

Music Charts and DR from the Early 1960s to the Mid-1990s

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In Danish radio history music charts have had a central position. In its different incarnations music charts reflect popularity, either broadly defined in numbers of sales or according to voting. The first Danish radio charts were based on sales and presented by the commercial offshore-station Radio Mercur which challenged the broadcasting monopoly from 1958-1962. The first music chart show broadcasted by DR was "Ti Vi Ka' Li", launched in the autumn 1962 shortly after the closing down of Radio Mercur. Apart from a two-year period (summer 1964-fall 1966) music charts were part of the schedule until 1977, when all charts (by that time three weekly shows) were closed down due to political decisions within DR. In 1986, the chart show "Det elektriske barometer" was the first reentry of the format, and since then music charts have been stable part of the schedule.

In many ways, music chart shows have been made in the crossfire between DR's own programming policies and public debate. Being a public service station, popularity has not been the sole criterion for DR when planning and choosing the musical content. On the other hand, music charts almost exemplarily symbolizes the popular. As a part of this project I will address the problematic chronologically by reconstructing the history of DR broadcasted music charts. I will include various critiques of the format over time as debates concerning music chart shows involve many central issues concerning public service and commercialism.

The music chart show will be considered as a specific radio genre. The planning, the jingles, the pace and not least the speak differs heavily from other programs due to the inherent drama concerning which songs will be in and out this week. Even the basic dramatic means, the playing order of the songs, are governed by "genre specific" rules, as songs are played in reverse order, i.e. from #10 to #1. Likewise, the often rapid and dramatic speak supports the setup. In music shows, especially in chart shows based on votes from listeners, the audience is also often addressed more directly than in other programs.

Another central aspect in the study will be how music chart shows constitute genres and audiences. The first chart show, 'Ti Vi Ka' Li' ("Ten We Like"), was targeted directly at a youth audience, and the songs selected for the program therefore mirrored the notions of 'youth music'

within the show's editorial staff. When the first sales chart, "Top 20", were introduced in late January 1963, youth was also specifically mentioned as the target group even though the records were stylistically mixed due to the fact that not only young people bought records. Later on, "Top 20" was the show mostly referred to by those growing up in the 1960's as their gate to the new worlds of popular music.

However, the constitutive aspects are most evident in shows based on listener votes. The clearest example is the fact that a specific show, "Dansktoppen" (launched 1968), has given name to the genre dansktop/dansktopmusik. Other shows like "Top Ti"/"Tipparaden" (launched 1969) and "Det elektriske barometer" (launched 1986) have been based on generic selections and notions about specific audiences. Studies of the repertoire, especially in their introductory phases where negotiations of genre and style, both of the shows themselves and the music played, seems to have been mostly at stake, will be used to examine the discursive practices and investigate the reasons for musical inclusions and exclusions.