THE RIDER · No.15

CAREER · THE OPPORTUNITY MAP

BEST TIME TO BE A DJ.

LEARN IT. PLAY IT. SHARE IT. KNOW IT.

The specialists teach online now. Your software can pull the vocal off a track, live, and stream over 100 million songs. Your phone is a stage. And more new music arrives every day than ever before. There has never been more open to a DJ. When everyone can reach every song, the DJ who really knows the music is the one with the most doors open. This edition maps those doors.

WHAT'S IN THIS EDITION

01	**WHAT OPENED UP**	Yes, more DJs. And four doors that opened for all of them
02	**THE EDGE**	Five layers of music knowledge
03	**THE OPPORTUNITY MAP**	Eight doors, and the knowledge that opens each
04	**YOUR KNOWLEDGE AUDIT**	Rate yourself, find your strongest layer
05	**THE 30-DAY CRATE PLAN**	Four weeks, one door
06	**TWO TEMPLATES**	A theme-night pitch and a 'song behind the song' reel
07	**LIMITS · GO DEEPER**	What this doesn't mean, and the sources

> The tool, platform and industry facts are cited to their sources. The opportunities, the audit and the plan are craft from the booth, not research. Use it to think, then make your own call.

Compiled by Vic Naik · The Vic Fix · 19 years, 18+ countries.

01 · WHAT OPENED UP

YES, MORE DJs THAN EVER. THAT'S THE POINT.

THE OBJECTION, FIRST

In a survey of about 15,000 emerging DJs and producers, **61%** said social media numbers matter more than musical skill, and 62% called the industry a “closed club”. That's how it feels from the start line, and it's fair. Here's the other side: the same doors that let more DJs in are open to you too. When everyone has the same tools, what you know is the difference.

Pete Tong DJ Academy survey of its users, presented at IMS Ibiza, Apr 2025 (via Mixmag). A perception survey, not booking data.

LEARN · THE TEACHERS CAME ONLINE

Once, you learned from whoever let you into the booth. Now there's a specialist teaching almost every style online: scratching, open format, wedding hosting, production, the business side. Software makers publish their own free tutorials.

PLAY · THE TOOLS CAUGHT UP

A starter controller instead of a wall of decks. **2019** streaming arrives inside DJ software (Beatport LINK). **2020** real-time stems: split any track into vocals, drums and bass, live. **2022** Serato adds stems, free version included. **2025** Apple Music's **100 million+ songs** stream inside rekordbox, Serato and Engine DJ (no stems on those streamed tracks, and you need a connection).

Music Business Worldwide, May 2019 · DJ TechTools, Aug 2020 · Digital DJ Tips, Dec 2022 · MacRumors, 25 Mar 2025.

SHARE · YOUR PHONE IS A STAGE

Instagram and YouTube are where clients find you now: the edit, the reel, the story behind a track. Bookings arrive by DM, with fewer gatekeepers in the way. Full mixes have licensed homes: Mixcloud signed direct deals with Warner, Universal and Merlin, and in 2024 Twitch signed **Universal, Sony, Warner and Merlin** for DJ livestreams. Live sets on Instagram can still be muted; know each platform's rules.

Mixcloud deals 2017–18 (Mixcloud, MBW) · Twitch DJ Program, Jun 2024 (Digital Music News).

DIG · MORE MUSIC THAN EVER

106,000 new tracks reached streaming services every day in 2025. Of 253 million tracks, **88% were played 1,000 times or fewer** that year. That's not a verdict on the music; it's how much nobody has dug through yet. Record pools give working DJs legal access on top. Your crowd can't dig through all that. You can.

Luminate 2025 Year-End Music Report (88% is our sum of its stream tiers).

02 · THE EDGE

EVERYONE HAS THE TOOLS. KNOWLEDGE IS THE EDGE.

Music knowledge isn't trivia. It's five layers, and each one opens different work. **This is craft, not research.**

01 **Eras.**
Not just this month's chart. The 70s and 80s records the older guests danced to, the 90s and 2000s hits that make a room scream, and what's breaking now. A DJ who can travel across decades can play to any age in the room, and every year you've spent in the booth counts.

02 **Genres and scenes.**
House, hip-hop, Afrobeats, Latin, disco, Bollywood and regional, K-pop: every scene has its classics, its deep cuts and its codes, and more of them cross borders every year. Every scene you really know is a crowd you can't lose.

03 **Roots.**
The original behind the remix, the sample behind the hit, the old song a new one quotes. Roots give you the transitions nobody else sees, and the story that makes a room lean in.

