



**SELINUS UNIVERSITY**  
OF SCIENCES AND LITERATURE

# Music Production and Mixing in the Style of ABBA

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## A Dissertation

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Faculty of Arts and Humanities in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Performing Arts

I do hereby attest that I am the sole author of this project/thesis and that its contents are only the result of the readings and research I have done.  
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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Dedication.....	2959
Acknowledgement.....	2960
Abstract .....	2961
Chapter One.....	2962
Introduction.....	2962
Background.....	2963
Research Objectives .....	2965
Methodology.....	2965
CHAPTER TWO.....	2966
Introduction.....	2966
The Rise of ABBA: Geopolitical Influences .....	2966
Scandinavian Melancholy: Shaping ABBA's Style.....	2966
ABBA's Influence on Music Today.....	2967
CHAPTER THREE.....	2968
Exploring the Band Members' History.....	2968
Benny Anderson: From Pre-ABBA to Musical Genius.....	2968
Bjorn Ulvaeus: Songwriting Talents and Collaborations.....	2969
Anni-Frid Lyngstad: The Underrated Mezzo Soprano .....	2969
Agnetha Falstskog: The Soprano Voice Powerhouse.....	2969
CHAPTER FOUR.....	2971
The ABBA Sound: Vocal Engineering Technique.....	2971
Pitch Shifting and Speed Alteration: Perfecting the Sound .....	2971
Unveiling the Vocal Over-Dubs: Importance and Effects.....	2971
Frida's Lower Harmonies: Enhancing the ABBA Sound .....	2972
CHAPTER FIVE.....	2974
Personal Journey: Applying ABBA's Techniques in Recording.....	2974
Secrets of the Trade: Expanding Vocal Range .....	2974
Equipment Limitations: Overcoming Challenges .....	2974
The Passion for Studio Work: From Singer to Producer.....	2975
CHAPTER SIX.....	2976
Introduction.....	2976
'Dancing Queen' A Vocal Engineering Masterpiece.....	2976
'Mamma Mia' Unveiling Harmonies and Over-Dubs.....	2976
A single Defining motif.....	2977
Instrumentation .....	2977
The chorus and the Texts That reflects emotions .....	2977
'The Winner Takes It All' Agnetha's Emotional Performance.....	2978
CHAPTER SEVEN.....	2979
Conclusion.....	2979
Summary of Findings .....	2979
Contribution to the Field.....	2979
Future Implications and Recommendations.....	2980
References .....	2981

## **DEDICATION**

This paper is dedicated to my late brother, James Nelson, a brilliant and talented artist. He had aspired to become an art teacher. It is appropriate that I include him on my journey of Higher Education. A journey he would have loved to take himself. In my mind, this project is for both of us. There is not a day that I do not think about him. He is in a better place now, doing what he loved to do, enjoying art and expressing it perfectly in the presence of the Almighty. "The one who loves, the one who sends, and the one who intercedes. "

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I am thankful that universities like Selinus University and others are beginning to recognize and understand that Higher Education is a human right and that mainstream universities are designed for younger students. Until recently, Higher Education has largely ignored older students and middle-aged adults. I genuinely believe universities such as Selinus University of Sciences and Literature are paving the way toward a new view of what Higher Education should look like and how it should be attainable to anyone who wishes to pursue it.

I also want to thank the participants who wish to remain anonymous for participating in the research and interviews I conducted while creating and writing my thesis.

## ABSTRACT

Music production and mixing constitute distinct yet inseparable components that play a pivotal and multifaceted role in the intricate landscape of successful music creation. Traditionally, music production has been elucidated as the meticulous process through which producers meticulously shape musical compositions to align with the creators' nuanced preferences and artistic visions. In parallel, mixing encompasses the fine-tuned adjustments of various elements, ranging from volume levels and dynamics to the intricate interplay of effects, orchestrating the final auditory tapestry before its eventual mastering. These intertwined realms of music production and mixing serve as the bedrock for artists, acting as transformative conduits that elevate their multi-track recordings from raw compositions to resonant symphonies. This synergistic process, involving meticulous adjustments in elements like levels, panning, and the intricate interplay of time-based effects, empowers artists to present their musical narratives with maximum impact, transcending auditory boundaries to reach the souls of listeners.

However, the importance of music mixing and production surpasses the mere technicalities of the craft. In spite, it inquires deeply into the emotional and psychological connections between the audience and the creators. This artistic synergy between the two realms creates a visceral experience that resonates with the listeners, leaving an indelible imprint that often transcends the realms of conscious perception. In this crossroads of creation and perception, the legendary musical ensemble Agnetha, Bjorn, Benny, Anni-Frid (ABBA) emerges as a quintessential example of an entity that harnessed a distinctive and innovative approach to music production and mixing. ABBA's sonic creations reverberate with a unique DNA that not only redefined the musical landscape of their era but, more significantly, continues to influence and redefine contemporary music production.

ABBA's trans-formative impact on music production and mixing is underscored by their audacious departure from conventional norms, defying the boundaries that restrained sonic experimentation. However, the paradigm they established is not an isolated phenomenon; instead, it has evolved, converging with modern technological advancements to shape the sonic experiences of today's musical generation. ABBA's unique amalgamation of production and mixing style reverberates through the core of modern music, echoing in the compositions of artists who navigate the evolving terrain of sound with nuanced respect for the past and audacious innovation for the future.

At the crux of ABBA's unparalleled influence is their unrivaled insight into the alchemy of perfect pop compositions. Their music weaves a delicate balance between repetition and the power of simplicity, creating infectious hooks that remain etched in the collective memory. This ethos paved the way for the rise of contemporary musical groups that have mastered the art of commanding audience attention through captivating, straightforward melodies. In essence, ABBA's legacy epitomizes a culture of pop maximal-ism that brilliantly straddles the realms of intellectual depth and musical simplicity, an intricate dance that has enthralled generations.

In conclusion, the dynamic interplay between music production and mixing forms the cornerstone of successful music creation. It offers a canvas upon which artists paint their narratives and listeners embark on trans-formative journeys. ABBA, through their ingenious manipulation of these realms, has not only rewritten the sonic narratives of their time but has left an enduring legacy that continues to reverberate in the modern musical landscape. Their fusion of repetition and catchy hooks underscores a masterful strategy that has influenced the emergence of a new generation of artists. ABBA's music production and mixing techniques encapsulate a profound truth: the beauty of sound transcends epochs, and the alchemy of emotion remains timeless.

*Keywords: ABBA Music Group, Music Production and Mixing Styles, Scandinavian Melancholy and Vocal Engineering Techniques.*

## CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

The concept of music production and mixing can be described as the process that entails the creation, recording, mixing, and mastering of various music tracks. In essence, it involves the input of selecting the most appropriate music equipment, setting up the studio, and guiding the creative process of song creation and writing process. In essence, the concept of music production is the act and art of taking a concept of music and transforming it into a final product that has been well polished, arranged, and ready for its distribution to the intended audience. The importance of music production and mixing in the global music industry has been understated for an extended period. This is against the backdrop that music production is an essential ingredient that plays a vital role in today's music industry. For instance, music production is essential because it ensures that the music tracks meet the required standards of the industry and are, therefore, of very high quality.

Contrary to the commonly held notion that music production is entirely the producer's duty, the artists also play a critical role in music production. However, it is the obligation and the duty of the music producer to guide the artists and ensure that the vision of the artists has been met and realized in the final product. Both the artists and producers can employ their expertise to enhance the music's overall sound quality and make it stand out. The success of the ABBA band was due to the collaboration between the artists and their producers, which is one of the reasons ABBA's music easily stands out from the rest.

Without the art of music production, the world's music industry and artists such as ABBA would not be in a position. They can produce high-quality music tracks that meet the expectations and demands of the audience. Essentially, this insinuates that the creative ambition and vision harbored by the artists could not be met or achieved. This also means that most talented artists would not be able to showcase their talent and abilities. In a nutshell, music production is an essential component of the music industry and a crucial process that is mandatory and crucial for the successful production of music tracks.

The history of music production has come a long way since ancient times, and it has continuously evolved to its current times. In the early days, music was recorded and produced onto wax cylinders using a gramophone, later replaced by vinyl records. The introduction of tape recorders eliminated the use of vinyl records. Over time, however, music production has continuously evolved with the introduction and adoption of new technologies, which have enhanced the music production process. With the assistance of digital technology, the music production process has become more affordable, efficient, and accessible. In addition, the introduction and adoption of digital audio workstations (DAWs) have greatly revolutionized music production by making it easier for producers to create high-quality music tracks. Today, Music production is regarded as a global phenomenon because it has made it easier for producers and artists to create and share their music with audiences. Over rally, the history and the process of music production are a testament to human creativity and innovation and the manners in which the introduction of technology has enabled artists to bring their music ideas to life and fruition.

Music production and mixing styles are essential parts that are mandatory for the successful completion of a music production process. Despite the important role of music production and mixing styles, the impact of the two musical concepts still needs to be better understood and underestimated. Very little or no effort has been employed to study the aspects of music production and mixing styles. This research stems from the music production and mixing styles which were efficiently used by the ABBA music band to produce their music and how the band's music production and mixing techniques have changed and defined today's music industry. This research paper has been divided into six chapters to achieve its objectives. Each chapter discusses a particular aspect of ABBA's music production and mixing styles.

In the first chapter, the researcher introduces the topic of discussion to the readers by providing a background of the ABBA music band. The researcher will extensively discuss the history of each member of the ABBA band. The core objectives of this research will also be discussed in this chapter. The researcher intends to inform the readers of the aims intended to be achieved within the scope of this research by the conclusion of this research. Last to be discussed in this first chapter is the research methodology employed by the researcher in this thesis dissertation. In this section, the researcher will extensively and exhaustively discuss the unique and distinct procedures and approaches used to identify, choose, process, and dissect information regarding the topic.

The main topic discussed in the second chapter is ABBA and the music industry. To begin with, the author will analyze the rise of ABBA and the geopolitical factors that influenced the rise of this band. Secondly, the researcher will explain how Scandinavian melancholy shaped and influenced ABBA's style. Lastly, ABBA's impact on today's music industry will also be further explained by the author of this research.

The third chapter is about the exploration of the band member's history. The researcher will discuss and explain each band member's history. First to be discussed in this section is Benny Anderson's journey from Pre-ABBA to musical genius. Bjorn Ulvaeus's songwriting talents and collaborations follow Benny Anderson's history. Thirdly, Anni-Frid Lyngstad's history as the underrated mezzo-soprano member of the group will be discussed. Lastly, Agnetha Failskog's history as the band's soprano powerhouse will be analyzed.

