

Rise of the Bedroom Producer?

I don't think so.

On the natural progression of home recording, two decades in the making, and why the success of Billie Eilish and Finneas O'Connell is no anomaly.

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SUBJECT · **HOME STUDIOS · RECORDING HISTORY**

I've been reading about this "Rise of the Bedroom Producer" and how some people seem to have a problem with it. I guess that it really jumped into people's consciousness with the success of Billie Eilish and Finneas O'Connell.

I've been trying to figure out what to write about it, and it is difficult because I really don't see any problem and can't figure out what the big deal is.

Ok, so let me back up and give you a bit about my background.

I was educated on big hardware; SSL consoles, Studer and Mitsubishi tape machines. I was not a hobbyist before that, so my first recording, mixing, and

production experiences were on these machines. This was in the early 1990's so digital recording didn't mean a computer, it meant a digital reel-to-reel tape. ProTools wasn't born yet.

After college, I got a job engineering for Teddy Riley at his Future Records studio in Virginia Beach, VA. We had an SSL 4000, two Studer A827 24-track tape machines, full 48 tracks of Dolby SR. All the big stuff.

Teddy also was also very into new technology, so we had Sound Designer II when it came out. We had Tascam DA-88 digital recorders, and he kept us up on the technology quickly moving on to ProTools, ProTools II, TDM, DSP Farm Cards, etc. through the late 1990's.

A few years after I left Teddy's employment, my business partner, Serban Ghenea, also left there and had developed a good clientele and was beginning to work "In the Box" completely in ProTools around the year 2000. This is when I rejoined him. We would work in a local studio, clients would send hard drives or DVD's, we would work on the song locally, and then when the time came, take a trip up to New York or Philadelphia to a big studio there and finish the mixes with the artists and producers. This was the Jill Scott, Musiq Soulchild, and Dru Hill era.

The technology advance was so rapid that the SSLs, the Studers were quickly becoming white elephants. We would take the stereo output of the ProTools I/O and plug into two channels of the SSL and only use the console to hold up the nearfield speakers and control the volume.

Around that same time, many producers were setting up in home studios. I worked with Sisqo, and with Nokio of Dru Hill, both in studios that were set up in homes and

apartments. It was very common to get the songwriting, and much of the production done at a smaller, or home studio, then bring it to the studio to record vocals, add some strings, and mix.

HOME STUDIO MILESTONES	
Kenna "New Sacred Cow"	Malibu house rental
Serban & Hanes mixing setup	2003 — residential
Current big producers	Hollywood, Burbank, Nashville houses

We recorded pretty much the entire Kenna "New Sacred Cow" album in a house rented in Malibu where Kenna, Chad Hugo, Serban, and myself lived and worked on it for a month or two.

When Serban and I set up our own studios for mixing in 2003, we did it in a house. As a business decision it just made sense. Take a look at commercial property loans, leases, costs, build-outs; most people don't want to deal with that.

Many of the "big time" producers that we mix for work out of houses these days as often as they do out of a commercial studio. There are scores of houses in and around Hollywood, Burbank, Nashville, and elsewhere that are outfitted as single or multi-room studios for many well-known producers and production teams.

I guess the difference is that we are not sleeping in our studio; or our studio isn't in our bedroom. But this "Rise of the Bedroom Producer" has been more than two decades coming and looks to me to be the natural progression of the technology and the industry.

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— THE CORE ARGUMENT

So Congratulations to Billie and Finneas for their success, for creating something new with their music, and for making the best decisions to make their music their way.

Addendum

This blog was originally written in early 2020, before the Covid-19 virus changed the world. I wanted to update it to emphasize that we are lucky to have had the technological advance that allows not only music producers, songwriters, artists, and engineers to work from home, but the larger world of many other business as well.

Many of us are feeling the effects of work from home now and it isn't always as much fun as it seems, is it? So I hope we can all go a bit easier on the "Bedroom Producers" of the world as we join them in figuring out how to get it done.