THE COMMODIFICATION OF POPULAR MUSIC IN DIGITAL ERA
(Case Study of Music Label's Sun Eater)

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A B S T R A C T

The development of digital technology has changed the business structure of the music industry. The presence of social media and music streaming services adds to the size of the music industry itself, starting from the intersection of various actors (music labels, artists/musicians, music streaming service applications, music consumers), interests (business and state regulations), to power (distribution networks), especially in the perspective of the political economy of communication. In the context of this research, the object of research is the independent music label Sun Eater. This study uses a qualitative research method with an intrinsic case study approach. In line with that the data collection used is observation, in-depth interviews and documentation studies. The results of this study indicate that the content commodification carried out by Sun Eater as a music label is not focused on the music itself. But it wraps up the issues of today's youth and makes them like lyrics, pictures and videos. In audience commodification, Sun Eater does not put the audience as mere music fans. However, with a consumer-centric and data driven approach, Sun Eater treats their audience (music fans) like mass media, by "selling" back on advertisers on various digital platforms. Finally, the Commodification of Workers, that musicians are not just music workers. Moreover, Sun Eater places musicians as workers who have other responsibilities, ranging from filming digital content, interacting with fans on social media, to photo shoots with advertisers.

INTRODUCTION

The long journey of the music industry in the digital era in Indonesia was dependent on the Ring Back Tone (RBT) service; RBT was glorified as the savior of the music industry (detikHot, 2011). But finally, in 2011, a joint decision of 10 Asosiasi Telekomunikasi Seluler Indonesia (ATSI) agreed to stop Premium SMS services, including RBT services, as a result of the urging of people who felt burdened by automatic deduction of credit by telecommunications operators (detikInet, 2011). This was further researched by Naratama, who mentioned that RBT is a mere trend that can fade at any time. Due to rapid technological changes, consumers do not need to buy one album to listen to their favorite songs. Consumers can get music in various ways (Naratama & Akira, 2008).

In 2016, the Swedish music streaming service application Spotify officially entered Indonesia.

The presence of Spotify marks a new era in the development of the music industry in the digital age. Spotify is a music streaming app for millennials. Spotify, with a mixed business model between freemium subscription services supported by ads and paid subscription services, has become the music streaming application with the most significant number of users worldwide (Netti & Irwansyah, 2018).

Today's digital era does not only depend on Spotify only. The existence of internet technology has changed the business structure of the music industry, especially in the aspects of creation, reproduction, distribution, and consumption (Dellyana et al., 2017). One of the change factors is also driven by current music labels that can spread their music through new media (Resmadi et al., 2020). The new media are social media, YouTube channels, and music streaming services, such as Joox, Deezer, and Apple Music.

Sun Eater, a music label from Jakarta just established in 2019, is said to be the new hope of Indonesian independent music (Superlive, 2020). The music label that manages musicians such as Hindia, Feast, Aldrian Risjad, Mothern, Agatha Pricilla, and Rayhan Noor has become a new entrant to the Indonesian music industry amid changes that occur due to technological developments.

Sun Eater can be classified into independent labels in the context of the main actors in music reproduction. Independent music labels consist of only a few employees and are not affiliated with major music labels. With minimal funding and often only financially supported by the owner or a few investors (Dellyana et al., 2017). Thus, the presence of Sun Eater in the Indonesian music industry further confirms the influence of the development of new media itself. At the beginning of the emergence of the phrase new media, McLuhan used the term new media to refer to "the technology of communications such as electronic information gathering and global reach" (in Hendricks, 2010, p. 4). New media is associated with digital information dissemination activities. Furthermore, Littlejohn defines new media as a new period in which interactive technologies and network communications, particularly the internet, would transform society (in Utari, 2011, p. 53). The concept of new media has the power of interactive technology and network communication so that it can bring changes to humans or society (Alwi, 2023), in the context of this research these changes depart from changing the business structure of the music industry from the aspects of creation to consumption.

On the Sun Eater music label, currently, the number of monthly listeners on Spotify is one of the musicians under Sun Eater's management, Hindia has reached 1.2 million listeners every month (Spotify, n.d.-a). In comparison when viewed senior musicians, for example, Sheila on 7, who was once called the "one million coffee band" in the golden era of Indonesian music before the digital age (Lawi, 2020), currently Sheila On 7 monthly listeners on Spotify music streaming service are 1.4 million listeners every month (Spotify, n.d.-b). The number of listeners differs slightly between bands from the early 2000s and musicians who have just released their first album in 2019. This can happen due to the presence of new media. Musicians use new media to disseminate their songs, and mediums are used not only in physical forms such as solid discs (CDs) or tape tapes. The presence of the internet has allowed for a new path in spreading the work of musicians today.

