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Afzali Paiman

ENTERING MUSIC MARKET THROUGH DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

– Independent artist

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Instructor Ajay Joshi

Paiman Afzali

ENTERING MUSIC MARKET THROUGH DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

- Independent artist

Music industry is on ongoing changing phase and digitalization is large part of the business. The objective was to find how music distribution functions and to do research on where it stands. The thesis defines the steps of music production as well it presents the available digital music distribution channels for independent artist. The strengths and weaknesses of each digital music distributor are evaluated and viewed. Also, an action of cooperation has partaken with a distribution company to forecast an ability of independent artist on distributing digital music.

A mixed method was chosen and applied to the empirical part of this thesis. Data was collected by a questionnaire about the digital streaming services and an interview was conducted with a signed artist to a record label. Also, an independent single was released with the cooperation of digital distribution channel and record label Amuse.

Key findings were the various characteristic of digital distribution companies' whit statistical result of mostly preferred digital streaming services. The important services offered by the recording label as their impact on the industry, which was collected by interviewing a signed artist to a recording label. Also, an outcome of independently produced and released digital music through a distribution company.

KEYWORDS:

Digital Music distribution, Independent artist, Digital Music, Distribution

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Paiman Afzali

DIGITAALISEN MUSIIKIN JAKELU

- Omatoiminen artisti

Musiikkiala kehittyy ja muuttuu yhä useammin ja digitaalisointi on suurimpia osia liikealasta. Tämän opinnäytetyön aiheena oli määrittää saatavilla olevia digitaalisia musiikin jakelun yrityksiä. Myös selvittää miten jokainen eroa toisistaan ja millaisia palveluja yritykset tarjoilevat omatoimisille artisteille.

Monimenetelmämetodi valittiin opinnäytetyön tutkimusmenetelmäksi ja tietoa kerättiin vapaamuotoisella kyselylomakkeella ja haastattelemalla levy-yhtiöön signeerattua artistia. Sekä omatoimisen sinkkuun julkaisua, yhteistyössä digitaalisen musiikin jakelun ja levy-yhtiö Amuse:iin kanssa.

Opinnäytetyön tulos; Musiikin tuotantoon asteet, sekä digitaalisen musiikin jakelun ja suoratoisto kanavien vahvuudet, heikkoudet ja käyttö.

ASIASANAT:

Digitaalisen Musiikin Jakelu, Omatoiminen artisti, Distribuutio

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (OR) SYMBOLS

DMD	Digital Music Distribution
ISRC	International Standard Record Code
UPC	Universal Product Code

1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis focuses on digital music distribution in services driven era, and how music can be distributed and listened. For the musicians, distribution has never been easier or more diverse as in 2016. Before iTunes, distribution was strictly a retail process in which the customer purchased directly from retail store. There were record clubs and later, online CD retailers like Amazon, but most of the record sales were made through retail stores. However today artists are presented with new possibilities that go beyond the traditional retail stores. These include online digital streaming sites like iTunes, Spotify, Rhapsody, Napster, eMusic, groupie tune and amie street. Also, social media pages e.g. YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. However, too not misunderstand two categories streaming services from distribution services. The different is that digital distribution services are intermediaries, from which albums or singles will be forwarded to the actual digital store, which are called streaming or subscription services. (Gordon, 2008)

Digital distribution is the backbone of 21st century we are living in, whether it is paid or for free. However, we must keep in mind that there are tons of distribution channels that are available for signed or unsigned artist and that different distribution channels are made on daily basis (Trask, 2004). As day passes by, new advanced or some more likely very similar to other ones come into the competition, so for this reason there are more options every day. For instance, the main online distribution channels today are CD baby, TuneCore, ReverbNation, Ditto music, Loudr, Record Union, MondoTunes, Symphonic, iMusician (Trandafir, 2016). Since most services rise and fall in popularity in a weekly basis, the ones mentioned are the leading and most popular in music business (Bird, 2014).

Music industry has had its ups and downs when it comes to distribution and sales. In the early 2000's Cd's, Vinyl's and cassettes were distributed to stores for sale and from which the artist and the major recording labels made their revenues and profits (Owsinski, 2009). However, that was before the popularity of the Internet. As technology grew and the need of Internet grew in our societies around the world, it had a huge impact on sales of music which considerably declined, since people were getting their copies of each album and songs for free

from various illegal Internet sides etc. Main issues were the leaks, which could not be controlled. (Krasilovsky & Shamel, 2007). Major record labels had a long lasting war against the illegal downloads and online leaks; while leaks were financially beneficial for the fans, in another hand, very devastating for the companies and artists (Harvey, 2015). However, after a long fight from 1991 to almost 2015, the labels noticed that the war couldn't be won by trying to stop the leaks or shutting down illegal download sites on daily basis (Harvey, 2015). Therefore, this issue had to be controlled and the only way to control it would be digital format of songs with a platform where it could be purchased or listened to. Such action could minimise downloading big bites in their laptops and so on, instead they could save space and in a very user-friendly way could purchase or with a little amount of monthly fee, be able to listen to any favorable song in different platforms. Also, They are able to take their songs with them anywhere they go, no matter the location, on their phones, laptops or in any other tech device. (Owsinski, 2009).

Digital formats have no manufacturing cost and it can be presented to the market very fast. There are simply no additional expenses after the initial production of the music. The reason behind this is that there is no physical container. Downloadable music makes it easy for numerous services to distribute a digital song for anywhere from free to having a nominal charge. Either yearly or a submission fee, all well under \$100 (Owsinski, 2009). Also, it makes it instantly available on your websites, but it may take two to six weeks to go live for some streaming services like iTunes, for instance. (Owsinski, 2009). Using digital promotion is also a great idea to minimise cost and again because there are no manufacturing costs to recoup. The market for digital music is huge and growing constantly, a claim that cannot be made about the other containers. (Gordon, 2008).

1.1 Motivation

I became interested in music at a very young age of 8. The day that I fell in love with the Hip Hop culture and Rap/Hip Hop music is still in the back of my mind and I can picture it perfect. Standing in front of the television and a song called "Sing For The Moment" by Eminem was played on MTV channel. Before this moment I had interest in music, but right after listening

and watching to this very fascinating music video, I said to myself in my heart, that this is what I want to do for living in future, when I grow up.

Therefore, I have always dreamt of signing a contract with major record label and to become and professional artist. I have been working on my dreams from a very young age. I love spending my free time on writing lyrics and producing songs. I have produced many songs, since I started making music as a hobby at the age of 13 year old. Till this day, I have enjoyed every second of making music, for it brings joy, happiness and peace to my hearth and soul. Also, it has taken me all around the world to work with different individuals and to enjoy beautiful places. For instance, I remember how great experience it was, to shoot my first music video in Spain. However, experience is he best lesson of life and I will continue to reach for my dreams no matter how hard, difficult or impossible it seems.

I am motivated and excited to write my thesis on a topic related to music and I see this as a perfect opportunity to dig deep in depth inside the music industry's distribution area. By writing this thesis on this actual topic, not only it augments my knowledge in the music industries business area, but it also help to be able to distribute my songs as an independent artist in a way better tactic and strategy.

I personally believe that this is the most suitable topic for me to do my research and write about, because it is connected to my dreams. This will help me find answers to questions that I have and will help me for taking my career to the next level at this point of my life. This topic allows me in various different ways as an artist to understand how the music distribution works. Therefore, it is very easy choice of a topic for me and I feel very confident about this topic.

This thesis will examine how music distribution is executed nowadays, and research how the main and large successful music distribution platforms or channels work. Goal is to be able to dig deep on how the distribution functions and note the beneficial aspects that are offered to the signed and unsigned artists. Since, there are many large distribution channels out in the world and most of them have their own uniqueness in offerings.

1.2 Research questions and objectives

The objective of this thesis is to find how music distribution functions and to do research on where it stands today. The thesis is designed to answer the following questions:

1. Examine how music is produced?
2. What are the different available digital distribution channels?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each channels?
4. How can unsigned artists distribute digital music independently?

1.3 The structure of the thesis

The following chapter, literature review describe the process of the production of music and the differentiation of music distribution from a physical goods distribution. After which will discuss the available distribution channels and get in details with their differentiations from one another.

The third chapter is the research methodology, which introduces how the research was implemented with the focus on the research techniques. The fourth chapter presents the actual results of the research implemented.

The fifth chapter concludes the research findings with a suggestion on further research.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, I will take you through the process of producing music and will explain the difference between music distribution from goods distribution. There are numerous ways in how to get product into the hands of the consumer, but these additional choices require a new distribution strategy and services. Further, in literature I will examine various distribution channels available at the moment for all artist and will review their services. Amuse is the chosen distribution channels in which will be concentrating.

2.1 The process of producing Music (Digital Music)

Every record starts with an idea and inspiration that will lead to song writing. However, there is a longer process behind the making of each record before having it in the market for the consumers. Therefore, this section explains how music is produced and provides the understanding of overall music production process.

When writing a song there are four main issues that needs to be addressed. Subject of the song and the story telling are the first areas that need to be thought through. Also, artist needs to hold the attention of the listener throughout the song, because if the listener gets bored, they will turn off the song. Final one is feeling over thinking, which means that the artist has to touch the listener's inner feeling and emotions with the lyric of the song. This action can be executed with the flow of the voice or meaning of lyrics. (White, 2017a)

Recording a demo is a step were artist and other producer's etc. searches for mistakes, new ideas and opinions for the song. This step help the artist improve and take notes on parts of the song that requires changes. (White, 2017b) Rehearsal is a very important step for all musicians before going to the recording studio for real. This step helps in pitch, timing and tone. Also, it helps the artist to be well prepared before the actual action time in the recording studio. (White, 2017c)

The basic track step focus be primarily on the rhythm section, in particular the drums and bass. The process outlined is most typically associated with band recordings, but many of the techniques can be applied to all recording situations that involve one or more musicians. (White, 2017d) Overdubbing is a process that allows performances to be recorded synchronously with pre-recorded material. This step will help record each instrument and performer individually from others without affecting other musicians performances. The benefits of overdubbing are that it makes each part more focused and perfected. (White, 2017e) The editing can be done while recording the song or after. This is a long process, which in terms of poor recording requires loads of work therefore, the better the artist record the song the less editing it will need. The process is executed with cooperation of the artist and the producers through computer technology, software development and programs. Main issues related is choosing the best lines and cleaning up the flaws. (White, 2017f) Mixing is the process of combining multi track records to a format, which stereos can handle and mastering is the art of processing a collection of mixes into a polished, cohesive record, says Chris Vita of Vita Mastering. (Herr, 2012)

2.1.1 Differentiation of music distribution from physical goods distribution

Physical goods distribution involves management of finished tangible goods flow from the beginning point to point of consumption all the way to meeting consumer needs at profit. This involves all steps between produce to delivery to consume (Chand, 2016). Distribution is the step that brings goods and services from those who make them to those who use them. Distribution includes other important steps as transporting, packaging, storage and advertising. (Norm, 2017) Transporting goods is mostly done through air, sea, road and railways by planes, ships, trains and trucks (Christopher, 2016).