In the fourth chapter, the main focus of the researcher will be the topic "ABBA Sound: Vocal Engineering Techniques." The first issue to be discussed in this section is pitch shifting and speed alterations to perfect the sound. The next issue unveils the vocal over-dubs, their importance, and their effects. This will be closely followed by Frida's Lower harmonies and how they were used to enhance ABBA Sound. Lastly, dissecting the instrumentals and Agnetha's vocal contributions will be analyzed.

The issues canvassed and discussed in-depth by the author in the fifth chapter evolve around the personal journey and applying ABBA's techniques in a recording. To begin with, the researcher will explain the secrets of trade by expanding the vocal ranges. Secondly, the challenges faced by ABBA due to equipment limitations and how they overcame them will be analyzed. Lastly, the passion for studio work from singer to producer will be discussed. In the sixth chapter, which also doubles as the last chapter, the researcher will analyze various case studies by analyzing ABBA's hits. Some of ABBA's hits discussed in this section are "Dancing Queen," regarded as a vocal engineering masterpiece. This will be closely followed by "Mamma Mia," which is regarded as instrumental in unveiling harmonies and overdubs. The last ABBA hit to be discussed is "The Winner Takes It All," which has been voted to be the epitome of Agnetha's Emotional performance. The researcher will conclude this research by providing a comprehensive summary of the findings. Also discussed in this section are the contributions made by this research to the relevant field of music production and mixing styles. Lastly, the researcher will analyze some of the future implications of this research and recommendations that can be used to improve this research or remedy the implications.

### ➤ *Background*

Currently, the songs which were created, expertly written, and produced by Bjorn Ulvaeus and Benny Anderson are still interpreted stridently with affection and devotion by Agnetha Fältskog, and Anni-Frida is still regarded as an essential part which forms the global musical canon. In the 21st century, ABBA musical band and their music are believed to be more popular than ever before. ABBA debuted as a quartet cabaret act under the stage name Festolk. When they began to gain and attract more international recognition after participating in the Euro-vision song contest, the band's manager Stig Anderson changed the group's name to ABBA, the acronym for the first letters of their name when arranged in palindrome. ABBA is a Swedish musical band that was established in 1972 by the following group members; vocalist Agnetha Fältskog, songwriter and guitarist Björn Ulvaeus, Benny Andersson, who was a song composer and pianist, and Anni-Frid Lyngstad who was also a vocalist. In essence, ABBA is often regarded as a Swedish Euro-pop group whose hits dominated the global music charts in the early 1970s and later culminated in the historic commercial success that the group enjoyed in the landscape of pop music. Bjorn Ulvaeus and Benny Anderson initially formed ABBA in June 1966. In the spring of 1969, Benny and Bjorn met Agnetha and Anna-Frid and included them in their group. The group produced an impressive number of hit singles which topped the charts. Some of the famous and chart-topping hits produced by ABBA were "Dancing Queen," produced in 1976, "Knowing Me, Knowing You," a 1977 production, and "Super Trouper," which they produced in 1980. ABBA was famous for its flexibility because its members could sing various music genres, including disco, rock, rock and roll, dance music, glam rock, Euro-pop, and pop rock. Most of the songs produced by this group also won numerous awards, including the world music award for Best-selling Artist in Sweden in 1993 and the Grammys Honorary Award. Besides, ABBA was also awarded Grammis Award-Special Prize in 2022 and the Grammis Award for Music DVD. ABBA was officially disbanded in December 1982. The break-up of the group was instigated and influenced by the existing personal tension between the members, which was triggered by the divorce of the married couples in the band. Anderson and Ulvaeus continued to write, produce, and write music for various entities as the rest pursued solo careers.

Several decades later, ABBA has influenced and defined today's music industry. ABBA influences today's music industry because of the music production style and mixing styles ABBA employed in its music production. This is because many of the classical and catchy hits that ABBA produced were due to intuitive creativity by the group members. Some of the production techniques and styles ABBA used to produce and mix their music are as follows. According to the words of ABBA's Agnetha Fältskog, the epitome of their successful work was the studio work, which was also the best part of it all. They used their time in the studios to shape and interpret the songs. ABBA members did this by fragmenting the tunes. The sentiments of Agnetha have been echoed by the other band members, who also attested that they used their music studio as the testing room for developing and fine-tuning their musical compositions.

ABBA's music has remained and continued to be popular because of the various music production and mixing techniques adopted by this band in their music production. It is essential to note that ABBA's music production styles were primarily influenced by several key figures and innovations that have significantly contributed to the evolution of the music production process. For example, Les Paul influenced and shaped their music production and mixing style of recording several pieces of music simultaneously. The band's 'Wall of Sound' technique entails layering multiple instruments and vocal tracks to create a dense orchestral sound. Another influential figure whose music production technique has been broadly adopted by ABBA is Brian Eno, who introduced ambient music.

Another music production and mixing technique employed by the group was either waltz or tango. For instance, it has been established that on most occasions, it was the duty of Bjorn and Benny to commence everything by coming together with Hawaiian guitar and a keyboard and trying to compose songs. They would occasionally throw fragments of tunes and select

the ones they deemed to fit their lyrics. The first procedure they employed in recording their songs was to bring together an instrumental backing track. The songs were recorded with the support of several backing musicians whose composition comprised a plank player, a bass player, and a drum player. This enabled them to select the best tempo for the song and provide room for the arrangement of their songs, which could be tango or waltz.

Vocal mixes were another music production and mixing style that ABBA used to produce their songs. This technique is quite famous in most of the group's songs and was responsible for highlighting numerous vocals and musical passages buried or mixed out of the final released songs. On most occasions, the entire verses were either edited or entirely removed from the song versions produced by the group. The objective of the vocal mixes style employed by ABBA was to edit and mix out of the final version, thus making them perfect pop records. The recordings also demonstrated the great effort employed and went into the numerous layers of vocal overdubs that could be barely heard in the backing "choir" on record.

In addition to the above mentioned techniques and styles, which ABBA effectively used in their music production process, the band also employed several pre-production techniques. Pre-production is essential in music production because it sets the foundation for the rest of the music production process. Therefore, in the case of ABBA, employing and implementing various pre-production techniques were crucial for successfully implementing their techniques, which also resulted in a positive outcome. The following are some of the pre-production techniques ABBA adopted and implemented.

Concept development was the first pre-production technique adopted and implemented by ABBA in producing their music. ABBA used this pre-production technique to identify their music's overall sound, mood, style and intended audience. Bjorn worked hand in hand with Anderson to create a clear and concise concept that guided the creative process of ABBA's song creation process. The second pre-production process utilized by ABBA in their music production and mixing technique was songwriting and arrangement. Once they established a music concept, the producer and ABBA band members shifted their focus to songwriting and arrangement. They did this by selecting the appropriate instrument for the song and creating a melody while at the same time structuring the songs, which they regarded as a key process. By closely working with their producers, ABBA was able to ensure that their songs were well crafted and this made the songs to resonate well with the audience. The selection of equipment and setting up of the studio was another pre-production technique that ABBA heavily relied on. Their producers played a significant role in selecting the right equipment and setting up the studio for recording. Some of the activities which ABBA did in this phase include the selection of microphones, instruments, and other relevant equipment. In addition, arranging the space to achieve optimal sound quality was another activity they engaged in during this pre-production technique.

Regarding recording, which involves capturing the sound produced by the instruments and the vocals, ABBA employed the following effective recording techniques. They effectively adopted the microphone placement technique to capture high-quality sounds. ABBA achieved this by experimenting with different microphone positions to find the optimal placement suitable for each instrument and vocalist. Monitoring and adjusting the levels during the recording process was another effective recording technique used by ABBA. During the recording process, ABBA's producer closely monitored the sound levels and adjusted them where necessary. This was purposely done to ensure that each instrument and the added vocal track were recorded at the most appropriate and suitable volume and that the sound was balanced.

ABBA's live stage performance has been described to be among the best, if not the best. The secret behind the successful stage performance by ABBA was the capturing and best performance technique that ABBA employed. To achieve this, the group focused on creating a comfortable and supportive environment and emphasizing the mixing and mastering process. The two effective mastering techniques ABBA used in their songs were; balancing and EQing tracks, more so during the mixing process. It was the mandate of ABBA's producer to balance the levels of each track and also to adjust the EQ. This was purposely done to ensure a clear definition of each vocal and instrument involved in producing ABBA's songs. Secondly, it was also the role of ABBA's producers and the members to add effects by processing each of the tracks to establish and create a precise depth and character of the sound. Some aspects of this technique include compression, delay, and reverb.

The background of this research paper is based on the success of ABBA, which can be attributed to the band's music production and mixing styles. There are numerous ways through which ABBA has influenced, changed, and defined today's music industry. To begin with, most of the artists and music bands have been influenced by ABBA's music production and arrangement. Like ABBA, most bands and music groups do not simply write songs nowadays. Instead, they have been motivated by ABBA's success in producing outstanding records. Secondly, ABBA has continued to shape the pop music people know and love today through their rich legacy. Despite being disbanded four decades ago, the group's achievements have paved the way for Swedish dominance in music. Besides, most of ABBA's album roll-out is adopted by modern times. For example, songs such as Voyage, written in the 1970s, were just released now. In addition, ABBA also influenced today's music industry because it changed the traditional ways of singing.

ABBA sang most of their songs in English. Traditionally, the majority of the countries which were competing in Euro-vision sang and composed their songs in their native languages. With its sights set on world dominance, ABBA knew that a number-one

hit had to be sung in English. ABBA are the pioneers in upsetting the status quo, a trend modern singers have adopted. ABBA's infectious melodies, impeccable harmonies, and genial chord progressions have been critical in shaping and evolving pop music. As a result, ABBA's music has inspired most of the current pop singers. In a nutshell, ABBA has changed and defined today's music industry by continuously infiltrating the other realms of popular culture since the 1990s.

#### ➤ *Research Objectives*

The core objective of this study focuses on how ABBA has changed and defined the music industry by emphasizing the music production and mixing styles of the ABBA music group. This is the central question intended to be addressed in this research, as suggested by the thesis statement. Due to technological advancements, music production and mixing styles have drastically changed in the 21st century. Through an ethnographic case study of the Swedish music band ABBA, this dissertation explores ABBA's music production and mixing styles that have made them continue influencing, shaping, and defining the current music industry despite ABBA disintegrating almost four decades ago. Music production and mixing styles in this dissertation refer to and are also understood as the way of making music, and this encompasses all the processes involved from composing songs, singing, writing the song lyrics, performing, and programming the drums and guitars. Therefore, this study explores and analyzes ABBA's music production and mixing styles by interrogating the possible reasons that have made ABBA music continue defining and shaping today's music industry. This paper has, therefore, three main objectives;

- To gauge the extent to which ABBA has influenced today's music industry.
- To get to know the music production and styles ABBA employs in their music production.
- Based on the above, this study aims to interrogate how ABBA's music production and mixing styles have enabled this group to continue influencing, shaping, and defining the music industry.