The various achievements achieved in such a short period are not without reason. An article mentions that the music label Sun Eater managed to juggle digital as musical ammunition (Pramayougha, 2020). In research, Resmadi and Prahara (2020) said that Sun Eater is a record

label that is adaptive to social media technology. They utilize various social media platforms, which are then processed into forms of visual communication. They also make use of a variety of relevant data to communicate with music listeners.

Sun Eater's ability to maximize new media is in line with the growth of music in the digital era, which continues to increase. As released in the "Global Music Report 2020" report of the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI), 2020 was the fifth year of successive increases in music industry revenue, with streaming music services being half the primary source of income (Smirke, 2020). After piracy became a global problem in the music industry, the presence of new media became the answer to musicians' concerns about spreading works. The internet, initially referred to as one of the sources of illegal music distribution, can slowly be used by music industry players to become one of the most influential media today.

The combination of new media, such as social media and streaming music services, is becoming the new face of the music industry in the digital age. Research by Dewatara and Agustin (2019) reveals how the presence of new media has changed how music is marketed in the digital era. Consumers find it easier to search for music, and industry players are very supportive of digitalization in the music industry because it makes it easier to market their music and helps protect their intellectual property because it reduces piracy (Dewatara & Agustin, 2019).

As internet technology and new media are advancing and increasing, so is the way to do marketing and promotion. The music industry is also not left behind in a fast-changing world, and sharing, purchasing, marketing, and distribution in the music industry are already on a much different level from the pre-digital era (Stafford, 2010). Several music-related studies in the

digital age have focused on the effects of digitization on the music industry, such as the research of Stafford (2010) and Vonderau (2017). Im and Jung (2015) try to find reasons for consumers to choose media to consume music. While Hyunsuk Im et al. (2019) tried to more profound the effect of streaming music services on digital music consumption, this research is also a further exploration of Arditi's (2017) research on never-ending consumption in the digital music era. In two more recent studies, Maaso and Spilker (2022) and Barata and Coelho (2021) are increasingly trying to explore streaming music services from the service side and the consumer side.

Suppose previous studies focused more on music consumption and put music labels in a minimal position. In that case, this research puts music labels as the primary focus by exploring what the Sun Eater music label is doing in the digital music era. The seven previous studies looked at the digital music industry from an economic point of view with the theme of consumerism and financialization, so this research will be more in-depth using the point of view of the political economy of communication, especially commodification. Vincent Mosco defined commodification as transforming goods and services, including communications valued for their usefulness, into commodities valued for what they would provide in the market (Mosco, 2009, p. 2). Ibrahim further explained that commodification transforms goods and services initially valued for their use value into commodities because they can bring profit in the market (Ibrahim & Akhmad, 2014, p. 18).

According to Mosco, the process of commodification has two significances for communication research. First, communication processes and technologies have contributed to commodification in the economy. Second, the methods of commodification that work in society penetrate the processes of communication and

institutions so that improvements and contradictions in the process of social commodification influence communication as a social practice (Mosco, 2009, p. 130). Using the point of view of the political economy of communication, especially commodification, this research is expected to bring a new perspective in looking at the music industry in the digital era.

The selection of Sun Eater as the object of research is essential, considering the achievements achieved by the Sun Eater music label in an arguably short period since it was first established in 2019. This research will delve further into how Vincent Mosco's commodification concept in today's digital music industry is expressed. By focusing more on the three types of commodification important for communication, namely the commodification of content or content, the commodification of the audience or audience, and the commodification of workers (Mosco, 2009, p. 2).

These three types of commodification will be viewed from a media studies point of view because Sun Eater's music label uses new media to reach today's audience, where Sun Eater manages to convey a message that today's generation can understand. This research will explore how commodification works in the music industry in the digital age, carried out by the Sun-Eater music label.

