

Rednex love Pirate Bay... but WHY??!

The Record Companies vs. The File Sharers

Everybody seems to think that a fierce battle is underway between the record companies and the filesharers, but this is a naive assessment - the battle is long since over. Within 12 years the record companies will be extinct and any efforts in holding back the filesharers until then will be futile.

The moral and legal issues are no longer at play now that a new practical reality has outplayed them. While record companies must concede defeat, those with the real power associated with them need to give up their support, and new artists must invent new ways to spread their music.

For the release of Rednex's new single, 'Devil's On The Loose', we have partnered with Pirate Bay. Although seen as a villain in many eyes, they are quite the opposite and such filesharing projects are helping them to pioneer a fantastic revolution in information exchange that will grant the world an enormous range of benefits far beyond its innovative technology.

The music business today is dominated by 'The Big Four', the world's four largest record companies in Universal, Sony, Warner and EMI. They attained their position during the second half of the 20th century thanks to a near total supremacy in the distribution and marketing of music.

If an artist wanted to succeed during the rule of the major labels then they first had to secure their patronage, for the labels held sway over the media that relayed the music to the artist's potential fan base and controlled the gateway to the record stores.

It has now reached a level whereby if you ask an unknown artist today what their dream is,

they won't answer, "To play a concert in front of 1000s of people," or "To have 10,000s of fans listening



to my music” or even, ”To make a living out of my music,” but instead respond, ”To get a record deal and release my own record”.

In an industry characterised by rampant ambition, it seems somewhat ridiculous that the predominant dream is something as humble as just getting your own record *released*. It’s as if there is a higher power that decides who is allowed to release their music or not. The record companies have succeeded so well through years of propaganda that artists now believe they need them just as you need a driving license to drive a car. That the labels should control which music reaches an audience is, of course, as insane as your internet provider deciding what songs from a certain artist are allowed to be released on the net.

Although the last century saw this control become a grim fixture of the industry, the digital revolution has now put a stop to it. Today, the reality is a very different beast - both distribution and marketing wise - and it is about time that everyone involved makes the necessary adjustments accordingly.

What most people don't dare realise is that it is no longer relevant to even ask the question of whether free downloads are right or not. No matter what people think about filesharing, one must understand that the moral and legal rights are no longer applicable. The battle is over. The filesharing communities won't budge. Now Pirate Bay has more visitors every week than London or New York has inhabitants.

How can anyone seriously believe that those tens of millions of people will just simply disappear? By now everyone must realise that any adjustment by the rights-holders will be immediately countered by the filesharers.

The next generation of filesharing applications - OneSwarm, GigaNews – are already ready waiting hand-in-hand with anonymity applications such as Relakks. If any more counter pressure is applied then the filesharing technique will simply be revised. For instance, information could be hidden in converted files - music can hide inside a jpg, pictures can hide inside a text file and so on. Technical development is always one step ahead. Laptops and soon portable phones have hundreds of gigabytes of storage, so friends can share files in the cafe over wifi, even without the internet.

Whether fair or not, upholding musical property rights is now as pointless as trying to patent a food recipe or a new word. In fact attempts to prevent a breach will ultimately just succeed in causing a lot of damage.

The filesharers themselves don't need to worry because tracking them down is like initiating an investigation into who farted on an aeroplane. They know all too well it is an impossible mission. The resources available to stop them are comparable to having one lone standing police officer monitor a five-lane highway for speeding motorists. Sure he will catch one or two and some might slow down, but ultimately the highway itself will keep on roaring onwards at its own relentless pace.

We were fortunate to find out about Napster as early as 1999 when one of our owners visited two audio professors at the technical university (KTH) in Stockholm, Sweden. Within 30 seconds they had downloaded 'Cotton Eye Joe' without paying a cent. Afterwards the owner called his label contacts hoping to get some smart answers on how to avoid an imminent apocalypse in the music business that this event foreshadowed. Surprised and bemused by the revelation they have yet to respond.

Instead he was left with a head full of troubling thoughts that had become so intense that while staring out of a train window a couple of days later, a stranger approached him, laid her hand on his arm and said, "Whatever your problem is, it will soon get better ..."

