

how music got free book

How Music Got Free Book: A Deep Dive into the Evolution of Music Distribution and the Impact of Technology

Understanding how music got free is an intriguing journey through technological innovation, industry shifts, and cultural change. The book titled "How Music Got Free" by Stephen Witt offers a compelling narrative about the rise of digital music, the struggles of the recording industry, and how consumers' access to music fundamentally transformed over the past few decades. This article explores the key themes and insights from the book, providing an SEO-optimized overview of how music became freely accessible to millions worldwide.

The Origins of Music Sharing and the Birth of Digital Music

Pre-Internet Era: Physical Media and Controlled Access

Before the advent of digital technology, music was primarily distributed via physical media such as vinyl records, cassette tapes, and CDs. These formats required significant manufacturing, distribution, and retail infrastructure, which made music relatively expensive and less accessible to the average consumer.

- Limited Access: Physical limitations meant consumers had to buy or rent music.
- Industry Control: Record labels and distributors held significant power over what was released and how it was marketed.

The Rise of the Internet and the Early Sharing Culture

The 1990s marked a turning point as the internet began to influence every aspect of daily life, including how music was shared and consumed.

- Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Networks: Platforms like Napster, launched in 1999, revolutionized music sharing by enabling users to exchange music files directly.
- Legal and Ethical Challenges: The ease of copying and sharing music without payment created tensions with record labels and artists.

How "How Music Got Free" Chronicles the Transition to Free Music

Napster and the Digital Pioneers

Stephen Witt's book details the emergence of Napster and its role in democratizing music access.

- Disruptive Innovation: Napster's peer-to-peer model allowed millions to share MP3 files effortlessly.
- Impact on Industry: The record industry initially responded with lawsuits, but the damage was already done; illegal sharing had become widespread.

The Role of Tech Entrepreneurs and the Rise of MP3s

The development and adoption of MP3 technology played a crucial role in making music freely

shareable.

- Compression Technology: MP3s compressed audio files, making them easy to download and store.
- Hardware Advancements: Portable MP3 players, notably the iPod, made digital music portable and convenient.

Illegal Sharing and the Culture of Free Music

The book emphasizes how illegal downloading became normalized, especially among younger audiences.

- Music as a Commodity vs. Cultural Asset: Consumers started viewing music as something to access freely rather than purchase.
- The Shift in Consumer Behavior: Downloading free music became a common practice, impacting sales and revenue.

The Industry's Response and the Shift Toward Free Music

Legal Battles and the Industry's Attempts to Reinforce Control

The recording industry responded with lawsuits, anti-piracy campaigns, and new licensing models.

- Lawsuits Against P2P Networks: Napster was eventually shut down, but the culture of sharing persisted.
- Introduction of Paid Services: Platforms like iTunes attempted to offer legal alternatives, but the allure

of free content persisted.

Emergence of Streaming Services

The advent of streaming platforms like Spotify, Apple Music, and Pandora has significantly altered music consumption.

- Freemium Model: Many services offer free tier options supported by ads.
- Subscription-Based Access: Paid subscriptions provide ad-free, unlimited listening, but the model still hinges on digital access rather than ownership.

The Democratization of Music Access

As a result, music became more accessible than ever before.

- Global Reach: People from all over the world can access vast catalogs instantly.
- Music Discovery: Algorithms and playlists help users discover new artists without cost barriers.

The Cultural and Economic Impact of Free Music

Changing Revenue Models for Artists and Labels

The shift to free and streaming models has redefined how artists earn money.

- Reduced Income from Sales: Download and CD sales declined sharply.
- New Revenue Streams: Live performances, merchandise, and brand partnerships have become more vital.
- Independent Artists: Easier distribution channels empower independent musicians to reach audiences directly.

The Impact on Music Production and Consumption

- Music as a Service: Consumers now access music as a service rather than a product to own.
- Shift in Artistic Creation: Artists often focus on singles, social media presence, and live shows due to changing income streams.

Legal and Ethical Debates

The question of whether free music benefits or harms the industry remains complex.

- Piracy vs. Accessibility: While piracy has hurt traditional sales, free access has expanded audiences.
- Future Outlook: The industry continues to adapt, seeking sustainable models that balance artist compensation with consumer access.