#### ➤ *Methodology*

It is now the appropriate time to develop a comprehensive methodology for research into ABBA's music production and mixing styles and how they have continued to shape and define today's music industry. This research study has adopted a quantitative methodology of an interpretive nature. Given the aim above, a phenomenological illustrative method was adopted to collect the participants' encounters. Following the guidelines and the outlines of the inaugural procedure, the crucial and instinctive aspects of the participants' encounters were accentuated, thus revealing what was relevant and important according to the participants' views and perceptions, attitudes, and emotions (Massot et al., 2004).

With this objective, three music producers were interviewed because they were regarded as key players and pacesetters in the music industry. The procedure and process adopted in the selection process of the three participants strictly followed a non-probabilistic deliberate testing method (Martinez, 2007). The following procedure was followed:

- *The Interviews were Selected on the Following Basis*
- ✓ They work in the mainstream music industry
- ✓ They have performed and signed for some major record labels
- ✓ They are currently working in the music industry.

All the persons who were interviewed who agreed to participate in this study did so to their volition and will. They had also voluntarily agreed to sign the consent form. The data collected from the interviewees were recorded to protect the incognito status and the privacy of the interviews and the results collected. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the three participants. The decision to use semi-structured interviews was informed by the fact that it was much easier to collect evidence, which was impossible with other methods. Moreover, semi-structured interviews also included assumptions, viewpoints, and principles. The interviews followed a plan that included pre-arranged, chronological succession and paced scripts. Numerous documents on music production and mixing styles were analyzed in designing it.

During the interview, the interviewers played a non-aligned role and used a non-descriptive technique to keep a trusted environment. From this, the researcher was able to obtain all the relevant information. This was important because it provided a crucial assurance that the interventions of the researcher did not contaminate the interview results. The data collection and collating process was done systematically, intentionally, and objectively so that the information collected could be easily verified using a scientific method. For analysis purposes, the semi-structured interviews collected were audio-recorded and transcribed.

## CHAPTER TWO INTRODUCTION

### ➤ *Introduction*

It has been established that there exists a relationship between music and geopolitics. Music has been used to express anti-establishment and protest themes, including anti-war, anti-government, and pro-establishment songs. Geopolitics is critical in defining, shaping, and influencing music production in a particular region. The establishment and the growth of one of the legendary and popular Swedish groups, ABBA, were influenced and affected by the geopolitical issues at that particular time in Europe. This chapter will discuss the rise of ABBA and the geopolitical issues that influenced its rise, the Scandinavian melancholy and how it shaped ABBA's style, and the impact of ABBA in today's music industry.

### ➤ *The Rise of ABBA: Geopolitical Influences*

The story of ABBA began in Sweden in June 1966 when Bjorn Ulvaeus and Benny Anderson met for the first time and decided to work together. Bjorn belonged to the Hootenanny Singers group, while Benny played keyboards in another popular and big Swedish pop group, The Help Stars. Bjorn and Benny wrote their first song a few weeks after their first meeting, which is how they established a regular partnership as composers. It was not until the summer of 1969 that Bjorn and Anderson met Agnetha Faltskog and Anni-Frid Lyngstad, who later became their fiancées. ABBA group was officially established in the spring of 1972 when the group recorded its first song, "People Need Love," which gained massive popularity in Sweden, and the group's popularity began to rise as it began to attract global attention. Since its establishment, the ABBA music group's rise was propelled and propagated by several factors, including the geopolitical issues during that particular time. Geopolitical issues had a major effect on the music production and mixing styles of the ABBA music group.

Concerning the topic subject matter, political geography has attracted substantial attention from visual culture. According to Kirby (2019), the aural has been considered mostly through spoken words on the radio or through popular music. The geopolitics of instrumental music is yet to be considered in depth. Street (2013) adds that popular music tends to be much more introspective and parochial because it does not focus on international affairs and global politics. However, there are several instances where popular music, as in the case of ABBA, is influenced by political issues and other issues that affect the relationships between states (Street, 2013). Music is produced and circulated as a sonic art form, making it operate distinctly from written or visual words. The rise of ABBA was influenced mostly by the geopolitics of Euro-vision ranging from wars to power ballads.

European countries' member states were faced with a lot of geopolitical issues, which greatly affected the relationship between member states. Several geopolitical issues affected Europe during the ABBA music band's existence. Some geopolitical issues include developments in Eastern Europe, largely influenced by the Soviet Union's policy towards Europe. The civil wars happened in different parts of Europe and Sweden's neutrality during the cold war. Geopolitics affected music production, influencing the themes and styles of ABBA's music, from the legacy of both country and subversive folk music, world peace and protest music, and the role of ABBA's music in the 1970s and 1980s to the creation of the worldwide underground heavy metal movement and nuclear-focused mainstream pop. The geopolitical issues influenced ABBA to create a thread of music that reflected the generational change. Geopolitical issues also influenced ABBA's music production because it made it switch to writing, producing, and singing its songs in English, a radical shift from the tradition of music being sung in native languages. Moreover, popular pop music also gained traction when European countries faced several geopolitical issues. Initially, the diplomatic use of popular music had been limited to certain genres of music, such as jazz; however, geopolitical issues made other music genres, for example, pop, be appreciated, and thus pop music culture, which ABBA was advocating for gained popularity, so was ABBA music band.

Geopolitical issues of the cold war, capitalism, and communism also greatly influenced the music production of ABBA. ABBA infused American pop culture, which was quite popular in Eastern Europe, in their music production, which made them gain global attention. ABBA music, therefore, gained global attention even in the countries and continents where it was not popular. Even though ABBA was not as popular in America as in other countries, it still performed extremely well, with its hit "Dancing Queen" topping the charts in the United States. The other songs of the group also performed fairly well.

### ➤ *Scandinavian Melancholy: Shaping ABBA's Style*

ABBA's music is believed to have lit the way in the lives of music lovers because ABBA's songwriters gave much of themselves when composing melancholic music, making most of their songs more intense and personal. Scandinavian melancholy is associated with the sad effect of some of ABBA's songs, particularly "Dancing Queen." ABBA's music production style of thick melancholy in every piano chord and the unmistakable, immediate singable nature of the chorus are all parts of its power. This can be heard when listening to "Dancing Queen" around the 2.57 mark brings agony instead of joy. This has made The Dancing Queen to be regarded as the saddest song to have been sung by ABBA. Another song that has the potential to make someone cry is ABBA as one watches as one sings along. Technology played a pivotal role as recorded sounds or the cinema tents and the footage of the oncoming trains can make the audience cream. The melancholic songs made ABBA's music to be shunned in most of the clubs in Sweden until the early 1980s when the lyrics focused on and reflected the unraveling of domestic unions, which

provided the couples in the group with uncommon cohesion. The sense of gravity indicated above appeared in far more serious lyrics accompanied by much heavier beats. Sorrow helped ABBA to progress and grow instead of sticking to the rut. The emphatic rhythms also played out the post-amorous tension in the song "Lay All Your Love on Me" and the "Visitors Anthem."

➤ *ABBA's Influence on Music Today*

The music and the Influence of ABBA have continued infiltrating the other realms of popular culture and today's music industry since the group's inception. How ABBA has influenced, shaped, and defined today's music industry has become a relevant topic of discussion and interest, forming the basis of this study. ABBA's rich legacy has continued influencing today's music industry in numerous ways, as explained below.

To begin with, despite having busted into the world music stage 40 years ago, the ABBA group remains highly regarded as the most influential and successful band of all time. ABBA did not simply write songs. Instead, they made great records, and this was regarded as their great secret. The secrecy was hidden in ABBA's music production; mixing and arrangement styles created great pop music visions. ABBA music production, arrangement, and mixing styles have been adopted by most of today's pop and rock music producers and singers. This is because ABBA's success has influenced the producers and singers, and they have been motivated to become successful as ABBA.

ABBA burst into the music industry at a time when rock and roll were at its peak following the break-up Beatles group. ABBA's music stood out because it focused only on albums as a complete work. Each of ABBA's songs addressed and spoke to the citizens of their native country Sweden, Europe, and the rest of the world. ABBA's music carried messages of hope which represented hopeful dreams that could become true one day despite the ongoing global conflicts at that particular time. ABBA's music style was adopted by most of today's musicians, who have blended their music to carry the messages of hope and information, which they communicate to the members of the public and their supporters. Just as ABBA used Scandinavian melancholy to evoke the emotions of music lovers, most of the songs produced today also can spark emotions when listened to. The song lyrics carry various messages of hope, inspiration, and creating awareness (Pretorius et al., 2015). Like ABBA, today's musicians have used loudness and volume to convey the intensity and power of emotions, including anger. Another important aspect of ABBA's music production style that has influenced today's music production is the use of melodies to communicate emotions (Johansson, 2010). For example, complimenting harmonies has been used to show happiness, relaxation, relaxation, and serenity. On the other hand, clashing harmonies have been used to communicate excitement, unpleasantness, and anger (Walters, 2015).

ABBA has also influenced and made the careers of some renowned and popular pop and rock artists, such as Madonna, Britney Spears, Taylor Swift, and the Weekend. The infectious melodies, impeccable harmonies, and genial chord progression have shaped, to a large extent, the evolution of pop music from 1970 to date (Lexhagen et al., 2019). Swedish popular band ABBA are the real royals of pop music. Even today, most people associate ABBA with glittery disco outfits because they strongly believe that today's pop music could not have existed without the input and repertoire of ABBA (Mansky, 2018)

## CHAPTER THREE

### EXPLORING THE BAND MEMBERS' HISTORY

#### ➤ *Exploring the Band Members' History*

The majority of music lovers who are conversant with the culture of Sweden, most of them will attest that pop music has played a crucial role which is evidenced by the Eurovision music concerts that have been held. Most of the Swedish bands have registered better performances in most of the Eurovision concerts. Even though many bands from Sweden have graced Eurovision music, they have yet to dazzle the world with glittering and dazzling musical success as the ABBA band. The ABBA pop band rose to prominence and gained publicity during the 1970s and later became one of the most successful bands in pop music history. ABBA succeeded in the pop music industry because it gave the much-needed flavour to pop music, catapulting them to the international music scene. The band, which consisted of four members, succeeded and managed to transcend the national borders within Sweden and other European countries such as Germany, England, Spain, England, Scandinavian countries, and the Netherlands. ABBA band branded itself as one of the most successful brands, raking in much money in foreign exchange. As had been explained earlier in this study, this popular musical band was made up of four talented singers and music composers, namely vocalist and keyboard player Benny Anderson, guitarist and vocalist Bjorn Ulvaeus, singers Anni-Frid Lyngstad and Agnetha Falstskog. Given that one of the most important aspects in marketing is an aspect of brand name, the group of four singers mentioned above selected a brand name that made it easier for the fans to relate with the works of the band, and that is how they settled on the ABBA. ABBA is an acronym for the group members' first letters. Each of the four group members brought significant contributions to the group in a unique manner because they were all talented differently.