Packaging is an intensive step where the good needs to be protected and conserved well. As this step will add value to the goods outlook and make it eye catching and suitable for retail display. For instance, CD's as item of tangible are worth by buyers because of their physical nature and fact that they include graphics and liner notes. Also, there is an ability to add more value to the units by including in the packaging additional concert tickets or any premium

items. However, CD's come with high costs for all artists. Therefore, it can be ranged around 50 cents to \$3 per basic copy. These prices are for large quantities of 1000 basic CD packages. Also, the graphic designs, artwork and case treys are another extra cost and time sustaining process, which artists prefer not to deal with. (Owsinski, 2009). CD's must be packaged in a unique, beautiful and colorful ways so they can catch the eye of consumers and be advertised as well. Advertising is a means of communication with the users of a product or service (Coleman, 2017). With various forms as outdoor billboards to online digital advertising, which are done using computers and cell phones to advertise through Internet in social media sites. Print advertising in magazines and newspapers, handing out flyers or direct mail are all effective and used ways. Also, Communication through television and radio can reach though a mass number of consumers. (Berry & Linoff, 2014)

Also, information about the product for the consumer to purchase is part of packaging. So as weight and size of packaging should be carefully considered to maximize the shelf space in stores. Products are most of the time kept in warehouses before entering the market or being ordered to wholesalers. It is to be kept and protected for later use. (Christopher, 2016)

Distribution of music happens when an artist provides the recorded song to the Record label, which then gets passed to the distributor, who will put the album to the store. Stores has limited amount of shelf space and stock, however if a CD is not on the shelf it cannot be sold. (McDonald, 2017) In Digital stores like itunes, Spotify and apple music etc. the shelf space or capacity is no longer an issue. Today Digital distribution provides many benefits, one of that being unlimited shelf space, this meaning digital stores are never out of stock. They have virtual unlimited inventory that is replicated on demand. No more need to make CDs and ship them to a warehouse and then re-ship them to a store in hopes the store takes it out of a box and puts it on a shelf. Instead, once the music is delivered to a server and then sits there until someone buys it. With an easy search the music can be found and purchased online. Also, the same album or a single track once uploaded online can be bought as many times as possible without running out of stock or anything coming off shelf. Another issue which digital distribution has covered is that music bought online cannot be returned at any time for a full refund. Therefore, CD's from stores can be returned. These three changes: unlimited shelf space, unlimited virtual inventory and no returns, make the big warehouses and sales staff obsolete. (Price, 2017)

2.2 Digital streaming service: Spotify

Digital music distribution is the future of music industry as record stores; cassettes and CD's are outdated. Digital music distribution has opened a way for unsigned artist to be able to release and make money from their music without the need of major record labels. Many music subscription services i.e. as Spotify, iTunes, Apple music, Dizzer and Tidal allow unsigned artist to sell and showcase their music online on services through the various distribution channels which will list and explain further on this chapter. (Gordon, 2008)

Spotify is a music subscription service, which was launched on October 2008 (Harris, Lifewire, 2016). Spotify's business model is to round up content from right-holders, distribute the content to consumers through their own technical application and gain profits from the advertisements funded service and through subscription service from its frequent users (Owsinski, 2009). Spotify is one of the largest online music services along with iTunes, Apple music, Dizzer and Tidal. Spotify being a Swedish based company and according to Colin Stuts (Stuts, 2015) Spotify is one of the most frequently used streaming service in Europe. Therefore, this chapter's exclusive focus is on streaming service Spotify, because of their leadership amongst EU's local music market (Stuts, 2015). By using Spotify you are able to listen to all most any music of any of yours preferred artist. It is easy and very handy to use by smart phone, laptop or even a TV. Spotify is integrated with every social media sites and this makes it easy for a listener to share songs with friends through Twitter, Facebook etc...

Spotify pays out approximately 70 % of all of their revenues to rights' holders who are artists, record labels, publishers and performing rights' societies. Spotify make its revenue streams through advertisements and subscription fees. (Dredge, 2015) A consumer who is not familiar with Spotify has the chance to try the service for free with a certain level of limitations and with mandatory advertisement breaks, which are the source of revenue for Spotify. Also, Spotify pays royalties from free music streams to recording industries and in time as consumers decide to turn as paying subscriber of the service. Which then transfers to the premium account with the cost of 9.99€ per month and is free off advertisements. In this case Spotify is making their revenue of the consumers monthly subscription pays. That being said, in both ways Spotify makes its revenue. (Harris, 2016)

Spotify periodically pays royalties to record labels, digital distributors, aggregators and publisher collecting societies with whom it also has direct agreements. For example, Spotify pays an average of \$0.006 and \$0.0084 for streams to labels and publishers. Also, the average payment to an artist from the label portion of that is \$0.001128, this being what a signed artist receives after the label's share. (Dredge, 2015) However, for artists revenues to be specified is very difficult as it is most of the time specified individually with their type of contracts from the recording labels. Recording artists and songwriters according to the specific agreements make their revenues between the recording industries and distribution services. (Dredge, 2015)

The Figure 1. shows how many plays does a signed and unsigned artist need in Spotify on a monthly basis to be able to make a minimum wage of \$1,260. As can be seen in Figure 1, that signed artist needs around 1.1 million plays a month to be able to make \$1.260. Meanwhile, an unsigned artist makes the same amount of money with only 180 thousand plays. The plays varies this much between signed artist and unsigned artist because, the signed artist usually makes their income after the major recording labels gets their cuts. (Dredge, 2015)

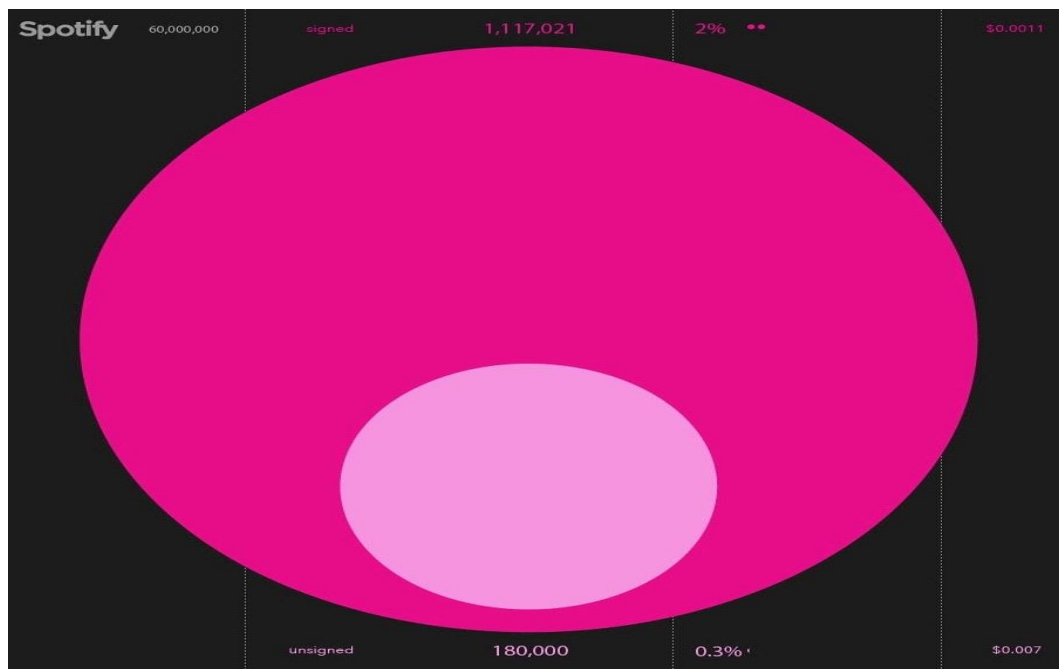


Figure 1. Dredge, S. 2015. The guardian. [https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2015/apr/03/how-much-musicians-make-spotify-itunes-youtube] Accessed December 15, 2017.

On top of the Figure 1, it can be seen that signed artist status and below are the unsigned artist status. The numbers in above and below in the centers indicate the number of plays that are needed to make \$1.126 for signed and unsigned artist.

Royalty refers to the payment of the right to use someone's property and usually intellectual property such as copyright or a patent. In this case under the agreement the licensor licenses the use of the track to the licensee for publishing the track through distribution channels and under the licensing agreement the licensee pays royalties to licensor. The payment can be fixed periodically in case of music. (Investopedia, 2016). Royalties are paid to artist in a manner that popularity of artist is taken in considered by Spotify. Roughly 2 % of Spotify's gross royalties are paid to an artist whose music is streamed among 2 % of Spotify users. Therefore, successful album, song from an artist can generate more incomes in time compared to the traditional income model calculated from unit sales alone. Royalties for an artist are accumulated every time that a song or an album is being streamed by a user of the service. (Owsinski, 2009)

Another benefit for unsigned artists from the artists signed to a major record labels is that, unsigned artist will keep more percentage of their music revenues for themselves when distributing music through distribution channels privately. Independent services offer much more friendly share of the profits than the labels. Furthermore, these online distributors often does not have sign up fee and offer non-exclusive agreements that allow artist to distribute their music through other channels as well. Off course, subscription services take their shares from all songs and albums. Therefore, signed artist not only have to give subscription services their shares but since record labels are behind their artists music distributions directly to subscription services, they draw their part of the shares before the artist receives their share. (Dann;Underwood;& Batterbee, 2008)

Now a days it is very simple for anyone to have their music on iTunes, Apple music, Dizzer, Tidal and other services. This means artist do not need record deals to get their music on various sites, because most of them have made a deal among some online distributors that can easily get artists songs or albums on these online music services platforms. The process only require artist to register and open an artist page on online distributors sites and make small

amount of payment yearly for having songs available for consumer on most major music subscription services.

The distributors also handle the royalty payments to artists. Spotify pays royalties to the new artists that have gained vast enough of audience to listen to their music. Therefore, Spotify can be an income source for an independent artist. (Owsinski, 2009)

2.2.1 Digital music distributors

Distribution channels help independent artist distribute their music on various music streaming services and let them have control over their own material. However, the way these distributors work varies from one another. Artists who claim to operate with any distributor needs to understand and know their own needs in terms to be able to choose the best suitable distributor to work with.

There are some similarities between services provided by most distributors that include marketing and promotion for the released or upcoming project. Playlist plugging opportunities for hyped artists. Playlist plugging feature help artist get their songs on various Spotify playlists, which plays a huge role on trending, collecting attraction and getting lot's of listeners. As each playlist can have from 100 thousand to 10 million followers or more. (Weissman, 1990). Onsite customer service if needed for the artists. All distributors have customer service as actual humans ready for questioning on other side of the phone, mail and face to face. No robotic customer service. (Weissman, 1990).

Distribution channels take reporting on revenues and analytics of each project very seriously. This means that on a weekly basis a report on artists are conducted to see success and achievements of their projects. Such as, revenue collection reports and plays or downloads from on all streaming services. However, these reports varies between distributors in a way that some may provide more in depth information for the artist and others may just briefly describe only positive or negative areas of the projects. (Bernstein;Sekine;& Weissman, 2007). Distribution channels give the independent artist an opportunity to boost their careers in many ways. For instance, direct label submission, TV and movie placements are huge opportunities

that are offered on a monthly basis. Private concert bookings and festival slots to help and support the artist to get more fans and make money. (Herstad, 2017)