Conclusion: How Music Got Free and Its Future Trajectory

"How Music Got Free" offers an insightful narrative about the technological, legal, and cultural forces that transformed music from a controlled commodity into a freely accessible digital resource. The journey underscores the importance of innovation, consumer demand, and industry adaptation in

shaping the contemporary music landscape.

Key Takeaways:

- The internet and P2P networks fundamentally altered music distribution.
- Digital compression and portable devices made access easier and more widespread.
- The industry's legal battles and technological innovations have continually reshaped how music is monetized.
- Streaming and free access models now dominate, redefining revenue streams and artist-audience relationships.
- The cultural shift towards free music has democratized access but also challenged traditional business models.

Looking Forward: As technology advances with AI, blockchain, and virtual reality, the future of music distribution will likely continue evolving, balancing free access with fair compensation for creators.

Understanding how music got free helps us appreciate the complex interplay between technology, industry, and culture that continues to shape the way we experience music today.

Keywords: how music got free, music distribution evolution, digital music revolution, P2P sharing, Napster, MP3 technology, streaming services, free music culture, music industry shift, digital rights management

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main focus of the book 'How Music Got Free'?

The book explores the history of music sharing, piracy, and the technological evolution that allowed music to become freely accessible.

Who is the author of 'How Music Got Free'?

The book is written by Steve Knopper, a journalist and music industry expert.

How does 'How Music Got Free' explain the impact of digital technology on the music industry?

It details how digital technology, especially file sharing and peer-to-peer networks, transformed the industry by making music more accessible and challenging traditional revenue models.

What are some key historical events discussed in 'How Music Got Free'?

The book covers the rise of Napster, the legal battles surrounding music piracy, and the shift towards streaming services.

Is 'How Music Got Free' suitable for someone interested in music industry history?

Yes, it provides a comprehensive and engaging account of how technological changes have shaped music distribution and consumption.

What lessons does 'How Music Got Free' offer about innovation and disruption?

The book illustrates how innovation can disrupt established industries, emphasizing the importance of adaptability and understanding technological shifts.

Additional Resources

How Music Got Free: An In-Depth Exploration of the Digital Revolution in Music

Music has been an integral part of human culture for millennia, serving as a vessel for storytelling, emotion, and identity. However, the way we access and consume music has undergone a seismic shift over the past few decades. The phrase “how music got free” encapsulates a period of radical transformation driven by technological innovation, economic shifts, and changing consumer behavior. In this comprehensive review, we will delve into the history, key players, technological advancements, economic implications, and cultural impacts that have collectively reshaped the music industry, making music more accessible and, in many cases, effectively free for consumers.

The Pre-Digital Era: Music as a Commodified Product

Before exploring how music became freely accessible, it's essential to understand the landscape prior to the digital revolution.

Physical Media and Industry Economics

For most of the 20th century, the music industry was built upon physical media—vinyl records, cassette tapes, and later CDs. These formats required manufacturing, distribution, and retail infrastructure, which inherently added costs and created barriers to access.

- Revenue Model: Artists, labels, and distributors relied heavily on sales of physical copies.
- Consumer Costs: Listeners paid a premium for owning a physical copy, and piracy was limited due to logistical constraints.
- Copyright and Licensing: Strict enforcement was necessary to protect the industry's revenue stream.

The Rise of Cassettes and CDs

The advent of cassettes in the 1960s and CDs in the 1980s revolutionized music consumption, offering higher fidelity and portability but still maintaining a proprietary, paid model. While piracy existed in forms like cassette copying, it was relatively contained, and legitimate sales remained dominant.

The Digital Dawn: The Birth of Free Music

The late 20th century marked the beginning of an era where music's distribution shifted from physical to digital, opening pathways for unprecedented access—often at no cost.

Emergence of MP3 and File Sharing

The development of the MP3 format in the early 1990s was pivotal. It compressed audio files into small sizes without significant loss of quality, enabling easy sharing and storage.

- Napster (1999): The first major peer-to-peer (P2P) file-sharing platform, Napster, allowed users to share music files directly with each other, bypassing traditional distribution channels.
- Impact: Napster's popularity demonstrated the demand for free, accessible music but also sparked legal battles and industry resistance.

The Rise of P2P Networks and BitTorrent

Following Napster's shutdown, other platforms and protocols emerged:

- Gnutella, LimeWire, Kazaa: Continued peer-to-peer sharing, making it easier to access vast libraries of music without paying.
- BitTorrent: Enabled efficient sharing of large files by distributing data across multiple users, further democratizing access.