#### ➤ *Benny Anderson: From Pre-ABBA to Musical Genius.*

The successful history of the ABBA band cannot be complete without mentioning Benny Anderson, one of the two main contributors to the spectacular success of the group. Goran Bror Benny Anderson is a Swedish musician, composer, and producer best known as a leading and pioneer member of the ABBA music band. He was born on December 16, 1946, in Vasastan district in Stockholm. His parents were Gosta Anderson and Laila. His father was a civil engineer and a musician. His mother was a musician too. His only sibling was Eva-Lis Anderson. Benny Anderson spent much of his youth in the suburb of Vällingby, where he spent most of his time learning how to play the accordion while his father and grandfather taught him how to sing Swedish folk and traditional music. His music journey began when he was six years old when he got his accordion and played it with his father and grandfather, Efraim. As a young talented music lover, Benny was impressed and motivated by established Italian singers Caterina Valente and Elvis Presley. This music later influenced him in his career and throughout the years. When he was ten years old, Anderson bought his piano and practiced playing it until he eventually knew how to play the piano. He dropped out of school when he was 15 and began performing in clubs. During this time, he met his first girlfriend, Christina Gronvall, with whom they later sired two children, Peter and Helene.

In early 1964, Anderson and Christiana joined 'Elverket Spellmanslag,' which can be translated as 'The Electric Board Folk Music Group,' a reference to their electrical instruments. Anderson left the group and joined Help Stars in October 1964 as a keyboardist, and Help Stars became one of the most successful Swedish bands in the 1960s. While in this band, he began to write and compose his songs. Some of the songs written and composed by Anderson were 'No Response' 'Sunny Girl,' which was his first big hit, and 'Consolation.' Anderson met Bjorn in June 1966 and began composing music together. The first song they composed was 'Isn't it Easy to Say,' which was recorded by Help Stars. As their friendship grew, so was their desire to collaborate. They formed their own publishing company Union Songs, together with Stig Anderson. He met Anni-Frid Lyngstad when he was recording their first Album, *Lycka*, in 1970, where they asked the ladies to provide vocals for them. 'Hej Gamle Man' was the first song in which Benny featured all the future members of ABBA. Buoyed by the success of their single hit 'People Need Love,' Benny led others in officially forming the ABBA band.

During Benny's time at ABBA, he critically composed, sang, performed, and produced some of the band's biggest and most famous hits. These songs include 'Waterloo,' televised at the Euro-vision Concert and became an instant international hit. The hits were 'SOS,' 'I Do, I Do,' 'Mama Mia,' 'Dancing Queen,' 'Money, Money, Money,' and 'Does Your Mother Know.' Benny married his fellow band member Anni-Frid-Lyngstad in 1978, and they divorced in 1981.

Benny continued to write, compose and produce songs with Bjorn after the disbanded of the group in 1981. He also collaborated with Tim Rice, a well-known lyricist, and some of the songs that they produced were 'I Know him so Well' and 'One Night in Bangkok. Musical Chess was another classical hit produced during his collaboration with Tim Rice. Benny later shifted to producing music when working with the duo group Gemini, the pop group Ainbusk, and the folk outfit Orsa Spelman. In 1987, Benny released his first individual solo album 'Klinga Mina Klockor,' featuring an eclectic folk, classical, and pop-influenced sound. He produced another solo hit 'November 1989' released in 1989. Benny worked with Bjorn again, supplying most of the songs for Josefin Nilsson's 1993 album *Shapes*. In 1995, Benny premiered his long in the works second music production, 'Kristina Fran Duvemala Moberg,' an epic Swedish-Language music based on Wilhelm Moberg's the Immigrant Novels. Benny's song 'Lassie,' sung by an all-female cabaret group Ainbusk scored a Swedish number-one hit. In 1992, Benny wrote the introduction melody for the European football championship in Sweden that year. Benny made a grand return to the pop territory, producing and writing songs for Nilsson's album *Shapes* in English. Besides, Benny and Benny were actively involved in the musical 'Mama

Mia' production based on the true story of ABBA. The story was done by Catherine Johnson and produced by Judy Craymer.

As a solo artist, Anderson spent much of his time performing with his group Benny Anderson Okester (BAO). He has scored several hits with his band chief, among them 2001 self-titled album effort, 2004 BAO, 2007 BAO, and 2011's O Klang Och Jubeltid. Benny Anderson has also ventured into the field of film music, and he has written several films for both screens and television. Benny has also won several awards as an individual and a group with the ABBA band. Some of these awards are Tony Award, Drama Desk Award, and four Swedish Grammy Awards.

➤ *Bjorn Ulvaeus: Songwriting Talents and Collaborations*

Bjorn Kristian Ulvaeus was born in Gothenburg on April 25th 1945. He is a celebrated and popular Swedish musician, singer, songwriter, and producer. He is a pioneer member of the Swedish pop band ABBA. He played a critical role in the band as a co-composer of the musicals and films. He was born to Aina Eliza Victoria and Erick Gunner Ulvaeus. His family moved to Vastervik when he was six years old, in this small town where Bjorn grew up. Bjorn began his singing career with a Swedish folk music group, Schlager band known as Hootenanny Singers. This group was previously known as West Singers Bay. He met his longtime music partner Benny when he was on a journey to southern Sweden with his Hootenanny group band in 1966. They wrote their first song, 'Isn't it Easy to Say.'

Before officially joining Benny and ABBA, Bjorn recorded several solo singles. In 1968, Bjorn collaborated with Anderson, producing two songs 'A Flower in My Garden' and 'Ljuva Sextiotal,' whose lyrics were written by Stig Anderson. Apart from being a talented songwriter, Bjorn was also talented in playing various instruments, including guitars. He had a knack for writing irresistible hooks and melodies embedded in popular culture. Bjorn collaborated with Benny in writing, composing, and producing numerous hit songs after the disbandment of their group. He and Benny collaborated with Gemini and Josefin Nilsson, working on several pop albums. In his collaboration with Benny, Bjorn ventured into writing a new music genre. They opted to compose songs in Swedish in producing the song Kristina från Duvemåla in 1995. Bjorn was also actively engaged in the production of the song Mama Mia which was based on ABBA songs. In addition, Bjorn also played a critical role in writing the lyrics of two lesser ABBA songs. He officially reunited with ABBA in 2018. Bjorn also collaborates with other artists and producers who were not members of ABBA. On April 15, 2013, Bjorn, alongside producer Avicii and Swedish DJ Anderson, were contracted by EBU to compose the 2013 Eurovision Song Contest Anthem. He also collaborated with Anderson Carlsson in writing the English lyrics of Tomas Ledin's song jukebox music.

Bjorn married Agnetha Fältskog on July 6, 1971, whom he later divorced in 1978. They had two children, Peter and Linda Ulvaeus. He is currently the president of the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC), a position he has held since 2016.

➤ *Anni-Frid Lyngstad: The Underrated Mezzo Soprano*

Anni Frid Lyngstad, known by her stage name Frida was born on November 15, 1945, in Ballangen, located on the outskirts of Narvik Township in Norway. She is an accomplished Swedish singer and a founding member of ABBA. She was born to Synni Lyngstad and Alfred Haase. Her family, consisting of her mother and grandmother, moved to Sweden when she was eighteen months old. Anni-Frid Lyngstad grew up with her grandmother after her mother's death when she was barely two. She began her colorful music career when she was eleven years old. Her passion and love for music were influenced by her grandmother, who occasionally sang her old Norwegian songs. She made her first debut at a Red Cross event, and for two years, she began to work as a singer and dancer with Evald Ek's Orchestra band. Her mellow soprano voice made her win a talent contest in September 1967 in Stockholm. EMI Records signed her after her victory. Anni only registered much success as a recording artist once she joined ABBA. She released her first solo titled "Frida, Islam," meaning Frida Alone 1975. Despite not having commercial success as a recording artist, she was a well-known stage singer. Frida began recording her solo English language album in February 1982, produced by Phil Collins. She also released another album Shine which Steve Lillywhite produced.

Anni-Frid Lyngstad is regarded as the singer with the best voice in ABBA, even though most people prefer Agnetha because of her tonal quality and pure pop sound (Thomas, 2021). Without a doubt, Frida has the best and the finest voice in pop music worldwide because her voice is so versatile. Her voice sounded rocky, warm, metallic, operatic, and soft. Besides, Frida also had an excellent vibrato which made her able to sing cleanly and on-pitch. Frida's voice was so buoyant and light; it was also strong and vigorous. In essence, her voice matured with natural ease. She gained self-assurance in singing even though she was not a trained opera singer. Frida and Benny Anderson got married in 1978 and divorced in 1981.

➤ *Agnetha Falstskog: The Soprano Voice Powerhouse*

Agnetha Falstskog is a famous Swedish singer, songwriter, and Swedish pop band ABBA member. She was born on April 5, 1950, in the Swedish town of Jonkoping. She began her music career journey at six when she wrote her first song, "Tva sma troll." Her parents were Ingvar and Margareta Falstskog. By 1958, Agnetha had already begun her piano lessons and sang in her local church choir (Gould, 2013). Her friends Lena, Johansson, and Elizabeth formed a music trio group, the Cambers. At 15, she quit school and focused on her music career. Agnetha joined Bernt Enghardts dance group when she was sixteen. She produced her first single, "I Was So in Love," in 1967. This debut song became the number-one hit on the Swedish charts. It was this song that

brought Agnetha to media prominence. In the following years, she released several other singles, albums, and German-language recordings in West Germany. She met Bjorn in 1969, and their romantic relationship culminated in marriage in July 1971. In 1972, just before she officially joined ABBA, Agnetha auditioned for a Swedish stage version of *Mary Magdalene*. She produced her solo album "Elva kvinnor i ett hus" in 1975. All the music in this Album was written and produced by Agnetha herself, save for the Swedish version of ABBA's *SOS*. Agnetha was actively engaged in the production and performance of ABBA songs alongside the other three group members.

