



# An Unusual Success: A Study of Modern Pop Music

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# Thesis:

While the recording industry's pop music has destroyed much of the complexity and individuality found in classical music, it has advanced the development of music's ability to quickly capture the attention of listeners.

# Pop vs. Classical

- › Simple
- › 4 Chords
- › Repetition
- › Autotune
- › Chord progressions
- › Complex
- › Development
- › Performed by trained musicians

# Why is **POP** music so popular?

Producers are using several elements which work together to get their music stuck in your head.

## Melody

- Simple yet catchy
- Easy to sing
- Easy to remember

## Harmony

- Predictable
- A simple progression is best for remembering the melody

## The Beat

- Drives the melody
- Gives a sense of development

## The Hook

- The most catchy part of the song
- The part everyone remembers

## Technology

- Quickly circulates songs
- No geographic limitations
- Allows listeners to instantly react to songs

## Network Society

- Links communication across a large number of people
- Rapid communication

# Viral Music

This pop music spreads very rapidly, reaching a mass audience within only days of its release or initial circulation.

# Viral Music...

How does it do this?

- A strong hook
- A music video
- YouTube
- An associated dance
- Ridiculous or foreign lyrics
- Released as singles rather than in an album

# Viral Music...

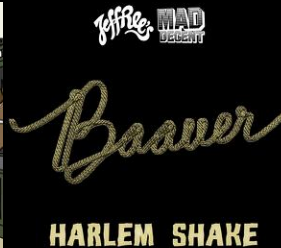
Examples:

Gangnam Style

Harlem Shake

The Fox (What Does the Fox Say)

Happy





Released in June of 2012

The music video was the first video to hit  
one billion views on YouTube

**1,000,000,000**

This song marks the beginning of viral music in the U.S.



# HARLEM SHAKE

Released in May of 2012

For the first time, Billboard introduced video streams on their charts

Although released in 2012, it did not become viral until a YouTube video sparked its rise to a viral outbreak in early 2013.

We saw the how this viral song affected our entire culture as everyone made their own music videos to post on YouTube

Harlem Shake is arguably the best example of viral music because it combines the elements of popular dance, video, and a strong hook.



# YLVIS THE FOX

Released in 2013

Accidentally went viral  
Produced by StarGate  
Ridiculous lyrical content  
Used a YouTube video  
Uses a very strong hook



# HAPPY

PHARRELL WILLIAMS

## Released in 2013

Strong Hook

Multi-cultural appeal

No. 1 hit in 24 countries

Soundtrack for 2 movies

(Also had its own music video)

# Another Dimension

There is much more to successful music than the musical elements themselves. Producers and artists are using the internet to bring a new dimension to their music. It is no longer just about the music. It's also about the media that it's produced with it. YouTube has played a huge role in the distribution of music videos and it is very common for modern pop songs to be produced with these videos.

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