Legal and Ethical Challenges

The proliferation of free music files posed significant challenges:

- Copyright Infringement: Artists and labels argued that unauthorized sharing undermined revenue.
- Legal Crackdowns: Authorities shut down several platforms, but the demand for free music persisted, leading to a complex legal and cultural landscape.

The Streaming Revolution: Making Music Freely Accessible

While file sharing was often illegal, the advent of streaming services marked a significant shift toward legal, accessible, and often free music.

Free and Ad-Supported Streaming Platforms

Companies like Spotify, Pandora, and YouTube introduced platforms that offered vast libraries of music at no cost to users, supported by advertising revenue.

- Spotify (2008): Initially launched as a freemium service; users could listen for free with ads or pay for ad-free experiences.

- YouTube: Became the largest repository of music videos, accessible for free, with revenue generated through ads.
- Pandora: Focused on personalized radio stations, offering free tiers supported by advertising.

Economic Models Facilitating Free Access

These platforms employ several strategies to sustain free access:

- Advertising Revenue: Monetizes user engagement through targeted ads.
- Data Collection: Uses listening habits for targeted marketing and recommendations.
- Freemium Tiers: Offers basic free services with optional paid upgrades for enhanced features.

The Impact on Artists and Labels

The streaming model has been controversial:

- Revenue Distribution: Artists and labels often receive a fraction of streaming revenue, sparking debates over fair compensation.
- Exposure vs. Earnings: While streaming provides exposure to a global audience, it complicates earnings for emerging artists.

The Cultural and Economic Implications of Free Music

The shift towards free music has profound effects on culture, industry economics, and consumer behavior.

Democratization of Music Access

- Global Reach: Music is accessible regardless of geographic or economic barriers.
- Diverse Consumption: Listeners can explore genres and artists previously inaccessible due to cost.
- Emerging Artists: New artists can distribute music directly to audiences via platforms like SoundCloud or YouTube, often for free or at low cost.

Economic Challenges for the Industry

- Decline in Physical Sales: Revenue from physical media plummeted, forcing industry adaptation.
- Shift in Revenue Streams: Increased reliance on touring, merchandise, and licensing.
- Copyright Enforcement: Ongoing battles to protect intellectual property rights in a digital landscape.

Changing Consumer Behaviors

- Expectations of Free Content: Consumers increasingly expect free access, sometimes leading to reduced willingness to pay for premium services.
- Subscription Models: The rise of paid subscriptions (e.g., Spotify Premium, Apple Music) offers ad-free, offline listening—balancing free access with monetization.

How the Industry Adapted and Innovated

Despite challenges, the industry has adapted through innovation and new business models.

Subscription-Based Models

- Balance of Free and Paid: Many services offer free tiers to attract users, with premium options generating revenue.
- Market Penetration: Subscription services have grown rapidly, with millions of paying subscribers worldwide.

Licensing and Royalties

- Negotiations with Rights Holders: Streaming platforms have negotiated licensing deals to ensure artists and labels are compensated.
- Streaming Royalties: Adjusted to reflect consumption patterns, attempting to balance accessibility with fair pay.

Emergence of New Revenue Streams

- Live Performances: Artists increasingly rely on concerts and festivals.
- Merchandising: Selling branded merchandise.
- Sync Licensing: Licensing music for films, commercials, and video games.

Summary: The Future of Free Music

The question of how music got free is rooted in a complex interplay of technology, economics, and culture. The digital age has shattered traditional barriers, democratizing access but also challenging existing revenue models. Moving forward:

- Continued Innovation: Technologies like blockchain and direct artist-to-fan platforms may further reshape monetization.
- Balancing Accessibility and Compensation: Industry efforts aim to ensure artists are fairly paid while maintaining free or affordable access.
- Cultural Shifts: Listeners now expect instant, free access to vast libraries, influencing how artists and labels approach distribution.

Conclusion

The journey of music from physical sales to freely accessible digital streams exemplifies the transformative power of technology on cultural industries. Initiatives like P2P file sharing and streaming platforms have made music more accessible than ever, often at no direct cost to consumers. Yet, this revolution also raises questions about artist compensation and industry sustainability. Ultimately, "how music got free" reflects a broader societal shift towards open access, digital innovation, and the reevaluation of value in the digital age. As technologies continue to evolve, so too will the ways we discover, share, and enjoy music—forever reshaping the soundtrack of our lives.

