 to \$0.006 per stream and big playlists can generate thousands of listens on daily basis. Therefore Spotify playlists are essential for any musician.

Beatport

Beatport is an online shop but we will also consider it as a social platform. It is crucial to get your releases to the top 100 of your genre by all means. There are some underground services offering that, and they charge around 200\$-300\$. They have multiple accounts buying your track over and over pushing it to climb up on the top 100. What is your benefit out of that? Well first you get noticed by the people that are checking the charts. There are many people buying music from the charts. And thus you might generate some more buys and get even higher in the top 100. After each purchase, Beatport gives you the option to follow the artist. When you follow an artist you get a notification on your screen each time he releases something new. The "real" people that are going to buy your music are probably going to follow you. Some of them will become consistent buyers and you will gradually build your own fanbase. Another promotional action is to build a DJ chart. There are currently 7000 charts in my genre but Beatport chooses only a few to feature on its home page. How does Beatport chooses which charts to feature? Well, when creating a chart:

- Add 10 tracks in total
- All of the same genre
- Released on near dates
- Released by different labels
- Add only quality tracks

With the above criteria Beatport concludes that you are not self promoting, and you made mature choices and thus you deserve an exposure.

Talk #4

15 Social Media Platforms You Should Be Using

In this chapter I am going to present 15 social platforms that you should be using as a producer, that will assist you in growing your audience and becoming a full-time producer. One of these networks that I am going to present to you, might be the next big thing. And this means that if you register and develop your profile early enough, you might be uplifted later on, as the platform grows and expands through time. The people that were putting effort and energy on Twitter back in the time when it was launched in 2006 or on Youtube, and kept working on those platforms, they now have huge influential channels and they enjoy their success and their passive income, just because they were insightful enough to foresee the potential progress of those platforms right before every one else did. And now, for them it's payback time! So pick a few of those platforms that I am going to present and invest a bit of your time using them and that could turn out to be in future one of the most important moves you ever made. Some of the platforms that I am about to present are not new, but they are lately rising tremendously. And I will also describe the main functionality and purpose of each one. We assume that you already have a Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Soundcloud and Youtube account so we are going to propose other-than-those social networks that you probably don't use right now, but you should! Let's get started.

<https://www.edeejay.com/profile-540812/>

Promote your DJ Mixes, remixes or any kind of content (like podcasts), through a community of DJs, producers, labels & fans. Create your profile on eDEEJAY & increase your networking among hundreds of thousands of profiles in the music industry by simply uploading your content.

<https://www.jamendo.com/en/artist/441650/opensource>

Jamendo is a pioneer music website and currently one of the biggest emergent music platforms. It provides free music for personal entertainment but also various licences for projects or businesses. Its catalogue currently exceeds 500,000 tracks shared by 40,000 artists from all over the world. Music can be streamed, downloaded or licensed. Their philosophy is that any artist in the world is entitled to share his music and should have a chance to be heard by a greater number of people around the world. I am watching closely how Jamendo is growing for the past 10 years and I can tell you this; Jamendo could be the next big thing.

<http://www.house-mixes.com/profile/opensource>

Another great place to upload and share your mixes. There are no limits or restrictions on mix uploads. Share your DJ mixes on a global scale as your profile page becomes your digital CV to showcase your music to users from all corners of the globe. Interact with other DJs and music fans. With over half a million registered

members house-mixes.com has become a buzzing DJ social network enabling you to network and build a large fan base.

<https://www.weibo.com/DJopensource>

Weibo is a Chinese micro-blogging website. Launched by Sina Corporation in August 2009, it is one of the biggest social media platforms in China, with currently more than 500 million monthly active users. Over the past 10 years, Weibo has transformed from a simple blogging site to a comprehensive social media platform, which has become an indispensable part of the Chinese people's everyday life. If you want to go viral on social media or gain a mass audience in China, get on Weibo, the country's most popular social site.

<https://hearthis.at/djopensource>

Browse your feed, discover and follow new artists, upload sets, listen or download your favorite tracks for off-line listening. A brilliant website to upload unlimited music and share it with friends and fans for free.

<http://imgur.com/user/djopensource>

Imgur (pronounced Imager) is an image hosting and sharing site. Users use tools to create new images and then share those images with both Imgur users and the wider internet. Founded in 2009, designed as a kind of gift for Reddit users, it immediately went viral, jumping from a thousand hits per day to a million in the first five months. Imgur has since grown in popularity even further. By 2014, 2/3 of all popular Reddit posts were links to images on Imgur. In 2015, the social platform received another boost, raising \$40 million in funding. On Imgur you can upload an image that can get thousands or even millions of views. When was the last time you uploaded something on Facebook and got thousands of views? I'll tell you when: NEVER.

<http://www.reddit.com/user/mavrokley/>

Reddit is a web content rating system and discussion platform. Registered members submit content to the site, such as links, text posts and images, which are then voted up or down by other members. Reddit is home to thousands of communities, endless conversations and authentic human connections. As a content entrepreneur you have to add each new piece of content that you upload on reddit and some of the content will be unusually up-voted, bringing traffic to your own social media. This is a good way to check what your audience likes and move towards that direction.

<http://xubuntu69.deviantart.com/>

In August 2000, Deviantart was founded. It is an online community featuring artwork, videography & photography. A platform for artists to exhibit, promote and share their works. Deviantart has over 44 million registered members and attracts over 45 million unique visitors per month. I have been watching Deviantart for

almost 15 years and it has been growing steadily ever since. Recently, it had a major design update which I believe will skyrocket the platform even more the following years. Now, this tutorial is addressed to musicians so you if you are stupid enough you might ask "I make music, what do I need a graphic platform?" Well you simply upload there your release covers and your promotional pictures and you bring traffic over to your streaming platforms.

<https://www.mixcloud.com/DJopensource>

Mixcloud is a popular British music streaming service that allows for the listening and distributing of radio shows, DJ mixes and podcasts, which are crowd-sourced by its registered users. I highly recommend using Mixcloud as being one the leading audio streaming platforms of our time.

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/djopensource>

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network with nearly 700 million registered users that focuses on professional networking and career development. You can use LinkedIn to display your biography or enhance your professional reputation by posting updates and interacting with your audience. Unlike most social networks, LinkedIn was designed to help people make business connections, share their work experiences, obtain professional support and build relationships with potential clients & partners. LinkedIn is ideal for home-based business owners, freelancers or independent musicians.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/djopensource/>

Flickr is one of the oldest photo management and sharing applications in the world. It combines a popular photo-sharing and hosting service with advanced features. It supports an active and engaged community where people share and explore each other's photos. You can share and host hundreds of your own promotional pictures without paying a dime. And if people like your content, they will jump over to your Spotify or Youtube profile.

<http://djopensource.tumblr.com/>

There is a good chance that you already know and use Tumblr but trust me most producers aren't using it and since Tumblr is growing rapidly I feel obliged to mention it. It is currently one of the top 10 social media of the world where you can upload and share any kind of content. It recently prohibited all explicit and mature content but even so, instead of losing ground, the platform keeps rising. I have the feeling that it will soon perform some kind of major update that will establish Tumblr as a leading platform bringing it perhaps up on the top 5 platforms worldwide.

<https://www.vk.com/djopensource>

VK is the Russian answer to Facebook. I would dare to say that its code is 10 times better than Facebook's because as I keep saying Facebook is encoded entirely by blondes. VKontakte is a Russian online social networking service based in Saint Petersburg. It is available in numerous languages but predominantly used by Russian-speakers, for the moment. It is highly probable that VK will go viral & global.

<https://www.pinterest.com/djopensource>

Pinterest is an American social network and mobile app that allows users to share images associated with any kind of project and to visually discover new interests by browsing images others have posted. You can think of Pinterest like a web-based pinboard or bulletin board but with greater organizational functionality. Pinterest allows users to visually share, by posting, known as 'pinning', images or videos to their own or others' boards and browse what other users have pinned. Pinterest provides 1000-2000 profile visits per month to me.

<https://www.tiktok.com/@djopensource>

TikTok is the leading destination for short-form mobile videos. Its primary functionality was to give users the chance to create and share short comedy and talent videos. TikTok is the world's fastest-growing social media app. With millions of children flocking to the app, parental concerns include explicit language and a potentially toxic environment that allows negative and inappropriate comments; but that is what we love on TikTok and the reason I think it's about to explode. The year is 2020 and my advice to you is this: Upload your content on TikTok as it will bring you a ton of new listeners and fans!

Talk #5

How To Interpret An Artist's Social Media Numbers

The first thing you need to do if you want to interpret someone's social media numbers is to check all of his profiles, not just his Facebook or Instagram. Most people feel that some social platforms are more important than others and so they put too much energy on particular platforms. And so they might have 15,000 followers on Instagram but only 300 on Soundcloud. That doesn't necessarily mean that they promoted their accounts on that platform. But it necessarily means that they like that platform and they spend time on it.

Social media numbers usually come with a specific ratio. For example, an artist who has 5,000 followers on Soundcloud is likely to have 15,000 likes on Facebook and 50 followers on twitter. That is a very common ratio. If he has 15K on Facebook but only 50 followers on Soundcloud, the standard analogy is not there, so he has done something to get those likes (promotion/advertisement).

Sometimes you see a newcomer, and if you have been on the scene for a long time you know that he is a newcomer right away, and this newcomer might have 75K subscribers on Youtube but only 600 likes on his Facebook page. That doesn't mean that his subscribers are fake or that he bought his subscribers. It just means he had a stroke of luck with one (or more) of his videos. If you check his uploads you will definitely find a video that has an extremely large number of views compared to his other videos. It is thanks to that video that he has a large number of subscribers.

Now the most important factor is not the numbers themselves but the hike of those integers. In other words, the most important thing is the growth, the dynamics of the augmentation. You might see a young kid with small numbers having a spectacular growth. On the other hand you might see a veteran who has been in the game for 30 years having much bigger numbers but much smaller growth. Even though the veteran of our example has bigger numbers, you can't really say that he is more successful as an artist compared to the young kid of our example who is having a significant growth that will put him on the map in the following years. You must be in a position to escalate the growth (the dynamic increase), if you want to come to safe conclusions.

The growth, or the popularity, go hand in hand with what we call "social media engagement". It is much more important and implies a more real success, to see people engaged (commenting, liking, sharing) than seeing big numbers. I believe that everyone can understand that a profile without engagement clearly indicates that those numbers were generated by promotion or sponsored ads; they do not indicate a rising star.