She was wrong, of course. Over the ensuing 10 years the solution has failed to emerge and we have long since stopped searching for it. If people want to download songs for free then they can and it will remain so. What's more the economy of the music business will continue to shrink to a tiny fraction of what it once was.

Any new laws created by governments will prove costly and without significant effect. At the same time, artists asserting their copyrights will look increasingly stupid and greedy - which hardly provides a good foundation for people to voluntarily pay for music.

As people bear witness to the ineffectual efforts made by the industry, more and more will start using free filesharing, and the more people using it the more ineffective the next 'preventative' measures will be - and on it goes. What's more if everyone is reportedly doing it then those that aren't will think it's now the norm and join in. Artists will eventually realise that there is no point in even trying to protect their rights since they can't be protected in any practical terms.

In the end, no rights will be claimed and those that are won't be defended. Services such as Spotify may

prove a temporary success - at least until someone works out a similar application that is free, and illegal - however, in the long run, music will be free to own and some of it legal, such as "Devil's On The Loose".

So, eventually **we will reach a point where the record labels will not have the resources needed to stay afloat and will sink.** No external body will believe they still have a value and the owners of the labels - who mostly deal with activities other than music anyway - will want to get rid of such costly and useless sub-divisions. This will all happen within 12 years, perhaps in as little as only 5-6 years.

Don't let yourselves be fooled by the relatively slow decline happening at the moment. The final 50% of the industry will vanish very quickly when the remaining enthusiasts finally decide it is time to flee the sinking ship. It is similar to what happens during a 'bank run', when the rumour about a bank's impending bankruptcy is spread and people start withdrawing money. When the key investors withdraw, everyone else panics and follows suit.

To plead with the record labels to put down their guns is pointless. They have nowhere to go - they can't move forward or transform and will get increasingly desperate with each passing year. However, their employees should be careful. Do you really want your CV diluted by bankruptcies that you were stupid enough not to foresee? Who wants to have in their CV, "2010 – fax machine salesman"? It is not very smart and probably says more about a person than you would wish. To invest knowledge and time in a dying system or product is hardly very productive.

How clever is it to sit on the losing team's substitute bench watching the opponents score over and over? Who will want to work in such a desperate and depressing environment?

But most important of all it is the artists that should worry and act to anticipate the record label collapse. Any artist who signs a contract with a label today might be stuck for more than 5 years. This includes the risk of having both yourself and your rights stuck with a company that no one wants and that will go bankrupt. There is only one piece of advice to give to artists today – flee the labels!

You don't want your rights to get stuck with these companies for 5-6 years. Their administration costs will be larger than their income, the royalty payments will not be paid. Rights will change owners several times during a short period of time and will be drawn into a dense legal tangle that will take an

eternity to unravel.

Furthermore, within the near future, artists signed with the Big Four will be seen as out-dated, helpless, and lacking the innovation and creativity to move forward - traits hardly desirable in an artist.

In interests of self-preservation, it is not that artists need to rethink their opinions on filesharing but simply think more street smart. You need to raise your worldview above and beyond the mixing desk, and away from the narrow view of the industry in order to realise how the world is changing and how you will change with it.

Artists must try out new ways to release their music and distance themselves from the current model. In order to build new systems, old systems have to first be dismantled. Partnerships with filesharing sites such as Pirate Bay could be one great way - or may not. But right now anything is worth trying and the best way to move forward is to experiment. Get inventive!

One thing is for sure though, the new system will be one modelled to suit the new technically advanced reality, not one that pathetically attempts to choke it. Essentially this is how it works: the world doesn't give a shit about the music business - it won't hold its horses to wait for it. Only the music business cares about the music business. In its naive and false pride has it fooled itself into believing it is invulnerable and respected by all. However, on the contrary, the world couldn't care less about the music industry and won't even flinch as it withers away.

The new system needs to come from a fresh, non-establishment source - or at least someone who has broken out of the establishment - since it won't change itself. This is partly born out by the extreme conservatism shown by the industry over the past 10 years, but also because it is not the nature of an establishment to make changes. Change is largely perceived as a potential threat to their position of power. Therefore, all changes needs to come from below.

