

To what extent can pop music genres be considered

[Art & Culture](#), [Music](#)



The dictionary defines hybridity as something of mixed origin or composition. This is exactly the definition we can apply to the above question. Within Pop Music there are always changes happening. Genres mould into each other until it is impossible to put a song or record into one definite genre or sub-genre. This is called hybridisation. Answering the question is actually quite simple. It would be easy to just say that genres within pop music are straightforward to define. If something has a flat four drum pattern and a loud bass we can categorise it as dance.

Where it gets difficult is when we try to sub-categorise it. There are so many different genres within dance that we need to break the song down to its soul components and work out where they come from. The bass line might have a 'disco' feel therefore we could put it into that category. But then again it could also be classed as 'funky house', which incidentally is a hybrid of disco and house music. From this example we can start to see what makes the question more complex than we first thought.

This paper will attempt to unravel the questions and present some kind of conclusion, albeit a conclusion which will have to be changed as music, pop culture and society progress ever onwards. Popular music since the 1950s has been energised by the merging of folk or roots styles from Europe and Africa to create virtually every new music from rock 'n' roll to contemporary dance culture. This however should not suggest that hybridisation has derived from that era. Hybridisation has been going on for centuries, longer even. It is inevitable that music that is created by one culture will be heard by another.

They will borrow techniques and components to improve their own styles. It is possible to say that without this interrelationship between cultures that music would never progress, especially into the phenomenon of the music industry that is so prevalent in our society today. When talking about hybridisation it is always important to mention the main theme presented, which of course is the artists and their roots. It is also important to present the notion that through the increasing mix of different cultures and society's new styles of music are born.

These two points raise some interesting questions: Is it in the social that we find the multicultural? Should one differentiate between music in the concert hall and music at a party? Does multiculturalism presuppose a social commitment to justice and equality? Is multicultural music primarily a means for nurturing tolerance or do music and artists have a value independent of the social context they move in? Is it about legitimating artistic quality regardless of genre? The last question brings us to another perspective: power sharing within the music community. Who are the gatekeepers of musical circles?

Do they keep certain types of music or certain performers/creative artists outside institutions and support systems? I will try to answer as many of these questions as is relevant to the essay question but it is important to note that some of the questions and ideas here are definitely worth looking at albeit briefly. The first question suggests that through the social, that is to say, media events such as festivals, or radio programmes we are led to a

multicultural society that begins to merge ideas from their own individual musical styles to create new innovative ones.

They hybridise the music to attract a wider audience. This helps us answer the question of artists having a value independent of the social context they move in. Artists have, although still only human, a certain level of idolism about them. They produce the music we listen to and if they are good enough we keep buying their records. For them to progress financially they need to find a way to keep 'captivating' us. Some do this by producing the same top quality music for years. Others try to innovate within the musical field.

One method is to collaborate with artists of a different genre. A very good example of this is Craig David's new single 'Rise and Fall'. Written by Craig David and produced by Soulshock and Karlin, 'Rise and Fall' originally just samples the guitar riff from Sting's 1993 hit 'Shape of my Heart', but then Sting suggested recording it with Craig David. It is this type of music that can define hybridisation so easily. There are samples of original material as well as collaboration with somebody from a completely different genre.

To extend this example even further 'Rise and Fall' has been remixed by Asian Producer Rishi Rich which sees Craig David re-recording some of the vocals in the song into Punjabi. One of the key principles of hybridisation has to be the method of remixing. The dictionary defines 'remix' as: to recombine (audio tracks or channels from a recording) to produce a new or modified audio recording: remixed a popular ballad and turned it into a

dance hit. The example used in the dictionary is similar to one I will use to help us define remixing and hybridisation.

William Orbit's 'Adagio for Strings' is a classic example of genres being fused to produce a new one. That is to say, classical with dance to produce trance. This is not the first time genres have been moulded together - blues was fused with country and western and gospel to produce rock 'n' roll. Orbit's remix is just a good example to use when trying to demonstrate easily the term hybridisation. The way in which he did this was to use equipment such as samplers, computers and synthesisers to create the track. This leads us onto the next topic which involves itself with hybridisation - technology.

We live in a society of immaterial materials. More and more, we manipulate things we are unable to touch. Sounds and images travelling through networks at increasing speed reach us everyday, but their apparently physical presence is no more than the semblance of digital information. It is with this digital information that we are able to produce new music through the use of computers and synthesisers. In terms of hybridisation it gives us the opportunity to fuse musical styles more easily. The method of sampling has been around for a while - at least ten years.

The dictionary defines sampling as: using or incorporating an audio segment of an original recording in a new recording: a song that samples a sound from one song to produce a new song. The track Army Dreamers, from the Kate Bush album Never For Ever is a good example and one of the earliest. Although it sounds like a cello there was no mention of a cellist, just a credit

to one Geoff Downes on 'Fairlight'. Fairlight was the sampler used in this particular track and one of the earliest if not the earliest sampler used in the music industry.

There are many areas of hybridisation that need to be discussed to answer the question. The mixing of genres which was mentioned earlier is one of the main areas. In terms of answering to what extent can pop music be considered as hybridised we can say that throughout the course of music history musicians have always innovated in their attempts to exceed the boundaries set by their contemporaries. Fusing genres makes this possible. These are just a few examples: 'chillout music' - classical, trance and rock: 'drifting away' - Faithless hard house' - trance, techno and house: 'to the max' - Lisa Pin-up 'r & b' - rap, soul and blues: 'simply deep' - Kelly Rowland 'trance' - techno and classical: 'tranceformation' - Push and Globe In conclusion to this paper I would say that Pop Music is always blending different genres - that is just the nature of the culture. As we progress into a bigger multicultural society and as the mediums in which the music can be presented expands, it is inevitable that records demonstrate styles mixed from different genres.

The term Hybridised is a word used to describe this fusing of styles. It is of course a very general term. Is it possible to say a particular genre is an hybrid of other ones? Or is it better to say that although one genre borrows signature components from another to create a new one that this new genre is independent of the others because it is innovative? Without fail, it is inevitable that that this new genre will also be borrowed from in the future.

Without this constant fusing or hybridising pop culture would cease to play as bigger part in society as it does at the moment.