Now, I have a question that will make you think twice, my dear reader, a drill for your mind. Let's take the artist Neelix from Germany as our example. At this point Neelix has 1 million followers on FB. The question is: Does success bring numbers or

do the numbers bring success? Or are both true? Well, I am not sure about that! What will happen if for instance you decide to buy one million Likes using Facebook ads? Will you become the next Neelix and will every party promoter be looking for a way to book you? No. Why not? For plenty of reasons. There are many things happening simultaneously along with each "Like" and each "Follow". But there is one particular thing that is more important than the "Like" itself; **THE IMPRESSION**. If you suddenly buy 1 million "Likes" you won't be Neelix. Because:

- You didn't give the chance to people to choose to like you at their own will. You advertised, you forced them to like you.
- You didn't complete the steps that are required in order to get from level 0 to the level of Neelix, which means that your content or else your music has not the same value as Neelix's.
- You didn't meet all the people that you would meet if you let time do the job instead of buying Likes. Human connections in the music industry have vital importance.
- And the most important thing: You didn't make as many impressions on people as needed.

Impressions are very important. There is a specific way that our brain operates. In order for your brain to categorize or tag something or someone, it does a rather complicated but typical process. You see something for the first time and subconsciously your neurons gives you a few choices: You can either like it, dislike it, or have a certain opinion about it or it can be something totally indifferent to you. Then at some point you might see it again, somewhere, because let's say someone has uploaded a track of Neelix on his Youtube channel. Then at another point you attend a party and the name "Neelix" is listed on the leaflet. Now, no matter if you remember how his music sounds and no matter if your brain can recall any of his products or services, you can still conclude that you know him because there are some neurons in your brain that indicate that you saw his name again in the past! So when something appears to you several times, your brain brings it to the surface faster and more effectively and that procedure is translated to "I know him, I know Neelix". So now we can lay the foundations of basic human behavior. People tend to attach easier to familiar things. That is a very normal reflex because we were Apes for thousands of years and it's in our DNA to feel good with what we know and feel scared or displeased with what we don't know. Back in the days when we were Apes, we would instinctively choose to follow or hunt a familiar harmless creature rather than a dangerous unknown creature. It's called "self preservation instinct". Anyway, people tend to follow and to get emotionally attached with what they know, that is a rule. So when you buy "Likes", you are not really getting there. You are certainly making an impression but it's more or less **THE FIRST IMPRESSION**, to an audience that is inadequate of creating an emotional attachment to your brand. The persons who pressed "Like" on the page of Neelix are persons that saw his name several times, before Neelix became a familiar figure and they eventually pressed "Like" and became a sustainable listener/fan/consumer.

Now, you might think.. "Nooo that's all bullshit! I know Neelix because I like his music". I can name you 500 artists that you know, whose music you never enjoyed, but you still know them! And those artists make money because you know them, not because you enjoy their music. The fact that they are instantly recognizable, no matter how, adds value to their brand! For example, as you hold a flyer with the name Neelix, nobody will hear you say "Who the fuck is that guy?". **Recognizing an artist matters!**

Buying "Likes" or advertising is not a bad thing. But is much better to allow people to discover you naturally and to allow your audience to grow organically. **So buying "Likes" or Followers, won't change much.** It won't bring a drastic change. Many marketing Gurus will object saying something like "Without spending money there is no chance that you will ever make it." To people that will tell you the previous sentence, go and check their profiles and see that they are not artists. **And.. they never made it as artists!** They are promoters, marketers, youtubers, coaches, whatever you want, but not artists! Real artists that made it in the music industry will not suggest to spend money on advertisement. What you need is not more "Likes" but more impressions. What you need is to appear on all sorts of platforms, on leaflets, on parties, on TV, on radio, on all sorts of sources. And that can only be achieved through time and activity. You can't get there by just running ads. You must put in the work!

Talk #6

Amateur VS Professional Comparison

Many people strive to advance from amateur to professional level. Allow me to clarify the definition of the professional. Against your preconceptions, a professional is not one who makes enough money in order to live from the occupation.

Professionalism has nothing to do with skills or with not using cracked software or using equipment more efficiently or knowing "Ableton Live" on a higher degree than an amateur or playing the guitar in a better way than the amateur. It's all about doing it every day and becoming one with the occupation in a matter of mindset and not in a matter of skill. I know many unskilled people doing this for a living, and many talented musicians who do it as hobby whilst forced to have an ordinary job. Obviously the problem is not their technique or their skills but the way they approach the subject, the way they project themselves throughout the universe and in around their environment.

So when does someone start to be a professional? "When he starts making money", you might say. Wrong! Let's assume that I release an album today. Portals pay you after 3-5 months. Even if I make a world hit, there is no chance that I get money before 6 months have passed since the launch of the album, except from Bandcamp. So during those months I was not a professional? But the album was already released, how can I not be a professional all this time?

My humble opinion is this: You become a professional the moment you decide to dedicate yourself to the high purpose of what you believe in. So the biggest difference between you and a professional is that you haven't decided about it yet. You haven't gone all in.

Now let's talk about the details and the differences.

The professional does not believe in bad luck, injustice, or conspiracy theories concerning his occupation. He accepts the situation as it is and does not believe in some kind of communistic ideology which usually implies that his problems or his failures are somebody else's fault. He does not take failure personally, because he knows the stats. I know the stats, do you? Do you have any idea what takes for 1 musician to succeed in the music industry? I'll tell you what it takes; it takes 99 musicians that gave up or failed. **The music industry is the second hardest industry after the industry of sports.** One out of 100 makes it. But the pro is not scared of the stats. Because he remembers the fear of rejection as a feeling of the past, of his youth. On the contrary, the amateur is paralyzed and prevented from keeping going on because of the fear of rejection or the fear of criticism and mockery.

The professional puts his time and mind on his project and then STEPS BACK and judges stone cold blood, like it's not of his own. He listens to his tracks as if they are someone else's tracks and takes notes and applies those notes to his next production.

When someone laughs at his music or mocks him or writes a bad comment, the pro feels nothing. Because once more, he knows the stats. You can't have everyone happy. Some people will dislike your work even if you are The Prodigy or Sister Mary Clarence.

Here comes an important one: The pro does not make romantic claims. If you make romantic claims that you are doing it for the love of Music or pretend that you don't care about money, you are an amateur and you have no idea what you are saying. No matter how talented or skilled you are, if you have that kind of romantic mindset, you are an amateur 100%. Because even if you go only for the acclaim and not for the money, you cannot be acclaimed without making money first. Money comes first. It's easier to make money than become famous. But you ostensibly don't go for the money. You want to be admired for offering great music and not caring about money. Well guess what? Nobody admires amateurs.

The pro accepts the money he earns in order to sustain himself and keep doing what he loves. And by accepting them he proves that he is a pro. How are you going to do what you love when you are getting paid by an entirely different occupation and how much of a pro does that make you? We are musicians for the love of music. But money is essential. Money is a tool. Use it in the same manner you use an effect. What is the most popular effect? Reverb. Use money as you use reverb; with sense, logic and purpose.

And one final thing: The pro knows that he is no one special. The pro knows that his charted track was a stroke of luck in combination with hard work, efficiency and persistence. The pro does not believe that he is special or better than anyone else. He sees a good output as having had a lucky day and not as having a miraculous talent that flows in his veins or a magic touch from God. Because, at the end of the day, no matter how successful, popular or famous you are, being a professional musician is just a job like any other job.

Talk #7

Why Record Labels Don't Respond To Your E-mails & How To React

First things first. There are several possible ways to contact a record label. You can send a message on Facebook, send a message on Instagram, send a message on Soundcloud or send an email. The most appropriate way to contact a label is to send an email using the email address of the A&R and not the email address for other inquiries like "info@domain.com". If the label is open to new submissions they have some sort of specific email address for receiving demos such as "demos@label.com". You must use this email address because your song needs to be heard by the person responsible for the catalogue which is the A&R. You don't want your message to be received by social media managers, or the label owner who most probably won't even bother listening or forward the message to the A&R. If the label's website has some kind of FORM that you have to fill-in for sending a demo, then you should use this form instead of all other ways.

Now let's assume you're a producer and you're trying to enter the label of your choice. Avoid making the same mistake that most producers make. As an A&R, I receive many emails that are wrongly formulated. Those messages provoke you to ignore them. So let me tell you some tips which are not even tips; it is common sense.

So the most awful mistake is this; I receive many messages that contain nothing but a link! The person sending just a link is doing this because he is afraid of the rejection and so he doesn't want to put much effort on sending a proper email, as a safety precaution. He doesn't want to be embarrassed by a possible rejection. And thus he just sends a link doing the LEAST he can. In that way he feels protected. Because if he sends a proper email introducing himself and THEN gets ignored, it will feel much worse. But my young apprentice that is a risk you have to take whether you like it or not.

Another thought that a person sending just a plain link could have is this: "There are some slim chances that the label will acknowledge my musical genius and contact me directly willingly to know more about me." Yea right. If you ever sent a single link to a label.. you are out of your mind.

Another common incident is that the link is broken and does not work. The A&R might see your message after one or two months. Make sure that the demo you sent is still up there months after you sent it.

So when you write an email, introduce yourself. Say something like "Hi my name is Angelos, I come from Athens Greece and I have been making EDM for the past 20 years. I have great respect for your label and I want to be part of it!" Try to sound enthusiastic. Also say something personalized like "I particularly enjoyed this track from this artist of yours." By sending a personalized message you eliminate the chances of being considered as a spammer; someone sending the same message to

people massively. You could say more things about yourself like "I have had several gigs in the past (throw some links there) and now believe it's time to turn my hobby into a profession and thus I'm sending you my very best production!". Now, it is extremely important to include your very best demo. Because most times what you consider as good, won't qualify.

So now that you wrote a proper email, what is the possible outcome? There are 3 possible scenarios. The best scenario is that the label is interested and wants to release your track. In that case you should probably know what to do since you managed to go that far.

The second possible outcome is when a label replies but is not interested in your music. They thank you but reject you with the most commonplace excuse that your music doesn't fit their current repertoire/style, which after all might be true, it happens all the time.

And the third possibility is when the label does not respond to you at all. Now let's assume that you have written a decent email and you attached your best possible production but.. you didn't get a response. What do you do now? Read carefully: **When a label does not respond to you at all, you lock your self up in a room, and you make better music.** You don't send another email, assuming that you already have sent a few mails to different labels and none of them responded, no, you just lock your self up in a room and try to become a better producer.

There is of course the possibility to register on distrokid.com (or a similar service) and release your music all by yourself. But that way no one will ever listen or buy, guaranteed. And here comes the bad news; When a label does not respond to you at all, not only is it not interested in your music but it doesn't see any future in you! They do not believe that you will ever make it in the music industry. They do not believe that you will ever manage to turn your hobby into a profession. And the worst part is, that in most cases, they are right. You won't make it. Those people know more than you. They are professionals. They receive demos every day. They have seen amazing releases going nowhere. They have seen amazing productions flushed down the toilet. They have witnessed much better producers than you, failing. They know better than you what it takes to succeed in the music industry. And by not replying, they are actually doing you a favor.