Although the industry will shrink, the potential will still be sizable since whoever manages to come up with a new idea or product that supports the new system will have a great opportunity to ably position themselves within the new industry.

As the system of today reels and writhes in its foundations, ceasing to function before the new decade

has passed, there is no valid reason for any artist to adjust to the old system of today. What's the point of decorating a room in a house earmarked for demolition?

The music business is standing at a breakpoint. As the boat sinks the question now is who will stay on board and who will abandon ship and swim for shore, where a new vessel can be built to better stand the new climate.

Well, well, sad tunes, huh? Actually, not at all! The fact is that this development is only bad news to a few individuals. For the rest of us it's fantastic and hugely beneficial, and not simply in terms getting free access to music and film, but in relieving all costs, borders and delay to obtain access to ALL information across the globe. **The benefit to mankind is so monumental that it cannot be compared to anything that we have experienced before.**

This movement is part of something much greater and we all need to expand our perspectives to realise the enormous value and potential that lies within it.

It is time for the world to fully understand that we are entering an era where everything that can be digitalised will be - your pictures, texts, opinions, songs ... everything! The borders have been breached and it is now much too late to go back. The downloading of music is only one small part of this gigantic framework and to only have one form of information out there floating around, and not all, is neither possible or desirable. Needless to say, to install a system that can separate copyright protected material from non-copyright protected material is simply inconceivable.

Mankind will become more knowledgeable, wiser, smarter and ultimately stronger by this development. We don't expect that established artists will celebrate, but everyone else should.

That a bizocalypse – when companies and whole industries crumble when faced with new techniques – occurs now and then is nothing new and the bizocalypses will only intensify as the technological development increases its speed. One beautiful example is the Swedish company Facit, who were the world-leading manufacturer of mechanical calculators during the 1960s. By 1970 Facit were a ubiquitous presence around the globe with over 14,000 employees based in 140 countries, and boasting an annual turnover of more than \$100,000,000. However, only two years later they filed for bankruptcy. The reason for their swift demise is credited to their failure to acknowledge the superiority of modern

digital calculators and adapt to meet the new demands. Sound familiar? People should be pleased that they are no longer around providing the world with useless products.

This debate needs to be taken to another level. It is no longer relevant or even interesting to discuss whether someone has the moral right or not to exclusively demand rights to ones music or ideas. It is not at all as clear-cut as the music business and various law enforcement institutions claim.

The copyright is definitely not a holy natural right that people acquire at birth. The concept that as soon as someone has an idea they also have the right to it is absurd. Copyright is something that is claimed and needs supporters to then assert the claim. There is nothing wrong in trying to capitalise on ones ideas but it is important to realise that this is not a given right that everyone automatically must agree to and respect.

We are not arguing that one does not have the right to ones idea, but we are not arguing in favour of it either. Our point here is that the issue is much more complicated than what the copyright holders and their opponents choose to make it.

Nevertheless, there is no need to feel moral pity for musicians as they themselves are skilled in the art of thievery. There is not a music producer in the world who doesn't have drawers stuffed with stolen samples, and there is not a successful vocalist who hasn't copied the style of another singer. Every piece of music is at least in part based on an earlier form of music first conceived by someone else. A musician that accuses someone of stealing is a hypocrite.

It should also be asked if it is not more appropriate to charge for a product after it's been used, as is the case with restaurants, massage and taxi, for example. How many times have you paid for a movie that on viewing you found to be rubbish or bought an album to later find out that two thirds of the songs are just filler?

Even the music business itself is confused by the issue of copyright, since it only claims copyright for the 50 or 100 years after the author is dead. This is weird. How do you defend this viewpoint? Shouldn't it be that one either has the right to the songs or doesn't? The moral opinions are ill founded and confusing and it is of course not difficult to understand that the labels arguments' are motivated less by morals than by profits.

It is important that the people in power realise how messed up the moral debate is, but even more so that they understand how paralysed they and the record companies both are. Any attempt to fight the files sharers will fail. If a politician fails it will just be another black mark on their resume but the consequences for society could be much worse.