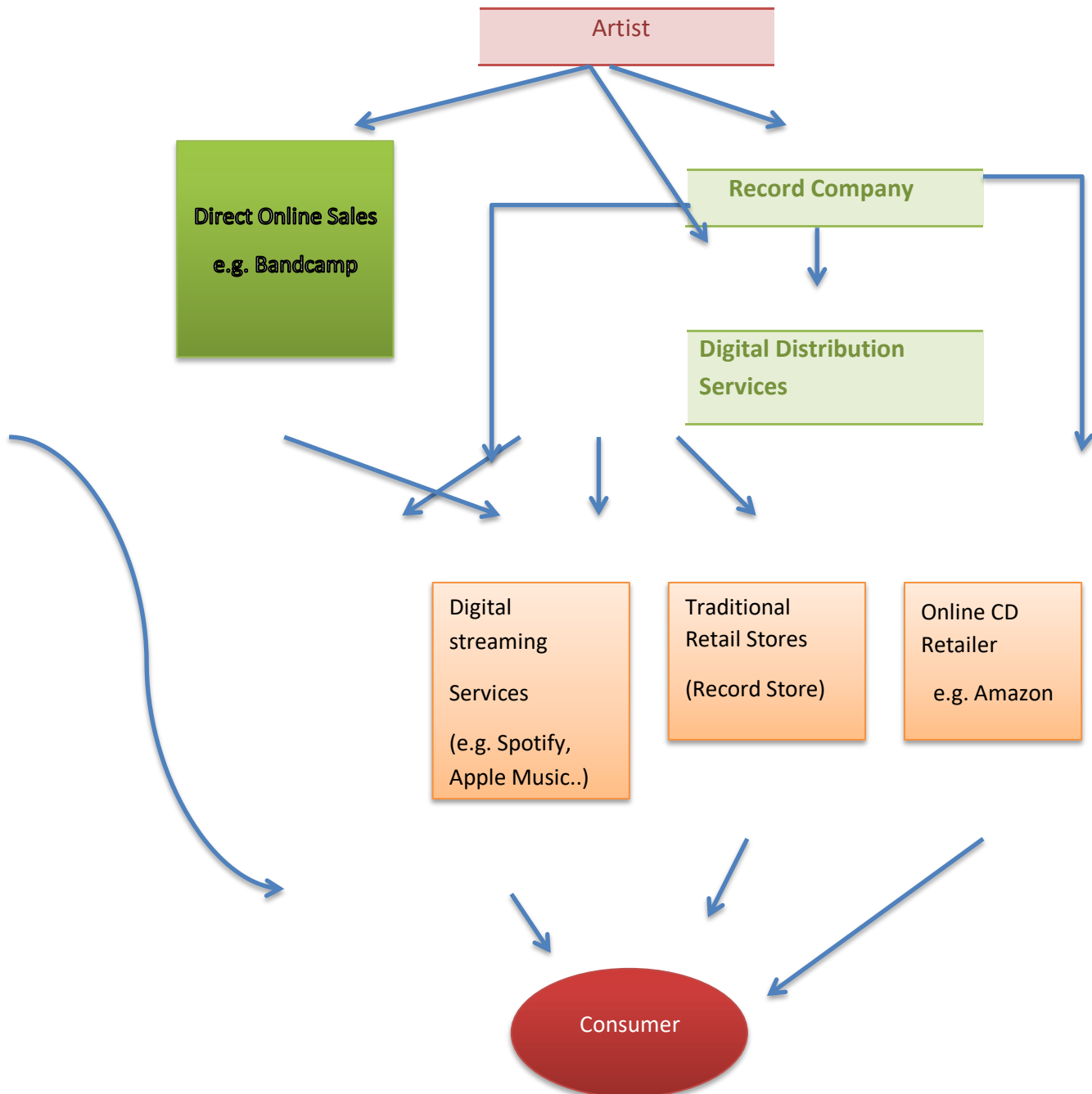


Figure 2. Music economy value chain (Spellman, 2011, s. 24).

(Spellman, 2011) illustrates how music economy value chain (Figure 2) enables direct online sales services for an artist. This creates the possibility for an independent artist to publish and distribute their music directly to the consumers without the need of being signed to a record label.

2.3.1 Distribution channel: Amuse

Amuse is the first mobile application distributor and record label. The company offers free distribution with an amazing opportunity of a record deal if they see potential growth in distributed music. This act definitely attracts many unsigned artist to work with them and use their services to distribute and get discovered at the same time. (Amuse, 2016) Amuses success and unsuccessfulness stories are still unknown since the company started in March 7th of 2017. However, the biggest achievement in their early start is that Will.i.am, creative innovator, entrepreneur, seven-time Grammy Award winner and front man for the Black Eyed Peas has joined the company as a co-founder. This is a great step for the company as Will.i.am can bring a level of creativity, expertise and contacts in the business that few others could offer. (Amuse, 2017)

Amuse operates in an interesting way for example, everything is free, even free distribution and 100% royalty to the artist. Plus if the music distributed through amuse happens to be successful the company will offer an actual record deal, which includes marketing, financing, promotion and playlist pitching that will boost artists music career. Also, after signing with them, they will pay for the projects but split the profit 50/50 with the artist. This is a great deal for all unsigned artist with having nothing to lose but much to gain, a true opportunity to be discovered and start a career in music. (Amuse, 2016)

Working with Amuse is easy, first you need to download their app on you device after which you will create an account either through Facebook or Google, whichever fits you the best. Creating a release is even easier; it can take user only a minute to make a single release on Amuse application. After applying the information of the product, such as title of your music, cover art, featured artists. Songwriter, genre, recording year and uploading audio files, you are

ready to have your release. The release will approve by Amuse in a short period of time after which they will arrange a release date of delivery to all major music services. Marketing and spreading the word about your song at this stage is in your hand. After the release, artist can use the application to track the progress of the released track by download and listens. Also, as soon as you earn 10 dollar or more, artist can withdraw royalties using PayPal. What I like about Amuse is that their customer service is available through out the releasing services and if problems occur in case of release, they are willing to help and manage everything smoothly. (amuse, 2017).

The special feature that set Amuse apart from others is that they are only an mobile application. Also, Amuse does not have much of extra services to offer, but it stands on the idea of scouting best talent by their team and signing them for extra features, which are the budgeting, promotion and marketing. (Amuse, 2017) . Amuse has an investor on their company from which their marketing money for their artist whom they want to invest in comes from. They have only signed two artists since March after their launch. (Herstand, 2017)

Herstad (Herstad, 2017) lists major online distributors (see appendix 1). The table is by far the best up to date comparison chart with almost all services presented from all major distributors and compared with each other. As companies do differ with one another at there own terms, however, concentrating only at distribution. The companies’ do poses similar key characteristics in services they offer. Therefore, to be able to rate the companies, will view main comparable services. Which are marketing, fees, commissions, royalties, reporting, revenue collections and outlet offers.

The following summary is based on table in appendix 1:

Pros:	Cons:
Not charging money for their services, totally free. No commission, artist keeps 100% of the	Amuse is new and unproven, with no admin publishing partner to help collect songwriting royalties.

<p>revenue.</p> <p>Amuse is data driven and focused.</p> <p>Amuse offers advances and marketing for their signed artist.</p> <p>Can upstream to a 50/50 agreement between the signed artist and not 360-label agreement.</p> <p>Mostly direct distribution with speed of 5 business days to all music services. Also, does Spotify playlist plugging for their artist.</p>	<p>Amuse has no desktop site and is only a mobile application.</p> <p>Will not obtain mechanical license for cover songs.</p> <p>No soundscan registration.</p>
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Awal

Awal founded in 2014 acts as a distribution channel for independent artists all around the world. Awal has many offices opened across the world and they offer services such as distribution, YouTube monetization, playlist promotion, member support from industry experts, and real-time data analytics through the Awal Portal and App. Awal has around 20,000 artists and labels working and using their services.

Pros	Cons
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awal services are free of charge - Clear analytical, demographical and trending reports. - Synch licensing and playlist plugging possibilities for hyped artist. - Digital distribution and physical distribution. - Also, has a Spotify/Apple music analytics mobile application, which notifies artist when tracks are added to playlists and it, will also notify on how many people skipped your track on Spotify or listened through. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No payment splitting for other producers or co-workers on the same project. - 15% commission and has a high payment threshold of 45\$. - No admin publishing partner to help collect songwriter royalties, artist must be signed to Kobalt. - Slow customer support.
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cdbaby

CD baby started in 1998 as an online CD store and worked their way to many other services through out the years. CD baby stands for being the largest global digital distributor of independent music, largest publishing rights administrator in the world and the go-to resource for educational information concerning music promotion, distribution, and rights management. Also, because of the good reputation and long lasting legacy, CD baby has managed to make a trustable name for themselves in the music business. CD Baby represents over 650,000 recording artists, 100,000 songwriters, half a million albums, and more than 7 million tracks across 800+ genres.

<p>Pros</p>	<p>Cons</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No yearly fees. - One distribution payment and the music will be available in streaming services forever. - Possibilities of physical distribution also, partnership with Alliance Entertainment, Super D and Amazon to get the physical records in record stores all around the world. - Collects songwriter royalties. - One of the few companies to collect Sound Exchange (Sound Recording Copyright Owner) royalties for artists. - Synch licensing possibilities for selected artists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9% commission - 30% YouTube commission. - Charge \$5 for a single UPC or \$20 for an album UPC. These aren't optional add on. Artists can't distribute album without a UPC - so it costs an additional \$5/20 for each release. - No payment splitting. - No mechanisms in place to help artists who start to grow, as marketing support or playlist plugging.
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Distrokid

Distrokid is an independent digital music distribution service, founded in 2013.

Distrokid has 150,000 artist and labels in total working with the company.

<p>Pros</p>	<p>Cons</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Artist keeps 100% of the revenues. - No commission. - Unlimited track distribution for one-year price. - Payment splitting - Ability to download songs, Distrokid stores everything in the cloud. - Analytics reports by mail - Leave a Legacy feature, this option costs \$30/release, the release will never come down “even if the artist die. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not clear reporting and analytics, only basic information. - \$.99 for a year to release in Shazam - this is free with all other services and it isn't disclosed up front that this is not included for the yearly price. If you distribute an album of 10 songs, it will cost you an additional \$10 a year for that album just for Shazam. - No admin publishing partner to help collect songwriter royalties. - No mechanisms in place to help artists who start to grow, as marketing support or playlist plugging.
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Ditto

Ditto is an independent artists distribution channel, founded in 2005. They have around 150,000 artists and labels working with them using their services.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Artist keeps 100% of the revenues - No commission. - Unlimited distribution for one year price - Clear reporting and analytics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No admin publishing partner to help collect songwriter royalties. - No mechanisms in place to help artists who start to grow, as marketing support or playlist plugging. - High distribution/yearly fees (numbers in table, watch appendix).

Fresh Tunes

Fresh Tunes is an independent artists distribution channel, founded in 2016. They have around 107,000 registered users at the moment and have offices in Russia, United Arab emirate and United Kingdom.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Artist keeps 100% of the revenues, except from Chinas market. - No commission. - Distribution to Chinese DSPs - Fresh tunes offers feedbacks from their experts to artist about their music for a \$25 if artist asks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No admin publishing partner to help collect songwriter royalties. - No mechanisms in place to help artists who start to grow, as marketing support or playlist plugging. - No payment splitting.

Horus Music

Horus Music is a digital music Distribution Company and record label, founded in 2006. They have only 5,000 artist and recording companies registered to them. They distribute globally and offer digital marketing and radio promotion opportunities.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The opportunity of choosing Distribution plan for projects. - Free of charge for 20% commission or a fee with no commission. - Distributes to Asian market - Playlist plugging - Marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No admin publishing partner to help collect songwriter royalties. - No payment splitting - High music takedown cost for the first three months, if any problems occur with the project released and needs fixing, it will come costly.

Landr distribution

Landr distribution is founded in 2017 and has already 1.3 million artist and recording companies registered to them.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commission free - Free distribution with any mastering membership. - Playlist plugging only for artists gaining attraction. - Landr has a collaborative workspace where everyone on the team can work on a track in a centralized location. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New company and asks for yearly/monthly fees. - Many missing features that other distributors have. (See table in appendix 1) - No admin publishing partner to help collect songwriter royalties. - No mechanisms in place to help artists who start to grow, as marketing support or playlist plugging. - No mechanical licenses for cover songs.

MondoTunes

MondoTunes is an online digital music distributor, found in 2012. MondoTunes distributes globally and provides major label resources and creative online marketing strategies to help artists gain maximum exposure. They have at the moment around 60,000 registered users.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distributing music to the worldwide market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No payment splitting - No admin publishing partner to help collect songwriter royalties. - No mechanisms in place to help artists who start to grow, as marketing support or playlist plugging. - 10% in commission and includes yearly fees. - The company does not report about the trending to the artist. - Distribution is very slow, takes approximately 3 to 4 weeks. - No mechanical licenses for cover songs.

OneRPM

OneRPM is a digital distribution service and fan engagement platform founded in 2010. Their headquarters are located in Brooklyn, New York. The company offers services as direct-to-fan sales, distribution to multiple web outlets, music sharing widgets and an app that allows artist to stream and sell music on social media (Facebook). At the moment they have 50,000 registered users.