So what do you do when the label does not respond? You simply get the message and try to become a better producer. You don't send another email. You don't try to send your music to other labels either. You lock yourself up and you improve your music. There is nothing else you can do. And when I say you improve your music, I don't mean you work on a new track that you believe was better than the previous. No, you wait for at least one year. You produce at least 10 tracks before you send something new.

Now, you might think that by not answering to you they are being rude or impolite or they can't see the genius of your production, but the truth is that by not answering

they are doing you a favor. Because they are discouraging you from applying for a job that they think is not suitable for you. Professionals think that this occupation, this job, is not suitable for you and in 99% of the cases they are right. And they discourage you by not saying anything. And yet THEY SAY SO MUCH with their silence. **Because silence.. is an answer!** When you don't reply to someone, you imply "I am not interested". If they answered they would have encouraged you and then you would keep making music but chances are, that you're not going to make it.

When labels do not respond they are helping you find another job, do something else with your life. They are helping you find your own way. And that is for your own benefit. Don't let your ego think "NOOO I WANT TO BE A WORLD CLASS DJ AND TRAVEL THE WORLD!". How can you be something you are not good at? Why don't you have the same opinion with football? How you resign yourself to the fact that you can't be the next Messi? How in that case you know that you haven't got what it takes to become the next Messi? And most importantly; WHY doesn't that bother you? I'll tell you why; because you think you love music. You have the impression that music is your thing. But that is just an illusion. Everybody does artistic work at some point in their life. And in most cases the artistic work will be to either write, dance, sign or make music. There are a million guys having music as a hobby but the music industry can support only very few of them. You might think that you have what it takes BUT ONLY TIME will tell if you are capable of surviving in the music industry. Not me and no one else. Time.. is the ultimate judge.

One of the common teachings of our time is "Hard work pays off". That statement is inaccurate. Hard work pays off when you have what it takes. Hard work pays off for a professional who showed signs of talent since his early stages. Messi did not become Messi after being a loser. Yes he worked hard but he showed signs of talent since a very young age.

So labels that do not answer to you they are not interested in you. Because if they had some sort of interest in you or if they believed that you might have some chances of surviving in the music industry or that you could be helpful to them in any way, by having a large Youtube channel or something, they would answer to you.

Which brings me to scenario number 2; When the label responds but rejects you politely. So why do they answer? Because they are polite, you might think. Maybe. But I, as an A&R, answer only when I see potential. I answer only when I believe that this guy, in the future, might produce something that I want or manage somehow to become successful in the music industry. I answer only when I see benefit. I answer when I believe that this kid might someday make it, and then I will want to gain credit for discovering him and giving him a chance.

So the label responded but they are not interested in your music with one excuse or other. What do you do now? **You network with their fans and their artists.** You make research, you make inquiries and you connect with its social circle. You follow their artists, you comment on their posts, you message them directly, you try to get in touch with them, you try to collaborate with them, you try to remix their songs.

You follow their audience, some of their audience will follow you back and you start becoming one with a label that you want them to release your music. In that way, the Internet, the search engines, associate YOU with THE LABEL. The search engine and the social media algorithms show you on the results and on the feed, like you're a part of this label. When you connect with their audience and with their artists, you make it easier for the label to accept you. You make it easier for the label to release a track of yours. Because now those artists are your collaborators. You work with them. Their fans are your fans. Their audience is your audience and so you are involved in either way. By networking in that way you are not just encouraging a label to accept you, you are somehow enforcing it. But of course you have to be or become a better producer for those artists to be willing to collaborate with you.

OK so let me summarize; When labels respond and they are interested it's up to you to do whatever you want. When labels respond but reject you politely it means that they believe that you could have a future so when this happens you network and connect with their audience and their artists. And the worse scenario, if the label does not respond to you at all, you don't send more mails, you don't look up for other labels that you could possibly send your music, you lock yourself up in a room and you try to improve your music and become a better producer. Because the third scenario means that your music is not sell-able. You must bear in mind that when you upload a track on Soundcloud and nobody is interested in listening to it or download it for free, how will this piece of junk be merchantable? How will a label be able to sell something that nobody wants even for free? Labels are looking for established brands and that is why **you should create some sort of buzz around your name BEFORE sending a demo**. Or they won't consider your music marketable but they are willing to invest in you because they believe that you will produce something marketable in the future or that you have some sort of a future in the music business.

Anyway, I hope I helped. If you feel discouraged, it's ok, one day you will find the job that suits you best. If you don't feel discouraged.. I will see you in the arena.

[gunshots]

Talk #8

10 Reasons You Fail In The Music Business

#10 You wake up late

In order to succeed as a producer, you need to succeed first as a businessman. You need to negotiate with people that want to book you for a gig, you need to do business with a label that wants to release your music, you need to do business with a promotional services provider that will help you reach a bigger audience.

Every businessman has bad habits but I have never seen one getting out of bed at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. When you get out of bed at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, it's like you don't care about the market. It's like you don't care about anything going on. You care only about your sleep. And the universe understands those things. It will hit you back like a fuckin' boomerang.

If you think that being a talented musician is enough, you are mistaken. You need to do business all the way. And a businessman wakes up early in the morning. He wakes up early in the morning because he doesn't want to lose any opportunities that might come along or be unaware of any possible happenings. That is his nature. Businessmen wake up early. That's a rule. A successful businessman wakes up early in the morning because there is simply not enough time to get things done. So if you don't get up early in the morning, go get a job at McDonald's, because chances are that you will never make it in the music industry.

#09 No good music

Your music is clearly not good enough. You started making music a few years ago and you think that this is enough. It isn't. Unless you are a wonder-boy. I have been making music for 20 years. In the beginning I thought my music was fantastic. That the world was about to discover the new super talented star Angelos Mavros. As years pass, even though my music is improving, my judgement is becoming more and more demanding. I currently believe that my music is totally lame and does not even deserve to be released. If you think that your music is bad, you're on the right path. If you think your music is awesome and you deserve to make a living out of it.. you have many years ahead of you to struggle until you realize the truth, which is, that your music sucks.

#08 No Social Media Engagement

You have no social media engagement. You realized only recently that you need a Youtube channel, in which you have 25 subscribers, and you are bored of uploading frequently because you realized that you might need to upload 5 videos in order to get 1 new subscriber and that makes you feel frustrated. You don't even have a Twitter account. Twitter is as powerful as Instagram, but you haven't realized the power of it. And the same applies for LinkedIn, Tumblr, Tiktok and many other

social networks that you haven't even heard of. You have no clue what to post on Instagram because you run out of content and out of ideas. And thus you post pictures of yourself holding your cat which makes a bad impression rather than a good one. You have no clear message and no professional covers. You just sit there and wait for people to discover you for the “quality” of your music and for the “very special essence” that your music radiates.

#07 No Musical Identity

Your music has no identity. Can you distinguish a “Van Gogh” from an “El Greco” painting? Sure you can. Why is that? Because of the artistic signature. They paint in a very specific way that characterizes their art. Quality is subjective. But a recognizable pattern, is objective. All people can see that pattern and define those artists. Their style makes them unique, makes them recognizable, adds value. Your music needs to be recognizable. And when someone listens to it he must be able to say "oh what I hear must be Infected Mushroom", "oh what I'm listening to could be Vini Vici". And YOUR music my friend has NO musical identity. Because you are constantly trying to imitate other artists and you think that your outputs are great when in fact they are just soulless replicates, with no personal stamp, no signature and no character.

#06 No Connections

You think talent and good music is all it takes for the music industry to discover you. I have some really bad news for you; it's all about connections. It's all about who you know. Who will book you for a big gig? Who will write a good review for you on his blog? Who will curate your music into his big Spotify playlist? Who will upload your music on his enormous Youtube channel? If you don't network with important people.. you are simply going nowhere. Don't just wait there for a handout. No one will ever give you a helping hand. You have to reach them by yourself.

One of the revelations that I had recently is that not all people are stupid. But they are all stubborn! It's not that they don't know what to do, it's just that they want to do it in their own freaking way! Everyone knows what to do as everyone knows what is wrong and what is right. A 4-year old kid can tell the difference between good and evil. If I ask you, what is the fault with your music career? Why aren't you making any money? Why aren't you having any gigs? You know the answer. You don't need me to tell you why this is happening; you already know. And.. you know what to do in order to change it. But you want to do it in your own freaking way which is pretty similar to not doing it at all.

So the world is as it is. Embrace it and play with its rules or go to a fuckin’ mountain and pretend to be a spiritual guru. If you want to be successful in the music industry there are things that you must do. You must release your music through different labels in order to reach different audiences. You must kiss somebody's ass in order to get some gigs. You must pay some youtubers to upload your music. THERE IS NO OTHER WAY.

#05 Lack Of Faith

You are full of doubt. Questions are spinning inside your head: Will I ever make it? What if I am not up to the task? What if I am old? What if I am late? In order to succeed in the music business you need all the confidence in the universe.

ACHIEVING IS BELIEVING. If you don't believe in yourself, you won't make it. Sometimes the lack of faith flows from your friends. Let's be honest; nobody believes in you. Most of your friends, at some point, have already told you, as a joke or seriously, that you are not going to be a superstar or that you don't have what it takes or that you have no talent or that you are a dreamer. And they broke your heart. Someone might think that those people, by discouraging you, actually strengthen your will and make you try harder and harder. But that is not the case. What in fact is happening is that they are undermining your morale. They are giving you the blue pill and they shuffle you into the matrix world with no wings, no dreams, no goals and no expectations.

«Show me your friend and I' tell you who you are.» If your friends are jobless losers, that won't help much. Because they are unwittingly feeding you the mindset of the loser. Those people are poisoning your mentality and planting the seeds of doubt in your soul, that what you're trying to accomplish is unattainable! Well I am here to tell you: **WHAT THE FUCK DO THEY KNOW?** I've made it! From scratch. I make a living out of my music. In a way, your friends are right; the odds are against you. But not because it's impossible. But because you don't believe in it! Because you don't want it that much! Take the red pill and stay in wonderland and I'll show you how deep the rabbit hole goes.

#04 Your Political Stance

There are 2 kinds of people. Those that are willing to invest their time in order to get the money back in the future, and those that demand to get paid from the very first day at work. Now as an artist, you could be both. You may want to get paid from your first working hour or you might be willing to invest your time in order to establish a brand name before you start making any money. Both traits can be found in successful musicians but our time favours the businessman type. So if you are willing to invest your time and your money, you might get something in return. But if you fall in the other category, in which you wake up late because you don't care about the market and you care only about getting paid for the extra quarter that you worked overtime, I don't see how you will ever manage to make it.

