

***ELECTRONIC
(AND)DANCE MUSIC:
HISTORY, PRODUCTION,
PERFORMANCE***

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EDM IN POPULAR CULTURE



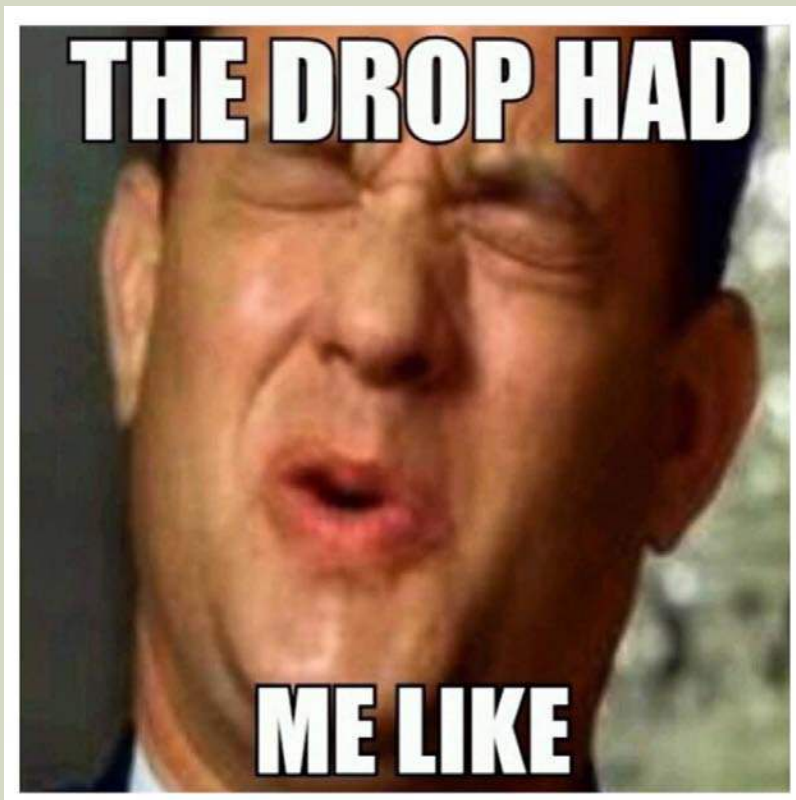
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Electronic Cash Kings 2015

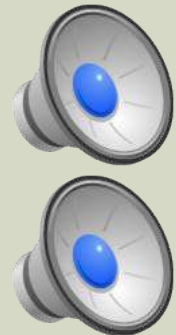
For the second straight year, Calvin Harris pulled in \$66 million to lead all DJs, and it's not even close: The Scotsman earned nearly twice as much as the No. 2 name on our list. The top twelve DJs earned \$304 million over the past year—read on to see the complete rankings.

WHAT IS EDM?

- **EDM (Electronic Dance Music)** is an umbrella term for the numerous genres and sub-genres of electronic music that are primarily performed at, and produced for, nightclubs and raves.
- A rave is a term used to describe long lasting (often illegal or unsanctioned) parties typically featuring loud music mixed by DJs.
- EDM performances consist of a **DJ** mixing together recordings, one after another.
- EDM pieces are called **tracks**. They are composed (**produced**) with synthesizers, drum machines, sequencers and computers.
- Many EDM genres are affiliated with youth **sub-cultures**, groups that operate “**underground**” or illegally.

SHARED CHARACTERISTICS OF EDM GENRES

- **Four-to-the-floor** Kick Drum.
- Hand claps or snare hits on beats 2 and 4 (**backbeat**).
- Loop based: Built on small sections of music (**loops**) that are designed to be continuously repeated.
- Sub-sections built on Duple metre (1-2-4-8-16-32).
- **Edits and Remixes**
- Rife with genres, sub-genres, and sub-sub genres.



AND OTHER (SUB)GENRES...