After the dissolution of ABBA in 1982, Agnetha ventured into solo career development. She also developed an interest in movie acting. She made her debut as an actress in the Swedish movie *Raskenstam*. She also duetted with a former backing ABBA vocalist Ledin in a song titled *Never Again*. Her first post-ABBA solo Album, "Wrap Your Arms Around Me," was released in May 1983 and was produced by Mike Chapman. Her second international solo Album, "Eyes of A Woman," was released in 1985 and produced by Eric Stewart. Agnetha's third English Album, "I Stand Alone," was released in 1987. Her compilation album "My Love, My Life" was released in 1996. During this time, she also published her biography "As I Am." Agnetha later returned as a recording artist in 2004 when she released a brand-new CD, "My Coloring Book." In 2013, she released her album "A," which featured some tracks she had duetted with Garry Barlow. Agnetha's soprano voice made her singing fabulous, and she could sing at numerous events and shows.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE ABBA SOUND: VOCAL ENGINEERING TECHNIQUE**

#### ➤ *The ABBA Sound: Vocal Engineering Technique*

The remarkable legacy of ABBA resonates not only through their chart-topping hits but also in their innovative use of vocal engineering techniques. Their music stands as a testament to the art of crafting sonic experiences that go beyond traditional norms, capturing emotions and stories with unmatched precision. This section ventures into the heart of ABBA's sound, unveiling the intricacies of their vocal engineering techniques that breathed life into their iconic compositions. By meticulously examining their methods, we uncover the magic behind their unique harmonies, the role of pitch shifting and speed alterations, the importance of vocal over-dubs, and the distinctive vocal contributions of Agnetha Faltskog. By dissecting these elements, we embark on a journey that explores how ABBA's vocal engineering techniques became a hallmark of their sound and an enduring influence on the music industry itself.

#### ➤ *Pitch Shifting and Speed Alteration: Perfecting the Sound*

ABBA's sound is renowned for its intricate vocal arrangements, and a significant aspect of achieving their unique sound was the skillful use of pitch shifting and speed alterations. Pitch shifting involves adjusting the pitch of a vocal recording, either raising or lowering it, to achieve a desired musical effect. This technique allowed ABBA to create complex harmonies, blend their voices seamlessly, and explore various vocal registers. Through shifting pitches, ABBA could experiment with different intonations adding value and greatness and the complex aspect to the arrangement of vocals. When the voice of an individual track is raised or lowered, harmony is created that is meticulously crafted to blend perfectly with lead vocals (McNiece, 2021). The intention to detail is allowed to achieve a distinctive sound characterized by intricate vocal harmonies.

Pitch shifting enabled ABBA to explore and enhance the local vocal registers. The boundaries of their local capabilities could be pushed by shifting their voices into different ranges, either higher or lower levels. This allows for diversification and dynamic vocal performance. The versatility in vocal range adds depth and variety to their songs, further contributing to the uniqueness of their sound. Other factors as speed alterations, involved adjusting the tempo of the vocal recordings. Changing the intensity of the vocals by slowing or speeding them allowed ABBA to control the paces and the likely mood of their songs, bringing about uniqueness in dynamics within the sound (Matthews & Nairn, 2023). This technique enhanced the emotional impact of their performances by allowing them to emphasize certain lyrics or passages, building anticipation or adding a sense of urgency (McNiece, 2021). The meticulous manipulation of pitch and speed in ABBA's vocal production allowed them to achieve precision and control over their sound.

These techniques are not simply used for their own sake but are employed purposefully to enhance the overall musical experience and capture the essence of each song. When pitch and tempo are carefully adjusted, ABBA can align the vocal performances with the mood and message of the lyrics, creating a cohesive and impactful musical journey for the listeners. On the technical aspects, the creative application of the rising and lowering of the sound of music and shifting the music alterations in ABBA's music contributed to the signature sound (McNiece, 2021). The meticulous attention to putting everything in detail and integrating these techniques into their arrangement demonstrated their artistry and commitment to perfection. Whatever resulted in this was a sound that stood out from the crowd, instantly recognizable and loved by fans worldwide.

In conclusion, pitch shifting and speed alterations were vital tools in ABBA's vocal engineering arsenal, allowing sound perfection and creating a distinctive musical experience. By adjusting pitch and tempo, ABBA achieved intricate musical experience. Intricate vocal harmonies explored various vocal registers and added emotional depth to their performances. The creative and purposeful application of these techniques contributed to a unique and timely appeal of ABBA's music, thus solidifying their status as one of the most influential and iconic groups in the music industry's history.

#### ➤ *Unveiling the Vocal Over-Dubs: Importance and Effects*

It has played a great role in molding the sound of ABBA. This technique, which involved recording supplementary vocal tracks and arranging them above the original lead vocal, was very important to the vocal arrangement of the band. Some significance of vocal dubs in ABBA's music. There are also some effects across the sound. The vocal over-dubs in the music are important. The band's attention to detail and dedication to vocal arrangements led them to employ multiple vocal tracks to create a rich complexity in the dimension of the sound. By layering other vocals, they achieved harmonies, textures, and counterpoint melodies that added depth and convolution to their songs.

The effects of vocal over-dubs were very extensive. By mixing several vocal tracks, ABBA created a seamless integration of voice. As a result, a cohesive and captivating musical experience. The over-dubbed vocals provided support harmonies. Counter melodies and other textures that elevated their songs to new heights were a result. The carefully crafted vocal layering added richness in musical depth and an enchanted quality to their sound. This made it recognizable and loved by a lot of fans around the world. Vocal over-dubs allowed ABBA to explore different vocal arrangements and expand their possible creativity (Rickert, 2021). They could experiment with the creativities with different combinations of voices, thus blending them in various ways. This helped them achieve the desired emotional impact. By utilizing over-dubs, ABBA created a distinct vocal palette that

expressed the individual strengths of each band member while integrating their voices into a cohesive force and easy musical expression.

The impact of vocal over-dubs can be witnessed in various ABBA hits. Several hits, for example, 'Dancing Queen,' showcase the intricate vocal layering and harmonies that became synonymous with ABBA's sound. These songs highlight the artistry of vocal over-dubbing and demonstrate how the careful integration of multiple vocal tracks enhanced the overall impact of the music (Rickert 2021). Another importance of vocal over-dubs extends beyond the normal aspect of creating a good sound. It also contributed to the emotional depth and storytelling in ABBA's songs. By layering vocals, they conveyed a sense of unity and connection among the voices, enhancing the emotional impact of the lyrics and allowing the songs to make sense on a deeper level with listeners.

In conclusion, vocal over-dubbing was a vital element in ABBA's music, playing a crucial role in shaping their unique sound and contributing to their continued and experienced success. The meticulous layering of multiple vocal tracks added depth, richness, and texture to their songs, creating a captivating sound experience. The effects of vocal over-dubs were not only technical but also emotional, thus allowing ABBA to convey their stories and emotions with greater impact. The careful integration of multiple voices through over-dubbing remains a testament to ABBA's artistry and its influence on the music industry.

#### ➤ *Frida's Lower Harmonies: Enhancing the ABBA Sound*

These were distinct and integral elements of the ABBA sound, playing a significant role in enhancing their music and adding more meaning to the arrangement of vocals. Frida was a mezzo-soprano with a unique vocal range that brought a distinctive quality to the sound of the group. The lower harmonies served as a foundation and a solid base supporting the soprano vocals.

Within the harmonious tapestry which defined the ABBA sounds, the lower harmonies from Frida emerge as an indispensable and overlooked thread, which weaves a unique depth onto their sort of music. The vocal prowess of Frida Lyngstrand as a mezzo-soprano stood out as a very pivotal function towards shaping the sonic landscape of the iconic song of ABBA. At the same time, even though the vocal soprano of Agnetha Faltskog took center stage in many incidences, Frida's lower harmonies provide the foundation upon which their distinctive sounds rest. Within the spectrum of the vocal ranges, mezzo-sopranos from Frida occupied a space which bridges the gap between the depths of the musical scale and the higher registers. The unique position granted her harmonies, which is an important element of the ABBA's harmonization, which served as a steady anchor that enriches and supports the soaring melodies carried by the soprano by Agnetha. Such a synergy of vocal ranges creates a harmonic balance, which provides ABBA music with its particular character.

When the soprano by Agnetha typically claims the limelight, the lower harmonies of Frida wielded a comprehensive power which, in most cases, permeated their emotional core in the songs. The harmonies, when meticulously blended with lead vocals by Agnetha, contributed to a seamless fusion, which enriched the overall auditory experience. The depth and warmth inherent in the mezzo-soprano by Frida contributed to a contrast to the ethereal heights of Agnetha's soprano. That eventually contributed to a sonic complexity that transcended conventional pop music's boundaries. It is crucial to acknowledge that the lower harmonies by Frida were not only merely supportive elements since they were also some transformative forces which elevated ABBA's music to being at emotional heights. Combining the grounded mezzo-soprano by Frida and the evocative soprano by Agnetha created a vocal symbiosis that defined ABBA sound, setting them apart from their contemporaries. To elaborate more on the significance of lower harmonies by Frida is equivalent to uncovering a layer of complexity, which remains crucial to the core of the ABBA experience. Their music was not only a mixture of melodies and rhythms, but it was equally an intricately interwoven fabric of emotions. Besides, the harmonies created by Frida offered depth, which caused the emotions to resonate. That is through using her harmonies, allowing Agnetha's lead vocals to soar even higher, the emotional groundwork which was aid and the melodies from the band, which reached even deeper into the hearts of their great audiences. It is, therefore, crucial to acknowledge, conclusively, that, despite often being overshadowed, Frida's lower harmonies are a crucial element of the ABBA sound. Her mezzo-soprano vocals created a solid foundation for depth, and harmonization, contributing warmth and emotional resonance to their music. An interplay between Agnetha's lead vocals and Frida's harmonies led to a unique vocal blend, defining the core of the ABBA overall experience. By recognizing the importance of the harmonies, people can attain a deeper comprehension of the complexities which caused ABBA's musicians to endure and were consistently loved by different generations.

#### ➤ *Dissecting Instrumentals: Agnetha's Vocal Contributions*

In their wealthy tapestry of the ABBA musical legacy, the vocal prowess of Agnetha Faltskog has stood out as one element that shaped the group's identity and sound. As one of the core vocalists of the quartet, Agnetha's contribution reached far beyond traditional singing, hence transcending to the domain of emotional depth and instrumental texture. This section evaluates further the multifaceted functions that Agnetha's vocals played in the ABBA experience through an exploration of her unique vocal range, remarkable techniques and emotional intensity, which propelled the emotional resonance of the band.