METHOD

This research uses qualitative research methods because it can provide a deep and detailed understanding through the investigation (exploration) of a phenomenon (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p. 48). Thus, in line with qualitative research methods, the strategy or approach used in this research is a case study. Using a strategy or case study approach in an investigation will be invaluable when "the researcher wants to obtain a wealth of information about the research topic. Case

studies provide tremendous detail." (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p. 144). The keywords that need to be underlined from the arguments above are a wealth of information and tremendous detail. Because indirectly, these two keywords will lead and make it easier for researchers to create rich and dense descriptions (Creswell, 2014, p. 287).

To achieve a comprehensive understanding (verstehen), case studies require the collection of complete and comprehensive information by involving a variety of ways and sources of compound information, including observations, documents, interviews, audio-visual materials, and various reports containing environmental, historical, economic, and social information related to the case under study (Creswell, 2014, p. 20, 2015, pp. 135–136; Leedy & Ormrod, 2021, p. 201).

So departing from the elaboration of these forms of observation, in this study, a form of observation of researchers was carried out as a certainty. Researchers made observations at the Sun Eater music label office located in Jakarta. To get more detailed data, the researchers directly observed the activities and work routines of the Sun Eater music label, from the meeting to the execution of the meeting results. In addition, researchers also conducted in-depth interviews with several informants. This study used purposive sampling techniques in determining the informants interviewed. Researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with the co-founder and director of the Sun Eater (KR) music label as the primary resource person. In addition, interviews were also worked with the Head of Community at the Sun Eater (RP) music label, Co-founder Demajors (DK), music journalist (AA), and music observer and academic (IR).

Another data collection technique used is documentation studies. In this study, data

collection in the form of audio-visual materials such as the main page of the Sun Eater website and messages conveyed through their social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok was carried out. In specific contexts, this data is sometimes included in separate categories, e.g., referred to as audio-visual material or audio-visual material (Creswell, 2014, p. 270, 2015, p. 221). This data collection is expected to complement and update information on how the Sun-Eater music label commodifies popular music in today's digital music era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Content First, Music Later

According to Vincent Mosco, commodifying content or content is "the process of communication involves transforming messages, ranging from bits of data to the system of meaningful thought, into marketable products" (Mosco, 2009, p. 133). From here, the practice of commodification of content in mass media becomes something of an irony. When a piece of content is created and published, the message conveyed will be very different in new media. The message is related to the audience, and then it's over. No longer so. When content is published through a new media platform, there will be several listeners, several viewers, several comments, several likes, and a series of algorithms that will relate to how the content "lives" in cyberspace.

As a music label in general, Sun Eater is undoubtedly tasked with releasing music from musicians who are included in their management. A new media presence allows Sun Eater to do more than "release music." In the age of digital music, content is vital. It's nothing new if musicians take on specific themes that they raise in song lyrics.

But what makes Sun Eater's music label different is the ability to look at the issues of today's youth and make it the main content of the musician's music product Sun Eater. Indies on the debut album "Menari Dengan Bayangan" with mental health issues, problems experienced by young people today. "Masalah yang mengeruh / Ho, perasaan yang rapuh / Ini belum separuhnya / Biasa saja / Kamu tak apa," a fragment of the lyrics of an Indian song called "Evaluasi" is encouraging to today's generation amid the pressures they face.

Listening to music is a communication process on how issues are conveyed through song lyrics and interpreted by listeners. Of the many experts formulating communication, Harold D. Laswell in Effendy (2005, p. 10) put forward a formula that makes it easier for a person to understand the concept of communication, namely who says what to whom by what channel with what effect. We can see how communication is carried out using the media. The communication process does not always give rise to a reciprocal process between the sender and recipient of the message. When a person listens to music, he is the message recipient. However, the message's recipient does not necessarily provide feedback.

According to Dominick, in the book The Dynamic of Mass Communications, mentions that; When we talk about mass media such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, sound recordings, and movies, we will also talk about the people, organizational policies, and technologies that produce such mass media. Of course, the so-called mass media is not just the eight media elements above. Billboards, comic book posters, or catalogs are also included. However, the eight kinds of mass media have the most audiences. We also know them as audiences (Dominick, 2005, p. 21). Sound recording, recognized as one of the mass media, is interested in sending messages to the audience. One of the products of the sound recording is music. Music is an auditive form of communication (captured by the sense of hearing).

Music in mass communication can be proved by fulfilling the eight elements until that communication is said to be mass communication. The eight elements are the source, encoding process, message, channel, decoding process, receiver, feedback, and noise.