- Florida breaks
 - Nu-funk
 - Miami bass
- Jersey club
- Nu skool breaks
- Disco
 - Afro / Cosmic disco
 - Disco polo
 - Euro disco
 - Italo disco
 - Space disco
- Downtempo
 - Acid jazz
 - Chill-out
 - Ethnic electronica
 - New-age music
 - Trip hop
- Drum and bass
 - Darkstep
 - Drill and bass
 - Drumstep
 - Funkstep
 - Hardstep
 - Jump-up
 - Liquid funk
 - Neurofunk
 - Sambass
- Krautrock
 - Minimal wave
 - New rave
 - Nu-gaze
 - Space rock
 - Synthpop
- Electronica
 - Berlin School
 - Chillwave
 - Dubtronica
 - Folktronica
 - Funktronica
 - Laptronica
 - Livetronica
 - Vaporwave
- Hardcore/Gabber
 - 4-beat
 - Breakbeat hardcore
 - Bouncy techno
 - Breakcore
 - Digital hardcore
 - Darkcore
 - Happy hardcore
 - Mákina
 - Speedcore
 - UK hardcore
- Big room
 - Complexro
 - Fidget house
 - Moombahton
 - Moombahcore
 - Electro swing
 - French house
 - Synthwave
 - Funky house
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 - Jazz house
 - Kwaito
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 - New beat
 - Nu-disco
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 - Dance-rock
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- Techno
 - Acid techno
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 - Dub techno
 - Free tekno
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 - Nortec
 - Tecno brega
 - Techdombe
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 - Dream trance
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 - Hard trance
 - Nitzhonot
 - Psychedelic trance
 - Suomisaundi
 - Full on
 - Progressive trance
 - Tech trance
 - Uplifting trance
 - Vocal trance
- UK garage

PREDECESSORS

- Electro-Acoustic Music
- Experimental Pop
- Disco
- Electro-Funk



ELECTRO-ACOUSTIC MUSIC



ELECTRO-ACOUSTIC MUSIC

- **Electro-Acoustic** music developed in Western Europe and North America during the early 20th century (and UofT!)
- It used electronics and early computing technology to generate sound.
- Composers integrated these electronic sounds into more traditional compositions, often combining electronics with instrumentalists or vocalists.
- Notable electro-acoustic composers include:
 - Iannis Xenakis (1922-2001)
 - Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928-2007)
 - Milton Babbitt (1916-2011)
 - Pierre Boulez (1925-2016)
 - Mario Davidovsky (1934-)

ELECTRO-ACOUSTIC MUSIC

■ Two schools of electro-acoustic music composition:

■ *Musique Concrete*:

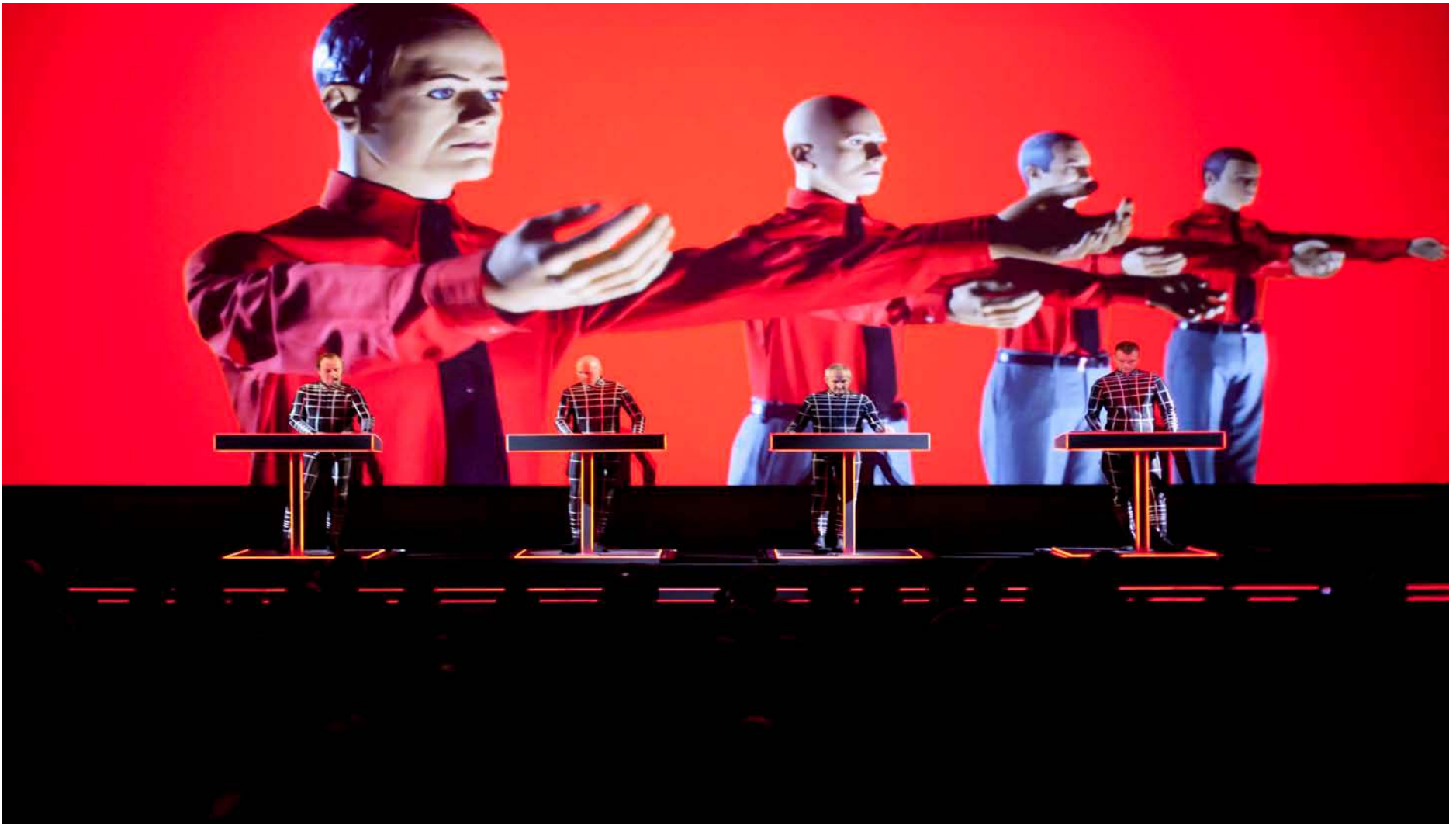
- Concrete Music, popularized by Pierre Shaffer (France) in the 1940s. (ex. *Poème Électronique* 1958).
- Relied on found sound, sounds that existed acoustically in the world but heavily manipulated through recording practice.
- A precursor to sampling.

