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## The Role of Patronage in American Popular Music and the Reemergence of Payola in Streaming Services

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## The Role of Patronage in American Popular Music and the Reemergence of Payola in Streaming Services

The Role of Patronage in American Popular Music and the Reemergence of Payola in Streaming Services.

Annotated Bibliography

**Bishop, Paula J. "Patronage." The Grove Dictionary of American Music, 2nd edition.**

**Edited by Charles Hiroshi Garrett. New York: Oxford University Press, Vol. 6. 2013.**

The New Grove's definition highlights the unique history of American patronage. One important distinction is that, "It never benefitted from the support of kings, nobles or a central church." Instead, American musicians have used multiple approaches to support their creative endeavors: private patrons, charity, government subsidy, the sale of sheet music, scores, recordings, concert tickets, merchandise and other products. Applicable to our topic is the role of government in copyright law and the creation of royalties as a major patron of music. As a result, record companies, radio and television broadcasters and other entities benefitted financially. In exchange for royalty and other sources of revenue, they support artists through, "providing studios, instruments, marketing and sales support, or even financial support." These institutions have become some of the most influential patrons of music.

**Carlin, Richard. "Song Plugger." The Grove Dictionary of American Music, 2nd edition.**

**Edited by Charles Hiroshi Garrett. New York: Oxford University Press, Vol. 7. 2013.**

The term song-plugger was originally coined for employees of music publishing companies that performed songs in public places to help popularize them. The Tin Pan Alley in New York is the most famous employer of early song-pluggers. Pianists would sit in the publisher's office ready to play tunes for customers interested in purchasing sheet music. George Gershwin got his start as a song-plugger with Jerome Remick. In the 1930s, song-pluggers turned to radio DJs and

record producers to promote compositions. As revenue increased so did the manipulation of the radio airwaves through monetary gifts to DJs. Government investigation prompted the Payola scandals of the late 1950s.

**Dannen, Fredric. *Hit Men: Power Brokers and Fast Money Inside the Music Business*. New York: Times Books, 1991.**

This book was referenced by The Penguin Encyclopedia of Popular Music under the Payola entry, as an example of more recent instances of American radio corruption. It discusses the record business from the 1960s to the 1990s. Dannen has unique insight into the greedy practices of record companies and describes the label executives as risk-taking businessmen that did whatever they could to discover and sign new trends. The book is meant to be colorful and entertaining while providing a closer look at the lack of integrity in the history of the music industry. The book has excellent reviews and is often used as an academic resource on the history of the American music industry.

**Halperin, Shirley. "Who Plays DJ in the Digital Age?" *The Hollywood Reporter*, May 29, 2013. <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/who-plays-dj-digital-age-558893>**

This article is a little out-dated but it paints an interesting contrast to the newer journal articles listed above. It starts out with a quote from the creator of Beats electronics and chairman of Interscope records Jimmy Lovine, "There's an ocean of music out there, and there's absolutely no curation for it." The article continues with other quotes from artists calling for algorithms and some form of curation. Ian Rogers, CEO of Daisy (Beats streaming service before they were

purchased by Apple) proclaimed, "What fans want is actually not every song in the world in their pocket; what they want is something awesome to listen to." It's interesting that these quotes are all made by music business executives but canned in such a way to make to make them appear as representative of the public. While it may be true that consumers need some form of curation, handing that responsibility over to record labels may not have been in the best interest of consumers and artists.

**Morris, Jeremy Wade and Devon Powers. "Control, Curation and Musical Experience in Streaming Music Services." Creative Industries Journal, 2005. <https://doi-org.du.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/17510694.2015.1090222>**

In this article, the authors argue that although streaming services offer seemingly limitless content, they still control and curate the music consumers listen to. They analyze how four different streaming services differ but all seek to provide a, "branded" musical experience. They liken these streaming services to cable providers with channels ready to populate for different genres. It is a well-organized scholarly source with an abstract, introduction and sub-sections. This article reinforces the idea that although streaming services offer more content, how you receive that content is controlled by the functions of the streaming services.

**Palermino, Chris Leo. "Labels Making 'Playola' Payments to Get Songs on Spotify Playlists." Digital Trends. August 20, 2015. <https://www.digitaltrends.com/music/popular-spotify-playlists-now-subject-to-payola-says-new-report/>**

Chris Leo uses multiple sources to show the blatant use of pay-for-play practices between Spotify and creators of influential playlists. He reports that Universal created a senior position called “Global Streaming Marketing,” to help market through and to streaming services. Billboard reports that Jay Frank, the head of this department for Universal has, “paid influential [streaming] curators to populate their playlists with their clients’ music.” He also mentions that Spotify is attempting to crack down on this practice but it remains to be seen how effective they will be.