Agnetha's true full soprano voice traversed a remarkable spectrum of tonalities, stretching from the nasal mid-ranges to the soaring heights of the almost operatic crescendos. The vocal flexibilities endowed ABBA's compositions and a dynamic range that could convey grandiosity and vulnerability. Irrespective of whether it was the tender intimacy of a ballad or the exuberant energy of a pop hit, her voice was a very versatile instrument adapted to the emotional needs of all songs. In conjunction with that, the effects of Agnetha's nuanced control over vocal dynamics and her emotive power contributed to the success of ABBA music. Her voice could convey a huge array of emotions, ranging from heart-wrenching melody to exultant joy. That emotional range enhanced her connecting with the audience profoundly, forming a deeply personal bond between the music and the listeners. Through the emotional connectivity, her vocals carved a space for themselves, beyond little sonic elements, immersing the audiences at the hearts of the ABBA narrative.

Another integral aspect of the techniques used by Agnetha was witnessed in the meticulous crafting of the vocal performances by using a technique of over-dubbing. Countless layers of the voices were adopted and interwoven so that each added a new dimension to the sonic landscape. The overdubbing caused a sense of vocal density, which endowed ABBA's songs with some rich complexity, inviting the listeners to explore some hidden nuances with all subsequent listening. The techniques not only expanded the tonal palettes, but they also influenced the songs with a three-dimensional quality, placing the audiences within the heart of a harmonious symphony. The importance of the vocal contributions of Agnetha is extensive, far beyond her soaring solos. She masterfully merged her voice with the instruments, blurring the boundaries between the music and the voice. The fusion thereby added an almost ethereal quality to their compositions at the moment when her vocals intertwined seamlessly with the instruments, thereby becoming an integral element of the sonic landscape. Consequently, her voice became an invisible force, which shaped the most contours of the ABBA sound. As a result, that propelled the harmonies and melodies to some newer heights.

It is, therefore, agreeable that Agnetha Faltskog's vocals contributed to a pivotal space within the intricate mosaic of ABBA's sonic identity. That is because her vocal range, emotional path, and meticulous over-dubbing techniques transformed her singing into an instrument that shaped not only the melodies but also the memories and emotions. The abilities she bared of seamlessly blending her voice with the instrumentation caused a synergy which defined the ABBA experience. Besides, apart from being a vocalist, Agnetha's vocals later became a conduit for the audience to immerse themselves in the journey of the music, as well as her mastery played a significant role in shaping the enduring legacy of the ABBA sound.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### PERSONAL JOURNEY: APPLYING ABBA'S TECHNIQUES IN RECORDING

#### ➤ *Personal Journey: Applying ABBA's Techniques in Recording*

In the realm of music creation, the personal journey of an artist is an intricate tapestry woven with inspiration, experimentation, and evolution. As a recording artist, my expedition through the terrain of music production and vocal engineering has been profoundly influenced by the iconic strategies employed by ABBA. This group etched its name in the annals of musical history. ABBA's innovative techniques have not only reshaped the contours of the music industry but have also found resonance within my artistic pursuits. This section delves into my expedition to infusing ABBA's unique methods into my recording endeavors, particularly exploring the secrets of expanding vocal range, navigating equipment limitations, and transforming from a singer to a producer. Through a fusion of inspiration, adaptation, and innovation, I have embarked on a journey that has broadened my artistic horizons and unlocked new dimensions in my role as a recording artist.

#### ➤ *Secrets of the Trade: Expanding Vocal Range*

Expanding an individual's voice is challenging and requires practice, dedication, and comprehension. As a recording artist, I have explored different methods of expanding my vocal range. That has been greatly influenced by ABBA's vocal engineering strategies, which have played an important role in shaping my approach. In this section, I will focus much on the secrets of the trade, which I have been able to discover, which I have drawn from ABBA'S influence as well as my practice and study.

Among the primary techniques that I learned from ABBA's recording is the element of vocals, using over-dubs. ABBA's ability to use a meticulous approach while creating textures and harmonies through laying multiple vocal tracks has inspired my mass recording process. By recording my vocal tracks as well as being in a position to blend them, I have been able to enhance the richness as well as the depth of my vocal performance. The technique has expounded the range of harmonies I can achieve and enhanced my ability to experiment with different vocal timbres while creating a more nuanced sound. Besides that, I have been able to adopt the pitch-shifting technique (Walters, 2015). This is a concept that ABBA has consistently used to achieve a seamless blend of voices as well as enhance the overall sound during every process of their recordings. By altering the pitch on my vocal recordings, I have explored the different vocals that have been registered and pushed the boundaries of my vocal range. Shifting of the pitch has eventually made it possible for me to experiment with adding an extra layer of depth to my recording as well as facilitating me with the unique vocal impacts. That implies that pitch shifting has been in a position to facilitate me in experimenting with the unique vocal impacts besides adding an extra layer of depth to my recordings.

Additionally, ABBA's emphasis on the necessity of vocal expression alongside emotion has profoundly affected my approach to recording. The band can convey powerful emotions using their powerful vocals, especially Agnetha and Frida's styles, which have inspired me to delve deeper into the emotional element of my performances. Through studying their phrasing, delivery, and dynamics, I have learned the way of infusing my recordings in conjunction with more intense emotional depth, hence facilitating me to be in a position to connect with listeners on an intensively profound level.

When these techniques have been invaluable in expanding my vocal range and achieving the desired results, it is important to conceptualize that they need some important and careful practice and experimentation. Every person's voice is unique, and it is important to use techniques to suit their vocal style and capabilities (Walters, 2015). Having multiple hours in practice, I have honed my ability to navigate my vocal range, push its limits, and ultimately broaden my animated possibilities. Additionally, it is important to recognize that expanding vocal range does not solely rely on vocal engineering techniques. Developing a stronger foundation in vocal techniques, which include breath control, proper vocal warm-ups, and resonance, is very important in achieving a broader range. The combination of vocal engineering strategies, which were inspired by ABBA's strategies, has facilitated me in exploring new vocal territories as well as expanding my abilities as a recording artist.

Despite that, my journey through applying ABBA's vocal engineering strategies has been transformative. By using the secrets of the trade, which include over-dubbing, emphasizing emotional expression, and pitch shifting, I have expanded my vocal range and achieved a greater varsity in my recordings. In conjunction with a strong foundation in vocal techniques, the techniques have opened up new possibilities for creating an expression that has become invaluable tools in my pursuit of composing impactful and compelling music (Walters, 2015). That implies that the influence of ABBA's sound and the dedication of their vocal excellence have continuously shaped my recording work, enabling me to push the boundaries of my vocal range and deliver performances that resonate with the audience.

#### ➤ *Equipment Limitations: Overcoming Challenges*

The recording equipment has an important role that plays a crucial role in capturing a high-quality vocal performance. However, as one of the recording artists who operate within the confines of a home studio and has limited resources, I have experienced various challenges in achieving the desired levels of sound quality. The equipment laminations have necessitated creative problem-solving, utilization of alternatives, and improvisation of alternative techniques towards overcoming the challenges. Among the primary limitations I have encountered is a need for more professional-grade recording equipment. In a traditional studio setting, access to top-of-line microphones, signal processing gear, and preamps ensure pristine audio capture

(Gan et al., 2020). In contrast, my home studio's setup is composed of affordable, entry-level equipment. The differences in quality may result in sub-optimal sound reproduction and a lack of clarity while recording vocals.

To compensate for the shortcomings arising from the equipment, I have thereby focused on maximizing the potential of my existing resources. To begin with, I have dedicated more time and effort towards acoustically treating my recording space. I have minimized unwanted room reflections by strategically placing sound-absorbing materials, bass traps, and diffusers and improved the overall sound quality. In conjunction with that, I have experimented with microphone positioning and angles to optimize the capture of my vocals, hence mitigating the deficiencies with the microphone itself. Alongside the room treatment and microphone techniques, I have turned to alternative equipment and techniques to enhance the quality of my recordings. For example, I have explored the use of reflection filters as well as vocal isolation shields to minimize any unwanted ambient noises, as well as make sure there is a more focused vocal recording (Gan et al., 2020). These relatively achievable solutions have been proven to be effective in isolating the vocals while also reducing any detrimental impacts caused by the room's acoustic characteristics.

Moreover, I have leveraged the power of software tools with plugins to compensate for equipment limitations. Digital audio workstations offer a vast range of digital sign processes and plugin tools, which can enhance and redefine any recorded vocals. I have used EQ plugins to shape the frequency responses of my vocals, reverb plugins to add ambiance and depth, and compression plugins to control dynamics. Through careful application and experimentation, I have achieved a more polished and professional sound, regardless of the constraints of my equipment. In addition, navigating equipment limitations and finding creative solutions have also contributed immensely to my growth as a recording artist (Gan et al., 2020). It has fostered a sense of adaptability and resourcefulness, forcing me to think outside the box and explore unconventional approaches to achieving the desired results. The experience has deepened my comprehension of the recording process and expanded my insights into different recording strategies and tools.

#### ➤ *The Passion for Studio Work: From Singer to Producer*

While my initial passion for music was rooted in singing, my journey of applying ABBA's strategies to my recordings has ignited a newfound passion for production and studio work. As I got deeper into the intricacies of vocal engineering and an exploration of ABBA's methods, I became progressively riveted by the behind-the-scenes processes of creating music. For an instant, I initially focused solely on delivering captivating vocal performances. Despite that, as I experimented with ABBA's vocal engineering strategies, I realized that music creation's production and recording elements were equally captivating. I became enamored with shaping my vocal delivery and the music's sound and feel.

My newfound passion for studio work has prompted me to expand my skill set and take on the producer role. As a producer, I discovered the power to shape the entire sonic landscape of a recording, from selecting the appropriate instrumentation to capturing compelling performances and craft arrangements (Ji et al., 2021). I embraced overseeing the creative vision and ensuring a cohesive and impactful musical experience of the final product. Among the most important elements of my transition from being solely a singer to being a producer was learning how to craft overall sound. ABBA's meticulous attention to detail and commitment to creating a distinct sound signature intensely prejudiced my approach to production. I have been able to study their recordings, the use of effects, analyzing the placement of instructions, and the intricacies of their vocal arrangements. Applying the insights to my work taught me how to carefully balance and sculpt the sonic elements while ensuring every element serves the vast artistic vision.