■ *Elektronische Musik*

- Electronic music, popularized by Karlheinz Stockhausen (Germany) in the 1950s (ex. *Studie I* 1953)
- Used electronics to generate new sounds, relying on synthesis to create timbre that had yet to exist in the physical world.
- A precursor to contemporary signal processing and modular synthesis.



EXPERIMENTAL POP



EXPERIMENTAL POP

- During the 1960s and 1970s young people were exposed to electro-acoustic music via **radio**.
- Especially in West-Germany, young musicians sought to integrate new music technology (synthesizers and drum machines) into their music.
- Combining this technology with Rhythm and Blues and Rock and Roll, they pioneered new genres like: electropop, krautrock, space music, and cosmic music.
- Notable groups include:
 - Kraftwerk (example Das Modell, 1978)
 - Tangerine Dream.
 - Neu!
 - Can.



DISCO



DISCO

- A dance music genre that contained elements of soul, funk and pop.
- Initial audiences (during the early 1970s) were gay, Black, and Latino club-goers in the American mid-west (Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia).
- By the late 1970s it achieved widespread popularity (and commercialization) through recordings by: The Bee Gees, Donna Summers, Gloria Gayner, and the film *Saturday Night Fever*.
- Disco often uses electronic instruments (synthesizers/drum machines) and many of its rhythmic characteristics are found throughout EDM genres ([the disco beat](#)). (Ex. Donna Summers, *I Feel Love* 1977



ELECTRO



ELECTRO

- Emerged from New York in the early 1980s when funk musicians became more interested in sound technology.
- Corresponds with the beginnings of hip-hop and uses many of the same technologies and practices.
- A fusion of funk and boogie with the electronic pop of Germany.
- **Afro-Futurism**: an aesthetic that combines elements of science fiction and futurism with afrocentrism. An approach to futurism informed by black experience and history.
- Most famously celebrated by **Afrika Bambaata** and his hit *Planet Rock* (samples Kraftwerk's "Trans-Europe Express").