<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - OneRPM is focused on Latin American market, mostly in Brazil. - The company has their own popular private playlist that they can place artist to. - The company has six various multi- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 15% commission - No Asian distribution - No songwriter royalty collection

<p>channel networks with 5.5 million views a month.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In house playlist pluggers, payment splitting and collects YouTube mechanicals in Brazil. - Report - Advance 	
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ReverbNation

ReverbNation is a great marketing and promotion technology platform for musicians, labels, managers and venues. It can act as a central point for musicians Internet coverage in overall. ReverbNation brings together, artist’s social networks, email, blogs and artist homepage. This service also provides such built-in marketing tools for a musician that the musician can share their music and information widely and effectively over the Internet. Signing up is easy and simple and other expenses with this online distributor are well oriented.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Packages. For \$19.95 a month they offer a mailing list service (up to 10,000 subscribers), - Free song downloads. - The ability to submit to opportunities such as TV placements, label submissions and festival slots, and distribution of 2 releases per year. - Reporting is clear on about shows and touring database. - No commission. - 100% revenue for the artist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No independent branding but everything is connected in ReverbNation. - No admin publishing partner to help collect songwriter royalties. - No mechanisms in place to help artists who start to grow, as marketing support or playlist plugging. - No professional services for artist who are outgrowing.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very slow customer service.
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RouteNote

RouteNote is an online digital music distributor. They offer download, streaming and video services to their clients. It was founded in 2008 and has 160,000 registered users.

<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RouteNote is focused in Asian market, (China). - Company does internal playlist plugging. - No fees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 15% commission. - No payment splitting. - No admin publishing partner to help collect songwriter royalties. - No mechanisms in place to help artists who start to grow, as marketing support or playlist plugging. - No reporting about the trending project. - Distribution is very slow, takes approximately 3 to 4 weeks. - No mechanical licenses for cover songs.

Soundrop

Soundrop operates as an online music streaming, sharing, and distribution platform. The company was founded in 2011 and is based in Oslo, Norway. The company provides services such as licensing and distribution of cover songs. The company offers free distribution to major retailers. Soundrop has 17,000 registered users.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No fees - Payment splitting for cooperative producers working with artist on the same project. - Free accounts for collaborators. - \$9.99 to obtain a mechanical license to distribute a cover song. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Soundrop does not present intelligible revenue and analytics reports. - The payment splitting must be requested through mail individually, it is not automatic. - 15% commission. - Offer fewer features than other distributors as it can be seen on the table. - Only 5 total outlets: Apple Music / iTunes, Spotify, Amazon, Google Play, Deezer. - No admin publishing partner to help collect songwriter royalties. - No mechanisms in place to help artists who start to grow, as marketing support or playlist plugging. - No reports. - Poor customer service.

Stem Music distribution

Stem is an online distribution company, founded in 2015. Stem's simple web and iOS dashboards enable you to upload content, manage contracts, track revenue and share earnings.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offers personal customer service. - No fees. - 5% commission. - Stem has their own analytics mobile app and offers very intelligible revenue and analytics reports. - In house playlist plugging. - Automatic payment splitting. - Collects US YouTube mechanicals and offers edits to songs that are already distributed without the need of take down. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Payment threshold is about \$50. - Distributes to only 12 music services. - No admin publishing partner to help collect songwriter royalties. - No report about the daily trending's. - Does not distribute cover songs.

Symphonic distribution

Symphonic distribution is an online digital music distribution company, found in 2006 and it's based in Tampa, USA. The company offerings include Video Distribution, Publishing Administration, Neighboring Rights, marketing, video marketing, Sync Licensing, mastering, web and graphic design, YouTube monetization, piracy protection and Soundcloud monetization. Symphonic distribution has 50,000 registered users.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No commission. - No yearly fees. - Collects soundexchange revenue for artist. - Distributes to Beatport and Pandora. Also, distributes to China and Korea. - Possibilities of physical distribution, and they also have partnership with Alliance to have records available all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High signup fees. - No automatic payment splitting. - No trending reports. - Pays the artist quarterly when most distribution pays monthly or weekly.

<p>over the world.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In house playlist plugging. 	
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TuneCore

TuneCore is an online digital music distribution company, found in 2005 and it's based in New York. TuneCore has offices in Australia, Germany, United Kingdom and France. TuneCore helps artist all around the world to distribute their music online to all major retailers. Also, it offers music publishing administration services, helping songwriters register their compositions and collect royalties internationally.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No commission. - 100% royalties for the artist. - Offers advances for future revenue projections. - Offers daily trending report for Apple Music, iTunes and Spotify. TuneCores revenue and analytics reports are very clear and in detailed. - Has an admin publishing company, which will help track down your songwriter royalties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High yearly fees. - High fees for every release. - No payment splitting. - Extra fee for adding new outlets, \$2 per outlet or an additional \$10 per release to automatically add all new outlets. - No marketing support. - No playlist plugging. - Admin publishing company prevents you from working with a synch-licensing agency to get your music in TV, commercials and films. - Possible to distribute cover songs but it is very complicated since it has to be licensed.

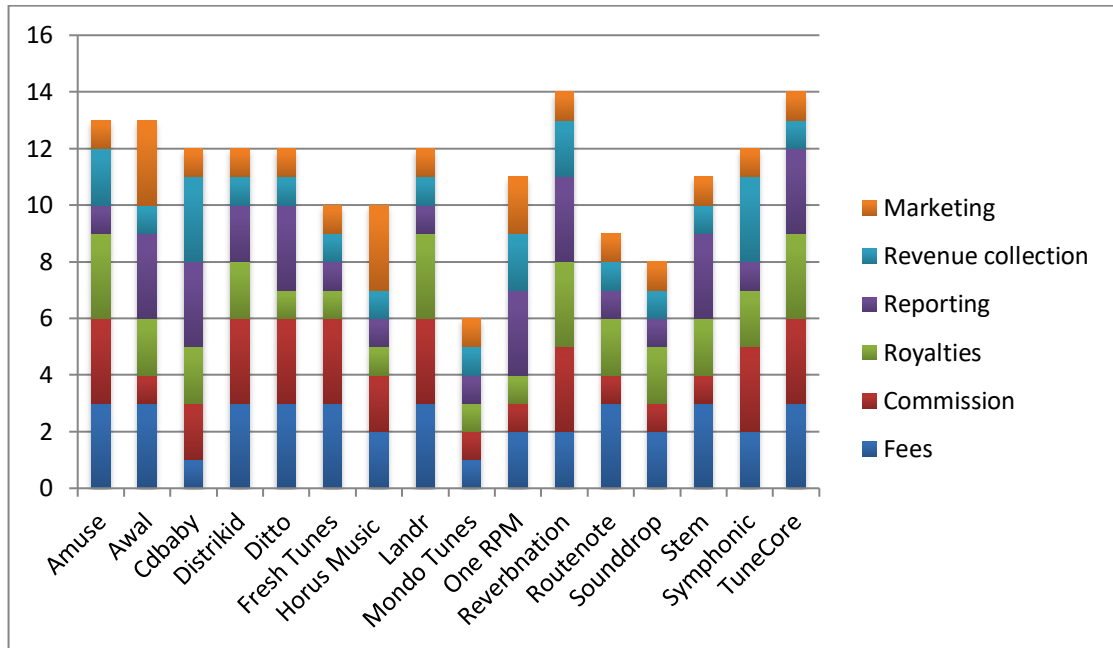


Figure 3. Is a fixed set of evaluation criteria that indicates 6 similar services, which all 16 distributors have in common. Each service has been graded from 1 to 3, as 1 = poor, 2 = good and 3 = great. Therefore, it shows that Tune Core and ReverbNation were two leading companies at first place with total of 14 point. Also, Amuse and Awal came very close in the second place with the total of 13 points. In third place with total points of 12, came in Cdbaby, Distrokid, Ditto and Symphonic.

3. MUSIC PRODUCTION

Through out my music career I have made many releases. However, I've never made a release for an actual streaming service. Therefore, this was the first attempt and step which I took with distribution channel Amuse to deliver my first single to many official digital streaming services as Spotify, iTunes/Apple Music, Tidal, Deezer, Pandora and eight other smaller streaming services. After preparing the actual song writing, recording, mixing and mastering. Also, preparing a shoot to have an art cover for the release. The single was first delivered to Amuse and moved forward with the release. Before delivering the song, Amuse needed the overall information of the project, as information on composers, writers, mix and mastering, exclusivity of the instruments, samples used in the track and other important contracts on rights of the usage. All other participants' rights in the project will be taking in consideration so that later on no one would face any form of issue relating to breaking the law or anyone's rights. Everything has to be legit to be able to move forward with the release process. After delivering all the information to Amuse, it took them a few days to go through the information and finally confirmed. They then sent the single, EP or an album to the stores and notify the artist with a confirmed release date on all streaming services.

At the release date Amuse notified with the link to the project of Spotify and the link to the project in other streaming services was just a search away. Amuse did not participate in any form of marketing with the artist unless the artist is signed to them. Therefore, the project did not include any marketing budget, as it was to find and understand how the overall process works.

After the release of the project in all major digital streaming services, major task was to attract as many listeners as possible and since there were no marketing budget or plan for the project. The only way to attract people was in personal social media sites. Therefore, the project was shared in artist's social media sites as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snap Chat.

Amuse sent the song to Spotify and other streaming services before the release date. So that the artist page would have been created by Spotify and other streaming services with the

single released on the exact set date, which was December 15th 2017. However, musicians once having a single released in Spotify, will then need to verify their artist page, so that it would have a professional insight and would blend in with other major artists signed to recording labels. Therefore, the artist must apply for this process and it can be accomplished through Spotify's homepages. After applying for the verification, Spotify connected the old user page to the artist page and the full insights of Spotify's artist page were in hand. This process lasted from 1-3 business days and all it took was an application that included information of all the social media platforms and emails to be sent to Spotify. So, that they could assure that the person applying is the right person and not a scam.

After the artist page is verified the artist will receive all fan information and statistics about the single, Ep's and Albums. Also, the artist will have the opportunity to upgrade the outlook of their artist page. The artist pages that are verified all have a blue stamp marked on them in Spotify, which indicates that the page is verified, and official.

The most difficult area were the marketing of the project after it was released, as new artists and singles without a profound marketing cannot be easily found in streaming services unless consumers would search for the right names. Because the release will not appear on any playlists unless it's a recording label release and therefore, it will not be discovered easily. As an independent artist marketing was the most difficult area to cover, as getting the music heard and discovered by the consumers. Therefore, a major issue that needed to be tackled was the right form of marketing. Reaching to Facebook, Instagram and Twitter friends and followers will not be enough at the beginning, as reaching out of the box to more consumers is very important and a must.

For the independent artist one of the best ways to be heard is to contact a local news agency to prepare a marketing motion for the artist and the released project. However, it is always better to execute this process with at least second single release. As taking into consideration the budget and the time to set the verifications of artist pages in Spotify and other streaming services, it makes more sense to invest in the second release so that there would be at least two songs for the consumers with official and professionally looking artist pages.

In overall this process was executed successfully as the project was released on time without any problematic issues. Also, there have been nearly 1000 streams in total by 23th of January 2018. The numbers of streams are growing on a daily basis as slowly more people are discovering the music in Spotify and other streaming services. However, the very low numbers of streams is the cause of the lack of no promotion and marketing campaigns. The information and knowledge gathered from this action and research will be helpful in future projects.



Above is a screen shot of the single released in Spotify with the cover art.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This thesis focused on the available distribution channels and the distribution of digital music independently. Also, the other focus was on strengths and weaknesses of distribution channels. This thesis was written using both qualitative and quantitative methods, hence mixed method approach were applied.

4.1 Qualitative Method

Qualitative research can be used to pilot ideas and develop the research and evaluate to generate original insights, concepts and ideas. Be used to generate and write stories about what has been conducted. Also, opens the possibilities to understand the cognitive and emotional or affective landscape of society, institutions or urban contexts. The research has range of techniques, which can help researchers to understand why individuals think, feel, react and behave the way they do. Data is collected based on the opinions and motivations of individuals, which can resolve the problematic issues. As long as it does not include numeric understanding of how many, the qualitative research can be suitable. The benefit of qualitative approaches are that you do not start with a 'hypothesis' that needs to be proved, which can be very rigid. Rather, it is an open-ended approach that can be adapted and changed while the research is ongoing, which enhances the quality of the data and insights generated. (Saunders, 2012). Qualitative interviewing was conducted and based on its results data were collected from a signed artist to major recording label (see interview questions in appendix 4). However, the one to one interview was conducted though Skype as the interviewee's location did not met the authors. Also, The artist and the record label will remain anonyms and the artist will be referred to as X. However, with X's newly released track called The Last Thing I Do, through major recording label. X can provide in detailed information about the positive and negative aspects of releasing through recording label. Which, then will be compared to unsigned released track called Star through Amuse.