Music also has the same function as other forms of mass communication, namely the process of conveying information (to inform), the part of educating (to educate), the role of entertaining (to entertain), and the position of influencing (to influence). The process of contemplating (to consider) seems to be very attached to music. Especially pop songs that are easy to digest and liked by the audience of listeners and connoisseurs. Another function is to influence; much debated, there can also be a message in the song's lyrics. The song, as another form of music, is recognized as influencing the listener through the message in its lyrics.

Mental health is becoming a youth issue today. Music label Sun Eater cleverly talks about the theme through Hindia. Of course, the result was an excellent response. From the lyrics, then to a video clip that also involves fans sending pictures and videos about personal stories, keeps scrolling on the comments page on their Youtube channel. Hindia convey the message through song lyrics and carry out the function of mass communication to influence the listener. If previously, the process of mass communication did not always involve reciprocity, with the existence of new media, feedback can be felt immediately. What Hindia did to the song "Evaluasi" shows how his fans are involved in the response on his MV page on Youtube.

The same way is also done through musical groups. .Feast with different themes. The early musicians of the Sun Eater music label chose to voice opposition to injustice, protesting through their songs. However, it is early in my career.

.Feast discussed quite diverse themes, but the success of the song "Peradaban" and the mini album "Beberapa Orang Memaafkan" made them dig further into the theme in the latest album titled "Abdi Lara Insani."

Furthermore, according to Mosco, "new media expand opportunities to commodify content because they are fundamentally grounded in the process of digitization, which refers specifically to the transformation of communication, including data, words, images, motion pictures, and sound into common language" (Mosco, 2009, p. 135). How mental health issues are raised from data related to mental health experienced by the current generation, then translated into words, then processed into pictures and videos. So that it becomes a common language, where the song or lyrics become symbols. In the example, "Peradaban" belongs to the band .Feast, where sociopolitical cases translate into diseases that the present generation must fight against.

Referring back, the presence of the internet, or what is often interpreted by the phrase new media, was first presented by Marshall McLuhan in 1953. McLuhan uses the term new media to refer to "the technology of communications such as electronic information gathering and global reach" (in Hendricks, 2010, p. 4).

Hendrick himself defines new media as "more than just transfer of information across digital highways, it is about how those informational digital highways are traveled, the routes that are taken and how you interact with the highway to get you where you are going" (Hendricks, 2010, p. 7). Here new media has become a part of human life, establishing a real interaction between technology, media, and humans that helps in decision making and determining actions.

Correspondingly Littlejohn defines new media as a new period in which interactive technologies

and network communications, particularly the internet, would transform society (in Utari, 2011, p. 53). From these two definitions, a line of similarity can be drawn that the concept of new media has the power to master technology (internet) that can bring changes to humans or society.

And so, at this point, new media plays its part; it allows issues to turn into content and more than that. There is feedback that can be obtained instantly; there is a response from the audience that can be used as the content itself. New media has allowed Hindia and .Feast to be the voices of today's generation. There is a feeling of being represented by their listeners. This is a form of power that Sun Eater has in mastering internet technology that makes them able to "sell" content every day.

The commodification of the content or content to analyze it is not limited to its message alone since many aspects surround it and make it complex, so it must be viewed as a whole. In addition to its message in its musical content, the Sun-Eater music label prioritizes content over the music itself. Music content such as lyrics, songs, video clips, and various other derivatives is not the majority of content for the Sun Eater music label. So much other content made Sun Eater's music label as big as it is today. Just listen to the routine content of the Sun Eater music label, such as "Kamis Misteri," which invites their fans to share horror stories through the Discord channel, "Sun Icip" content in the form of talk shows discussing food from various places aired through the Youtube account, and "Horospik" content, which is a funny discussion of zodiac predictions and horoscopes through the Instagram account. Regarding this digital content, in an interview conducted with IR, music observers and academics on May 24, 2022, stated that:

"Because Sun Eater has a different approach (to the physical era), in terms of musicians and the music is also based on market, consumed by millennials, they are more not selling the music, but selling the content. So they made the bullets before the gun. So the content used to be, with comics, especially social media, yes, it's clear what their social media usage is like. Because Sun Eater doesn't sell music, they don't care how many CDs are sold, because if we talk about music sales, it's consumption-based if it's in the physical era, but Sun Eater is different."