If you believe that a big plot is being woven behind your back, in which a few rich families are out there to get all the money and you are just the victim of circumstances, that you are somehow enslaved by the system, then you are fucked. If you believe in conspiracy theories in which the big labels or the big television networks want to keep you poor so they can take advantage of you.. you are fucked. If you think that money is essential in order for someone to succeed.. you are fucked. Money is a trading medium. It can help, yes. But it is not the only medium. You can work hard instead. Or get help from other people and make up for not having

money. Using money to increase your fame and your sales is an investment that most of the times won't pay back. Most of the advertisement done out there is not enough to generate a sustainable sales increase. It is highly probable that the sales will go DOWN after the advertisement is switched OFF. So no matter how much money you spend, if people are not interested in you, if people are not in your music, you won't make it. I have seen many people getting frustrated because they truly believe that money is what they need in order to go forth. They truly believe that rich will necessarily become more rich and poor will stay poor. But that only means that they have no idea about marketing, investing or succeeding.

I have witnessed first hand individuals making fortunes with their bare hands. I worked with a mentor during the Greek crisis who managed to triple his fortune. During the Greek Crisis, 250.000 businesses closed and almost 1 million work places lost, between the years 2009 and 2016. But I worked with a businessman who managed during those same years to upgrade his business, from making 250.000 euro gross total to 700.000 euro yearly gross total. While everyone else was failing, we succeeded.

But you are not as lucky as I am. You were probably raised by some people who never understood how the market operates. And they fed you with this leftist ideology that no matter how hard you work, the rich will always be ahead of you. And so whenever you hear the word "competition" you get a severe allergic reaction. How are you going to compete, if the word "competition" is not in your vocabulary? *"I won't compete, I will produce something extraordinary and the world will discover me".* Yea right, and then you came down to earth.

#03 Your Daily Job

A very common reason why you could be failing in the music industry is because.. you are not working for the music industry. You have a daily job and music is your hobby. And because you have had this hobby for a long time, you think that you can turn it into a profession while having another job at the same time. That is mainly because you are being cautious, wise. You wait until you become known first and make some money with your music before you give up your daily job. Well guess what? It doesn't work like this. It works the other way round. You need to give up your job if you want to have a slight chance of success. There are many wise people out there telling you "Do your hobby but keep your real job in order to be able to sustain yourself till you manage to make money out of your hobby and then you can quit." They are telling you.. "Do your hobby but have a steady source of income, for safety." Well guess what? Those people have not made it in the music industry and they don't know what it takes for someone to make it. Ask me, I know. It took me 20 fucking years. You cannot worship 2 Gods. You will either serve music and starve (at least in the beginning) or serve your needs. And if you want to turn your passion into a profession you have to work as hard as possible. There is no time for an ordinary job. If you have a day job and you are expecting someone to discover you before you take the big step of giving up your day job in order to commit yourself to music, then go ahead and forget about it because it is never going to happen. Quit

your fucking job if you want to have a slight chance of surviving in the music industry and start working as many hours as possible.

People work 7 to 8 hours doing something they dislike and they think that this is a job. Well, I work all day, every day, even during Christmas and New Years Eve, not because someone forces me to do so but because I have goals, because I enjoy it. And no one can stop me from reaching my goals. And I don't work in a routine job doing the same things over and over again every single day. No, I work using my brains. I work using expertise that I acquired over 20 years of experience. Your friends do not understand that you have to put your mind into this 24/7. Only when you like something that much, that you have it on your mind all the time, can bring the results that you desire. But your friends cannot understand that because they think a job is something that you do 8 hours a day without thinking, by having a boring time doing the same thing every day. They don't understand that in order to succeed in music business you have to.. rediscover America.

On the one hand we have a McDonald's worker. His training for his job was obtained with a few seminars of 20 hours in total. While working he doesn't need to use his brains much. He works 8 hours per day, no weekends and he gets 1000 euro per month, more or less. On the other hand we have a total whacked producer like me. His expertise in his field totals 20 whole years instead of 20 hours, he works as many hours as possible including weekends and he gets for example 500 euro per month. But check this out: The best thing that could ever happen to a McDonald's employee is to become the manager of the shop and earn 2000 euro per month. The best thing that could happen to a producer is to make a world hit and earn millions. That is the price we are willing to pay and the leverage that we might get. That is why I said that we are businessmen. We are investors. We are gamblers. We gamble everything and some of us win big. If you have an ordinary job, you are not ready to gamble, and without risk, you can't possibly win.

#02 Lack of Plan

You have no plan whatsoever. Or in the best case scenario, your plan is the upcoming release of your single in a month from now. That is not a plan. That is an event bound to happen. Plans are strategically formed variables. They are flexible. They need to be changed and adapted according to the ever-changing circumstances. They flow along with the market. I have plans based on things that worked out for me and on things that didn't work out but might work in the future. I have short-term plans and I have long-term plans. From time to time I had side projects with totally different plans like licensing music on audiojungle.com or becoming a ghost producer, and many other plans that didn't work out or worked out partially. I make plans for myself and I make plans for my label. I constantly adjust and pitch my plans until I get results. You have to set realistic targets and know where you're headed and keep focused on that targets for as long as you can. But if you see that there is nothing there, if you feel that nothing awaits you at the end of this road or that the destination is unreachable, then you have to change plan. **In life, it is not the strong who win but those who adjust better to the environment.** I work on my

computer 8-10 hours a day. I also spend a couple of hours per day making plans about how I am going to survive in the music industry. My mind is constantly developing strategies and exploring possibilities about how to influence people and eventually convert them into buyers or listeners. And I look around me at what other producers are doing and the vast majority of them have no plan. They just produce new tracks and wait to be discovered. "That is what a producer is supposed to do!" you might say. No! That is what an ultra gifted producer is supposed to do! The rest of us should make plans. **Stop making music, and start making plans.** You certainly improve in music making as the years pass but you really think that this is enough? It's not enough. Everybody's music is improving at the same time and in some cases much faster than yours. Young kids that can go along with the trends can produce better music than yours at a younger age with much less effort and much more ease. How are you going to compete against that? By making a hell of a plan!

#01 You Want It All

Why are you reading this? What is the reason you're trying so hard? What are you trying to prove? Find the answer to this question and success will knock at your bloody door. Ask yourself: What are you trying to accomplish? What are you trying to do? If the answer is more than a simple sentence.. you are fucked. The answer should be one simple sentence; with one object and one verb. I want to produce music. I want to travel the world. I want to be famous. I want to make a hit. I want to collaborate with Vini Vici. I want to be a pianist. I want to be a label manager. I want to suck cocaine backstage with the best models. Then and only then you might be able to fulfill your dream. Each sentence changes the strategy and the things you need to do in order to succeed. If you want to make collaborations, go ahead and contact some people. If your dream is to meet your favorite DJ, go ahead and send him a message and tell him that you have leukemia or something and that your days are numbered and that your last wish is to meet him. That will get the fuckin' job done! If you want to travel the world, go get a job in a travel agency. But your problem is that you want it all! So you are fucked. Because none of these is going to happen. And none of these will happen because you're trying to do many things simultaneously and you are not doing anything right. You're making one collaboration per year, you're releasing one song every 6 months, you're having one gig per year, and nothing is moving the way that it should.

So choose something. Make up your mind. Ask yourself what you want to do and answer with one simple sentence: "I want to make music tutorials", "I want to make money from live performances", "I want to be famous". You can't do everything at once. Now, you might ask "How come famous artists do all at once?". Well, you must understand that in life, we cannot choose who we will be. We can only strive for it. So you must set a very clear goal. You can't wish to be "Armin Van Buuren" and expect this wish to come true. It's like asking a woman: "What is it that you look for in a man?" And she responds "I just want someone to love me for who I really am". No Madam you don't just want someone to love you. You want..

Someone who is not a criminal.

Someone who is not incapable of having an erection.
 Someone who is not incapable of having kids.
 Someone who has no cancer.
 Someone who has no HIV.
 Someone who is not schizophrenic.
 Someone who is not a thief.
 Someone who not a maniac.
 Someone who is not Scrooge McDuck.
 Someone who will not beat you up.
 Someone who is not jobless.
 Someone who talks nicely to you.
 Someone who takes care of you.
 Someone who brings you flowers.

[And a million other things..]

But she said "I just want someone to love me". You are doing the same thing. You say that you want to succeed in the music business but you imply 100 things. Which are more or less translated to:

I want to have gigs.
 I want to be a Rock star.
 I want to gain world-wide fame.
 I want to make money from home using my computer.
 I want my music to be played all over the world.
 I want to travel the world and perform in big venues.
 I want to find myself backstage with some super models and some first class Colombian cocaine.

[And a million other things..]

And none of this is going to happen. Because you want it all. And he who wants it all, gets nothing.

What if I told you that you can work as a teacher, teaching other people how to play an instrument or how to use "Ableton Live" and make a living out of that? What if I told you that you can work as a ghost producer, without fame, without anyone knowing about you, and be able to do what you love, which is making music, and make a living out of it? Would you do it? Would you be a teacher? Would you be a ghost producer? No, you wouldn't. Because it is not the job that you love, it's the fame, the glory. **It's what comes with the job that you pursue!** And that my friend is the number one reason, that you are failing.

[The Devil Speaking] *Vanity, definitely my favorite sin.*

Talk #9

How I Failed As A Web Developer & Why Failure Is A Good Thing

If you check my video tutorial on Youtube of the same title you will see that I had been working part-time as a web developer for more than 10 years. During those years I set up many websites for companies and individuals using various methods and coding languages. Eventually, I gave it up. Why did I give up or why did I fail? There are many answers I could personally give like "I had no expertise over the field" but I think the most appropriate answer is "Because I didn't love it that much".

I want to point out something very important here contrasting music making and web developing. If I ask "Why did I fail as a web developer?", none of you will think "because I had no talent." Because you know that web developing skills take many years to master. But if I ask "Why did I fail as a music producer?", all of you will think that this happened because I had no talent. And this is where people are mistaken about music. The thing with music is that people get emotionally attached when consuming it and thus they think that they are very familiar with it. But let's put the record straight here; I eat 3 times a day but that doesn't make me a cook. No matter how much music you consume, you still know very little about music. But people wrongly believe that they know much about music. And so when someone gave up making music, they most likely assume that it happened because "he had no talent".

Other answers I could possibly give about me failing in web development are: I had no experience in this industry. I didn't spend much time or effort or concentrated enough on the profession. But I think the most serious answer is that I didn't love it so much. And that is what makes me happy about it; that I finally unchained myself from a occupation that I had thought was suitable for me, but eventually realized that I liked doing something else much more, and that was music making.