- Quantitative Method

The quantitative research assumes based on numbers of population. Also, is the way to compare, classify and explain objectives through numeric variables. Which means it's a form of research that focuses and interprets statistically by numbers. Therefore, it makes the research significantly reliable and objective. However, Quantitative data flows in less detailed than the qualitative data as some answers may be referred shortly and could miss desired response from participant. By conducting quantitative research will receive samples of representative population of each desirable streaming service users. Also, it can show in depth relationships between the users and streaming services. (Saunders, 2012). Therefore, by executing the quantitative research with a questionnaire (see appendix 3), it can test theory hypotheses as well. The questionnaire was sent and uploaded on social media site Facebook. Ideally anyone can participate in the questionnaire. Also, there was no numerical goal for the respondents but the idea was to get as much people to participate. The questionnaire identifies and evaluates statistical usage of digital streaming services. It provides what perspectives based on does consumers goes on about choosing their services. As well as the numerical leading status of streaming services can be identified through the questionnaire.

- Mixed Method

Mixed methods research is collecting, analysis and integrating of conducted quantitative e.g. questionnaire and qualitative e.g. interview research. Mixed method provides a better understanding of research, than choosing one method. Therefore, one of the most advantage characteristics of mixed methods is the ability to use several references to examine one phenomenon. For instance, quantitative research lacks in depth knowledge of the context, or identifying the behavior of people, where as qualitative research fills that gap. On the other hand qualitative research is insufficient for the potential of biased interpretations made by the researcher and the difficulty in generalizing findings to a larger group, where as quantitative research stands strong. Therefore, using both researches, each one can fill one another's negative gaps and provide a solid answers. (Wisdom, 2013). So, the mixed method is used to identify the weaknesses and ability of cooperation with distribution channels, which then will

be evaluated and compared, to the interview, which focus was to find about cooperation with the recording label.

As an artist, the author produced and uploads a music piece in Amuse, with purposes of data collection, site usability, distribution and overall services. Amuse, as a case company would best meet any artists expectations and needs, as it does not only distribute but offer actual recording contract if enough potential is spotted from behalf of cooperative artist. Therefore, the reason behind why Amuse is chosen for the release over other distribution companies is mostly personal reasons. As it is free of charge and the great opportunity they offer to sign an artist to their label if enough potential is met. The data that will be collected from Amuse would help others as how beneficial and useful the companies' services are. Also, the experience gathered through the process will come useful for someone else to follow up.

Amuse was used as distributor for a single track called Star (see song lyrics in appendix 2). Releasing a project with their company will help gather information on their best and worst abilities. Also, shows how far can the project be taken with their services and cooperation. The act of working with a distribution company will bring the positive and negative impacts that an independent artist can face and how far can independent artists actually take themselves without a major recording label.

4.2 Sampling Method

As for sampling method used for selecting respondents, probability simple random sampling was chosen. In simple random sampling subset of population is recognized and each member of the subset has an equal probability of being chosen. For instance, a good example can be playing a lottery. As having a large number of 100 members and having each members name written in a piece of paper and added to a bowl. From which they'll then be picked for sampling. (Saunders, 2012). Simple random sampling is an evenhanded representation of all members in a group thereby it was chosen as a sampling method. However, the final statistics of participated members in the survey were not as large as anticipated. Therefore, the ability

of choosing members fairly and being able to evaluate all answers become possible. So, in case of the questionnaire all 36 participated individuals answers were examined one by one.

The research was designed to answer the following questions:

1. Examine how music is produced?
2. What are the different available digital distribution channels?
3. What are the strenghts and weaknesses of each channel?
4. How can unsigned artists distribute digital music independently?

4.3. Reliability, validity and generalization

The questionnaire was anonymous to increase reliability. Even though the questions were simple and did not contain personal information from the participants. The anonymous questionnaire is likely to receive more honest answers from participants. Also, in order to increase the reliability and validity the questions were carefully thought through and chosen. Thereby, to mainly receive the key point from the participants without any form of confusion. However, the smaller the sample is, the less likely it is to be represented. (Saunders, 2012, s. p.429). For instance, the main limitation of this research was the low number of participants, as based on 36 reviews it is difficult to keep the research validated. As for most researches greater sample sizes lead to result that are more significant. Therefore, the lack of larger numbers has major impacts on the generalization, which then leads to incorrectness of the final result. Thereby, the final results of this research because of the smaller sample size can be considered weak and cannot represent a larger scale of representatives. However, smaller groups can be used as proximal similarity, which then restricts generalization. This may not be perfect but contains external validity and perhaps an acceptable generalization. (Shuttleworth & Wilson, 2015).

Also, the interviewed artist and recording company will remain anonymous, as it was the artist's personal choice, which was taken in consideration.

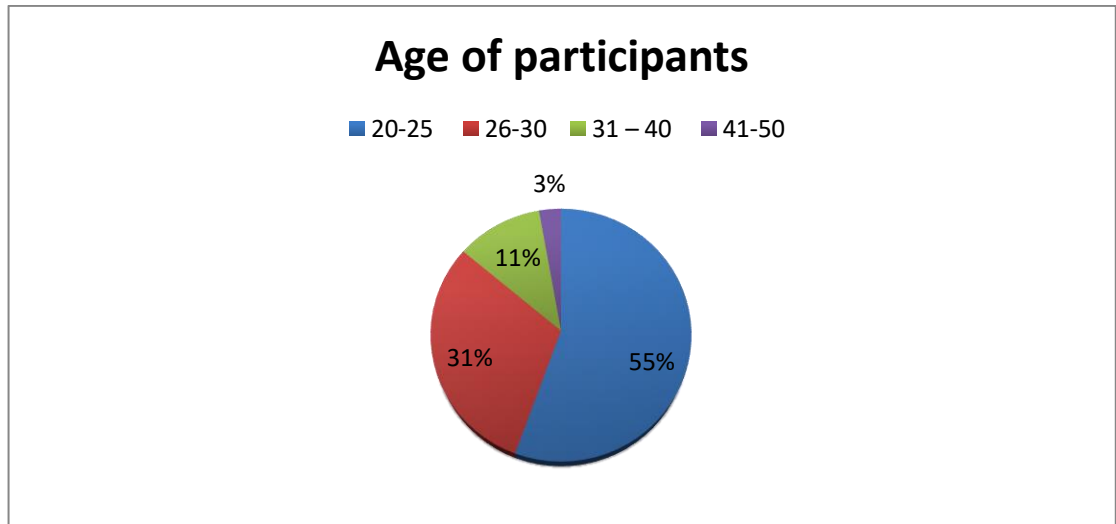
5. RESEARCH ANALYSIS

5.1 The questionnaire

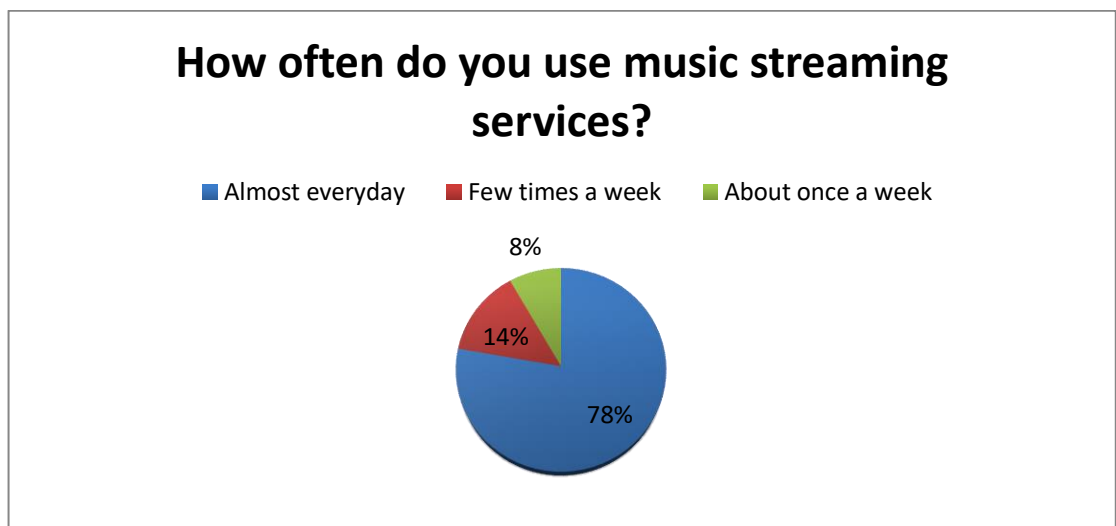
The questionnaire was constructed using Webropol and administered in social media site Facebook. The survey was open approximately for 48 hours through Saturday and Sunday and it contained 9 questions. Reason why the survey was open for 48 hours is because of the strict schedule of finalizing the thesis and writing the analysis. Perhaps it could have gathered more responses if it stayed open for longer period of time. However, the survey was personally sent to 100 individuals on Facebook through messenger. The personal survey link receivers by messenger could be called as the targeted individuals, as they were mostly in close relationship with the author. Therefore, It issued more confidence of receiving responses from those individuals than just posting a random link on Facebook wall in hopes of having participants. Also, the survey was posted in class Ninbos14's Facebook page that contains 75 individuals in total. However, in total 68 individuals was reached, which is the number of individuals opening the file and taking a glimpse at the questionnaire. Therefore, from the total of 68 individuals, 36 had decided to participate and respond to the survey. There were never an actual targeted number through out this research, as the ideology was to gather as much participants as possible, which could be mentioned as a mistake. Then again the biggest mistake, was to keep the survey open for a short period of time. Also, noticing that all individuals did open the messages but not bother to open the survey, as perhaps they may not feel to participate or care. What ever the reason may be it was never reported. Therefore, It gave me the motivation to not wait any longer and close the survey for analysis.

The first question defined the gender, and from the 36 people who responded 66,7 % was male and 33,3 % were females.

The second question, respondents' age ranged from 20 all the way to 50, however, there were only 2,8 % responds from age of 41-50. Also, 11,1% participants were from 31 – 40 and 30,6 % were from 26 – 30. The age range was mostly concentrated on younger generation as 55,6 % of the responders was from 20-25 years of age.

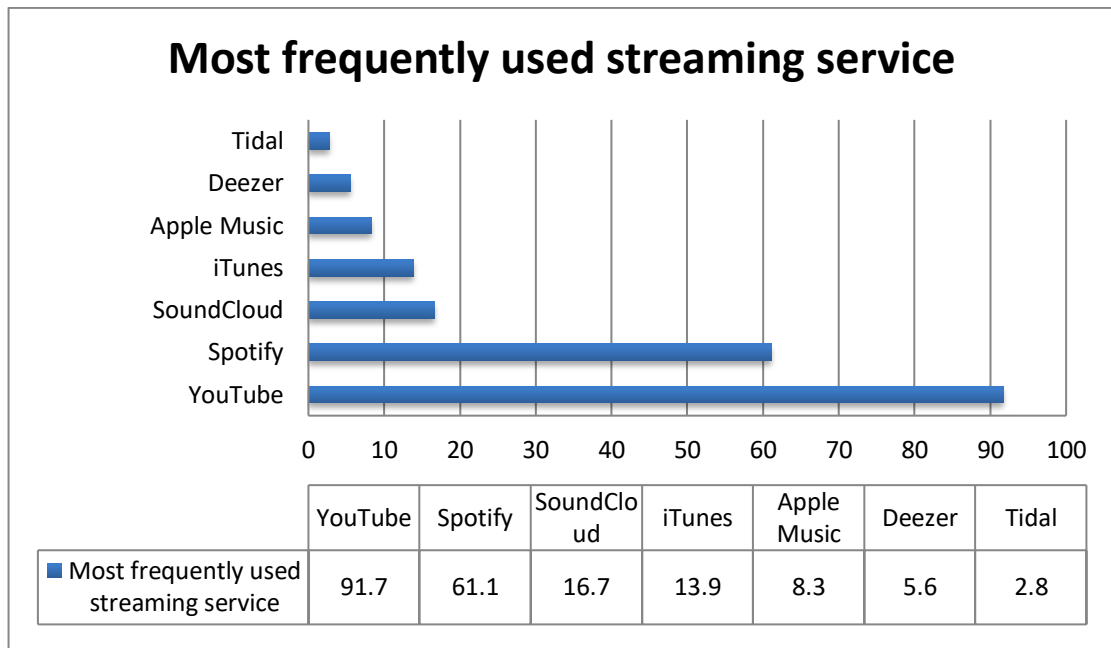


The answer from third question found that the number of people who used digital distribution service were high. As 77,8 % of the responders was every day users. Also, few times a week users had the second highest percentage of 13,9 %. Therefore, 8,3 % of the responders were once a week digital music streaming users.