These three examples of routine content can prove that the Sun-Eater music label is not just concerned with music as a commodity. But there is so much variety of content that they "sell" with a wide selection of new media platforms. If Spotify is one of the platforms for music products in the digital age, then the Sun Eater music label doesn't just dwell on it. This was also expressly stated by KR, the co-founder, and director of the Sun Eater music label, in an interview conducted on May 19, 2022:

"So we as musicians, make songs, make movies, make any content, we can't sit around waiting for 'uh next week there's a scheduled gig'... That's why our income from the stage is not the biggest either, on target. For offline targets, it is around 40 – 35 percent".

This is in line with the results of the research of Im et al. (2019), "producers need to understand the algorithm that exposes their music titles. Service providers have gradually adopted the recommendation system to give consumers access to various options and simple and convenient access to popular products". Music label Sun Eater proved the study's results, that producers (music labels) must understand algorithms and use multi-platform new media to provide more access to their products.

Judging from the variety of content of the Sun Eater music label, it can be concluded that for them, the content is not limited to music only; in fact, more content that is not music and outside of music and is used to sell music in the future. Music as a significant commodity is not overlooked. Still, the Sun-Eater music label, through its musicians, uses additional values,

such as current issues, to correlate with the voices of today's generation.

In Adorno's point of view from an essay entitled "On Popular Music" (1941), this effort made by the Sun-Eater music label was an attempt at standardization in pop music. As Adorno points out, once a musical and lyrical pattern becomes a success, it is exploited to commercial exhaustion, culminating in "standard crystallization." The Sun Eater music label found several patterns of content that it felt worked; the most visible examples are Hindia and .Feast.

The success of the theme approach carried out by Hindia (mental health) and .Feast (resistance) makes them repeat the same pattern. .Feast returns with the concept of a political theme on his latest album, "Abdi Lara Insani" and the content feels thicker than the previous album. Likewise with Hindia, after succeeding with a video clip format that involved their fans on the song "Membasuh" they again used the same method on the "Evaluasi" MV a year later.

If Adorno only looked at the standardization of the repetition of musical and lyrical patterns at the time, the practice of exploiting popular music criticized by Adorno still occurs today. It doesn't just happen to musicals and lyrics; the repetitions that lead to standardization occur in the various elements surrounding today's music.

The Sun Eater music label observantly carries out propaganda through the content they present. The use of new media supports that. The presence of various technology platforms in supporting the music industry today has allowed music labels to carry out the mission of influencing their listeners by capturing what their listeners want or unrest.

Supporting the concept of content commodification presented by Vincent Mosco, efforts to standardize or make it uniform in the same formulation as mentioned by Adorno can be seen in the various content productions carried out by the Sun-Eater music label. Standardization with repetition or diverse content outside of music performed by the Sun-Eater music label is a broader form of what Adorno criticizes. However, in the context of Adorno, it is limited to songs or lyrics only.

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Audience is the Greatest Commodity

Vincent Mosco defines user commodification as a "Digital system which measures and monitors precisely each information transaction are now used to refine the process of delivering audiences of viewers, listeners, readers, movie fans, telephone and computer users to the advertiser. Companies can package and repackage customers in forms that reflect their actual purchases and demographic characteristics" (Mosco, 2009, p. 137). In an all-digital system, the internet makes it possible to create user classifications with great detail and precision. This classification will then be packaged

according to the needs of advertisers based on their demographics, ranging from the place of residence, age, occupation, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, hobbies, and others. The more detailed user data you have, the higher the selling price will be to advertisers.

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According to Vincent Mosco, in his book The Political Economy of Communication, political economy is the study of the social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including communication resources (Mosco, 2009, p. 2). The key word that must be underlined here is power relations because by understanding and being able to map how power owners are interrelated and related, the interests of all actions or steps taken will be read. Mosco later traced this power relationship into a chain of production, distribution, and consumption of communication resources.

As previously presented, when Marxist ideas about commodification influence the approach to political economy, it refers to Karl Max's work entitled Capital. He begins with an analysis of commodities because, according to Marx, commodities have become the most straightforward form, the most explicit representation of capitalist production (Ibrahim & Akhmad, 2014, p. 18). Commodities here are interpreted as "gold mines" that bring multiple profits. Mosco then defines a commodity as "the particular form that products take when their production is principally organized through the process of exchange" (Mosco, 2009, p. 129). A commodity is a particular form of a product produced through the exchange.