For many years the job title "Web Developer" sounded good to my ears. But eventually I realized that I was not a web developer. Because for instance I hate to keep up with the technology trends, and the ever-changing knowledge that is required. If you want to be a developer, you have to be up-to-date. Not to mention that you need to spend a million hours learning about SEO (Search Engine Optimization). I started making websites when I was 20 and by the time I was 35 I realized with all my heart that I didn't care about websites, and that I couldn't spend another minute on web development.

So why is failure a good thing? Humans are curious by nature. Curiosity leads to breakthroughs and to scientific discoveries which ultimately lead to making our lives easier. Failure is an inseparable part of our curiosity. Unfortunately, we were taught that our failures are a sign of weakness and so whenever we fail, we fall apart. We blame ourselves and feel depressed. But since we all make mistakes, you must remember that the mistake is never the issue, the issue is how you handle your

emotions when you make mistakes. When we fail, we instinctively feel bad. And that feeling does not allow us to interpret the real lessons behind our failures. If you put aside your bad vibes, you will get to the core of things and find out WHY you failed. In my case, the answer was pretty simple; because I didn't love web development that much. It doesn't get simpler than that.

Unreasonable as it may sound, failure is a positive thing because it makes you try harder. In order to succeed at any task, you must be willing to take risks, and taking risks means that you might fail. Use those mistakes as learning tools. Interpret the lesson and move on. Do not be disheartened. Be encouraged and motivated knowing that your mistakes are helping you to become better as a whole.

Our failures make us undoubtedly wiser. Failure provides expertise and self confidence. No one needs to teach you what went wrong because you found out the hard way! While I was making websites, I needed people to tell me how to succeed because I didn't know how. But now that I have failed, I don't need anyone to tell me why I failed. I know why I failed. There were many pieces missing from that puzzle and I know now what all the missing parts were.

When you have failed and have gotten over your disappointment, you are much more likely to find a pathway more suitable for you. You will realize what you are truly made of and how resilient and flexible you are. In order to grow, you have to stretch your output and your content, and failure helps you move away from what is comfortable. A super clever guy called Robert T. Kiyosaki states: *"Winners are not afraid of losing but losers are! Failure is part of the process of success. People who avoid failure also avoid success."*

It is said that things happen for a reason, but the reason is never clear at the time we fail; it gets clear much later. The saying "One door closes as many more open." is true. Failure is just one door closing with other doors opening. Look at some of the most important personalities in history. Thomas Edison said that he didn't fail - he only found thousands ways that didn't work out. THIS is the mentality you should have. Failure is not the end of things but an opportunity to try something new.

Consider your failures as stepping stones to your goals. That is what I do. I didn't actually fail as a web developer; I just realized that this was not my thing. I was not suitable for it. A football player that plays in a small team is not a loser. It's not that he didn't try so hard or that he did something wrong. It's just that nature didn't provide him with the necessary qualifications to become a world-class football player. We don't choose who we will be, we just choose who we won't be. We can only try and exclude, try and exclude. The same applies with your partner. You can't choose with which girl you will hook up. You can only choose with which girls you won't. You can only disapprove of someone and say "I won't go out with this guy" and move on to the next one. But who is eventually going to become your partner is not really up to you, nature chooses on our behalf.

So after this long and boring talk in which I pretend to be a wise guy who in fact is a loser, I will summarize my key-points into one sentence so you can easily memorize:
Be happy with your failures and use them as opportunities for further development.

Talk #10

The Biggest Religious Lie You Have Been Told

Ladies and gentlemen in this chapter I am going to discuss a very important matter: Sin and money. As we have been taught in the Western world those two go together.

Apostle Paul's first letter to Timothy (6:10): *"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have erred from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows."*

In the Western world, we have all been taught and thus we feel deep inside us, that rich guys are bad guys. That the rich are distanced from the kingdom of God and thus they are cruel and mean.

Jesus talks about how hard it is for the rich to remain untangled by the trappings of their wealth, saying *"For it is easier for a camel (he actually says "camilos" which is the fat ancient rope) to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."* And on other occasions Jesus or his students denounce wealth. Well I am here to tell you: In the real world, the rich are usually the good.

[Lightning strike]

Being generous and kind could be the most important factor to increase your wealth. When I say being generous, I don't mean offering gifts, donations or supporting charities. I simply mean someone who pays some respect and some attention to others; someone who cares about other human beings and offers his time, his energy or his attention and provides value to others, has high chances of becoming rich. People with that kind of generosity make the most money.

Behind each successful corporation lies the will to provide VALUE to the lives of their consumers. That is what marketing is by definition. That is what they teach at university. *"Marketing is not a method to make money or sell something at all costs. Marketing is the process of finding what people need and giving it to them."* So does this mean that I have to offer my services or music for free? Being generous doesn't mean that you should offer your music for free, even though that has proven to be a remarkable advertising strategy for expanding your fame or for establishing relationships with your audience. Being generous doesn't mean that you should not make profit from your products or services; it doesn't mean that you should neglect your needs or your interests for the sake of others. It just means that you should prioritize the needs and the interests of others and put your own needs aside temporarily. The spirit of generosity does not mean self sacrifice or being a martyr. It means that when you focus on others, your own interest will be served too, because others will know that your first priority is to help THEM, and they will subconsciously or consciously be willing to help YOU in turn.

If you are just trying to sell your music and you go around yelling "LISTEN TO THIS!!", "LISTEN TO MY MUSIC!!!" and you bother random people with direct messages, why should someone be interested? When was the last time you helped someone homeless who asked you for money in the street? I'll tell you when: NEVER. Instead of begging and yelling, you can offer value to people. Give them what THEY need from you, not what YOU want to give them. For example, instead of asking people to listen to your music, you can create a compilation and help other producers too. This way, every producer will advertise the compilation and your project will be advertised too. Instead of asking people to book you for a gig, you can offer them a gift, promotional merch, and let them come back to you with a gig request in the future.

Sometimes we wonder: Why has this promoter never booked me for his party? Why has this guy never booked me for his festival? Well, you must understand that a promoter is trying to survive just like YOU are trying to survive. Have you ever reached out to him to congratulate him for his efforts? Have you ever attended one of his parties? No. You just sit there and wait for him to discover you and book you because you are an incredible artist. **We only think of ourselves, and that is why we fail.**

What I am proposing is not to go around helping others and stop caring about yourself. What I am proposing is to put your self-interest aside temporarily. Self interest is a natural defense mechanism. It's what keeps us alive. But self-interest is also blocking your music career. You have to trick it in the same way you trick a beautiful woman in order to seduce her. You don't go asking her "Would you like to go to bed with me?". No, you act like you don't care, you play cool and you talk about other things. Now, if you think that showing a lot of interest is a method to win a woman, you watch a lot of movies instead of actually talking to women. Women need to be ignored in order to pay you some attention. The more interest you show to a woman the more she will reject you. You have to act like you are not trying to sell her anything, act like you have no ulterior motive, put it aside for a bit, hide it. You already do a similar trick each time you watch a movie. Although you certainly know that you are about to watch a fictional story, you are willing to set aside your disbelief in order to put yourself in the place of the protagonist and have a parallel experience and thus enjoy the movie. You know during the whole movie that the events are not true, and yet you bypass that knowledge and try to experience the facts at the maximum level and become one with the actors. You deliberately bring yourself into the fictional world to give yourself the chance to fully experience the sensory reflection of the movie on your real life. Do the same with your self-interest! Put it aside. Work on what people want from you. Maybe you want to produce Rock music, but people like your chill-out stuff. Maybe you want to upload music videos but people want to hear your jokes and your anecdotes. Maybe you want to sing but people want to hear you whistle. Maybe you want make music but people want to hear you talk about politics. If you want to succeed, you must put the interest of people FIRST, ABOVE your own interest! Many people who are extremely successful, celebrities, offer what other people wanted to see or hear from them. It

just happens to be the exact same thing that they have to offer. The rest of us should search for what people want from us to offer.

I will say it one more time: Do not deny or oppress or try to discard or eliminate your self-interest, just put it on hold. Let it wait. Put it aside, empty the space in front of you so there is enough space to put the interest of others. Being generous does not mean going around and doing good deeds in the hope that what you do will pay back. Helping an old lady cross the street is a praiseworthy action that will NOT help you reach your goals. What I mean is pay attention to your consumers. Pay attention to your audience. Listen to what the market needs from you. Don't listen to yourself constantly yelling "I want to give my music to the market!". The market has millions of musicians, there is no place for you, unless you provide something that people need.

So I am sorry if I tear down your sacred beliefs, but try to see the world in a new way; in which money and success go with the generous and the kind. I know that this could possibly go against your beliefs, especially if you are both religious and poor, you may not be able to accept it. But in real life, against what you have been taught, the generous guy, the good guy, gets all the money. The more value you give, the more money you collect. The more attention you pay to others, the more fame you get in return. The more favors you do for random people, the more important you become in the music scene.

Talk #11

10 Things Producers Are Unable To Realize

#01 Being Unique Simply Means Being Yourself

I have spent countless hours trying to remake great hits. On the one hand, it's a good thing because you disassemble a song and you learn many new things. On the other hand, you are burying your own personality. You are burying what you truly like and replacing it with what other people like. Can you create something totally yours? Something truthful and meaningful? You are 1 person out of 7 billion people, in 1 solar system out of 200 billion solar systems, in 1 galaxy out of 200 billion galaxies, in 1 universe out of an infinite number of parallel universes, and that makes you ENORMOUSLY unique to this world. Use just that, use your own singularity. Use your own power!

#02 It's not the idea but the build-up

There is a very important thing that some producers get and some producers don't. And the producers that get it are full time producers and the producers who don't get it have other day jobs. Young producers tend to think: "I need to produce a track that will be released by a big label", "I need to make a world hit that will motivate the party promoters to book me", "I need to have the right track at the right time to take me to the next level." That kind of attitude hands all control over to the universe. Your job is to think realistically and set goals. And in fact, you need to produce 20 original tracks per year. And the reason for producing 20 tracks per year is because most probably one of them (or more) might go out to the world and buzz, and make a difference. And then, out of the blue, one of these tracks will hit 1 million streams on Spotify and some promoter will notice it and he will come to you saying "Hey I want you to come and play at my party because I like your track". And even though the situation looks the same, you are still looking for the right track at the right time, and yet everything is different because now you have a plan! Now, you are making 20 tracks per year. Now, because of your confidence, the universe is primed to submit to your will!