Besides, the producer role allowed me to mix the vocals. ABBA's vocal engineering strategies, which include pitch shifting, harmonizing, and layering, opened up a world of possibilities for creating impactful and dynamic vocal performances. Through careful experimentation and refinement, I learned how to integrate the techniques into my recordings, enhancing vocals' emotional effects and richness. As a producer, I obtained the ability to shape the vocal presence within the mix, ensuring it completed the instrumentation and conveyed the intended message appropriately. Beyond vocal production, I discovered a passion for manipulating different recording elements to create a cohesive experience in music (Ji et al., 2021). That includes experimenting with the different effects, exploring alternative arrangements, and employing creative editing strategies. Throughout my endeavors, I learned to bring out the best of all songs and capture the desired atmosphere and mood.

The transition from being solely a singer to becoming a producer has transformed my growth as a recording artist. It has also granted me a deepened trans-formative for my growth as a recording artist. That includes granting me a deeper comprehension of the music creation processes, from initial ideas and arrangements to final mixing and production. The expanded skill set has facilitated me to bring my creative vision to life more fully and to engage in meaningful collaboration with other producers and musicians.

## CHAPTER SIX INTRODUCTION

### ➤ *Introduction*

ABBA music group gained fame and publicity because they did not just compose and write great songs but also engaged in making great records, which was their major secret. ABBA conceived their music as productions and arrangements, giving them a taste of perfect pop music. In this section, three classical hits which ABBA produced will be discussed and extensively analyzed. 'Dancing Queen,' 'Mamma Mia,' and 'The Winner Takes It All' are some of the classical hits of ABBA that have been selected for discussion in this chapter. Specific emphasis has been given to some critical aspects of production that were employed in producing this music. In particular, the vocal engineering masterpiece in 'Dancing Queen,' the unveiling harmonies and over-dubs present in 'Mamma Mia,' and the effects of Agnetha's emotional performance in 'The Winner Takes it All' will be analyzed. In addition, the other critical aspects of production and performance that made ABBA songs popular will also be discussed in this chapter. For instance, the great melodies and terrific words in the songs mentioned above, the simplicity they employed to perfect their pop songs by using repetition and simple yet catchy hooks. The structure of the verse, chorus, and bridge section was well-balanced, and the topics were interesting and resonated well with the audience.

### ➤ *'Dancing Queen' A Vocal Engineering Masterpiece*

Very few songs are universally loved and cherished as 'Dancing Queen' by ABBA. There is always an irresistible urge to sing along to 'Dancing Queen' whenever this song is played. 'Dancing Queen' perfectly captures the euphoria of music lovers falling in love with the dance floor because of its catchy keyboard lyrics, which have been drawn out of seductive lyrics. The 'Dancing Queen' was released in 1976, and it became the biggest commercial hit and arguably ABBA's creative high point. This song was composed by Anderson and Bjorn, with their manager Stig assisting them with the lyrics. Both Bjorn and Anderson had written a good hook for a dance song. However, they needed to find out where they could take it. The composers were greatly inspired by George McCrae's hit song 'Rock Your Baby'; the inspiration from the drum beats came from the Gumbo album by Dr John. There was an attempt in this song to emulate the techniques used in the production of early American disco music by applying Spector's famous wall of Sound technique in the production and arrangement of the song (Nolan, 2022). Agnetha and Anna-Frida were responsible for the lead vocals in the song. Several things have made this song too unusual and unique for a standard hit pop song, which has made it the best vocal engineering masterpiece to have ever been produced by ABBA (Revival ABBA Tribute Band, n.d.). In essence, 'Dancing Queen' is the most popular and famous hit of ABBA and one of the greatest pop songs ever. It became a classical hit because of the trademark piano figures associated with Benny and the distinct vocals of Frida and Agnetha.

To begin with, the song's chorus served as its introduction, which is very unusual and rare. The vocals came in the second section of the chorus to be specifically in the 'You can dance, you can jive' part. Besides, this song is a good and solid backing track courtesy of the drums, bass guitar, and keyboards, coupled with a strong emotional reaction from Frida (Revival et al., n.d.). The song's lyrics capture the energy of youth spirit and the triumphant feeling associated with good music. The scene of the song is set in the first verse with Frida looking for a good time on a Friday night. It is a ritual courtship to find a desirable person of the other gender, as aptly captured in the line, 'You came to look for a king.'

The song's melody is also structured in a clever manner, making it easier for the vocals to register relatively low on the verses. Moreover, the chord's structure was much simpler than the chorus itself. The bridge of this song was also unique because it only lasted two bars, contrary to the common eight bridges as witnessed in most of the songs. There is also a distinct change established in the vocal register due to the sweeping transition emanating from the verse to the chorus. There is a continuation of the ecstatic rising in the song's second section. Besides, the absence of cymbals made 'Dancing Queen' unconventional. The composers opted to maintain the sonic control because they found it difficult to deal with the overdub of the mix. Moreover, numerous instrumental touches act as memorable, distinctive hooks, adding color and nuance to the song because of the effects of the staccato piano motif. Lastly, the swirling synth-string melody in the first line of the song's verse has classic overtones: melodic and boundlessly bouncy with a simple baseline.

In a nutshell, 'Dancing Queen' correctly became regarded as one of the most unique pop music vocal engineering masterpieces in both its production and performance. This is because it aptly captured the vocal voices of Frida and Agnetha and the song-composing chemistry and prowess between Bjorn and Anderson. Dancing Queen is the epitome and a true reflection of ABBA's magic, a timeless classic that it has preserved for future generations.

### ➤ *'Mamma Mia' Unveiling Harmonies and Over-Dubs*

The song Mamma Mia has been described as a global musical phenomenon constantly and simultaneously being played worldwide in different countries compared to any other music. Most music lovers regard Mamma Mia as a classical hit Broadway musical that has brought a new experience to global entertainment, thus bringing back to life the tremendous writing talents of ABBA's due to Anderson and Ulvaeus. According to Ross (2018), 'Mamma Mia is not just a song that borrowed its name from the musical works of ABBA; it is an embodiment of a decadent experimentation of pop that also entails an absolute treasure trove for music lovers (Ross, 2018). This song is a compositional prowess of Anderson and Bjorn and is regarded as one of the most open

ingenious pop music ever composed by Anderson and Bjorn.

'Mamma Mia' has been described as a light, sometimes silly, and romantic music comedy. Some of the conspicuous features associated with this song are the presence of the well-known cast members, a catchy and appealing soundtrack, and a gorgeous scene. Mamma Mia is an Italian word that means 'My Mother,' it has been considered a perfect example of lyrical dissonance (Sound on Sound, 2018). This is because of the infectious and catchy tunes, which contain melancholic lyrics discussing heartbreak and the pain of watching and letting someone you love and could back leave.

'Mamma is a vocal engineering masterpiece because it features the following characteristics and features.

- *A Single Defining Motif*

A single defining motif can be heard right at the beginning of this song. This is because of the Ostinato-esque marimba as well as the piano line. The back-and-forth oscillation between the fifth and the root of the song and that of the root and the sharpened fifth is responsible for tension. The single motif in this music has been described as iconic because it is responsible for defining the song. This can be further attributed to its boldness and the simplicity present in its expression. Furthermore, the presence of subtleties that are responsible for the prefiguration of the offbeat accent in the song has granted 'Mamma Mia' playful use of syncopation (Sound on Sound, 2018). The electric guitars belonging to Anderson and Ulvaeus and the synthesizer joins the marimba, thus introducing music lovers to the melody sung by Agnetha and Anna-Frida and which is considered a subject belonging to ingenious ornamentation.

- *Instrumentation*

Apart from the marimba, orchestral augmentations also exist in 'Mamma Mia.' However, they do not gelatinize the entire song (Ross,2018) as they have always done for other songs such as ELO. However, the orchestral augmentations in this song groove into the rock configuration, acting as an enhancement and not a defining feature of the song. Furthermore, the availability of common sounds associated with the string section that is ever present in most ABBA songs as it heads to verse did not come as a surprise. Moreover, there is also an oboe that distributes the vocal phrases.

- *The Chorus and the Texts that Reflects Emotions*

The fascinating interplay of musical elements within "Mamma Mia" gives a preview into the complexity and depth which can be achieved in a considerably short period. This intricacy holds effects which extend beyond the song itself, pointing towards intriguing possibilities for the future of music composition and production. As technology continuously evolves, the insights from

ABBA's groundbreaking techniques have the potential to reshape the way artists approach their craft. In an era where music often indulges in extended arrangements and sonic extravagance, the brevity yet richness of "Mamma Mia" suggests that concise storytelling can be equally impactful. This could usher in a new wave of songs that captivate listeners within a few minutes, delivering emotional journeys that resonate deeply. Musicians and producers can draw from ABBA's playbook to craft compositions that are not just musically intricate but emotionally resonant, encapsulating a spectrum of feelings within a compact time frame.

Moreover, the orchestration and textural shifts within "Mamma Mia" raise intriguing prospects for sonic experimentation. The deliberate manipulation of quietness, transitions from sparse instrumentation to full-band crescendos, and the interplay of different musical elements could inspire a fresh exploration of contrast and dynamics. Musicians can incorporate these techniques to create immersive soundscapes that ebb and flow, enveloping the audience in a captivating sonic journey. As technology advances, the role of digital audio workstations and plugins becomes increasingly significant. ABBA's approach to manipulating texture and instrumentation offers a road map for artists to harness these tools effectively. Future musicians can take inspiration from the intricate layers of "Mamma Mia" to create multi-dimensional soundscapes that push the boundaries of sonic possibilities.

However, as artists delve into these realms, it's crucial to maintain a balance. The intricacies of texture and instrumentation should not overshadow the emotional core of the music. While technical prowess can enhance a song's appeal, the emotional connection truly captivates listeners. ABBA's ability to seamlessly intertwine technical expertise with heartfelt expression serves as a reminder that music's essence lies in its ability to evoke emotions. To fully embrace the impacts of ABBA's techniques, it is recommended that artists embark on a journey of musical exploration, orchestrations, and experimenting with various transitions and textures. Collaborations between musicians, producers, and sound engineers can create truly innovative compositions that break free from conventional norms. In conjunction with that, as technology becomes more integral to music production, honing technical skills becomes imperative. Musicians should familiarize themselves with the latest techniques and tools, while using them to amplify their creative visions.

Ultimately, the profound implications of ABBA's pioneering techniques in "Mamma Mia" go beyond the song itself, pointing towards a future of music which embraces emotional depth, brevity, and technical innovation. As artists continue to push boundaries, the intricacies of instrumentation, texture, and transitions can reshape the sonic landscapes of music in the future. Drawing inspiration from ABBA's legacy, musicians may embark on a transformative journey that redefines the boundaries of

creativity, leaving an indelible mark on the evolving tapestry of music.