The audience is a crucial commodity because we can see how the power relationship over Sun Eater's control of extensive audience data is supported by the role of new media that allows this to happen. This is in line with the needs of brands or advertisers that lead to economic interests.

Strictly speaking, Dallas Smythe says, "because audience power is produced, sold, purchased, and consumed, it commands a price and is a commodity" (Smythe, 1981, p. 234). What is purchased by advertisers is a target grouped into advertising needs, measurable, and by the target market of the advertiser's product.
In an interview conducted with KR as co-founder and director of the Sun Eater music label, the approach taken by the Sun-Eater music

label is consumer-centric approach and data driven. Consumer-centric means Sun Eater bases all its decisions on what its audience likes, and data-driven has the sense that they always use data as a fulcrum on numerous occasions.

With a large audience base on various social media, Sun Eater's music label can offer its musicians to advertisers who they feel fit their target audience. In the language understood today, music label Sun Eater can look for endorsers who provide new revenue for its musicians. Some examples that can be seen are the Lomba Sihir with Hyundai Motor Indonesia; in a program entitled "Drive & Produce," it appears that Lomba Sihir personnel are driving Hyundai cars and recording various sounds from the vehicle. From the image that Hyundai wants to build, it means that they want to catch up with the audience of the Lomba Sihir band, and their car is considered appropriate to associate with this band.

According to Ursula Huws (2015), in her research entitled iCapitalism and the Cybertariat: Contradictions of the Digital Economy says that "when telecommunications systems mediate human sociality, it leaves digital traces wherever it goes, traces that can be mined to generate data that enable advertising to be targeted with ever-greater accuracy" (Huws, 2015). In a more superficial understanding, users have use value; then, in the process of commodifying them to make them have an exchange rate, they will be classified based on data, information, or whatever traces they leave on the internet and then sold to advertisers.

From the confession of the informant, KR also mentioned that the most significant revenue of the Sun Eater music label is not from the offline stage, which is only around 35-40% of the total revenue. This shows that as a musician on the Sun Eater music label, income does not only come from music royalties, stage to stage, but

there are other sources of income, such as cooperation with brands or advertisers whose value can be more significant. Band .Feast collaborated with Netflix as the soundtrack for one of its latest series, Hindia became the brand ambassador of telecommunications provider Indosat Oredoo for two consecutive years. The ability to be digitally present on multiple platforms, bringing engagement or interaction with audiences, makes it easier for musicians on Sun Eater's music label to get various cooperation contracts.

From Barata and Coelho's research on consumer behavior toward music streaming services (2021) *"behavioural intention is itself a strong driver of the recommendation and consequently that all the direct determinants of the intention to use are themselves significant indirect determinants of the recommendation".*
Music fans in the digital age volunteer to share and recommend their favorite musicians through personal social media and directly to their friends. This became the principal capital of the Sun Eater music label to the point of growing its audience as it is today.

Unlike musicians before today's digital age, they could have social media and be available on streaming music services. Still, if they didn't actively create content and didn't manage their audience well, even though in the previous era they were prominent musicians, they wouldn't have grown like musicians from the Sun-Eater music label, for example.

In the commodification process, the listener will eventually take the form of mere numbers. The number of followers, the number of listeners, and the number of subscribers, to the conditions of statistical graphs that can be sold further to advertisers. On the other hand, the presence of new media can better know who their audience is. But in audience commodification, this is only a sellable number. Mosco further emphasized

that two aspects make commodification related to communication: communication processes and technologies contribute to the general operation of commodification in the economy as a whole. That interbreeding between communication and new media is, on the one hand, a matter of economics.

One of Adorno's statements in his essay "On Popular Music" (1941), which has always been a reference in criticizing popular music, is that pop music encourages passive hearing. The consumption of pop music is always passive and repetitive. The findings in this study reinforce Adorno's statement. The listener or audience becomes a commodity sold by the Sun-Eater music label. And the audience itself can't do anything about the choices it makes on its own. This proves that popular music makes the listener passive and accept what prevalent music presents.

Audiences can't do much listening to popular music, something that's trending, even though the presence of new media doesn't make the audience's position better than Adorno's statement on popular music decades ago. It further strengthens Adorno's argument that popular music encourages passive listeners; today, the audience is increasingly becoming the most significant commodity.