If you are waiting for divine inspiration and you take long breaks between your studio sessions because of lack of inspiration, you are finished. **We never stop making music.** So the artists that travel in order to find inspiration are out their mind. And the producers who do understand this are constantly creating new content, because they know that the outcome is not up to them. **The listeners decide.** We just create and the audience decides. You don't wait a million years until you are totally satisfied by your output. You put it out there and you let the people decide if it's good or not.

#03 Trigger Emotion

People don't listen to music because they like to jade their ears. Using ears to just hear pointless sounds, more or less to noise pollution, is not enjoyable for living creatures, it becomes irritating and gets on your nerves. **People listen to music because music generates feelings.** We are all feeling hunters, emotion seekers. Our job as producers is not to come up with the perfect sound and tweak the knobs a million times but.. to elicit emotion! So if you haven't achieved anything yet is because you have not embedded sufficient resonating emotions in your tracks.

A song is a participatory experience for the audience. We become that song. We imprint our selves on that song. We listen to music because we connect the melodies to our own experiences and we somehow identify our own existence through vibes. So if you've created a song with an empathetic melody or lyrics so the listener can participate, then the emotion will grow organically. But if you are just throwing one loop after another and NOT creating peaks and fluctuation, so there are big moments and quiet moments and moments of pause, then you are doing something wrong. People are influenced by the changes. You might create the perfect sound but If you put that on repeat, after a while, the listener will want to kill himself. On the other hand, play something ugly but change it rapidly and have someone hear it and you will be surprised by his feedback. People cannot identify the quality, they only hear the changes, the contrast. So if you create idiotic Dark Psytrance and you just add loops with no chance to catch your breath, no chance to imagine what might be coming, you are going to have an output with limited emotional involvement and tiny impact.

#04 Have 0 Expectations

Eliminate your expectations for things you have no control over. If you make music because you want to be a Rock star, it will never happen. Rockstars are Rockstars because they like making music, not because they wanted to be Rockstars. I started making music in 1999 and my first official booking, where the promoter approached me himself, happened in 2014, 16 years after I started making music. And during those 16 years many times I got to a point where I asked myself.. "What am I missing here? What am I doing wrong?". But all those were the wrong questions. And one day I asked myself the right question, **the most crucial question that every artist should ask:** "Would I keep doing this if I got nothing in return? No bookings, no glory, no money?" And I answered "Yes I would because my life is too short and I want to leave something beautiful behind me." Music for me is beauty. Some people see colorful butterflies and think "How lovely". I listen to Tchaikovsky and I think "What a divine touch?". So I don't care if they book me anymore. I am here for a higher purpose. I even disabled the "Send Message" button on my Facebook page and posted a message "Open Source is not available for live bookings". I have no expectations from anyone and that is why I am free to say, do or produce whatever I want.

#05 Lack of Communication Skill

I get blind copied mails every day. "Dear Ghost Label records can you put my track in your playlist?", "Can you retweet my tweet?", "Can you repost my track on Soundcloud?". Not even a sign of research about the recipient (me). Those emails are not addressed to me, they are massively sent to potential A&Rs and labels. Now, I don't really care who you are and where you come from, but if you want me to help you, at least send something specifically addressed to me. Spend a few minutes researching about me and then just express yourself in a humanly authentic way, not like a robot. Why would I otherwise want to help you? You didn't even spend one minute checking my links. But no, most people don't check the links, they just go ahead and send blind copied emails.

So that is what established producers possess: Communication skills. I am so good at communicating with other artists that almost everyone responds. And that happens because I see them as colleagues, because I understand them and because I research their background before sending a message. I write mails like "Hey man.. I have listened to ALL your discography and although you mainly produce progressive beats, I particularly liked this techno track that you made.. and I might have a proposal for you." Now, who wouldn't answer an email like that? Maybe the track is available, maybe not, but it doesn't matter. The important thing here is the dialogue, the networking. Because if he responds, now you have a connection! And after 6 months you might send another mail asking for something else or just offering something for free. And that dialogue would never happen if you send massive emails like "Hey I am looking for a label to release my track". **Established producers have a communication protocol which is totally unknown among newbies.**

Newbies write music and then they write more music, and then some more, and then they get frustrated and send out massive emails saying "Here is my track! Isn't it fantastic?". You don't build a brand like that because you are being self-destructive. You have to think in terms of business; "What more can I do that others are too bored of doing?" And that "more" can be "more" in terms of quantity or "more" in terms of quality where you actually do LESS but more efficiently. You should invest a serious amount of time figuring out how to be a businessman and how to reach out to people, and how to do things differently than all the other million producers out there who are failing.

#06 Don't Sit Back & Watch

When you're waiting for something to happen, it never happens. We cannot force things to happen. What we can do instead is try 20 different things, and as a result, one good thing might happen. You can try to be friendly with party promoters, you can try to sell sample packs, you can try to be a youtuber, you can try to be a ghost producer, you can try to license music to game developers. The more things you try, the more you increase your chances of hooking up with an activity. Don't waste time hoping for something to happen. It will never happen.

Do your work, then put it out there and let the people decide. I have a track on Spotify with 1 million hits which is called "We are the Gods". The track is terrible. I specifically remember that I was ashamed of it the day I released it. But it turned out

to be a success. Who would have thought? Over 900 playlists include it. That would not have happened if I had thought "I don't like this track so I won't release it". **You should always put out the work, and keep putting out the work until someone knocks at your bloody door!** That is what successful artists do. They keep putting out content.

Most people live in their own utopia. They think that this world was created by some divine miracle, that God made it out of pure wisdom, and that everything is perfect. "If the moon was located a kilometer further.. life on earth would not exist.", "If the meteor had passed a millisecond earlier, Dinosaurs would never have vanished from the face of the earth and so mammals would never have dominated." A trillion parameters came together in order for this project that we call life to happen. **But people forget the infinite times that the project failed.** We are now witnessing the successful version of the experiment. But there is an infinite number of times that this project didn't work out! There are 200 billion galaxies out there without life. Trillion planets without atmosphere. The experiment worked out here because all the conditions were met. It ran again and again for an inconceivable amount of times, and we just see the only one successful outcome rather than the infinite times that the experiment failed! Life happened here because God was constantly trying new things again and again!

#07 Set Short-Term Goals

I have always been and I will always be, a learner. When I hear a great track, I get excited and go analyze it and try to reproduce it. By constantly learning and researching is how you eventually gravitate to professionalism. The correct perspective is to see it as "I'm always developing and growing" and not like "I'm supposed to know it all and be perfect at it and the things will automatically turn out great and the music scene will miraculously discover me."

I remember myself and my friends as students naively saying "I will learn how to make websites and then be a web developer". "I will learn how to play the piano and become a pianist". And in 99% of the cases that a person says something like that, he is never apt to get there. And he never gets there because life is unpredictable and because he won't be the same person forever. You have to see it as a continuous quest and not as "I have to get to a certain point". There are these goals that we all set, that are usually out of our control. If you decide now to go to the kitchen and eat an apple, you can do that. But if you decide today, that after 3 years you will go to the kitchen to eat an apple, you will most probably change your mind till then.

The question to ask is how to be a better producer who is learning, and find some satisfaction through that journey. You can say "I will learn to play the piano", but you cannot say "I will be a pianist". It sounds rather feasible but is not really up to you. And it's not up to you because it takes a lot of time, and you won't be the same person. You don't know what your future self wants. The only thing you do know and can say is, "I will start learning the piano and see what happens..". So people say, "I will start making songs for a living." and of course they fail. Because this statement

by itself is almost impossible to achieve; simply because you can't see the future. We are constantly changing. So to say that you will accomplish something that takes more than 6 to 12 months is irrational. Because you won't be the same person after 12 months.

#08 Your content is puny

The most crucial thing to success that producers don't see is that their content is not enough. Your content my friend producer (not specifically your music) is not yet intriguing enough. You are not keeping up with the stuff that is out there and you are not experienced enough to evaluate the current situation objectively and foresee where the market is going in order to float in the same direction.

[Reporter] "Shouldn't we be authentic as you said earlier?"

You should be authentic in terms of art. In terms of business you need to be up-to-date. You can't succeed in marketing using the methods that were used in the 70's. Making music is art but selling music is business. And your music might be good, but your content is not enough.

#09 Embrace Feedback

I hear people preaching "If you love doing art, just do your thing and listen to no one". Well if the audience is saying or indicating that your music sucks, you can keep on creating as a hobby, but if you are trying to do that as a profession, you are left with very few chances of succeeding. One thing that I realized, rather late, is that you have to be really open to feedback. Most of us fail because we create what WE like while we should be creating what OTHERS want from us to create. We tend to lock ourselves in a room and shut the outside world out. On the contrary, I believe we should engage with the world, with feedback, and see it like trying to make our music better but not our results better. Because results are not up to us. When you focus on how to give more, you will get back more automatically. But we usually ask ourselves: "How do I get the likes?", "How do I get the right person to listen to my track?", "How do I get people to view my page?" It's more like "How do I create something so wonderful that people will just choose to listen to it? How do I provide value? How do I give them what they want?". It's all about improving your content and maximizing your impact.

#10 Beware Of False Prophets

There is a whole market place of music teachers and music marketing specialists. In an effort to manipulate the consumers, they are constructing specific formulas. For example: "If your track has a big intro, Spotify curators won't include it in their editorial playlists." . "If your track is more than 5 minutes long it is not suitable for big playlists". Next time you hear someone speaking about Spotify, go and check his Spotify profile and you will see him having 0 to 50 monthly listeners. Because those people have never made it as artists. They made it as youtubers, as marketers, as

coaches, as teachers, BUT NOT as artists. And if you ask them "How come Mister Guru and you know so much about Spotify and yet you have no listens?". Their answer will be something like: "I am helping others build their own brand, I am not an artist." But if you check their very first youtube videos they always admit that they wanted to succeed as artists in the first place! How did they manage to help others but not themselves, I really cannot understand. For instance, all of them say that long intros and long tracks will never be placed in a big editorial playlist, and my track "We are the Gods" is 9 minutes long with a long and boring intro, and it was picked up by "Psytrance Supernova", an editorial playlist with half million followers. I watch a lot of coaching on Youtube about music marketing and if those teachings come from a successful artist, like Jon Sine, they can assist you, but most of the times they come from theoreticians who are false and harmful. Theoreticians are good in theory but they never made it as artists. Picture this: I eat 5 times a day, and even though I am NOT a cook, I will teach YOU how to cook by tasting your food and saying what tastes good and what not. Eventually my comments will make you a better cook. Think about that.

[Reporter] Any advice to young producers?

I think a lot of producers are waiting for the world to signal them, to give them permission to pursue their dreams. **You need to give yourself that permission.** You need to man up and say "Okay I'm going to do this and I won't be the best at it in the beginning but if I keep doing it I will improve at some point." You won't know the outcome unless you put yourself out there. That is what I am doing right here. I don't have the slightest clue if this interview is going to affect anyone. We 'll know after a few years.