To support the record companies and challenge the torrent communities is a huge waste of resources, money and labour. Some random files sharers will be punished but for no use. Maybe they will win some stages but in the long run they will be outclassed so any effort made will ultimately be wasted. The question is how much damage will be caused and how much blood will be spilled on their path to surrender.

The trial against Pirate Bay is one such example of hollow action that won't change a thing. What's more as Pirate Bay were never responsible for hosting any illegal files it is also a gross miscarriage of justice.

Sweden has once again distinguished itself internationally as being an unfortunate mix of visionary geniuses with world class expertise (Nobel, Linné, Kamprad mm) - in this case Pirate Bay - and nervous sops intent on making politically correct decisions - in this case Tingsrätten (Stockholm local court).

When artists, filmmakers, software programmers and more realise the futility of copyright claims and decide to cease such endeavours thereafter, Pirate Bay will be acknowledged and hailed as visionaries and pioneers and be admired for their uncompromising strategy to speed the inevitable advance towards free information.

Rednex is enormously proud to be associated with Pirate Bay, who push human and technical development to new heights, and it will be a true pleasure to watch the pointless and inefficient record companies vanish and become nothing but a fossil in the lush digital jungle.

Obviously the existence of torrents and Pirate Bay have meant that Rednex have lost out massively over the years, but we have long since realised that it is pointless to fight against this torrent, and so celebrate a digital development that will enrich humanity on many levels.

Somehow we will attempt to uphold a profitable business regardless, but it will be a gamble. We will try to get people to donate money or become members at RednexMusic.com where people can also buy songs for only 30 cents. We hope that, together with income from shows, films, commercials and sponsors, this will be enough to keep us alive and well. It is a shaky business but amidst the chaos beginning to engulf the industry, there is no other alternative than to experiment and plant one boot firmly in the future.

Biography:

Rednex is one of very few artists that has lasted on the charts for 15 years and sold more than 10 million records thanks to a dozen Top 10 hits. The project was created by fluke in 1992 and literally exploded into fame in 1994 just days after its first release – “Cotton Eye Joe”. It became a massive hit, went to No.1 at record speed in 15 countries and is today a party classic which has sent the band repeatedly touring the world.

The follow-up releases also achieved significant success, including 4 other million-selling releases, and led to Rednex, for example, spending more weeks (25) at top of the German singles chart than any other act of the last 30 years, thanks to hits such as “Wish You Were Here” and “Spirit Of The Hawk”.



Being alone in their own unique and homemade genre has also made them popular in other media as they have been featured with various songs in 3 major Hollywood-productions and 3 high-profile nationwide TV-commercials, all within in the last 6 years.



In 2010 their 4th album, “Saturday Night Beaver”, is to be released. The first single from the album, “Devil's On The Loose”, will once again propel Rednex into major controversy due to its highly unlikely promotional strategy and underline Rednex's roll as the ugly duckling and black sheep of the music industry.

Rednex have always been frowned upon by the artist community and music media for its unconventional methods and appearances, but the alienation felt at being on the fringes of the music business seems to be something that attracts its members.

The band members today are female singer Scarlet (from UK) and the boys Dagger & Ace Ratclaw (from Sweden), and Joe Cagg (from Netherlands). Since 1994 15 performers featured in the group. By 2001 the band already consisted entirely of members who were not in the original line-up. The awkward set-up of Rednex allows for people to come and go as they please and so several of the performers have done just that. All of the performers in the band today are on their second round.



Rednex is highly different to other bands, mostly because it's not even a band - it is more like a project, a concept, a spirit or an attitude, or perhaps it is best described as a clan circled around an idea. Rednex consists of a loosely knit group of creative people – music producers, songwriters, stage performers, video artists, graphic designers, web programmers, marketeers etc.

They all create within the boundaries of a specified concept, the attributes of which consists, for example, the wild west, spirit of freedom, playfulness, carelessness of order and cleaning, positivity, adventure, high energy, party, provocation, high acceptance of variety, joy, as well as a lack of conflicting parts - snobbism, restrictions, trend-following, hip-factoring, pretentiousness, exclusivity, neatness etc.



