

It's 1993, new forms of globalisation are being rolled out: the European Union gets formalized; Bill Clinton ushers in a mode of 'third-way' neoliberal centrism; & the internet goes mainstream, instituting the mass 'digitization' of markets & culture.

All the while, global pop charts begin to fragment into genres & subgenres that now continue to dominate the airwaves: a type of smooth, sexualized R&B moves into high rotation from Whitney Houston thru Mariah Carey, Janet Jackson & Toni Braxton; many groups & artists begin to bring about Hip Hop's 'golden age' (snoop dogg, Wu-tang), with its pragmatic kicked up a notch; a jungle techno or hardcore moves away from repetitive forms while eurodance embraces some kind of pan-European consumer unity; breakbeat science also slows into a novel downtempo centred in Bristolian trip hop; dance music turns intelligent thanks to a few artists warped into unorthodox types; & grunge shrugs off its limelight, whilst remaining the sound of a generation. This is only a partial list of the many musical movements in the making.

the deep listening club
lovers & lollypops

Music & its underground had more reach, & with mass proliferation it lost its edge. The utopian mood would drift into a dark-side dystopianism thru commercialization. Collective imaginaries traded off for the 'alternative' lifestyle brands that could be bought & sold: none of this is new nor specific to 1993, yet a clear phase-shift is heard thru this postmodern soundscape.

The year is saturated by heterogeneity. A breaking apart of the grand narrative may bring with it an opening for coincidences to occur between the minor threads moving at their own tempi & rhythms. Subcultures pull at the shards of possessive identity by offering divergent groupings some room to develop. Countercultures snowball into consumerist impossibility, & teens become a site for an on-going experimentation in a feigned & imposed individualism. Copies gain autonomy (simulacra) & mass-mediated

#10: 1993
2026

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hyperreality becomes the rule of the day.

Futures loop back as altered echoes: this late-century sonic condition announces an aurality to come, a fugitive listening in constant paradox never seeking to resolve nor to find ways of settling its discord. Its audiovision fixates on Jurassic Park, on a Nightmare Before Christmas, crossing over temporalities for a virtual present.

The future was still palpable in 1993. No one had noticed the advent of its recall. Science fiction imagined a slick progress that was chromed-plated & neon, & much of the music followed suit. Mutation & xenopraxis ruled the undercommons & something felt possible amid the subterranean vibe. Music technology was increasingly easy to afford & digital recording technology had made at-home sonic experiments realistic. Pirate & college radio moved out to sound off possibilities of a site-specific ear. Samplers & beat machines could be tracked down in a pawn shop if you had some luck.

why have you done today?

The international standard for the MP3 is also published in 1993. [ISO\IEC 11172-3] The defined a few years earlier, it would not be widespread till the second-half of the 90s. It is impossible to downplay the significance of the format, how it formed the sonic ubiquity that runs today.

1993 sees the deaths of several musicians from Eurythmics, Léon Theremin, GG Allin, Frank Zappa, Dizzy Gillespie & Sun Ra. It also births Metro Boomin, Shygirl, Yaeji, Kali Uchis & Vince Staples, naming a few.

Some of what was heard:
polygon window...SURFING ON SINE WAVES

&

don caballero.....rupaul
björk.....autechre
nirvana.....ace of base
primus.....cypress hill
meat loaf.....bikini kill
harry passy.....bo\$
origin unknown.....tool