The fourth question asked which digital music services do the consumers use and the respondents had the chance to choose more than one service. As expected YouTube was one of the most used service, with almost everyone having it as a second or first choice. YouTube

was checked 91,7 % by the respondents. Spotify came in as second with 61,1 % of users and SoundCloud had 16,7 % users reserving the third spot. 13,9 % of the users use iTunes but Apple Music only was being used by 8,3 % of the attendees. Also, for the attendees Deezer has been in usage as 5,6 % are members of the service and the last digital music service was Tidal with only 2,8 % of users.



The fifth question, the respondents were asked, which digital music service is primarily at their usage. Therefore, the most primarily in use out of all digital music services came to be Spotify with 17 primarily users and second primarily used service was YouTube with 15 users. Apple Music had three primarily users and iTube had one primarily user.

Sixth question was to determine the various reasons why people have chosen a specific digital music streaming service as they're primarily usage. The participants in this research had an open hand on this question to write exactly the reasons of their choice based on the streaming service they use mostly. Therefore, as discovered in the fifth question and analyzed in above paragraph that Spotify has been a primarily choice of the majority.

The reason were the following:

Majority of people voted on Spotify being user friendly, cheap compared to their service offerings and well working application. Spotify providing a wide range of different music, not limited by the regions and exclusive personalized radio and preference mash ups. Spotify's good audio quality, versatility, being able to connect to multiple devices and lots of customization regarding playlists. Tailored music experiences and weekly recommendations of Spotify are very impressive. Spotify's offline listening option was very much preferred by the participants as this is very unique. Some of the participants mentioned that they don't bother using other streaming services because everything they need is in Spotify and therefore, there is no reason for them to move to another streaming service.

YouTube was the second primarily in use choice of the participants in this research. Therefore, their reasons behind their choice were the following:

YouTube being easy to access as, no need of registration acquired and the service being totally free are definitely bonuses. The other advantage YouTube have is the videos that are included. One major issue that separates YouTube from other digital music services is that in YouTube you can find anything, for example, many middle eastern participants mentioned that there are no Arabic, Persian or afghan music anywhere else except in YouTube. Which is true, the Middle Eastern music catalogues are missing from most of the digital music services, as they don't operate in those Middle Eastern areas and countries. YouTube in other hand covers everything, from all nationalities music and also music videos. Also, other preferred choices from YouTube were, user friendly, desktop version, free of advertisements and totally free of charge.

In case of Apple Music, Dizzer and Itube. The participants weren't much clear as in case of Apple Music it was initiated that it's a preferred application because the person owns an Apple product iPhone. In case of Dizzer some minor issues were mentioned as it being user friendly, cheap if it being offered by contracted company as DNA networks. Also, a better sound quality was mentioned to be offered by Dizzer. In case of Itube the participant did not give much other information than it being a user-friendly application.

Socializing in the digital music services is not the most preferred option for the participants, as 64 % were not interested in any interaction with friends or family. They enjoy the digital music

services as music listening platforms only. Also, 52 % of the majority likes to start the service and just let it play. Were as 25 % preferred to just use some basic functions of the services and 13, 9 % liked to use customizations and only 8,3 % would preferred to take full advantage of the services provided by the digital music distributions. However, 36 % preferred to socialize with friends and family in the platforms by commenting and sending preferred or loved songs forward to friends and families.

The final question determined how people intend to purchase music. Digital or physical formats as from outdoor stores or online itunes for instance. Not surprisingly 77.8 % of the participants claim that they never buy any music but only stream music in digital music platforms. Also, we find that the physical formats of music as CD's and Vinyls have declined significantly as only 2,8 % were interested in buying physical formats from stores. However, incase of both digital and physical purchasing's the votes were higher around 19,4 %.

5.2 The interview

The second part of the research was to conduct an interview and the following information was collected through the interview with a signed artist to a recording label.

The Interview contained 7 open questions, which was sent by mail to the artist before the actual interview. However, the interviewed artist as well as the recording label will remain anonymous as this was agreed with the artist. The interview took place on 22th of December 2017 via Skype as the artist resides in San Francisco, USA.

1. What difficulties did you mostly faced in your career with distributing music before signing to a record label?

When I started I was very confused as I did not know which distributor to choose or the question itself that should I even choose a distributor when there are platforms like Sound cloud and YouTube that are totally free of charge. So, in the beginning of my work I decided to distribute my songs by myself on YouTube, because it was free and I had nothing to lose. However, growing in YouTube did not happen overnight, the most plays I had were around 4 000 to 8 000. But again, YouTube is an easy place to get views I believe, more than other online services, the videos you put up on YouTube tends to trend easier and faster with not much of an marketing. However, later on as I had to try new things for my career I started to look into and find information about the available distribution channels. Since, Digital streaming services were the new market for music and it felt like it is a must to get your songs in there for the consumers. As I was finding more information about various distribution channels, I luckily got discovered by a smaller Record label through YouTube, based on my older releases, so I took the chance and signed a small couple of single contract with them. That's when I did not care about the independent distribution channels anymore since the Label was making the releases.

2. What are the benefits and advantages of being signed to a recording label?

The Recording labels own the radios, festivals and charts so if you are signed to the label, you have an easy pass. As long as you make the music they ask you to make. Radio plays, festival slots and the overall workforce of the professional marketing tools, playlist plugging are the great beneficial issues of being signed. The recording label has been in the business for a very long time so they also have the best connections, which can boost the artist career very fast. Having booked shows through out the whole year and being able to only focus on the actual work, which is only producing music and not having to think about the other issues as, what now when the music is done. It gives the artist the opportunity to just focus on your own work and there are other staff professionals that will take care of rest of the work for you. It's a huge relief and a big weight of any artist's shoulders. The professionalism in the staff is easily recognized, as the recording labels hires the best producers and staff in the business, working with the best and professional people makes it very easy, fun and ends with great results. The labels are rich in pockets, which means they can spend money on promoting the music produced, therefore financially the label can offer a large advance and invest on the recording, touring, video shoots and more. As an independent artist investing financially was always one of the major issues I faced over time. Also, the size of the label matters therefore, the larger the label the more power they have over manufacturing, advertising, media and other expenses since they do business in a enormous scale. The larger labels can make artist careers very successful overnight with the power on deals and connections they have over media spots. Recording labels are very good at artist branding since it's a big part of their job, they assist on growing your audience and support artist image with the team of experts in the business. Most of the time films and TV companies will need and seek for music to present on their TV broadcasts, commercials and films. Therefore, Recording labels work as publishers and make these opportunities happen very easily, which can have a great beneficial impact on artist career. Also, when being signed to a label the artist immediately becomes part of a community as signed artist become associated with that label's rosters, get the benefits of that exposure, and get credibility from it as well.

3. What are the advantages of releasing a track through the label?

The ability to work with the experts in the studio to mix and master and put together a song that is specifically produced to be played on the radio itself is a great advantage. Also, having a professional team that is assigned to handle and tackle all the business areas of the release in the music business. For instance make a marketing plan, finance, monitor, organize events, publicity, website and magazine connections, digital distribution, manufacturing physical CD's and packing and shipping orders are all part of the work and is a large process. However, today with the access of the Internet it is possible to do all these things independently but again it is very time consuming and will come with high cost for the artist to manage all those issues by themselves. Plus the label will finance everything for the artist so, it's all a great advantage to be signed and release through a recording label.

4. How does the label invest in artist?

Music production is heavily in need of promotion; record labels invest on artist releases and finance all the needs so that the project and artist gets enough exposure they need. Usually the investments are spent on digital marketing as the consumer groups can be focused on and targeted directly. Marketing across television, radio, print and outdoor media are all investment areas for the label to present the artist to consumers. Some record companies have also increased their spending on consumer insight and research to enable them to take advantage of new marketing platforms.

Record labels invest on recordings, and this investment amount varies depending on the scale of the project. Also advances are paid to artist signed as from the beginning so that the artist can focus mainly on writing, rehearsing, recording and performing. Investment on music video production is very important. For example, creating a music video to promote on YouTube and major various available platforms and in addition creating the needed promotional billboards and digital banners of photos can be very expensive. However, A record label has a built-in crew that will streamline these processes and is able to build for you the look you want, and at a fraction of the cost.

Locally or globally touring requires a significant amount of investment and support from the recording label, which can be very expensive. Of course, it also depends on the artist act, as some require full orchestra or a band. Therefore, this is an area where the recording company requires a lot of investment as well.

5. What do you dislike about the label?

It is difficult to say anything negative about the record label, as record labels are very needed by the artist and the industry. They have got all the team players to cover everything for the artist as marketing teams, press teams, radio pluggers, accounts departments and more. However, some A&R's may be a bit difficult to handle or to work with at times, as their ideas and may not match the artist's style or the artist may not feel comfortable with what they want and ask for. Some issues I may point out is that there are some projects I wish to be released which have not or it may never be released, because the record label does not feel that the project is suitable for the label's catalog in terms of insight of the music or they may simply not feel that it is not a radio hit. Working with the label means the artist must provide the type of art that the label would ask for and want. Therefore, some projects may never be released and some projects may be delayed far back. Also, depending on the type of deal artist have for instance, in my case the label has the full ownership of my productions, so there is nothing much I can do with the projects that are not being released. Record labels have hundreds of artists signed to their label so at times there might be a lack of attraction by the label for a newer artist or an upcoming artist.

6. What do you like about the label?

Having a great team behind you to support you with all that you need is an amazing feeling and I am very grateful for it. We get a long and most importantly the team works very hard. It's an opportunity that the record label has given me by believing in my projects and talent so it really is a blessing. In overall, the help I have received with all my projects and the way the

label have presented me to the audience and got me in front of thousands of people is amazing. Probably something I may have never been able to do by myself, as financially my life was not stable enough to be able to invest on myself the way the record label has committed. The recording labels are all professionals in the business and they definitely know how to sell to audience. What I like about the label is that they can really make the music production better with their high technologically developed studios and professional staff members. The credibility and being able to make it big in the industry are another factors that I love about the record labels.

7. What are the bad and good experiences you've faced with the label?

It's always a good experience when you work with a good team that knows what they are doing and where they want to go. However, of course the best experience and feeling was the moment I got offered the deal to be signed to a record label, as it was a dream that came true as I had struggled independently with my music. Because of the marketing and financial issues I was facing. But every release is now a great experience as there is no stress and I'm sure that my team will do their best to make the project successful, there is a great trust bond between the staff in the label. I don't have to think about anything else but the art itself.

Bad experiences may be the long studio sessions were there might be some issues with the lyrics or putting the project together, but I feel those are improvements that I need to work on myself to get better and from which new things are always learned.

Business wise I have been very happy with the label and all the help they have been giving to take my career to different heights.