Musician is a Worker

The commodification of workers or laborers is the transformation of the work process in capitalism, where workers' skills and working hours are made commodities and rewarded with salaries. In a Mosco sentence, "labor is constituted out of the unity of conception, or the power to envision, imagine, and design work, and execution, or the power to carry it out. In commodification, capital separates conception from execution and skill from the raw ability to carry out a task. It also concentrates conceptual power in a managerial class that is either a part of capital-labor represents its interests. Finally,

capital reconstitutes the labor process to correspond to this new distribution of skills and power at the point of production" (Mosco, 2009, p. 139).

The musician is an art worker. Her fame and popularity brought her to a world that treated her as a pop star. Money and fans are the counts. Musicians became the idols of many people. But what is not realized today in the digital age, musicians are precisely the workers like most. He does not only produce musical works; in the digital era, he is required to be able to create content for his social media. The goal is to increase the number of followers, the number of listeners, and the number of viewers.

In Hendrick's sense of new media (Hendricks, 2010, p. 7), the interaction of technology, media, and humans that help in decision-making and determining actions can be simplified. How, then, musicians must become workers because of the demands of the digital age; musicians can no longer stand idly by and leave all tasks to music labels. Musicians must be proactive on social media so they can be material in making decisions and actions.

Galih Nugraha Su (Hendricks, 2010, p. 7) mentioned that scavenging rupiah and survival for art workers today is not enough work and leaves it to the management. Art workers seem to be required to always appear in the conversation, and whatever they do, if necessary, will be adapted many times in the form of caricatures typical of the kiwi era: memes, short comics, and threads. What Galih revealed can be seen in what the Sun Eater music label does. This is generally illustrated in the cross-talent practices carried out by musicians on the Sun Eater label, as seen in the chart below:
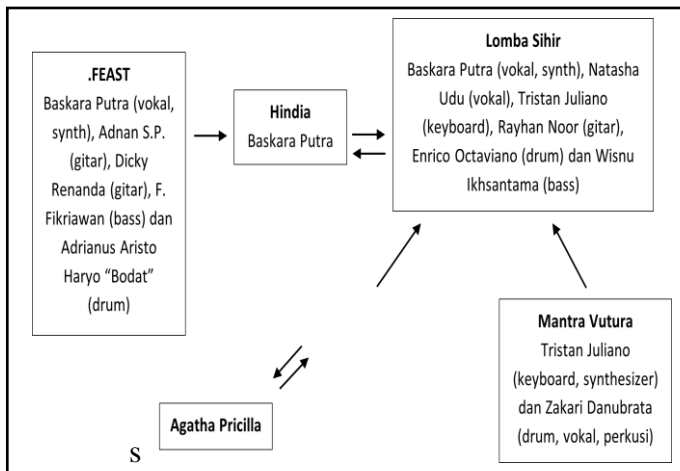
Cross-talent in several music label musicians
Sun Eater

Source : Processed Researcher

In the chart in particular, it can be seen how Baskara Putra exists in several Sun Eater music projects. It is alluded to by AA, a music journalist, in his interview on May 26, 2022, that:

"They are lucky to have Baskara; if there is no Baskara, I'm not sure Sun Eater can be this big. But the point is that when there is Baskara, they realize that it is their greatest asset, maximized very well anyway... Baskara is in all bands; I've criticized his album Lomba Sihir in the PopHariIni review; it's a cool album, so why is the spotlight on Baskara again? Isn't this (Lomba Sihir) an Hindia accompaniment band? Does the spotlight go to them? The spotlight is flipped back to Baskara; if you want to know why you don't ride Aldrian Risjad or Rayhan Noor, who sings full, this is even Baskara again; if Baskara writes the lyrics okay, go backstage. If there is no Baskara, Sun Eater will not be this big, but he is aware of his assets and maximized very well cross-subsidies and everything..."

The same is true of the .Feast, the pattern of work involving musicians is not only for making music. In an interview conducted with informant RP, Head of Community at music label Sun Eater on May 25, 2022;

"So actually .feast every year we have an evaluation, so like during this one year, we've been playing a role in what we're moving forward? The .feast is always like that every year. Well, we sometimes like to change, so for example, the finance part used to be Dicky, and

the social media section was Awan and Adnan, so Awan made the plan and Adnan who executed how to make the content. It's the same as me we usually network, we keep looking for a stage, then if Baskara is more into the music, lyrics or something."