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how music got free book: *How Music Got Free* Stephen Witt, 2016-06-14 Soon to be an Apple TV+ documentary series One of Billboard's 100 Greatest Music Books of All Time Finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize, the J. Anthony Lukas Book Prize, and the Financial Times and McKinsey Business Book of the Year A New York Times Editors' Choice ONE OF THE YEAR'S BEST BOOKS: The Washington Post • The Financial Times • Slate • The Atlantic • Time • Forbes "[How Music Got Free] has the clear writing and brisk reportorial acumen of a Michael Lewis book."—Dwight Garner, The New York Times What happens when an entire generation commits the same crime? *How Music Got Free* is a riveting story of obsession, music, crime, and money, featuring visionaries and criminals, moguls and tech-savvy teenagers. It's about the greatest pirate in history, the most powerful executive in the music business, a revolutionary invention and an illegal website four times the size of the iTunes Music Store. Journalist Stephen Witt traces the secret history of digital music piracy, from the German audio engineers who invented the mp3, to a North Carolina compact-disc manufacturing plant where factory worker Dell Glover leaked nearly two thousand albums over the

course of a decade, to the high-rises of midtown Manhattan where music executive Doug Morris cornered the global market on rap, and, finally, into the darkest recesses of the Internet. Through these interwoven narratives, Witt has written a thrilling book that depicts the moment in history when ordinary life became forever entwined with the world online—when, suddenly, all the music ever recorded was available for free. In the page-turning tradition of writers like Michael Lewis and Lawrence Wright, Witt's deeply reported first book introduces the unforgettable characters—inventors, executives, factory workers, and smugglers—who revolutionized an entire artform, and reveals for the first time the secret underworld of media pirates that transformed our digital lives. An irresistible never-before-told story of greed, cunning, genius, and deceit, *How Music Got Free* isn't just a story of the music industry—it's a must-read history of the Internet itself.

how music got free book: *How Music Got Free* Stephen Witt, 2016-06-14 Now a Paramount+ docuseries narrated by Method Man and produced by Marshall Mathers, LeBron James, and more One of Billboard's 100 Greatest Music Books of All Time What happens when an entire generation commits the same crime? *How Music Got Free* is a riveting story of obsession, music, crime, and money, featuring visionaries and criminals, moguls and tech-savvy teenagers. It's about the greatest pirate in history, the most powerful executive in the music business, a revolutionary invention and an illegal website four times the size of the iTunes Music Store. Journalist Stephen Witt traces the secret history of digital music piracy, from the German audio engineers who invented the mp3, to a North Carolina compact-disc manufacturing plant where factory worker Dell Glover leaked nearly two thousand albums over the course of a decade, to the high-rises of midtown Manhattan where music executive Doug Morris cornered the global market on rap, and, finally, into the darkest recesses of the Internet. Through these interwoven narratives, Witt has written a thrilling book that depicts the moment in history when ordinary life became forever entwined with the world online—when, suddenly, all the music ever recorded was available for free. In the page-turning tradition of writers like Michael Lewis and Lawrence Wright, Witt's deeply reported first book introduces the unforgettable characters—inventors, executives, factory workers, and smugglers—who revolutionized an entire artform, and reveals for the first time the secret underworld of media pirates that transformed our digital lives. An irresistible never-before-told story of greed, cunning, genius, and deceit, *How Music Got Free* isn't just a story of the music industry—it's a must-read history of the Internet itself. Finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize, the J. Anthony Lukas Book Prize, and the Financial Times and McKinsey Business Book of the Year A New York Times Editors' Choice ONE OF THE YEAR'S BEST BOOKS: The Washington Post • The Financial Times • Slate • The Atlantic • Time • Forbes "[How Music Got Free] has the clear writing and brisk reportorial acumen of a Michael Lewis book."—Dwight Garner, The New York Times

how music got free book: *How Music Got Free* Stephen Witt, 2015-06-18 For fans of *The Social Network*, the story of an accidental pirate, a mastermind, and a mogul. *How Music Got Free* is a blistering story of obsession, music and obscene money. A story of visionaries and criminals, tycoons and audiophiles with golden ears. It's about the greatest pirate in history, the most powerful executive in the music business, and an illegal website six times the size of iTunes. It begins with a small-time thief at a CD-pressing plant, and a groundbreaking invention on the other side of the globe. Then pans from the multi-million-dollar deals of the music industry to the secret recesses of the web; from German audio laboratories to a tiny Polynesian radio station. This is how one man's crime snowballs into an explosive moment in history. How suddenly all the tracks ever recorded could be accessed by anyone, for free. And life became forever entwined with the world online. It is also the story of the music industry—the rise of rap, the death of the album, and how much can rest on the flip of a coin. How an industry ate itself. And how the most successful music release group in history is one you've probably never heard of. *How Music Got Free* is a thrilling, addictive masterpiece of reportage from Stephen Witt. It's a story that's never been told—but that's written all over your hard drive.