6. CONCLUSION

The objective of this thesis is to find how music distribution functions and to do research on where it stands today.

Examine how music is produced?

A single song, album or an EP is not produced over night. Production of a single song can be a very long process, which can take up to three or four months. Starting a storyline can be a difficult issue for most people, thereby; trying to attract others emotions while they play it can be even more difficult of a difficult task. Therefore, being able to write a story with a subject that can attract the attention of listener is very important key in production of music. As the first 15 - 25 seconds of a song are the moments to sell the actual product. Most consumers don't bother listening more than 20 seconds if the actual song doesn't have any form of attraction or interest to them. Therefore, during production of music the beginning of the song should be intensely focused on and produced very wisely. Storylines in music that are mostly relatable are topics as love and everyday living. Simple topics, that people experience through their daily, monthly and yearly lifetime. Also, the song stands better when the lyrics are thought through simply and performed so, as it will be more easily understood. After finalizing the storyline a demo must be recorded, which can help point out the mistakes, and changes that would have an impact on improving the song. Recording a demo is a step that may require the artist to go back and make some improvement to the lyrics as well. Therefore, in production of music one must keep in mind that in any moment there are possibilities of bouncing back and forth in steps for changes and improvements. Third major step of music production is rehearsing pitch, timing and tone. Rehearsals help the artist to be well prepared before the actual action time in the recording studio. This step helps artist save lots of energy and time on the actual recording day, as well as it makes the artist well prepared. Recording of the song with laying out the tracks following to overdubbing and mixing and mastering the produced track are the finals steps, which may have more cooperative producers helping the artist put the work together.

What are the different available digital distribution channels?

There are 16 digital distribution channels available at the moment, which are the main leaders of the digital music distribution field for independent artist. However, there are many more distribution channels in which this thesis has not focused on, as new distribution companies raise and fall on a frequently basis. Therefore, the 16 digital distribution channels this thesis has focused on are the ones that have been in the business for very long time and have been very successful companies in their field. As the industry has moved on the digitalization path the industry has also provided ways of distribution for the independent and signed artist all around the world. There are many digital distribution services out there, for all genres of artist to choose from. Distribution channels all appearing with their uniqueness and differentiation with prices, marketing tools and distribution tactics for all genres of musicians. The musicians have the opportunity to choose preferred and most suitable distribution channel to cooperate with their releases. As each musician may be in different type of service need at a certain level and point of their music career.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of each channel?

The strengths and weaknesses of each digital distribution channel lay on their service offerings. Therefore, in order to define the strengths and weaknesses one must understand each distributors service separately. As companies do differ with one another, however, concentrating at distribution. The companies' do poses similar key characteristics in services they offer. Main similar services offered are marketing and playlist plugging services that tends to be very important for all artists, as it has significant impact on their career growth. Also, type of revenue collection system that the companies provide for artist, as all companies do not include split payment method to their users. Major key characteristics, as number of outlets and speed of distribution that companies execute the workload. Also, another important facts for the artist are the statistics and revenue reporting that all companies offer. Whereas, the reporting differ from each company as some conduct in depth and some have very formal way of presenting the reports to their artist. In theory a fixed set of evaluation criteria is presented (figure 3) which indicates 6 similar services that all 16 distributors have in common. Therefore, based on that evaluation criterion it shows that Tune Core and ReverbNation were the two leading companies out of 16 distribution companies based on their distribution service offerings. Also, Amuse and Awal came very close in the second place with

total of points they managed to gather based on their services (look into points in figure 3). Also, in third place came in Cdbaby, Distrokid, Ditto and Symphonic.

How can unsigned artists distribute digital music independently?

Digital distribution channels offer services, which helps artist to have control over their career and enables the opportunities to sell music globally. However, the way these distributors work varies from one another. Artists that claims to operate with any distributor needs to understand and know their own needs in terms to be able to choose the best suitable distributor to work with. For the musicians distribution has never been as diverse at it is nowadays. As the industry has moved towards digitalization the digital music has tackled many issues on its ways. For instance, lowering manufacturing costs and limiting the time of delivery to online stores to unlimited space online.

The comparative independent release with cooperation of a distribution channel Amuse and a major recording labels artist releases vary in a very large scale. As the labels have a massive control over the music business and have extreme opportunity offerings on which way do they want to take the artists career towards. Recording labels offer a full staff team who are masters of various different fields to manage the release with a fully coverage on all areas of music and business. Heavy investments on digital marketing, manufacturing, production, branding and connections are key areas where the artist is in need of contract with the major recording labels.

Even though the cooperation with Digital music distribution Amuse lacked most of the business aspects as profound marketing and further investments, which usually the recording labels provide. The negative areas pointed out were a lack of marketing and promotional team or tools, no investment budget or an actual playlist plugger that can push forward the project after the release to radios or other playlists on digital streaming services.

Distribution channel Amuse has its beneficial factors as it operates totally free; no commission and 100% royalty give away. The artist will remain as the full owner of the production and if

Amuse spots interests and success in the individual artist they will offer a 50/50 recording contract to the artist. The contract will include financial investment on the artist and its projects as covering, marketing, promotional and playlist plugging's.

6.1 Suggestions for further research

A Further re-search that mainly concentrates on promotional and marketing areas which best suites digital music after release of an EP, album or a single can be conducted. For example, it would be interesting to know the best types of marketing tools that can be used that can have great impacts on independent artists visibility. Independent artist can use such a research to present themselves to more audiences and have greater results for their published music. Therefore the research can be very helpful to many upcoming artists in future.

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Heading of appendix 1

COMPANY	amuse	AWAL	cdbaby	DISTROKID	D+++O	FR TUN S	SH
LAUNCH DATE	March 7, 2017	December 2011	March 10th, 1998	October 10th, 2013	December 25th 2005	March 3rd, 2016	
APP?	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	
PARENT COMPANY?	n/a	Kobalt Music Group	AVL Digital Group	n/a	n/a	n/a	
DIRECT DISTRIBUTION OR PARTNER?	some direct. Some via FUGA	direct	direct	direct	both	direct except Kanjian for Asia	
# OF OUTLETS	200+	200+	100+	150+	200+	15	
COMMISSION	0%	15%	9%	0%	0%	0%	
OPEN TO ALL?	yes	submission	yes	yes	yes	yes	
SIGN UP FEE	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
DISTRIBUTION FEE	\$0	\$0	single = \$9.95 album = \$49	unlimited songs = \$19.99/yr - \$35.99/yr	unlimited releases for... 1 artist = \$19 / 2 artists = \$29 / Up to 5 artists = \$69 / Up to 10 artists = \$119 / Up to 15 artists = \$159 / Up to 20 artists = \$199 / Up to 30 artists = \$249 / Up to 40 artists = \$299 / 40+ artists	\$0	
YEARLY FEE	\$0	\$0	\$0	unlimited songs = \$19.99/yr - \$35.99/yr	unlimited releases for... 1 artist = \$19 / 2 artists = \$29 / Up to 5 artists = \$69 / Up to 10 artists = \$119 / Up to 15 artists = \$159 / Up to 20 artists = \$199 / Up to 30 artists = \$249 / Up to 40 artists = \$299 / 40+ artists	\$0	
FEE FOR ADDING OUTLETS?	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0 manual or \$7.95/release automated	\$0	\$0	
SPEED TO APPLE MUSIC / ITUNES (weekdays)	5 business days	deliver to their backend in 1 day	1-2 days	1-7 days	3-5 days	up to 5 days	
SPEED TO SPOTIFY IN HOUSE SPOTIFY PLAYLIST PLUGGER?	5 business days	5 days by request and with approval	3-5 days	2-7 days	1-3 days	up to 3 days	
CUSTOM LABEL NAME	yes (once signed)	free	free	with musician plus or label plan	yes	yes	
ADDITIONAL ARTISTS COST?	free	free	free	5+ artists = \$44	varies	no	
COST of ISRC CODES?	free	free	free	free	free	free	
COST of UPC CODES?	free	free	\$5 single \$20 album	free	free	free	
TAKEDOWN COST	free	free	free	free	free	free	
ITUNES, GOOGLE, AMAZON PREORDER	by request	free	free	yes	\$40.00	yes	
YOUTUBE MONETIZATION	automatic	opt in	opt in	opt in	selected artists	sound recordings only and branded channels	
YOUTUBE UGC CONTENT ID MONETIZATION (commission)	0%	0%	30%	\$4.95 per single, and \$14.95 for each release of 2+ songs, per year.	10%	0%	
SOUNDCLOUD MONETIZATION	n/a	by request	n/a	n/a	selected artists	n/a	
PUBLISHING ADMIN PARTNER	n/a	n/a	Songtrust	no	n/a	n/a	
SOUNDEXCHANGE COLLECTION (Sound Recording Copyright Owner) / COMMISSION	N/A	15%	9%	n/a	n/a	n/a	
SOUNDEXCHANGE COLLECTION (Performer) / COMMISSION	N/A	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
ITUNES DIGITAL BOOKLET	no	yes	no	no	selected releases / artists	no	
PANDORA RADIO SUBMISSION	by request	yes	yes	yes	yes	n/a	
BEATPORT DISTRIBUTION?	by request	yes, with application process.	no	no	\$49	no	
GET ISRC CODES BEFORE UPLOAD	No	yes	no	no (without hack)	by request	no	
SOUNSCAN REGISTRATION	no	yes	no	no	worldwide chart registration = \$79 / national chart registration = \$30	no	
OPT OUT OF OUTLETS / TERRITORIES	yes	territories yes / outlets no	yes	yes	yes	no	
PAYMENT	2 month delay	within 45 days	weekly	by withdrawl	immediate		
PAYMENT SPLITTING?	no	no	no	yes	no	no	
PAYMENT THRESHOLD	\$10	\$45	user set minimum	\$0	\$25	\$25	
APPLE & SPOTIFY TRENDING REPORT	daily	daily	daily	daily (with musician plus or label plans)	updated hourly	2 days	
RELEASE COVER SONGS?	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	
OBTAIN MECHANICAL LICENSE FOR COVER SONGS? COST/COMMISSION?	no	No	yes, \$14.99 + royalties	yes. for \$1 a month.	no	no	
CUSTOMER SUPPORT EMAIL TURN AROUND	within a day	6 days	same day (business days)	1 business day	hours 24/7	7 days	
CUSTOMER SUPPORT PHONE	no	no	9am - 5pm pst, mon-fri	no	no	no	
CUSTOMER SUPPORT LIVE CHAT	no	existing clients only	9am-5pm pst	no	UK only	no	
REVENUE REPORTS (non existent, calculus degree required, poor, decent, clear and intelligible, best)	poor	best	clear and intelligible	calculus degree required	clear and intelligible	unavailable for review	
# OF ARTISTS / LABELS	n/a	about 20,000	650,000	150,000	150,000	107,000 registered users	
# OF SONGS RELEASED	n/a	280,000+	7.34 million	1.62 million	1000/week on average	224,000	
# OF LABELS	n/a	n/a	n/a	75,000	15,000	n/a	
OFFER ADVANCE \$	no	yes	no	no	no	no	
DISTRIBUTE TO CHINA?	no	no	yes	yes	no	yes	

