

**The New Music Industries: Disruption and Discovery by
Diane Hughes, Mark Evans, Guy Morrow and Sarah Keith,**

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Book review by Daniel Nordgård

With their book, *The New Music Industries: Disruption and Discovery*, Hughes et al provide an interesting and insightful description of the current changes that have taken place in the music industries. Across seven chapters, the authors describe key concepts and theories relating to the digital disruption of the music industries, while continually assessing the interpretation of these changes and questioning certain established views of digitalisation's effects.

A first, and very welcomed, point is evident in the book's title: The music industries. By stressing the plurality of a sector commonly referred to in singular terms, the authors signal from the outset their appreciation of the complexities that characterise these businesses (as well as their digital progressions). This diversity is further expanded to include new businesses and intermediaries integrated in their descriptions of 'the new business of music'.

Even within the first and second chapter, the authors assess the meaning of the new music industries, how the sector has traditionally been viewed as well as organised around a set of revenue-streams and risks, and finally how the new digital tools and platforms enable new business- and career models. Here, Hughes et al provide a compelling description of how the new music business has provided a more artist-centred logic, where the DIY-model and self-management empower the artist and provide greater control over career-paths and revenue-streams. The second chapter also elaborates briefly on how 'the new music business' has gone from a linear, top-down business to a more circular one encompassing artists, fans and industry. The authors argue that this circular model better encompasses the relationship between fans, the artists and industries than the models of disintermediation and

artist-to-fan promised, which dominated much of the earlier discourses about the music industries (p. 29).

This is further elaborated in chapter three, where the authors continue to explore the new music business and the new models for business- and career development. In particular, the authors make a compelling recommendation (cit. Ries 2011) that rather than talking about DIY and self-management, one should look at the new music businesses as 'hypothesis-driven entrepreneurship' (p. 46-52). This is particularly due to the new potential for data-driven business development in collaboration with new digital platforms (such as Music Glue). The new possibilities for acquiring and owning data and knowledge about one's fans are the centre-stage for an artist-centred economy. However, here too, the authors highlight the potential of online platforms and new digital tools while simultaneously pointing out the challenges involved with acquiring the required skills and the difficulties of standing out in the crowd. The growing complexity of the new business of music has also resulted in a portfolio of responsibilities for the artist.

The fourth chapter provides a brief exploration of creativity and new digital technologies. By drawing on Csikzentmihalyi (2014), the authors argue that, although technology has provided the artist with new tools and platforms for creativity, this is not necessarily an individual process. Rather it's the results of three forces: domain, field and the individual.

Chapter five's, 'The realities of practice', explores a highly important, often overlooked and ignored topic, namely that of the health, safety and well-being of musicians and others involved in the music industries. Building on a broad range of academic work (their own and others' research), the authors describe the problems associated with career sustainability, drugs and alcohol, long work-hours, hearing loss or economic vulnerability. Again, linking back to the celebration of an artist-driven economy, the DIY mantra, the authors also cite Dr. Daniel Robinson's notion that sometimes career development is too hard and artists/bands 'burn out' because they do not have the infrastructure around them to be sustainable in their art (p. 87).

This article claims that while the opportunities to perform, share and/or distribute ones music have never been better, the challenges to be heard and to sustain a consistent income from music have never been greater (p. 86). This important consideration draws on different angles and approaches but always returns to this inherent complexity and duality represented within the new music industries.

It is therefore appropriate that chapter six looks at popular music education and how contemporary music education needs to reflect the convergence between the artist and business. Building on the five earlier chapters, the authors propose an integrated education model that focuses more thoroughly on artistry, individuality and the artist-entrepreneur. In other words, given the changing framework for artists and musicians together with the complexities of the new music industries and the range of skills required, developing a career will depend more than ever on contemporary music education.

And this neatly leads to the final chapter where the 'new' artist is described as one possessing a broad range of skills aligning art as well as business together with a greater capacity to adapt to changing technologies and the adjacent connected sectors and industries. Rather than just being music producers or performers, the authors argue the 'new' artists are independent media producers (p. 121).

Today's artists and industry practitioners have a wealth of opportunities provided by new technologies. However, these developments also present certain challenges and dilemmas. This book examines these issues by identifying the problems at the same time as celebrating the positive aspects of these developments. As such it provides a good framework for debates on important issues, in the issues described in chapter five. The book is a really interesting read and one which manages to identify a range of issues related to digitalisation and the 'new' music industries. It does so by drawing on a broad range of research and by keeping a balanced approach to subjects too often described through dichotomies.