➤ *'The Winner Takes it All' Agnetha's Emotional Performance*

The Winner Takes It All is ABBA's most celebrated and revered break-up song. This is because the purported winner, addressed by the singer of the tracks, is expected to emerge victorious from the couple's dissolution of marriage. Ironically, although sarcastically, she seems to be congregating with him to move on with his life while facing an emotional breakdown from their break-up (ABBA, 2020). This song is considered a story masterpiece and has been lauded numerous times as one of ABBA's greatest and most accomplished recordings. It features personal lyrics that have continued to affect people for decades. It is also considered among the finest pop ballads of all time. The lead vocals on the ballads sung were Agnetha. The song was recorded during the year when they divorced.

Bjorn composed this song after separating from his partner and fellow band member Agnetha. Bjorn has always denied that the song is based on their personal experience. This position has been adopted and supported by Agnetha, who has also stated that there was no actual winner in their divorce. Bjorn argues that nearly 90% of the song is based on fiction. Agnetha has also further reiterated that despite the lyrics of the song openly depicting and portraying the breakdown of their marriage, the song is her biggest favorite, and she regrets that they did not get the opportunity to perform it live (The Guardian, 2014). The song had put Agnetha in a strange and awkward position because she was expected to sing the vocals of a break-up song composed by her former partner shortly after their divorce. The fact that the song was composed and released after their divorce was touching to her (ABBA, 2020). It was a fantastic song for her because it allowed her to put such feelings. She firmly believes that the song was a mixture of what she and Bjorn felt, and she did not mind sharing it with the public.

## CHAPTER SEVEN CONCLUSION

### ➤ Conclusion

#### • *Summary of Findings*

The exploration into the world of music production and mixing styles, intertwined with the legacy of ABBA, has unearthed profound insights that resonate through the modern music industry. This research aimed to shed light on ABBA's impact on music production and mixing and how their innovative strategies have continued to define and shape today's musical landscape. In traversing the intricate journey of ABBA's sonic evolution and subsequent influence, several key findings have emerged, redefining our understanding of music creation and its lasting effects. The inception of ABBA's journey, as outlined in the historical accounts of each band member, showcases the convergence of diverse talents and visions into a harmonious whole. Benny Andersson's transition from a pre-ABBA musician to a musical genius demonstrates the evolution of an individual's artistic identity within a collaborative venture. Similarly, Björn Ulvaeus' songwriting prowess and collaborations signify the power of synergy in crafting timeless compositions. The often overshadowed yet critical contributions of Anni-Frid Lyngstad and Agnetha Fältskog highlight the importance of vocal diversity within a group. This narrative underscores how individual histories converged to form ABBA's unique musical DNA.

The geopolitical backdrop of ABBA's rise showcased the interconnections of sociopolitical factors and artistic expression. Scandinavian melancholy, woven into the fabric of their music, stands as a testament to the profound influence of cultural context on artistic style. This melancholic undertone, layered with catchy hooks, resonates as a musical philosophy that has stood the test of time and continues influencing contemporary artists. ABBA's vocal engineering techniques, dissected in the fourth chapter, have proven to be a goldmine of innovation and inspiration. The manipulation of pitch shifting and speed alterations has unveiled a realm of sonic possibilities, enabling artists to explore diverse vocal ranges and timbres. The strategic use of vocal overdubs emerges as a masterstroke, adding a multi-dimensional depth that forms the bedrock of ABBA's signature sound. Frida's lower harmonies have been unmasked as the hidden pillars of their sonic architecture, an element that resonates even in the absence of instrumentals. Agnetha's vocal contributions, often mistaken for instrumental textures, have emerged as the cornerstone of emotional resonance, unveiling the fusion of vocal technique and storytelling prowess.

The personal journey of applying ABBA's techniques in recording, examined in the fifth chapter, underscores the transformative power of adaptation and innovation. The secrets of the trade, encompassing vocal range expansion, have illuminated how ABBA's techniques have informed and enriched modern vocal experimentation. Overcoming equipment limitations through resourcefulness and acoustical interventions has illuminated the role of creativity in mitigating technological constraints. The transition from singer to producer has emerged as a paradigm shift, wherein the passion for music has unfolded into a passion for shaping the very essence of sound. This transformation reflects the evolving role of artists as creators and curators of sonic experiences. Through case studies of ABBA's hits, the sixth chapter has magnified the intricate interplay of production techniques in their iconic compositions. "Dancing Queen" stands as a testament to the meticulous craftsmanship of vocal engineering, a veritable masterpiece in sound manipulation. "Mamma Mia" unveils the harmonious symphony of vocal overdubs, creating an auditory tapestry that transcends individual vocal contributions. "The Winner Takes It All" encapsulates Agnetha's emotional prowess, demonstrating how vocal expression can evoke profound sentiment, immortalizing the marriage of storytelling and vocal dynamics.

#### • *Contribution to the Field*

This research has significantly contributed to the field of music production and mixing and its effects on the surfacing landscape of the music industry. By exploring the intricate interplay of ABBA's music mixing and production techniques, this study has demonstrated a pathway to comprehending how an artistic innovation may reverberate across generations, thereby shaping the essence of musical creation and consumption. The foremost contribution lies in understanding ABBA's influence on music production and mixing. The meticulous exploration of their vocal engineering techniques, as highlighted in the fourth chapter, has unveiled the previously obscured intricacies of their sound. The technique of pitch shifting and speed alterations, so subtly employed by ABBA, has now been dissected and analyzed, offering contemporary artists a toolbox of methods to experiment with vocal textures and ranges. This research's focus on vocal overdubs, particularly the exploration of Frida's lower harmonies, has further illuminated the multifaceted nature of their sound, unraveling a cornerstone element that underpins their musical richness.

Recognizing Agnetha's vocal contributions as more than mere instrumentals has unearthed a dimension of emotional depth and power that vocal engineers and artists can now embrace in their creations.

Furthermore, the research underscores the evolving role of artists as performers and producers, transforming the narrative of music creation. The detailed analysis of the personal journey of applying ABBA's techniques, as explored in the fifth chapter, provides a road map for aspiring artists to traverse the delicate terrain of expanding vocal range, overcoming equipment limitations, and transitioning from being singers to becoming producers. This insight into the journey of self-discovery,

adaptation, and innovation acknowledges the contemporary artist's multifaceted role. It sheds light on the trans-formative potential of embracing the entirety of the music production process. Incorporating case studies of ABBA's hits in the sixth chapter has amplified the practical applications of music production and mixing techniques. By dissecting hits like "Dancing Queen," "Mamma Mia," and "The Winner Takes It All," the research has illustrated how production strategies influence the final sonic outcome. These case studies serve as invaluable resources for aspiring producers and artists, revealing the intricate relationship between different techniques and the overall impact on the audience's auditory experience. Moreover, the research bridges historical context with contemporary implications. The second chapter establishes a link between cultural context and artistic innovation by illuminating the sociopolitical backdrop of ABBA's rise and its fusion with musical expression. This understanding emphasizes the importance of acknowledging the environment's influence on music creation, urging modern artists to embed socio-cultural elements in their work to resonate with global audiences.

Overall, this research enriches the music production and mixing field by weaving together historical context, technical intricacies, and contemporary relevance. ABBA's legacy, dissected through the lens of music production and mixing, is a model for aspiring artists to embrace innovation while honoring their unique artistic identities. This study redefines the discourse surrounding music production and mixing, therefore portraying them not as mere technical processes but rather as vital components of the creative journey of an artist. As the music industry continues to evolve, the insights gleaned from this research will undoubtedly guide producers, artists, and scholars in their pursuit of creating music that resonates deeply with audiences across time and culture.

- *Future Implications and Recommendations*

The culmination of this thesis offers a glimpse into a realm of future possibilities, where the legacy of ABBA's techniques and the insights gained from their application continues reverberating through the music industry. These findings underscore the enduring influence of ABBA's sound and pave the way for a more profound comprehension of studio work's evolution. Looking ahead, several implications and avenues for future research and practice emerge, each poised to contribute to the dynamic landscape of music creation and production. A vital avenue for further exploration lies in delving deeper into ABBA's vocal engineering strategies and their adaptability across various musical genres. While this thesis highlights their impact within the context of pop music, a comprehensive investigation of how these strategies can be applied and innovated in diverse genres promises insights into the inherent versatility of ABBA's techniques. Such a comparative analysis would illuminate how vocal engineering influences genre-specific dynamics, potentially leading to breakthroughs in cross-genre innovation.

Moreover, conducting a comparative study involving other influential artists and their distinctive vocal engineering approaches could provide a broader perspective on the effects of vocal production on the trajectory of the music industry. This comparative lens might unveil common threads and divergences in strategy, leading to a more holistic understanding of the nuanced impacts of vocal engineering techniques on the listener's experience and the artist's trajectory. Considering the profound influence of ABBA's sound and techniques on my journey, future research could explore the concept of artistic emulation and its role in shaping an artist's unique approach and style. Investigating the interplay between inspiration drawn from iconic artists and the subsequent evolution of individual artistic expression would offer a richer understanding of how artists bridge the gap between emulation and innovation in the studio.

To facilitate the practical application of ABBA's techniques, it is recommended for future studies to focus on creating accessible resources, comprehensive training materials, and tutorials tailored to aspiring recording artists and producers. Such resources would ensure that a wider spectrum of musicians can harness the power of ABBA's techniques, irrespective of their technical prowess or familiarity with equipment intricacies. The democratization of these techniques would empower a new generation of creators, fostering a musical landscape where innovation knows no bounds. In music education, the insights from this thesis could also inform the development of curricula that emphasize both technical and artistic dimensions of studio work. By incorporating the history of iconic techniques like ABBA's into educational programs, educators can inspire students to blend technical proficiency with creative expression, thus contributing to cultivating versatile and skilled musicians.

In conclusion, the implications stemming from this thesis are far-reaching and multifaceted, underscoring the enduring relevance of ABBA's techniques and their potential to reshape the future of music creation. The legacy of ABBA's unique sound and vocal engineering strategies resonates in their historical context and as an ongoing source of inspiration and innovation. By delving into the dynamic interplay of adaptation, inspiration, and innovation in recording, we unlock a realm where the past converges with the future, and iconic sounds continue redefining the boundaries of musical expression. Embracing these implications, producers and recording artists can journey into a future where ABBA's legacy continues to shape vocal landscapes, transcend equipment limitations, and cultivate music that resonates deeply with listeners.

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