



The Ultimate Guide to Hardstyle Music: What You Need to Know

Hardstyle is a genre of electronic dance [music EDM](#) that has captivated millions of fans around the world. With its distinctive blend of energetic beats, powerful basslines, and high-pitched melodies, hardstyle has carved out its niche in the electronic music scene. In this ultimate guide, we'll explore everything you need to know about hardstyle music, from its origins to its major artists, key elements, subgenres, and its global impact on the dance music community.

What is Hardstyle Music?



Hardstyle music is a subgenre of EDM that is characterized by hard-hitting basslines, fast-paced beats, and a mixture of uplifting melodies and aggressive sounds. Typically, the tempo of hardstyle tracks ranges from 150 to 160 BPM (beats per minute), giving it a fast, energetic feel. The genre often blends elements of other styles such as hardcore, trance, and techno, creating a unique and powerful sound.

Hardstyle tracks often feature distorted kick drums and anthemic melodies, and they frequently include vocal samples or spoken word elements that enhance the emotional impact

of the music. The genre is known for its ability to create an intense and uplifting atmosphere, making it a favorite at festivals and in club environments.

Origins of Hardstyle Music

The origins of hardstyle music can be traced back to the early 2000s in the Netherlands, where DJs and producers began experimenting with harder forms of trance and hardcore music. Early pioneers of the genre like DJ Zany, Showtek, and The Prophet sought to create a new sound that combined the melodic elements of trance with the aggressive, pounding kicks of hardcore. This fusion of styles gave birth to what we now know as hardstyle.

The term “hardstyle” itself began to gain traction around 2003, as the genre began to grow in popularity in Europe, particularly in the Netherlands and Belgium. Over time, hardstyle music evolved and began to influence other genres of electronic music, leading to the creation of various subgenres and the rise of massive hardstyle events and festivals.

Key Elements of Hardstyle Music

Hardstyle is defined by several key elements that set it apart from other forms of EDM. Some of the most important components of hardstyle music include:

1. **Distorted Kicks:** The kick drum is the heart of any hardstyle track, and the genre is known for its signature hard-hitting, distorted kicks. These kicks are often manipulated and distorted to create a more intense and powerful sound.
2. **Fast Tempo:** Hardstyle tracks typically have a tempo of 150 to 160 BPM, which gives the music its high-energy, driving feel. This fast pace makes it a popular choice for festival crowds and nightclub performances.
3. **Melodic Elements:** Unlike some other forms of hardcore music, hardstyle incorporates melodic elements, often with uplifting, euphoric melodies that contrast with the aggressive kicks. These melodies are typically synthesized and can be quite anthemic.
4. **Vocal Samples:** Many hardstyle tracks feature vocal samples or lyrics that add emotional depth to the music. These vocals can range from uplifting and positive to dark and intense, depending on the mood of the track.
5. **Build-ups and Drops:** Like many other EDM genres, hardstyle features dramatic build-ups that lead to intense drops. The build-up typically increases tension, and the drop delivers a powerful, hard-hitting release that gets the crowd moving.
6. **Energy and Emotion:** One of the defining characteristics of hardstyle is its ability to evoke strong emotions and energy in listeners. Whether it's the euphoric feeling of a high-pitched melody or the intense power of a distorted kick, hardstyle has a way of making people feel connected to the music.

Famous Hardstyle Artists

Over the years, several hardstyle artists have risen to fame for their contributions to the genre. These DJs and producers have become household names in the hardstyle community and have helped shape the sound of the genre. Some of the most influential and popular hardstyle artists include:

- **Headhunterz:** One of the most iconic names in hardstyle, Headhunterz is known for his uplifting melodies and emotional tracks. He has played a major role in popularizing hardstyle music worldwide and is a frequent headliner at major festivals like Defqon.1.
- **Showtek:** Originally starting out in the hardcore scene, Showtek transitioned into hardstyle and became one of the genre's biggest names. Their tracks often feature a blend of aggressive kicks and melodic elements, making them a fan favorite.
- **The Prophet:** Known for his pioneering role in the early days of hardstyle, The Prophet is one of the genre's founders. His distinctive sound has influenced countless hardstyle producers over the years.
- **Brennan Heart:** Another major name in the hardstyle scene, Brennan Heart is known for his emotive, melodic tracks and his energetic live performances.
- **Wildstylez:** Wildstylez has become one of the leading names in hardstyle, known for his powerful basslines and memorable melodies. He has collaborated with many other big names in the scene and has gained a massive following.

Subgenres of Hardstyle

While hardstyle has a distinct sound, it has also evolved over time and given birth to several subgenres. These subgenres offer different variations of the hardstyle sound, catering to a wide range of musical tastes. Some notable subgenres of hardstyle include:

- **Rawstyle:** Rawstyle is a darker and more aggressive form of hardstyle. It often features distorted, heavy kicks, and a more intense overall sound. The melodies tend to be darker as well, giving the music a harder, more industrial feel.
- **Euphoric Hardstyle:** In contrast to rawstyle, euphoric hardstyle focuses on uplifting melodies and a more melodic, emotional vibe. The kicks are still powerful, but the overall feel is more positive and uplifting.
- **Hardtrance:** A fusion of hardstyle and trance, hardtrance focuses more on melodic elements and atmospheric sounds. It is often slower in tempo than traditional hardstyle but still maintains the high-energy feel.

Hardstyle Festivals and Events

Hardstyle has a global following, and it's no surprise that major music festivals around the world feature hardstyle performances. Some of the biggest hardstyle festivals include:

- **Defqon.1:** Held annually in the Netherlands, Defqon.1 is one of the most famous hardstyle festivals in the world. It features a lineup of top hardstyle artists and attracts thousands of fans from all over the globe.
- **Qlimax:** Another major festival in the Netherlands, Qlimax is known for its high-energy performances and impressive stage designs. It's one of the biggest events in the hardstyle community.
- **Hard Bass:** Held in Russia, Hard Bass is a growing festival that showcases the best of rawstyle and hardstyle music, drawing fans from Eastern Europe and beyond.
- **Tomorrowland:** While not exclusively a hardstyle festival, Tomorrowland in Belgium features hardstyle performances from some of the genre's top artists, making it a must-attend event for fans of the genre.

The Future of Hardstyle

As hardstyle continues to evolve, it remains one of the most exciting and energetic genres in the world of EDM. The genre's ability to connect with fans on an emotional level and its unique blend of melodic and aggressive elements have ensured its place in the hearts of dance music lovers around the world. With new artists constantly emerging and hardstyle festivals growing in popularity, the future of hardstyle looks brighter than ever.

Whether you're a longtime fan or new to the scene, hardstyle offers something for everyone. With its infectious energy, intense basslines, and unforgettable melodies, hardstyle music continues to define the sound of modern dance music. So, put on your dancing shoes, and get ready to experience the raw power and emotion of hardstyle!