



A Music Industry for the 99%: Streaming Services, Artist Exploitation, and the Indie Future of Music

Paris Marx

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Are streaming services really to blame for low artist royalties?

A Music Industry for the 99% dissects the argument of major labels and celebrity artists that streaming services are at fault for low artist pay—and comes to a very different conclusion. Not only are streaming services not to blame for the percentage of royalties that make it to artists, but their model presents an opportunity to revive industry revenue. The real exploitative force within the industry is the labels, and through the course of the book, many of the actions they've taken to reduce the percentage of revenue they have to share with artists are revealed.

This isn't news to many artists though. While the media narrative has sought to make it seem as though all musicians share Taylor Swift's opposition to Spotify, a growing number of artists are speaking out against label exploitation, and some even go as far as to suggest that the industry needs to change.

Labels haven't always controlled the industry, and it shouldn't be assumed they will continue to in the future. There are changes we can make on a societal level that can promote the growth of an independent music industry, free from the increasingly exploitative terms of labels. The book suggests a number of policies that can be implemented that would have this effect, and presents several indie musicians as examples of what a model for indie success might look like.

The current music industry benefits labels and celebrities, but their greed is starting to turn artists against them, and toward an independent path. Instead of trying to reform labels, we should try to promote this shift. *A Music Industry for the 99%* identifies the real reason artists aren't paid fairly, how artists are beginning to look for a new direction, and proposes changes that could promote independence.

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