This unique blend of traits is then put into a musical blend that is less easy to categorise – bluegrass, country, folk, techno, europop, alt. rock ...? On top of this it is being performed in a show unlike any other. What largely differentiates Rednex shows from others is their uncompromising level of energy - the party never stops! The amount of positive chaos is incomparable to anything else, taking performing to new levels that often stun the audience. It is not a rare occasion that a band member will pass out in the middle of the show.



All of this is the backbone of what is being created within Rednex. Since the Rednex expression originates from a concept that shapes the people within it - as opposed to almost all other artists, where the people shape the concept - it sharply differs itself from the generic pop product and as such receives much criticism, as other artists and media are constantly sceptical towards the genuineness and sincerity in this hobby-project.

Though in Rednex, no person is or will ever be especially important, or at least not in a way that the existence of the project will be dependent upon them.

Rednex was created in Stockholm in 1992 by three Swedish music producers – Jan Ericsson, Örjan Öberg and Pat Reiniz. They still own the trademark through the company Rednex AB. Today, Jan Ericsson has, after a 12 year long songwriting break from Rednex, supplied several tracks for the upcoming album including the hit single “Devil's On The Loose”.



Örjan Öberg has not been active in Rednex since 2001 and Pat Reiniz (a.k.a. Ranis), who also used to manage the project back in the day, is no longer active as a writer or producer as of 2003, but is still loosely involved in some of the administrative tasks. Neither of them spend much of their lives mingling in the music industry but instead focus on other activities.



However, the lack of centralised persons, undefined boundaries and timelessness of this playhouse is one of the two secret ingredients to its long-term success. Rednex is immortal, as immortal as the idea of music itself and it will always live on even when the people who originally started it are no longer active. Several of the people involved today hadn't even graduated junior high when Rednex was created.

The other secret ingredient to success is Rednex's ability to be a complete counterpoint to everything that the music business usually stands for – the glamour, celebrity status, glitter and gold, trend fascination, exclusivity etc. Almost no artist has the courage to perform ugly, dirty and drunk by intention, but for Rednex this is not an intention, we just don't give a shit and everyone is welcome to join us in doing so. We are too busy partying to bother.

The eventful and odds-defying history of Rednex is a story of great wonder, success and awards but also of turbulent conflicts, controversy and arrests. From the beginning the owners and producers of Rednex wrote a bogus biography that fooled the media into thinking the band was an inbred farmer family from Idaho, instead of the Swedish suburbanarians they actually were. It took 6 months before this was revealed.



In 2007, Rednex created controversy by becoming the first pop band to ever try selling itself at auction. The sale price of \$1,500,000 on eBay was highlighted, laughed at, and frowned upon all over the world. No deal was ever concluded, though at popbandforsale.com the whole project is still for sale. Due to the expected success coming out of the latest album release the owners have now raised the price to \$2,900,000.

During 2007 and 2008 the former performer Mary Joe (Annika Ljungberg) asserted a power of attorney in order to lead Rednex, but was fired immediately after the expiry of the contract due to contractual fraud. In the process she dishonoured the Rednex concept to her own benefit and made enemies with most people inside the group. However, this did not stop her, as she went on performing and selling her show illegally as Rednex for several months and even now is still occasionally found to be doing this in Norway. This conflict will reach its conclusion in court.

Needless to say, the piled up amount of controversy and original ways of performing, making music and dealing with things has made the relationship between Rednex and the music industry, the media and the conventional artist community somewhat tense.



Rednex defies and despises conventions. Rednex provokes and differs by intention. It is a lifestyle that is almost strategic and it has a strong purpose – because this is how one stays challenged and by doing so keeps growing and expanding. Many people relate this attitude to something destructive and desperate but Rednex have shown that it can be done with a smile and togetherness. There lives a little Rednex in all of you and it probably deserves to be given a lot more room.

www.RednexMusic.com

The logo for Rednex, featuring the word "REDNEX" in a bold, white, stylized font with a slight 3D effect, set against a dark red rectangular background.