Talk #12

Why Music Used To Be Better

In this talk, I will try to answer the question “Why people tend to believe that music released during the 60’s, 70’s and 80’s was better than the music being released nowadays?”. "BECAUSE IT WAS!", you might say. Maybe. I hear about this topic, statement, argument, call it whatever you like, frequently and I have decided to share my own theory about it. My humble opinion is that music being released nowadays IS NOT worse than before. Music did NOT use to be better. I understand that the situation looks like this, but that is only a way of seeing things; a false impression created unavoidably by our modern society. If you work in the music industry you might possibly agree with what I am about to declare; great music is being released every day. But for reasons that I will expound shortly, we get the impression that the music released today is worse than the music released in previous decades. In order to justify my opinion, allow me to make a hypothetical time travel into the past, a few decades back.

Let's say we are in the 70's. You have an old piano at your house but your father is keeping telling you to become reasonable, to come to your senses, to live in the real world, to forget about the dream of becoming a rock star, and to find a real job. But let's also assume that you are a stubborn man, and you can't stop composing your own melodies and writing your own lyrics and you are also capable of signing your songs. You also managed to make some friends with similar interests and they all play a different instrument and you all together formed a band called "The Nowheres". Now that your band has a few ready songs, it's time for you and your friends to make your dreams come true.

Here comes a question: How hard was it for someone to release a song back in the 70's compared to how hard it is today?

Answer: Hard enough.

Question: How hard was for someone to enter a studio with his band and rehearse or record a song back then?

Answer: Hard enough. You either needed to have a ton of money to spare or your band needed to be extremely talented in order to be discovered by a record label that will sponsor studio sessions.

Question: How hard was it for a manager or for a record label to represent your band?

Answer: Very hard.

What do all these mean about the numbers of records been put out back then? It means one simple thing; the music that was coming out was much less in quantity

than the music coming out nowadays. Not everyone could record an album. Not everyone could release his music. Not everyone could have a chance in the dream. The incident of finding a manager or a record label to believe in you, invest in you and record your music was rare, very rare. On the contrary, nowadays everyone is free and capable of putting out his own music with just a few clicks. But of course, since anyone can do that, the competition is greater and your music most probably won't cut through the noise. So the number one reason we think that today's music is worse is because nowadays good music is being lost in an ocean of releases, while back then only the best stuff was released! Let's think a bit deeper.

What was the effect of that situation? What was the impact of less music going out? The answer is pretty simple; **STRONGER BONDS** between the products and its consumers. People were attached tighter to music. They loved it much more than nowadays. And they did not get bored of it that easily. The tracks could be on the charts for weeks or even months. Those people are still here, alive. They are in their 40s, 50s or 60s and they still feel this way. The attachment they have with the music they loved as teenagers is very strong. As we get older, you must have noticed that nothing excites us in the way that excited us as kids. Because back then everything was new. We experienced everything for the first time. We were clean slates; *Tabula rasa*. It's not that easy to fall in love with a song in your 50s as it was in your 20s. That pretty much means that the generation born in 2000, when the year 2050 comes, they will claim that the music released in 2020 (when they were 20 years old) was much better than the following decades. And they will have a point, from their perspective.

Let's examine the situation from a different angle. Till the early 90's almost all songs were recorded in a studio using live instruments. In the early 90's we started making music with our personal computers and nowadays in more than 99% of the cases the music that goes out comes from a home studio without even been tested in a professional recording studio. In almost all cases, the instruments have been replaced by virtual instruments. It takes a lot of practice and a lot of expertise to make a computer sound as good as real instruments, no matter if you use sampled instruments or synth generated. So what I am trying to say is this: The overall quality of the music being released today is worse than the overall quality of the music released in previous decades. Simply because everyone is using home computers instead of live instruments. Now a young kid might object and say something like: "Have you heard the insane quality of Marshmello (American DJ)? This sound quality has never been achieved before." I am not talking about the tracks that get on the charts. The tracks that make it to the radio or to the television have indeed insane quality. I am talking about the **OVERALL** music being put out there. You can't possibly imagine what huge quantity of trash is being released every day.

As you know or should know, one's music career nowadays is totally connected with his internet presence and his social media. If you want to be a musician you have to be a youtuber, a mastering engineer, a graphic designer, a promoter, a marketing expert and many others things. And if you check around, all music coaches suggest that you should **NOT** pay attention to the details and that you should go ahead and

upload your content. *"Don't spend too much time looking for the appropriate kick"* they say. *"Don't spend too much time EQ-ing or tweaking the knobs; just go ahead and upload your content."* they say. *"Quantity over quality"* they say. That is being said by both coaches and producers. And.. they are right, for the moment. So how can an individual spend time in producing quality music, with those widely acceptable teachings at the background of his head? How can someone spend time working on quality, which after all is subjective and does not really exist as a sense? And yet, there are some crazy dudes out there with insane quality who don't care about the mainstream strategy. And they pay maximum attention to the details and they release just 1 song every 6 months. But in general, nowadays, for most people quantity outweighs quality.

A hypothesis that pleads in favor of the theory that music was indeed better in the past is the following: There are 12 musical notes, and as far as I know for the organ there are 132 basic chords. Now, the combination of those chords and notes might be a huge number, but it's still a finite number. And each time a cool melody or a cool chord progression is invented, this number is being reduced. Each time a cool melody or a chord progression is invented the chances of discovering a new melody or chord progression are getting smaller and smaller. 1000 years later, it will be much more difficult to come up with a new melody than it is today, simply because during those 1000 years many melodies and chord progressions will have been discovered.

Another factor that pleads in favor of those saying that the music was indeed better in the past is the following. The previous decades were chronically closer to major facts like World War 2. The 60's, 70's, 80's & 90's was a time of big changes. In the 60's civil rights acts were passed but spiritual leaders like Martin Luther King were assassinated. Then we were at the height of the Cold War. America was still feeling the after effects of JFK's assassination in 1963. We had the Vietnam war. We had the "Flowers Children", a synonym for the Hippies who were supposed to be zealous activists protesting against racism, war & politicians. The Watergate scandal was huge, leading up to Nixon's resignation in 1974. We had the first ever people in space, the first ever astronauts, accompanied by unavoidable disasters like the explosion of the "Challenger" space shuttle. The Berlin wall came down. Communism in Russia ended with the breakup of the USSR in 1991. There were SO MANY important happenings. Culture itself was waking up in a way that affected the whole world. And music played a huge part in the formation of society and civilization. Music was never closer to the way people were feeling. It touched them. Moved them. Consoled them. Energized them. Rallied them. Brought inner-peace. It awakened them and helped lay the foundation for change. Back then, music meant a lot more and was an integral part of our culture and the shaping of our society. That's why the bonds were so strong. That's why artists and groups became so iconic. It wasn't because the music was better but because the impact was larger! Because it represented masses as they were and who they were and what they stood for and believed in and felt like. When I asked my 95 year-old grandmother what she thinks about this topic, she said the same thing; that back then the music & lyrics spoke directly to their hearts. And that as a fact along with the "Fast Food culture" of our times led us today to lower quality productions. By the term "Fast Food culture" I mean that everything is

accessible and thus has less value than before. You can walk 100 meters away from your home and buy strawberries with ice-cream, peanut-butter or get a massage or a blow-job. 50 years ago not everything was accessible. You couldn't have everything right on the plate. So everything had greater value.

Do all these mean that the music released today has less value than the music released a few decades ago? No. It means that the average music released today is worse than the average music released decades ago. There are still incredible singular productions being released today. As you saw there are ways to contradict both arguments. But I will go with those saying that the market is more complex today and so are the products. To put it in simple words: Music is not worse than before. We may have lost some musical geniuses like Freddy Mercury, Ennio Morricone or Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. But we currently have musical geniuses alive like John Williams, Alan Silvestri, Alan Menken or Clint Mansell. There is amazing music being put out every day. The inevitable problem and the difference today is that you have to look for it.

Talk #13

Why You Shouldn't Create Underground Music

In this chapter I am going to share with you a theory about the underground music subgenres that you should avoid creating and why? And the answer is simple: Because you will waste your time. Because those genres won't be here after a while. They are already holding out much longer than expected.

I remember myself posting somewhere approximately 6-7 years ago that Dubstep will eventually die. Those who followed me might remember this post, I think it was on Twitter. Today I prove myself correct. The Dubstep scene is dead. There is no Dubstep anymore. The same will happen very soon with most Dark Psytrance styles and Hardcore Techno subgenres. Why do I feel that this is the inevitable evolution of things? Allow me to explain.

The value of a song is proven through time. Time is the ultimate judge. If a song doesn't last in time it has no value. Valuable tracks are those that we keep listening to throughout decades and those that artists bother to remix, remake or make covers. The more times a song is being enjoyed, signed, remade, remixed, the more it survives in the world's music scene. And what happens every 20-30 years? The contemporary trends cannot keep up with the old-fashioned versions of those hits, so new versions arise. New remixes of those hits come up, presented in a new modern way and with a contemporary rhythm. And what are the elements preserved from the old hits when making remakes or remixes? Is it the rhythm? No. The tempo? No. The drum-sets? No. The percussion? No. The main melody? Yes. The lyrics? Yes. The characteristic sounds of it? Yes. Something that describes the track and makes it unique, like a specific chord progression or a specific bassline or a specific sound? YES. Those are the elements preserved and transcoded into the new remixes that ultimately make the songs last through time.

So briefly, what are the common elements that a contemporary producer absorbs from an old hit in order to make a remix and thus preserve it through time which eventually classifies the track as classic? **The lyrics and the melodies.** And what does he add on top of those? His own rhythm, tempo and style. And what does this mean about for example Hi-Tech Psytrance music? It means that this sub-genre cannot be preserved. In spite of some very few exceptional productions that include genuine vocals or melodies, the vast majority of underground subgenres have just a dancing rhythm which won't be modern or trendy after a few years. And then, after many years, what elements will the remixer be able to use in order to remix and thus bring a song back to fashion? Nothing. Now, as the issue starts to unravel, I ask you very simply: What is it that you will remix in a Dark Psytrance track in order to revitalize it when the trends change? Nothing. Most underground music sub-genres are full of junky sounds that were made up to entertain drugged kids. Dark Psytrance has no vocals. The melodies are so tight that they cannot be transcribed into other genres because they were meant to be played in a fast tempo and they are not even melodies, they are arpeggios (notes of a chord played in a row).