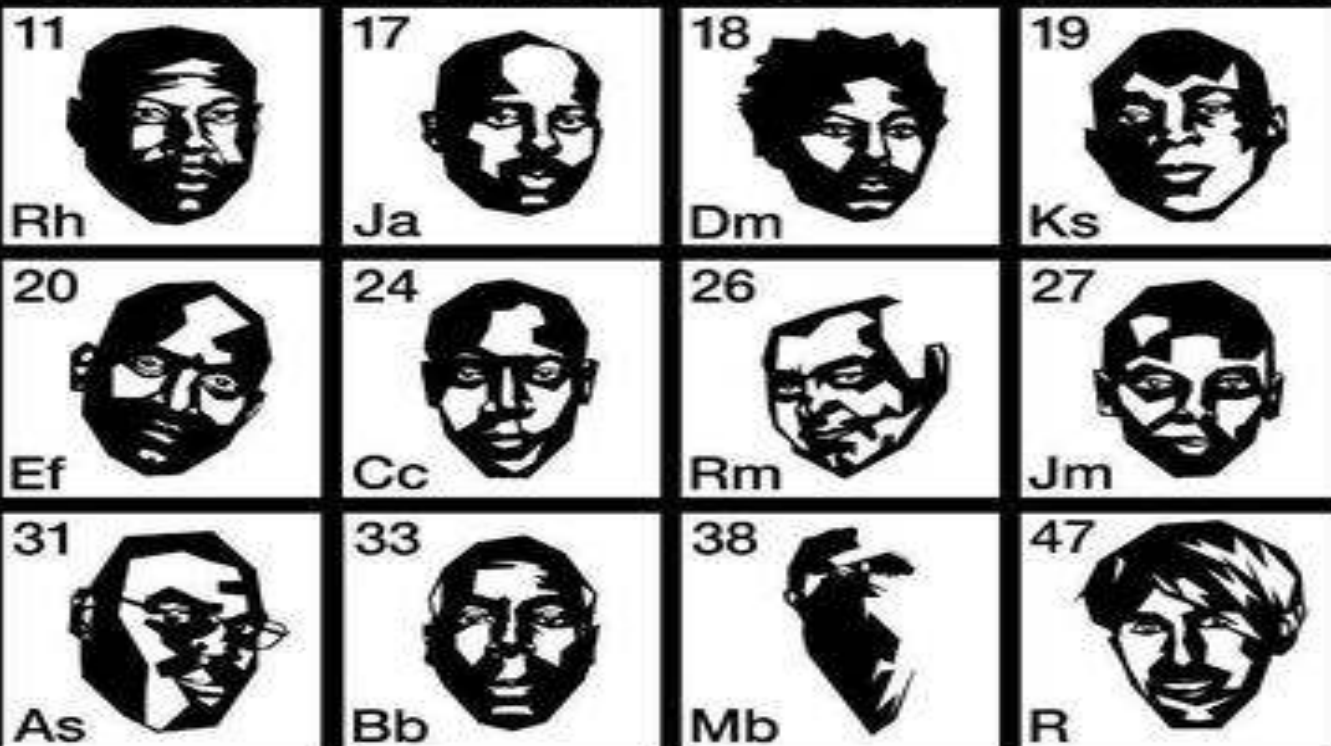
PREDECESSORS

- Electro-Acoustic Music
- Experimental Pop
- Disco
- Electro-Funk
- Of What????



(DETROIT) TECHNO

DETROIT TECHNO ELEMENTS



(DETROIT) TECHNO

- Begins in Detroit with the **Belleville 3** (Juan Atkins, Derrick May, Kevin Saunderson).
- Exposed to German experimental pop via radio (*The Electrifyin' Mojo*) and New York electro, they begin experimenting with drum machines and synthesizers.
- They become well known on the black Detroit party scene, and eventually gain popularity throughout the mid-western United States during the 1980s.
- First wave:
 - Juan Atkins
 - Derrick May
 - Kevin Saunderson
 - Blake Baxter
 - Anthony Shakir
- Second Wave
 - Carl Craig
 - Jeff Mills
 - Octave One
 - Richie Hawtin

TECHNO

- Throughout the late 1980s techno continues to grow, gaining popularity both in the United States and in Europe.
- In the early 1990s, techno becomes quite popular in Germany, and the Berlin club Tressor (and its record label) begins importing first and second wave of Detroit artists.
- By the mid 1990s techno is predominantly being consumed in [Germany](#).
- Present day: Berlin is the epicenter of global techno.