**The Penguin Encyclopedia of Popular Music, 2nd edition., Edited by Donald Clarke. s.v.**

**“Payola.” London: The Penguin Group, 1998.**

This definition describes Payola as one of the many ways the music business is, “dirty.” The term Payola refers to the bribing of radio disc jockeys to play records. It was especially used in the 1950s when radio dramas gave way to television shows and freed up bandwidth for the playing of pop records. This coincided with Top 40 programming and radio becoming the preeminent, “showcase for record companies.” As a result, Payola instances and revenue skyrocketed. In 1959, The Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission both started investigations. As a result, these investigations brought public awareness to these issues and there was an amendment added to the Communications act of 1934 that outlawed pay-for-play. However, not much was done to go after the DJs themselves and the laws were not extensive enough to prevent Payola from flourishing.

**Raine, Michael. "How Streaming Changed Everything." *Canadian Musician*, March, 2019.**

**<http://du.idm.oclc.org/login?Url=?url=https://search-proquest-com.du.idm.oclc.org/docview/2211285214?accountid=14608>**

“According to Music Business Worldwide, the major labels together earned \$13.14 billion in total in 2018 and \$6.93 billion of that came from streaming.” Another article stressing the importance of streaming revenue to the music industry. It goes on to discuss the consumer relationship with albums in the 1990s, the disruption that Napster caused, and the acceptance of Spotify as a link between these formats. Spotify has been successful and yet the record companies are making all the money. The article is one of the first to talk about the artists perspective. “On a macro level, few people dispute that things are better now for the music industry than they were a decade ago. Just look at those revenue totals! But are things better for the average professional musician? Or even smaller labels and publishers? Among many, there is a definite sense that they aren't. And if we accept the belief that average artists aren't better off despite the influx of money into the industry, then who or what is to blame?” This is a well-researched, recent article written by the Senior editor of the *Canadian Musician*. It is an important perspective that will help discuss the impact of streaming services on artists.

**Sanjek, Russell, David Sanjek. *American Popular Music Business in the 20th Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.**

David Sanjek, the archive director for BMI music, compiled and finished his late father Russell's work. It is a comprehensive history of the American music industry from the early 1900s. The book explains how technological advancements changed the industry and struggles between

institutions like BMI, ASCAP and the artists themselves changed the landscape. At first glance, the book appears to be written in dry, scholarly prose. I'm most interested in Chapter 9's in-depth research of Payola in the 1950s and 60s.

**Silva, Marsha. "US-Based Streaming Music Revenues Slated to Reach \$8.4 Billion This Year." Digital Music News, 2019.**

**<https://www.digitalmusicnews.com/2019/07/16/streaming-music-revenues-2019/>**

This article points to the widespread adoption of streaming services and their continued increase in market share of the music industry. With the adoption of streaming services as the major format in recorded music, every other format except for vinyl records are losing significant revenue. This is a large and growing marketplace with a lot at stake for artists and the record companies that seek to control content. It highlights the importance of this discussion.

**Sun, Hyojung. "Paradox of Celestial Jukebox: Resurgence of Market Control." Creative Industries Journal, 2019. <https://doi-org.du.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/17510694.2018.1554944>**

We have reached the age of the "celestial jukebox," where consumers can listen to any song from any location. Experts from the era of Napster in the early 2000s predicted that this new technology would, "loosen market control and hence bring about cultural diversity in the marketplace." The author argues that with the adoption of these technologies and exposure to endless content, consumers want their choices to be curated. As this new medium continues to expand, forces are jockeying to control this, "filter." Sun argues that the freedom these services



provide are ultimately causing a resurgence of market control. It is interesting that Sun Hyojung describes this market control as inevitable whereas the previous source talks about this control in a negative light.

**Yagoda, Ben. "Lullaby of Tin Pan Alley." American Heritage, October/November 1983.**

**<https://www.americanheritage.com/lullaby-tin-pan-alley>**

This article paints a vivid picture of the history of Tin Pan Alley and the famous contributors to the business of song-plugging. Famous composers like Jerome Kern and George Gershwin found their way to success through Tin Pan Alley. They started as pianists that would entertain customers and attempt to sell sheet music by performing new music. It also spends a considerable amount of time on Max Dreyfus, "the head of the publishing firm of T. B. Harms and dean of Tin Pan Alley." Yagoda highlights the level of influence Dreyfus had on selecting which composers would become successful. He was a talent scout but also a gatekeeper that ultimately decided what music customers would be sold. I'm most interested in Dreyfus's role as a patron of composers and curator of music to the American public.