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Swift to a factory worker? Kanye West to a German engineer? Beyoncé to a boardroom mogul? They've all changed the face of the music business, in the most unexpected ways. *How Music Got Free* is the incredible true story of how online piracy and the MP3 revolutionised the way our world works, one track at a time. This brilliant book tells you exactly how the perfect storm that forever changed the way we consume music took shape. Like many great works of investigative journalism it makes it clear that this is one of those stories you think you know. Until you realise you don't! John Niven, *The Spectator* Reads like an underworld crime story a concise and very funny The most remarkable thing about Witt's book is that virtually none of the names is familiar a Witt finds unlikely heroes in unlikely places' *New Statesman*

how music got free book: American Popular Music and Its Business in the Digital Age

Music Licensing Consultant Rick Sanjek, 2024-07-18 As the long awaited sequel to *American Popular Music and Its Business: the First 400 Years*, this book offers a detailed and objective history of the evolution and effect of digital technology from 1985 through 2020 on all segments of the popular music business from CDs and stadium tours to TikTok and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, with particular emphasis on the relationship between the creators, the consumers, and the business professionals who form the three major axes of the industry. Author Rick Sanjek, a 50-year industry veteran, combines the knowledge acquired during his decades of experience with scholarly research to create a compelling narrative of the events, economics, and innerworkings of the modern music business.

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Monetizing Entertainment: An Insider's Handbook for Careers in the Entertainment & Music Industry offers a thorough, guided exploration of the current state of the industry, with an emphasis on trends in copyright, digital streaming, and practical advice for developing a career as an artist, technician, or industry executive. This book investigates a variety of topics within the entertainment and music industry, ranging from traditional and emerging business models to intellectual property rights to the creative destruction happening currently. The book strategically outlines the existing gaps that make being successful as an artist a dynamic interaction between creativity and business. This book includes the following: An overview of the creative destruction process that has destroyed some of the old business models and created a number of career options. A look at innovative, entrepreneurial career options. A step-by-step examination for both creative and business professionals of the administrative and financial structures of the industry. Detailed analysis of trends and topics shaping the current entertainment and music industry drawn from insiders' perspectives and other contemporary resources. An accompanying website (www.routledge.com/cw/wacholtz), hosting case studies, videos, data, infographics, and blog posts on business models, is the perfect companion to this authoritative resource.

how music got free book: A K-pop Live Suk-Young Kim, 2023-05-25

A glittering glimpse into a pure realization of late capitalism, and . . . our collective future . . . uncovers why K-pop is the global cultural phenomenon. —Carol Vernallis, author of *Unruly Media: YouTube, Music Video, and the New Digital Cinema* 1990s South Korea saw the transition from a military dictatorship to a civilian government, from a manufacturing economy to a postindustrial hub, and from a cloistered society to a more dynamic transnational juncture. In *K-pop Live*, Suk-Young Kim investigates the ascent of Korean popular music in relation to the rise of personal technology and social media. Based on in-depth interviews with K-pop industry personnel, media experts, critics, and fans, as well as archival research, *K-pop Live* explores how the industry has managed the tough sell of live music in a marketplace in which virtually everything is available online. Teasing out digital media's courtship of liveness in the production and consumption of K-pop, Kim investigates the nuances of the affective mode in which human subjects interact with one another in the digital age. Observing performances online, in concert, and even through the use of holographic performers, Kim offers readers a step-by-step guide through the K-pop industry's variegated efforts to diversify media platforms as a way of reaching a wider global network of music consumers. In an era when digital technology inserts itself into nearly all social relationships, Kim reveals how what is live becomes a

question of how we exist as increasingly mediated subjects. Lively insights into the complexities of the artistry and the commerce, the manufactured and the impromptu, the virtual and the somatic, and the local and the global that propel the production [and] consumption of Korean popular music today. —Hyung-Gu Lynn, University of British Columbia