TECHNO (STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS)

- 120-135 BPM (beats per minute).
- “Artificial” Sounds.
- Abrasive timbres (often mimicking sounds like car alarms or loud factories).
- A distinct lack of harmonic and melodic change.
- Dystopian Affect (dark, sinister, brooding).
- Example: *The Bells*, Jeff Mills (1997)

TECHNO

- *The Bells* Jeff Mills (1999)
- Booming kick drum
- 4 beat bass synthesizer loop
- Long introduction to assist DJing
- Hi-hats are played on the off beat to increase intensity
- No melodic or harmonic change
- Synth melody relies on dissonant and minor intervals to increase a sense of uneasiness and abrasiveness



(CHICAGO) HOUSE



(CHICAGO) HOUSE



HOUSE

- Grew out of the 1980s Chicago black gay disco scene.
- The term “house” originated from the Chicago club *The Warehouse*, where their resident DJ Frankie Knuckles would edit/remix disco records.
- During the 1980s it gained popularity in American cities like New York, Baltimore, Detroit, and Newark.
- By the late 80s it began achieving commercial success and became integrated into mainstream popular music.
- Early house producers include:
 - Frankie Knuckles
 - Lil Louis
 - Masters at Work
 - Mr. Fingers

HOUSE (STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS)

- 115-128 BPM (beats per minute).
- **Instrumental “Organic” Sounds** (electric bass/electric guitar, strings, brass, woodwinds).
- Often features a vocalist.
- A relative lack of harmonic and melodic change, however there are often chord progressions and **recognizable melodies and bass-lines in place.**
- Often described as: groovy, sexy, warm, funky.

HOUSE

- Example: *Can You Feel It?* (MK-Dub remix), Chez Damier.
- One 4 bar percussion loop consisting of kick drum, snare drum, and hi-hats
- Spliced vocal sample: the vocal sample is heavily edited and fragmented.
- Extended introduction that gradually adds instruments
- Middle section features an electronic organ and strings (instruments often featured in disco music).
- The percussion and bass instrument combine to form a **groove**: a rhythmic feel or propulsion that draws the listener and dancer in.



TRANCE



TRANCE

- Developed during the late 1990s in Germany.
- Became widely celebrated in Holland during the early 2000s
- The genre of “EDM” that became popular in the US during the past five years was initially made up of Trance/Progressive house producers/DJs
- Characterized by it’s distinct melodies, **dramatic chord progressions** and large melodramatic builds
- Seeks to be both **hypnotic and euphoric.**
- Notable trance musicians include:
 - DJ Tiesto (example: Adagio For Strings Tiesto Remix)
 - Armin Van Buuren
 - Above and Beyond
 - Paul van Dyk

TRANCE

- Example: *Adagio for Strings Remix* Tiesto (1999)
- A remix of the orchestral work by American composer Samuel Barber (popularized in the film *Platoon*)
- Very melodramatic: the piece remixed was once described as “full of pathos and cathartic passion.”
- BPM around 130. Hi-hats are played in 16th notes to increase intensity. (four hits per each kick)
- Driving bass line
- Extended **build** before the drop: texture and timbre are all gradually intensified leading to a climax.

TRANCE



Samuel Barber's 'Adagio for Strings' Remixed by Tiesto

UK RAVE CULTURE



UK RAVE CULTURE

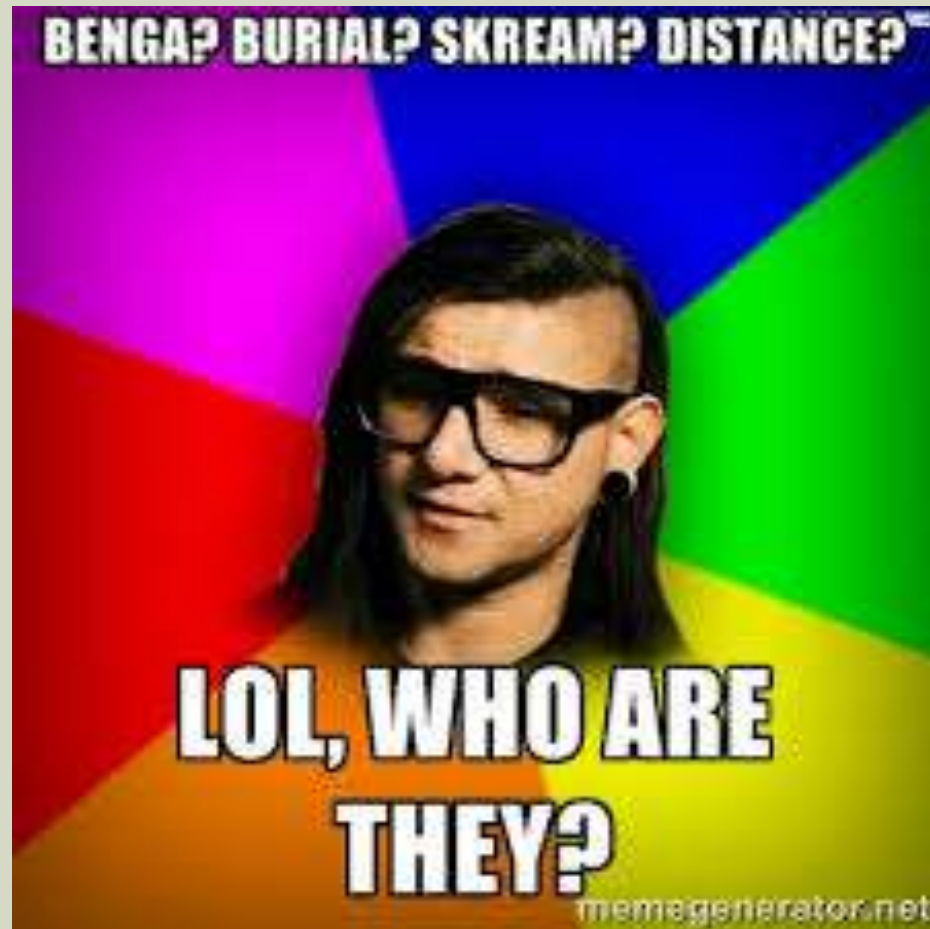
- In the mid 1980s UK youth culture becomes exposed to American EDM
- By the late 1980s EDM becomes widely popular in the UK with the emergence of raves. This is popularly called “**The Second Summer of Love.**”
- **Rave**: a large dance party with DJs. Often in an illegal/illicit space. Characterized by its long length, drug use, and attachment to underground/youth culture.
- “Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of 1994”
 - Outlawed raves.
 - Banned illegal events that featured “repetitive beats.”

