Musicians Real and Fake

Hari Osias C. Banaag

San Joaquin Valley College

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Benjamin Andrews

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Turn the TV on to any music station and you will see rock-stars living the life you could only dream about. Shows like “American Idol” give people chances at becoming a famous musician as if it will be a lifestyle of riches and fame where everything you want can be yours without question. Other shows, like the sitcom “Gilmore Girls”, always begin with the musician struggling to be seen and heard, but they always get their contract in the end and end up living a life of fame. Is that how it really is? Television would convince people that musicians leave a charmed life where everything works out in their favor. That’s not the truth. The truth is that musicians lead a much different life than what is portrayed on television, except in some rare cases, and that only rarely can they be called similar.

For season ten of “American Idol” thousands of people tried out for their chance of a record contract with the contest. “The first stop on the IDOL audition tour was Nashville, Tennessee on July 17, where an incredible 16,000 people swarmed Broadway, home of the world-famous Music City Honky Tonks. Days later, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin more than 10,000 hopefuls showed up at the Bradley Center on July 21” (Examiner.com, 2010). On Television that is what we see, people lining up, singing a song and that is it, they either make it or they don’t But those numbers are crazy because in just two instances over 26,000 people were trying to be musicians. The same thing can be said for shows like “The Voice” or “America’s Got Talent” where people feel like all they need is that one chance for fame. Tom Hess, a professional guitarist, knows this is not the case. TV makes it seem like there is only one chance, one song and then they can be discovered. Hess says it takes far more work to do what needs to be done. “The problem isn't in knowing what to do. The main problem for most people is that they would not choose to do what it takes even if they did know what to do and how to do it” (Hess, 2008). He goes on to say that just having that chance isn’t enough if you don’t know what to do with it. That it takes a will to succeed, to really work for it for fame to come. Television would have you believe otherwise. The reason is simple according to Hess: “Investing large sums of money on Human Beings is extremely risky. When music companies work with you, they are investing in YOU - not just your music. They need to be convinced that an investment in YOU is going to make them tons of money with the least amount of risk” (Hess, 2008). That is what television doesn’t show people, that there would be more artists out there if there was no risk in investing in people. That’s not something that you can show on television.

Now, there are instances of someone being “discovered” by random chance. Disney Channel airs a show called “Austin and Ally” where the main character, “Austin Moon”, writes music with his friends and posts videos so that he can be discovered. He eventually is by a record producer who happens across his music and signs him on that same day. Sounds unbelievable. Take Justin Bieber for example:

“As a way to share his singing with family, Justin and his mom began posting clips of Bieber performing covers of [Stevie Wonder](http://www.biography.com/people/stevie-wonder-9536078), [Michael Jackson](http://www.biography.com/people/michael-jackson-38211), and Ne-Yo on YouTube.Within months, Justin was an Internet sensation, with a large following of fans, and an eager manager arranging for the teenager to fly to Atlanta to consider a record deal. There, Bieber had a chance meeting with Usher, who eventually signed the young singer to a contract. (Biography, 2013)

It sounds like something from a movie, but there television shows something that can actually happen. Here a boy showed his skills in videos online and sure enough the right person came along and made him a star. A few years later and Justin Bieber is one of the most popular names in the music industry and a favorite for young women everywhere.

Television would have people believe that a simple audition, simple chance, is enough to make you famous and get you everything you want. Shows show these people with a charmed life where good things just happen to talented people. They don’t show the years of hard work that most people have to do to even have the chance of being noticed by the industry. They don’t show the hours of practice, the shows where no people show up and the time spent just trying to build a name. Television wants more people to believe in instances of Justin Bieber when that just is not the case.

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