So my Dear reader, you might be 20 or 25 years old and you love Hardcore Techno or Gabba or Dark Psytrance, but each time you spend a minute making Psytrance or supporting the Psytrance scene in general, keep in mind that his music won't last long. It took me literally 15 years to understand that. All the tracks I made without melodies are rubbish. All the tracks I made adding in hook-lines from movies are rubbish, because they do not include original content. So when you make a song, ask yourself: Does it have any elements that can be taken after 10 years in order to be remixed? Does it have a unique characteristic sound? Does it have a melody? Does it have some vocals or some good lyrics? If yes, go ahead and produce it. If not, you are wasting your time.

Talk #14

The Dark Commitment Behind Successful Careers

Being an artist is in many ways similar to gambling in the stock market. As long as you hold your shares, you are neither a loser or a winner, despite your stock's current value, because there are always chances that your stock value will increase or decrease. So, as long as you hold your shares, anything is possible. But, the moment you sell your shares, you are either a winner or a loser. The same is true for the world of arts. As long as you keep doing something, there is always a chance to be discovered, glorified or become rich and famous. The moment you give up, it all ends right there. Giving up is the worst thing you can do to your music career, but the best thing you can do to yourself, in order to become a free man. Nikos Kazantzaki's epitaph reads «*I hope for nothing. I fear nothing. I am free.*» On the other hand, if you are stubborn enough (and full of psychological problems), like me, you can always increase your chances of succeeding by never giving up. But this requires a little sacrifice. The sacrifice of your own lifetime. Because even if you spend your whole life trying, you might possibly not succeed. And in some rare cases recognition comes after death, like in Van Gogh's case. And some other times recognition never comes at all. But let's assume that you don't care so much about your lifetime and you have nothing better to do than succeeding as an artist. There is one simple thing that you can do that will **definitely** increase your chances of succeeding, and that is never giving up. Never sell your shares.

In 334 BC, Alexander the Great sailed his fleet across the sea and into the Asia Minor shores. At that time, the Persians, his most worthy opponent, had the most formidable Navy in the world. When the Macedones reached the shore, Alexander was afraid that because of the size of the Persian army, his men would get scared and use the ships to retreat even without his permission. So what did the great Alexander do? He ordered his men to burn down all their ships! And then he said "*We will either prevail and return home on Persian ships or we will all die here.*" That is the mindset that brings results. When I decided to dedicate myself to the purpose of music making, I didn't say "*I will try this for a few months and then I will try that for a few months and if both scenarios fail I will do something else with my life.*", which could be the right thing to say if you are a normal, healthy person. But no, I said "*I will succeed in the music business even if I spend my entire lifetime trying*". And I did exactly that. For many years I had no income. And sure there were plenty times that I felt discouraged and frustrated, but the decision was made. It was all or nothing. I would either succeed in the music business or I would be a starving artist for the rest of my life. And for many years I was a starving artist in terms of profit. I had a Fiat Seicento till my 40s and my relatives mocked me calling it "Lamborghini". Did I have the opportunity to buy a new car? Sure I did. But I chose to spend money on music gear, on music advertisement, on promotional CDs and on making video clips for my songs. The purchase of a new car would distract me from my main goal which was succeeding in the music business at all costs. If I had a new car I would use it more often to go for rides or worry about it getting scratched or stolen. I also refused going out a lot.

Because I had only one goal; to succeed in music business, everything else came second.

Now, I do not encourage you to act in a similar way and deny having a good time. But unfortunately that is the only thing that can increase for sure your chances of succeeding. And it might sound simple, but as years pass, this simple decision will put you to a big test. Questions will arise again and again; "Is this job really for me? Did I make the right choice? Is it worth sacrificing my time, time I cannot recover, since we only live once?" As you long as you keep answering "Yes, this was the best choice for me", the dark forces that keep you away from your goals will be dispelled. And your willpower will be strengthened, bringing you closer and closer to your goal.

So ask yourself: What am I willing to sacrifice in order to succeed? Will I give my entire lifetime? Will I give away all my money? Do I like music that badly? Is this art-form indeed my thing? Or is it just an illusion? The people that made it in the music industry are madly in love with music and highly determined. I made it, not because I am a good artist or a talented musician but simply because music flows in my veins. And I started to realize that around my 40s. Because only then was I able to recall incidents of my life and conclude how important each incident was. Recalling incidents in which I listened to music while I was on a road-trip for example. Or an incident when I was in love with a girl and we had our own love song. Music has always been a major factor in my life. But you can't make the comparison and understand that when you are young. Because when you are 20 you enjoy more or less everything because everything is new. You enjoy at the maximum a joint as much as you enjoy a visit to the casino. But when you have lived long enough then it gets clear which is your thing and which is not. Only when you get to a certain point can you look back and say how important each person that you met in your life was, and how important a song was or how important any art-form that you encountered was. And when you are mature enough you get to the point where you can comprehend that this particular art-form or occupation is really the most suitable thing for you and then you start becoming a true professional.

So I will end this talk with a nice quote from Robert Kiyosaki, a very successful businessman of our time, quote that I find very realistic. As I keep saying success has nothing to do with talent but with how much you like an activity, and Robert puts it like this:

«The size of your success is measured by the strength of your desire; the size of your dream; and how you handle disappointment along the way.»

Talk #15

The Only Tangible Way To Survive In The Music Industry

I will share with you the only tangible way of surviving in the music industry and that goes by 3 simple words: BE THE TURTLE. The myth goes like this..

Once upon a time a rabbit was mocking a turtle for being deadly slow. The turtle disagreed and they decided to settle the argument with a race. For the rabbit, that was a completely ridiculous joke. The race began and the rabbit ran far away ahead of the turtle, as everyone would have assumed. After reaching the halfway point he looked back and he couldn't see the turtle anywhere. Realizing that he was far ahead, he thought he'd sit under a tree for some time and relax before continuing the race. And so he sat. But not long after, because of fatigue and the strong sun, he fell asleep. Unfortunately for him, he slept longer than he had expected and when he woke up he was in panic! He went at full speed to the finish line but found the turtle there waiting for him. While the rabbit had been sleeping, the turtle kept walking step by step. She never quit no matter how hot, tired or frustrated she was. She just kept on moving. The moral of the story is that the steady and persistent one wins the race, not the skillful, not the talented, not the gifted, not the favorite. Although the rabbit was the favorite of this race, the guy with the most skills, he lost. And the turtle emerged as the undisputed champion!

That might be just a fable, but it happens in real life all the time. So people ask how to make it in the music industry.. and the answer is simple: **You make it by being the bloody turtle.** You make it by keep moving forward. While others are constantly giving up, you keep on going! I see people around me giving up all the time. And I don't blame them. It is the right thing to do. Who is willing to sacrifice his best years before a computer screen for the slight chances of succeeding? In order to overtake the artists that are more skilled than you, you need to be lucky, you need to be persistent and you need to have a plan. *«An idiot with a plan can beat a genius without a plan»*, says Warren Buffett, one of the richest men in the world.

There was a time when I was very young and completely unknown and I knew that I was the outsider rather than the favourite, but I liked making music. And I asked myself.. "How am I going to do this for a living? How am I going to steal this elegant and clean job from other producers that have more skills and talent than me?" And back then, I really had no answer. I hardly had any experience in marketing or making music and none of my relatives or friends were working in the music industry. I felt nothing but a big void. Whenever I released a CD (on my own budget) or even tracks in digital format, nothing happened. Nobody cared. I was witnessing around me known artists reaching the top, having successes, playing in huge festivals, entering the charts and I had none of their luck. But I had something none of them had. I HAD THE WILLPOWER TO KEEP ON GOING. Willpower is one of the most important things in life. It takes one man's will to change the world. So everything becomes balanced. **Those lacking skill, make up in will.** And my will is made out of steel. In order to succeed in the music business many things could be

useful, like money, connections or a catchy song. But one thing is more important than all and that is to keep on going and not to stop no matter what.

Once in a while you will see someone posting something like "I've had enough with this scene", "I quit making music", "This is the end for my project" with excuses that it's always someone else's fault. I have never seen one guy acknowledging that he just failed. It is such a hard pill to swallow. Nobody can admit that he is simply not good enough. Well I am here to tell you: I am not good enough. I fail almost every single day. Even now that I am finally able to make a living with my music, if you compare the money I get with the years I've spent doing this, the profit is so puny that makes me a total loser. But I am ok with that, because everybody fails. You really think that the turtle was so arrogant to believe that she will make it against the rabbit!? She didn't think that she would make it. Chances were against her and she knew that. But she competed anyhow because she had nothing better to do. And she also considered; what if something goes wrong with the rabbit? What if he falls down and breaks a knee or something? You always have a chance! You always have a chance no matter how little skillful or talented you are; people might still like your outputs! And by keep moving forward you increase the chances of positive things that might happen to your career.

If you are new in the business, or if you even have a few years of experience behind you, I know how you feel. You feel no one is paying attention, that no one is watching or listening to your content. But trust me, people ARE listening and people ARE watching. You just can't feel it yet. If you keep on going there will be one day that you will feel eyes fixed on you and ears tuned in your music. The real difference between an established producer and a newcomer is that the newcomer is in a hurry to succeed while the established producer even though he might be 10 to 20 years older, he is in much less hurry. He is relaxed and focused on his targets. When I create content I sense nothing but eternity. I feel that my content will be there when none of us will.

You don't need to create something spectacular in order to succeed. You don't need to have a brilliant idea. I know how 20 year-old kids think because I was also 20 years old once. They think that they need a genuine idea in order to succeed. But you don't need a genuine idea, **you need to build on the idea!** The most successful businesses out there are NOT original ideas. Facebook was not an original idea; there was Myspace and Friendster before that. Microsoft Windows was not an original idea. Apple had a better operating system with a graphical interface long before Microsoft. It's all about how much effort you put and how much passionate you are and how far you are willing to go. By just being more persistent you will overtake your competitors. Slowly, as the years pass, you will see your competitors disappearing in the background and you will ask yourself "Where is that great artist that was constantly touring?", "Where is the other guy that had so many hits and his music was featuring all over the place?". None of them will exist anymore, BUT YOU WILL STILL BE HERE! And you will be here, not because you are better or because you have a supreme skill but simply because you want it more than them! And you didn't stop, as the turtle didn't stop, until you reach the end line! All you have to do

is not to quit and not to switch pathway and the end line will at some point appear in the distance before your eyes.

But in order to go that far you need to love what you do. Because it is highly likely that at some point in your life, an occupation will appear that is more profitable than making music, and most people will choose to do the most profitable occupation. Which will mean that you didn't love making music so much. And that choice will instantly kill your music career, but perhaps also get you a better life. I put my music above my life, and I do not encourage you to do the same. But, if in any case, you feel that you were born to make music and that you are determined enough to go all the way.. I am delightfully looking forward to running across you in the music battlefield.

[gunshots]