So not only on stage, as musicians are cross-talented between each group to produce various products (music), but behind the scene also individually, musicians in the Sun Eater music label are given more responsibility with other jobs. A commodification of workers further reinforces that the musician is a worker. He is not what he seems to be, an artist with all the glittering popularity. Still, he is also a worker with responsibilities outside of music according to the agreed division of work.

So much content from the musicians of the Sun Eater music label can be imagined how the daily life of the music label musicians is. They are not only limited to recording songs, shooting MVs, rehearsing, and doing shows: other content shooting activities, interactions with fans through social media, and photo shoot with advertisers.

Music label Sun Eater is familiar with the development of internet technology. They are adaptive to the consumer-centric and data-driven approach they choose. As a result, what they do is always able to reach the target audience they want to target. They always build interaction with the audience and create content close to today's generation. What the Sun Eater music label does can be understood as a negative commodification because it exploits many things that led to the shift in use value it did. However, this commodification can also be considered positive because the efforts made by the Sun-Eater music label have proven to open up more new markets for Indonesian music listeners. With various forms of exploitation of resources that are converted into commodities, it will indirectly present a variety of product variants as well as consumers.
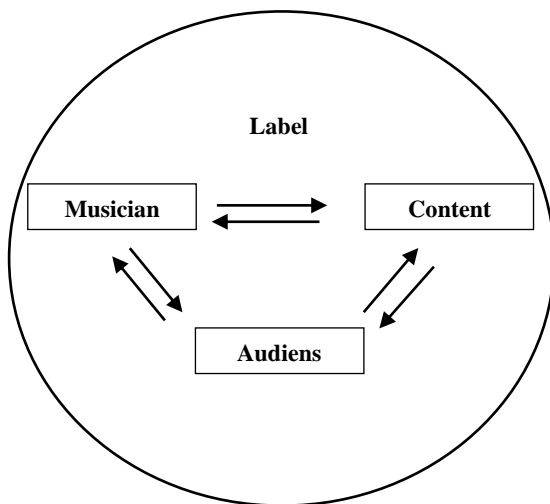
Sun Eater Music Label Commodification
Model
Source: Processed Researcher

The Sun Eater music label commodification model above illustrates the role of musicians, content, and audiences in the commodification process itself. New media has allowed musicians, content, and audiences to have a reciprocal relationship with each other that is inseparable. Nor is it in a one-way form where there are parties who are passive in receiving messages like traditional mass media.

The model also shows how music labels stand today in the digital music industry. A music label with a role like the Sun Eater music label is actually considered necessary because of its position to move musicians as workers further in creating content and reaching audiences.

At the same time, it demonstrates the illusion of cyberspace as expressed by Vincent Mosco, especially in the part of worker commodification, that the musicians who are the main backbone of a music label, with all the glitter of pop stars and the artistry they get, are nothing more than workers or laborers themselves.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results and discussion of the research that has been discussed, the researcher draws the conclusion that:

1. The commodification of content carried out by the Sun-Eater music label can be seen from the diversity of content owned by the musicians under the management of the Sun Eater music label. Products are no longer just limited to music; many things outside of music are used as content by the Sun-Eater music label. In addition, the message and meaning conveyed through music products have also been commodified with themes related to the anxiety of today's younger generation. Mental health and activism are two themes seamlessly used by the music label Sun Eater.

2. The commodification of the audience on the Sun Eater music label is seen through the number of followers, listeners, and audiences of musicians from the Sun Eater music label. Based on a data-driven and consumer-centric approach, audiences can be "processed" in such a way by the Sun-Eater music label. Interaction is always built with the audience because engagement is a reference in the digital era. These numbers are used to gain further cooperation with advertisers. Audience data can be compiled and processed so that it can be tailored to the needs of advertisers. This is one of the sources of income from the Sun-Eater music

3. The commodification of the workers is visible in the position of Baskara Putra on the Sun Eater music label. As a musician, he was involved in most of the music projects on the Sun Eater music label. The fact that musicians are artists or idols of many should also be accepted as workers for music labels. And not only when it comes to music, but today's musicians also need to be able to create content regularly and interact with their fans.

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