UK RAVE




- Example: *Leeds Warehouse Mix*, LFO 1991.
- LFO was a group from Leeds England who released on Warp Records
- More aggressive (agro) than American house music
- Consists of a main bass line and a single **lead** loop (a melodic loop played in the upper register throughout the song).
- Supplemented by string-like **synth pads** (a term for synths that sustain chords for background harmony, often like an orchestral accompaniment)



DUBSTEP



DUBSTEP

- Dubstep was created in south London during the early 2000s.
 - Notable producers include: Skream, Benga, Plastician, Burial.
- Influenced by drum and bass, 2-step, and dub (British sub-genres that characterized by their use of **break-beats** and fast tempo) 
- Dubstep is heard at half speed, with rhythmic accents (snare hits) on the 3rd beat. **1-2-3-4 1-2-3-4** 
- Features a “wobbly” bass, a lower frequency sound that changes in timbre and volume as it is played.
- By the mid to late 2000s dubstep began to achieve popularity in North America. This North American dubstep, offensively called “brostep” is more bombastic and found in the work of Skrillex (example: Scary Monsters and Nice Sprites 2010). 

DUBSTEP

- Example: *Rutten, Skream* (2006)
- Feels significantly slower than techno, house, or trance.
- Strong hits(heard with snare hits) on beat 3 of each bar.
- Predominantly featuring a wobbly bass
- Relies on looped samples o “acoustic” instruments such as the pan flute



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DJ PERFORMANCE



DJ PERFORMANCE

- DJ performance consists of the continuous sounding of recorded music.
- Record A is mixed with Record B creating a “new” record, known as the “**third track.**”
- This is done by using multiple turntables (or digital emulators) and a mixer.
- DJ performance is evaluated by:
 - Technical proficiency: The ability to move elegantly and seamlessly between records.
 - Curatorial skill: The ability to choose records that work well together. DJs are dubbed “**Selectors.**”
 - Reading the Crowd: The ability to judge the crowd and play the appropriate music that enhances their experience as dancers and listeners.
 - Example: Using Traktor DJ software.

PRODUCTION PRACTICE



PRODUCTION PRACTICE

- Utilizes drum machines, synthesizers and sequencers, both physical (analog) and digital.
- EDM is built upon **loops**. Musical material designed to be repeated for a given amount of time.
- A majority of time spent in production is on **sound design**: tuning and adjusting the parameters that define a sound (i.e. altering timbre).
- Production entails **groove construction**: the combination of loops to create interesting and danceable rhythmic structures.
- Example: Abelson *Live* and Roland TR-8

LISTENING APPROACHES

- **Sound Design:** What timbres am I hearing and do they change over time?
- **Groove:** How are loops overlapped to create an interlocking rhythm?
- **Affect:** What feeling do I get from this music?
- **Mixing:** Do I notice when the DJ moves between records?
- **Genre:** What genre is this music? Does it even matter?

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