how music got free book: The Piracy Years Holger Briel, Michael High, Markus Heidingsfelder, 2023-06-15 *The Piracy Years: Internet File Sharing in a Global Context* is the first collection to provide an overview of digital piracy's recent past and its potential futures. Combining research essays, interviews, and overviews, the volume brings together leading scholars and infamous digital pirates from China, Germany, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In June 1999, the peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing website Napster transformed the availability of online content, but the site was quickly sued into oblivion. Despite the highly publicised shutdowns of a number of P2P websites, many continue to thrive, and digital piracy has become a global phenomenon. This book argues that any future media theory and research will have to contend with such web practices remaining an integral and politically formative part of the Internet. Offline and online piracies thrive on technological affordances in opposition to corporate efforts - in music, film, publishing, and academia - to label them as threatening to the economy and society. Therefore, this book explores piracy as a phenomenon navigating the conventions, norms, and boundaries of legality in digital cultures. Pirate networked sociabilities work within and outside the fringes of market economy through the lens of institutional and discursive power. By creating new ways that keep society moving and from stagnation, they ensure its continued existence - including the survival of the very areas they attack. *The Piracy Years* is an essential resource for researchers, post-graduate students, and anyone interested in the global spread and ever-increasing importance of digital piracy.

how music got free book: *Popular Music in the Post-Digital Age* Ewa Mazierska, Les Gillon, Tony Rigg, 2018-12-13 *Popular Music in the Post-Digital Age* explores the relationship between macro environmental factors, such as politics, economics, culture and technology, captured by terms such as 'post-digital' and 'post-internet'. It also discusses the creation, monetisation and consumption of music and what changes in the music industry can tell us about wider shifts in economy and culture. This collection of 13 case studies covers issues such as curation algorithms, blockchain, careers of mainstream and independent musicians, festivals and clubs-to inform greater understanding and better navigation of the popular music landscape within a global context.

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vivid biographies and music of Jason Moran, Vijay Iyer, Rudresh Mahanthappa, The Bad Plus, Miguel Zenón, Anat Cohen, Robert Glasper, and Esperanza Spalding. These musicians are freely incorporating other genres of music into jazz—from classical (both western and Indian) to popular (hip-hop, R&B, rock, bluegrass, klezmer, Brazilian choro)—and other art forms as well (literature, film, photography, and other visual arts). This new generation of jazz is increasingly more international and is becoming more open to women as instrumentalists and bandleaders. Contemporary jazz is reasserting itself as a force for social change, prompted by developments such as the Black Lives Matter, #MeToo movements, and the election of Donald Trump.

how music got free book: Performing Popular Music David Cashman, Waldo Garrido, 2019-11-21 This book explores the fundamentals of popular music performance for students in contemporary music institutions. Drawing on the insights of performance practice research, it discusses the unwritten rules of performances in popular music, what it takes to create a memorable performance, and live popular music as a creative industry. The authors offer a practical overview of topics ranging from rehearsals to stagecraft, and what to do when things go wrong. Chapters on promotion, recordings, and the music industry place performance in the context of building a career. Performing Popular Music introduces aspiring musicians to the elements of crafting compelling performances and succeeding in the world of today's popular music.

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how music got free book: Summary of Stephen Richard Witt's How Music Got Free Everest Media,, 2022-05-19T22:59:00Z Please note: This is a companion version & not the original book. Sample Book Insights: #1 The death of the mp3 was announced in a conference room in Erlangen, Germany, in the spring of 1995. The technology had failed to secure a single long-term customer. Its inventors knew it was over. They were running out of state funding, and their corporate sponsors were abandoning them. #2 The body of research the committee was dismissing went back decades, and engineers had been theorizing about something like the mp3 since the late 1970s. Now, from this murky scientific backwater, something beautiful had emerged. #3 In the digital age, information is stored in binary units of zero or one, termed bits, and the goal of compression is to use as few of these bits as possible. CD audio used more than 1.4 million bits to store a single second of stereo sound. Seitzer wanted to do it with 128,000. #4 The auditory system cancels out noise following a loud click. You can assign fewer bits to the first few milliseconds following the beat. Relying on decades of auditory research, Brandenburg was able to figure out how to compress the audio and preserve fidelity.

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