COMPANY						
LAUNCH DATE	August 20th, 2006	June 29th, 2017	February 2012	July 2010	September 2008	May 1st, 2008
APP?	no	No	no	no	no	no
PARENT COMPANY?	n/a	LANDR Audio Inc.	n/a	n/a	eMinor Inc.	n/a
DIRECT DISTRIBUTION OR PARTNER?	direct	direct to the top 8 services	Ingrooves	direct	direct	direct to 19 outlets
# OF OUTLETS	200+	150+	200+	31	90+	200+
COMMISSION	20% with free, 0% with fee	0%	10%	15%	0%	routenote "Free" = 15% routenote Premium = 0%
OPEN TO ALL?	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
SIGN UP FEE	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
DISTRIBUTION FEE	1-3 songs = 20€, 4-6 songs = 30€, 7-20 songs = 40€, 21-50 songs = 50€. OR free distribution for 80%	\$12/year = 10 songs, \$24/year = 30 tracks, \$36/year = unlimited	\$39.99 unlimited songs	\$0	single=\$9.95 album=\$19.95	1 song (\$10), 2-6 songs (\$20), 7-18 songs (\$30), 18+ songs (\$45)
YEARLY FEE	£ 0	\$12/year = 10 songs, \$24/year = 30 tracks, \$36/year = unlimited	\$39.99 unlimited songs	\$0	single=\$9.95 album=\$49.95	\$9.99/yr or free with "Free"
FEE FOR ADDING OUTLETS?	£ 0	\$0 / Automatic	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SPEED TO APPLE MUSIC / ITUNES (weekdays)	1-2 days	1 day	up to 30 days, but can be expedited for \$25 for 10-14 day delivery.	under 24 hours	1-3 days	3-4 weeks
SPEED TO SPOTIFY	4-5 days	3-5 days	up to 30 days, but can be expedited for \$25 for 10-14 day delivery.	3-5 days	1-2 days	3-4 weeks
IN HOUSE SPOTIFY PLAYLIST PLUGGER?	yes	yes	no	No	no	yes
CUSTOM LABEL NAME	free	free	\$39.99 one time	n/a	free	free
ADDITIONAL ARTISTS COST?	free	free	free	free	free	free
COST of ISRC CODES?	free	free	free	free	free	free
COST of UPC CODES?	free	free	free	free	free	free
TAKEDOWN COST	100€, within 3 months	free	free	free	free	free
ITUNES, GOOGLE, AMAZON PREORDER	free	n/a	\$25	\$0	n/a	free (automatic)
YOUTUBE MONETIZATION	opt out	no	n/a	opt out	n/a	opt in
YOUTUBE UGC CONTENT ID MONETIZATION (commission)	20% with free, 0% with fee	no	n/a	30%	n/a	0% (premium), 15% ("free")
SOUNDCLOUD MONETIZATION	20% with free, 0% with fee	no	yes	yes	n/a	0% (premium), 15% ("free")
PUBLISHING ADMIN PARTNER	n/a	no	No	youtube brazil only	n/a	In House
SOUNDEXCHANGE COLLECTION (Sound Recording Copyright Owner) / COMMISSION	n/a	no	10% opt in	n/a	n/a	Via PPL
SOUNDEXCHANGE COLLECTION (Performer) / COMMISSION	n/a	no	10% opt in	n/a	n/a	Via PPL
ITUNES DIGITAL BOOKLET	by request	no	\$25	free	no	yes
PANDORA RADIO SUBMISSION	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
BEATPORT DISTRIBUTION?	by request	no	yes	no	yes	no
GET ISRC CODES BEFORE UPLOAD	by request	no	no	no	no	by request
SOUNSCAN REGISTRATION	no	no	yes	no	no	no
OPT OUT OF OUTLETS / TERRITORIES	by request	yes	yes (manual - write in)	yes	no	yes
PAYMENT	monthly, 3€ charge overseas	immediate	monthly	immediate	yearly	on the 15th of each month
PAYMENT SPLITTING?	no	no	no	by request	no	by request
PAYMENT THRESHOLD	UK = £ 0, Outside UK 10€	\$0	\$25	0\$	\$5	\$50
APPLE & SPOTIFY TRENDING REPORT	daily	daily	no	daily	weekly	6 weeks
RELEASE COVER SONGS?	Yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
OBTAIN MECHANICAL LICENSE FOR COVER SONGS?	no	no	no	n/a	no	no
COST/COMMISSION?	no	no	no	n/a	no	no
CUSTOMER SUPPORT EMAIL TURN AROUND	24 hours	within 24 hours	hours 24/7	within 24 hours	1 business day	48 hours
CUSTOMER SUPPORT PHONE	yes	by request	yes (email first)	by request	yes (email first)	weekdays 8-6 UK time
CUSTOMER SUPPORT LIVE CHAT	no	yes	no	no	no	no
REVENUE REPORTS (non existent, calculus degree required, poor, decent, clear and intelligible, best)	decent	clear and intelligible	calculus degree required	clear and intelligible	calculus degree required	clear and intelligible
# OF ARTISTS / LABELS	5,000	1.3 million	60,000	50,000	n/a	160,000
# OF SONGS RELEASED	250,000	n/a	500,000+	2 million	n/a	1 million
# OF LABELS	200	n/a	3,000-3,500	400-500	n/a	10s of thousands
OFFER ADVANCE \$	no	no	no	yes	no	no
DISTRIBUTE TO CHINA?	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes

COMPANY	 SOUNDRÖP	 Stem	 SYMPHONIC	 tunecore
LAUNCH DATE	December 19th, 2016	October 2015	December 2006	2005
APP?	no	data only	no	yes
PARENT COMPANY?	CD Baby	n/a	n/a	Believe Distribution Services
DIRECT DISTRIBUTION OR PARTNER?	direct	direct	direct	direct
# OF OUTLETS	5	12	200+	150+
COMMISSION	15%	5%	0%	0%
OPEN TO ALL?	yes	submission	yes	yes
SIGN UP FEE	\$0	\$0	\$25	\$0
DISTRIBUTION FEE	\$0	\$0	1-5 tracks \$10.99, 1-10 tracks \$19.99, 1-15 tracks \$29.99, 1-30 \$39.99, 30+ \$50	1 song=\$9.99 2+ songs=\$29.99
YEARLY FEE	\$0	\$0	\$0	Single: \$9.99 // Album: \$49.99
FEE FOR ADDING OUTLETS?	\$0 / Automatic	\$0	\$0 / automatic	\$1.98 per store or \$10 unlimited
SPEED TO APPLE MUSIC /iTUNES (weekdays)	3-5 days originals, 5-10 days for covers	5 days	3+ Days	1-2 days
SPEED TO SPOTIFY	3-5 days, 5-10 days covers	5 days	3+ Days	5 business days
IN HOUSE SPOTIFY PLAYLIST PLUGGER?	no	yes	by request	by request
CUSTOM LABEL NAME	free	yes	by request	free
ADDITIONAL ARTISTS COST?	free	n/a	free	free
COST of ISRC CODES?	free	free	free	free
COST of UPC CODES?	free	free	free	free
TAKEDOWN COST	free	free	free	free
iTUNES, GOOGLE, AMAZON PREORDER	yes	n/a	free	\$15
YOUTUBE MONETIZATION	no	5%	opt in (via approval)	opt in / \$10 one time
YOUTUBE UGC CONTENT ID MONETIZATION (commission)	n/a	5%	30%	20%
SOUNDCLOUD MONETIZATION	n/a	5%	yes	n/a
PUBLISHING ADMIN PARTNER	n/a	n/a	Tunecore Publishing Administration Service	Tunecore Publishing Administration Service
SOUNDEXCHANGE COLLECTION (Sound Recording Copyright Owner) / COMMISSION	n/a	n/a	30%	n/a
SOUNDEXCHANGE COLLECTION (Performer) / COMMISSION	n/a	n/a	30%	n/a
iTUNES DIGITAL BOOKLET	no	n/a	yes, free	\$20
PANDORA RADIO SUBMISSION	no	yes	yes	yes
BEATPORT DISTRIBUTION?	no	n/a	by request	no
GET ISRC CODES BEFORE UPLOAD	no	no	yes	yes
SOUNDCLOUD REGISTRATION	no	n/a	\$10	no
OPT OUT OF OUTLETS / TERRITORIES	yes	yes	yes	yes
PAYMENT	monthly	15th of the month	quarterly	weekly
PAYMENT SPLITTING?	yes / write in	yes	no (breakdowns only)	no
PAYMENT THRESHOLD	\$20	\$50	\$50	\$0
APPLE & SPOTIFY TRENDING REPORT	no	by request	next day (iTunes only)	1-2 days
RELEASE COVER SONGS?	Yes	by request	yes	yes
OBTAIN MECHANICAL LICENSE FOR COVER SONGS?				yes, \$59 for 500+ digital downloads, \$15 for less than 500 downloads + royalties
COST/COMMISSION?	\$9.99 one time fee	no	no	
CUSTOMER SUPPORT EMAIL TURN AROUND	1-3 days	1 day	1 business day	1 business day, Monday-Friday 10am-6pm (EST)
CUSTOMER SUPPORT PHONE	no	no	yes	yes (email first)
CUSTOMER SUPPORT LIVE CHAT	no	yes	no	no
REVENUE REPORTS (non existent, calculus degree required, poor, decent, clear and intelligible, best)	poor	clear and intelligible	decent	best
# OF ARTISTS / LABELS	17,000	n/a	50,000+	n/a
# OF SONGS RELEASED	250,000	n/a	1 million	n/a
# OF LABELS		n/a	10,000	n/a
OFFER ADVANCE \$	no	no	via Sound Royalties	yes
DISTRIBUTE TO CHINA?	no	no	yes	no

HEADING OF APPENDIX 2

(Pre-Chores)

Shoot for the moon, don't fall for a star, (OUUUU)
Got to let you go, you wont take me far,
Love aint enough, (Nah naa) I want it all (WouOU)

(Chores)

I wanna know your flaws
I wanna know your wrongs,
I wanna know can you heal my scars
I'd love you without a mask on (OUUUU)
I Cant loose a good girl for a bad one (OUUUU)

(Verse 1)

One shot takes my pain away
One word I miss you used to say
Late nights you were one call away
You know I go crazy over you,
Break somebody, you call it jealousy
I call it love

Show meh
Show meh Ahh..
Show me your true colors
Take the trust outta me
Show me your inner self
Take my best and worst

(Pre-Chores)

Shoot for the moon, don't fall for a star, (OUUUU)
Got to let you go, you wont take me far,
Love aint enough, (Nah naa) I want it all (WouOU)

(Chores)

I wanna know your flaws
I wanna know your wrongs
I wanna know can you heal my scars
I'd love you without a mask on (OUUUU)
I Cant loose a good girl for a bad one (OUUUU)

(Verse 2)

Heard you lately change a lot, since they don't equal me
If it weren't for your fake friends, things be different
Since when you become so cold,
Since when you become so rude,
Our past six feet under
Bout the future we wonder
You could take us anywhere, but you chose the deep ocean
Even when you knew,
I was on my way to the moon, with you

(bridge)

Take care, take care,
Blame me now, you'll wake up later on
Take care, take care, Ahh
You'll miss me when I'm gone

The End!

Heading of appendix 3

I am writing my thesis on topic of Digital Music Distribution and this survey is part of my research. Thank you for taking your time to fill this survey. It should not take you more than 3 minutes and it's completely anonymous. - Paiman Afzali

1. What is your gender?

Male

Female

2. Please select your age range?

Under 20

20-25

26-30

31-40

41-50

Over 50

3. How often do you use music streaming services?

Almost everyday

Few times a week

About once a week

- 2-3 time a month
- Once a month or less

4. Which music streaming services do you use most frequently? (check as many as you use)

- Deezer
- Tidal
- Spotify
- Apple Music
- YouTube
- iTunes
- Pandora
- Google Play
- Beats Music
- SoundCloud
- Other

- I don't use music streaming services

5. Which streaming service do you primarily use? *

6. Write shortly why you prefer your primarily streaming service over other services? *

7. Do you usually use the social features of music streaming applications?

Yes

No

8. Ideally, how much do you like to engage with online music streaming services?

I just like to start the service and let it play

Basic functions

I use customisations and interact

I like to take advantage of all features

9. Final question, Do you purchase music (in either physical or digital formats as from stores or iTunes)?

Physical (CD's) (Vinyls)

Digital (iTunes or Amazon)

Both (digital and physical)

Never, I only use streaming services to listen to music

HEADING OF APPENDIX 4

Interview questions:

1. What difficulties did you mostly faced in your career with distributing music before signing to a record label?
2. What are the benefits and advantages of being signed to a recording label?
3. What are the advantages of releasing a track through the label?
4. How does the label invest in artist?
5. What do you dislike about the label?
6. What do you like about the label?
7. What are the bad and good experiences you've faced with the label?