04 **Crowds.**
What each room sings along to. A college party, a wedding, a corporate dinner and a 1am club floor all want different songs. Knowing a room's songbook is how you read it fast.

05 **Connections.**
Which songs share a key, a tempo, a groove or a feeling. Stems make this a live skill: an a cappella over a different groove, a classic hook over a new beat. The connection is the idea; the software just carries it out.

> **THE SHIFT**
>
> **When everyone can reach every song, choosing is the craft. The tools are everyone's. The knowledge is yours.**

03 · THE OPPORTUNITY MAP

SO MANY DOORS. HERE ARE EIGHT.

Each door, the knowledge that opens it, and a first step you can take this week. Tick the ones that fit you.

THE DOOR	KNOWLEDGE THAT OPENS IT	FIRST STEP THIS WEEK
☐ Weddings and private events	Crowds · Eras · Genres	Build a 20-song set that moves across three generations cleanly
☐ Theme nights you pitch to venues	Eras · Roots	Write a one-page pitch: a decade night, a scene night, a classics night
☐ Live edits and mashups	Connections · Roots	Make three stem mashups this week and test one at your next gig
☐ Livestreams and mix shows	Genres · Connections	Stream or record one hour where you say why each track is there
☐ Music-story content	Roots · Eras	Post one 'the song behind this song' reel. Your knowledge is the content
☐ Festival and concert warm-ups	Crowds · Connections	Map a headliner's sound and build the hour before it
☐ Teaching and workshops	All five layers	Outline a 60-minute class on one layer, such as reading a wedding crowd
☐ Brand, corporate and venue music	Crowds · Eras	Offer a brand or venue a music plan for their event or their hours

WHERE TO START

Don't chase all eight. Pick the door that matches your **strongest** layer (next page), and one that stretches you. Two doors, done properly, beat eight half-open.

04 · YOUR KNOWLEDGE AUDIT

WHAT DO YOU KNOW BETTER THAN ANYONE?

Be honest. Score each box 1 to 5. A 5 means you could play two hours of it, from memory, and keep a room.

LAYER					
ERAS	70s–80s ___	90s ___	2000s ___	2010s ___	Now ___
GENRES	House / techno ___	Hip-hop / R&B ___	Pop / commercial ___	Disco / funk ___	Other: ___
SCENES	Latin ___	Afro ___	Desi / regional ___	K-pop / Asia ___	Other: ___
CROWDS	Wedding ___	Corporate ___	Club, peak ___	College / party ___	Lounge ___

Roots: how many originals can you name behind the remixes in your last set?

Go through your last set. For each remix or edit, write the original artist. Count them.

Connections: how many mashups or blends are uniquely yours?

READ YOUR SCORES

My strongest layer:

Where you have the most 4s and 5s. Lead with it.

My door (from page 4):

The door your strongest layer opens.

My gap to close:

One row of 1s and 2s that would open a second door.

Who teaches it:

Start free: your software maker's tutorials, a YouTube channel by a DJ in that style. Then one paid lesson or local academy session.

> Your audit is the honest version of your bio. If your strongest layer isn't in how you describe yourself to clients and online, change the description.

05 · THE 30-DAY CRATE PLAN

FOUR WEEKS.
ONE NEW DOOR.

Thirty minutes a day. Each week builds one layer, and the last week turns it into something you can show or sell.

WEEK	BUILD	DO THIS	DONE WHEN
1	One era	Dig one decade you half-know. 10 songs a day; keep the 15 that still move a room.	15 songs, playlisted
2	One scene	Pick the genre your gap needs. Take one class or tutorial from a specialist in it, and ask a fan for their 10 essentials.	20 tracks you'd play
3	Roots	Trace 10 tracks in your set back to the original or the sample. Note the story of each.	10 stories, written
4	The door	Turn weeks 1–3 into a set, a pitch, a mashup, a stream or a reel for the door you picked.	One thing out in the world

MY PLAN

The door I'm opening: _____

Week 1 era: _____

Week 2 scene + teacher: _____

Week 3 roots, starting with: _____

Week 4, the thing I'll put out: _____

e.g. a theme-night pitch to two venues, a one-hour stream, or a 'song behind the song' reel

Start date: _____

THE DIG RULES

- Listen to whole songs, not 15-second previews. The bridge is often the best bit.
- Go past the algorithm. Follow labels, curators and DJs you trust, not just your feed.
- Write the story down. A song you can talk about is a song you can sell.
- Test it live. Knowledge you've never played is a guess.

06 · TWO TEMPLATES

DON'T STALL.
FILL IN THE BLANKS.

The two doors people most often stall on. Copy, fill, send or post.

A · THE THEME-NIGHT PITCH (ONE PAGE, OR ONE DM)

The night: [name], a [era / scene] night for [who comes].
Why your venue: your crowd already [what you've seen them love].
Why me: I know this music: [3 records or eras you know cold].
The shape: doors [time], warm-up [what], peak [what], close [what].
The ask: one trial night on [date]. We look at the room together after.

Attach: a 20-minute mix in the style, and one reel from the booth.

B · THE 'SONG BEHIND THE SONG' REEL (30–45 SECONDS)

0–3s, hook: play the hit everyone knows. Text: “You know this one…”
3–12s, the turn: “…but do you know where it came from?”
12–30s, the root: play the original or the sample. One line of story: who, when, how it got flipped.
30–40s, your move: show how you blend the two in a set.
Close: “Comment the next one you want traced.” Every reply is your next reel.

Use short clips and check your platform's music rules; long uncut tracks get muted.

07 · WHAT THIS DOESN'T MEAN

- **Open doors aren't guaranteed bookings.** Easier tools also mean more DJs. That's exactly why knowledge matters, but we found no reliable data on what DJs earn from each door.
- **Streaming isn't a gig plan.** It needs a solid connection, and stems don't work on Apple Music tracks in Serato, rekordbox or Engine DJ. Keep downloaded files for every gig.
- **Check the rules before you go live.** Twitch's DJ Program covers live streams, not clips or replays. Instagram, YouTube and Facebook have their own rules and can mute a mix. A personal streaming subscription isn't a venue's performance licence.
- **The 61% is a feeling, not booking data.** It's how emerging DJs on one academy's platform see the industry. Promoters are split on how much follower counts matter.
- **Venue licences still apply.** Wherever you play, the venue needs its public-performance licences (for example PPL and IPRS in India, PPL and PRS in the UK).
- **Low streams don't mean bad music.** The 88% includes noise and AI uploads, and plenty of gems. Telling them apart is the skill.

GO DEEPER

2025 Year-End Music Report
Luminate · Jan 2026 · luminatedata.com
106,000 tracks a day, and the stream pyramid behind the 88%.

Twitch DJ Program officially launches
Digital Music News · 6 Jun 2024 · digitalmusicnews.com
The label deals that made DJ livestreams legal on Twitch.

DJ with Apple Music
MacRumors · 25 Mar 2025 · macrumors.com/2025/03/25/dj-with-apple-music
Which apps and hardware got Apple Music, and the catalogue size.

Review: VirtualDJ 2021's real-time 5-stem track separation
DJ TechTools · 25 Aug 2020 · djtechtools.com
When live stems landed in DJ software.

61% of emerging DJs feel social media numbers matter more than musical skill
Mixmag · Apr 2025 · on the Pete Tong DJ Academy survey at IMS Ibiza
The objection, in numbers.

Rider No.13 · TASTE
The Vic Fix · djvicofficial.com/therider/ep13
Your crowd is on autoplay: why the DJ's taste matters more, not less.

THE CLOSE

THE TOOLS ARE EVERYONE'S. THE KNOWLEDGE IS YOURS.

More DJs than ever, and more open to every one of them: teachers online, a hundred million songs in your software, a stage in your pocket.
It's the best time there has ever been to do this.

Now go dig.

THE REST OF THE SERIES

No.01 INSURE · Health insurance for working DJs
No.02 RATE · Pricing your work
No.03 TDS · Tax setup for Indian DJs
No.04 CONTRACT · The performance contract
No.05 EARS · Hearing protection
No.06 BRAIN · The neuroscience of DJing
No.07 MOMENTS · Music as memory
No.08 MACHINE · AI-proofing your craft
No.09 2030 · The global DJ economy
No.10 BODY · DJing longevity
No.11 ONE · The first three tracks
No.12 PROPOSAL · The DJ who makes it easy
No.13 TASTE · Your crowd is on autoplay
No.14 CLOCK · You set the clock
No.15 CRATE · Best time to be a DJ (this one)

All editions at djvicofficial.com/therider

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The Vic Fix · 19 years, 18+ countries · @thevicfix · @djvicofficial

A note on the evidence. Tool dates, platform facts and industry figures are cited to their sources. The five layers, the eight doors, the audit and the crate plan are our craft view for working DJs: not a finding, and not a promise of income.