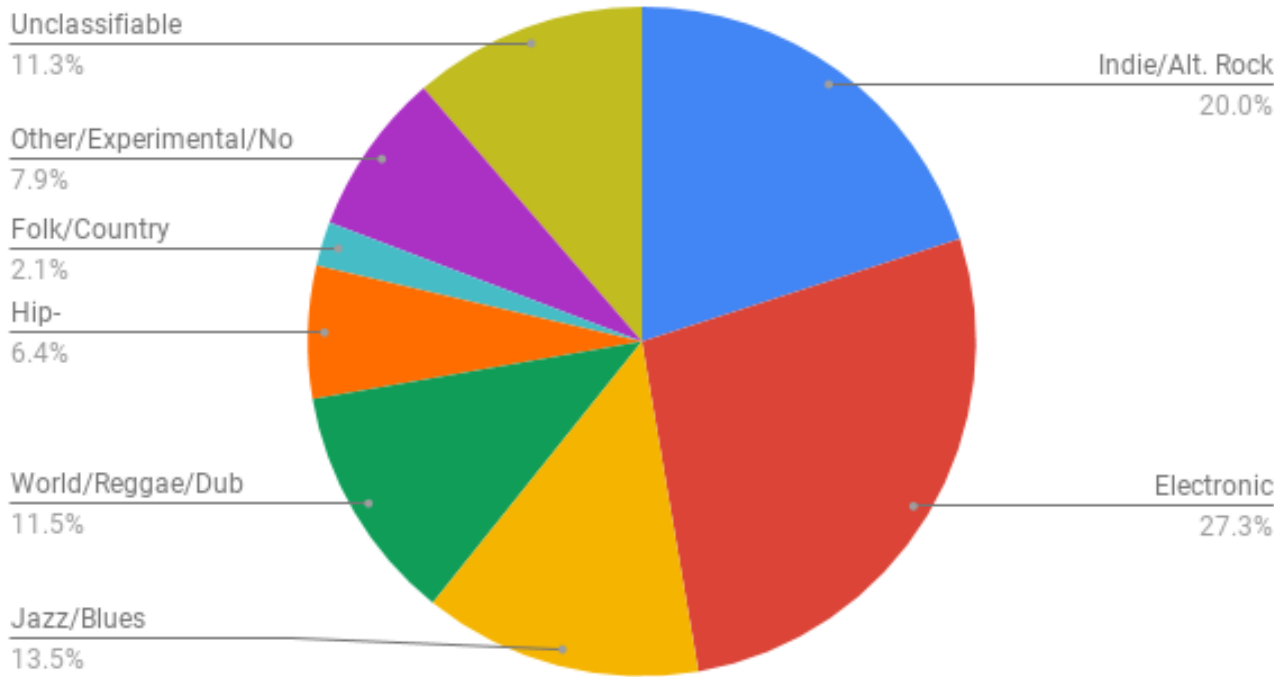


Aug. 2019 Labels on eMusic: The Big Picture



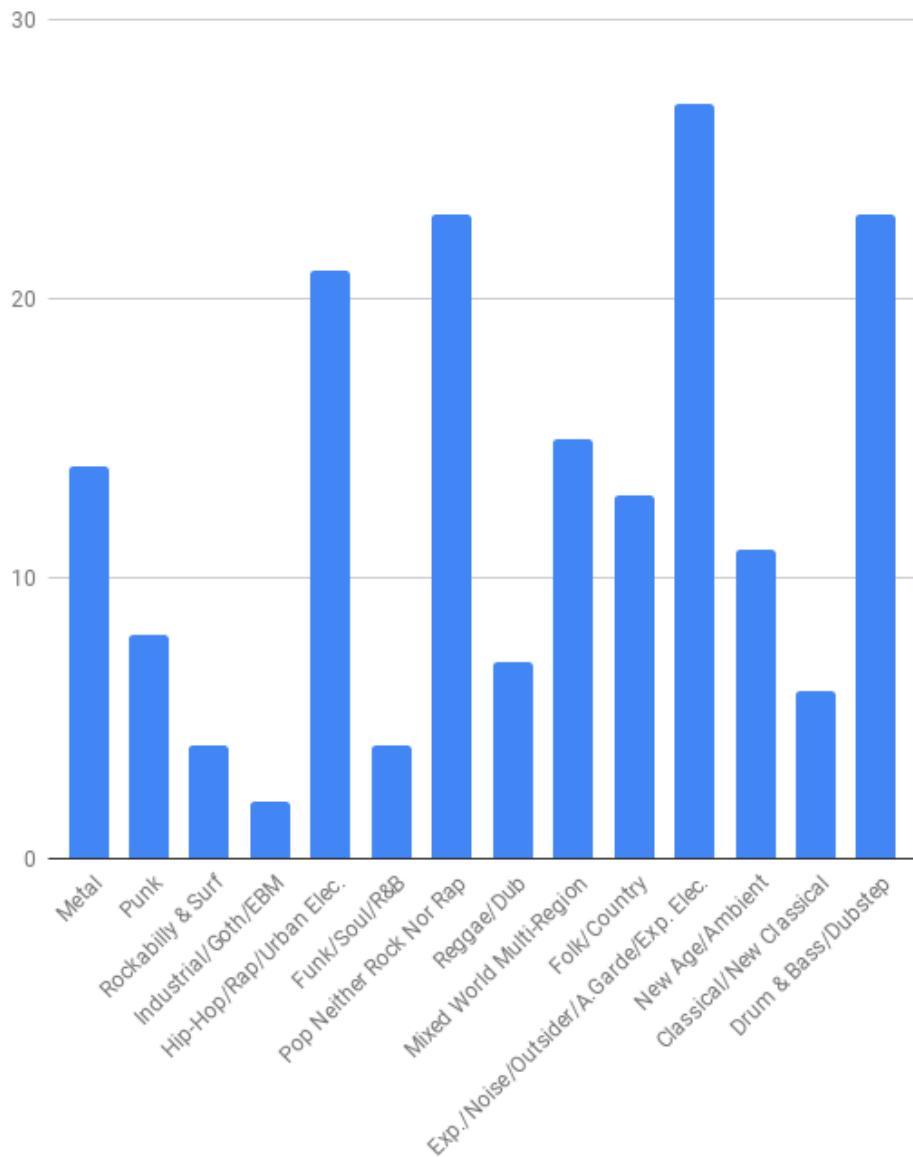
The total number (N of the sample) of labels in the chart at left is 610. They should all be listed in the basic categories on the pie chart (plus metal & punk lumped into Indie/Alt. rock) in this forum: <https://www.emusers.org/forum/discussion/1678/emusers-label-linernotes-database#latest>

Smaller genre and geographic determinations are based on the brief label summaries listed here (note that the eMusers list is longer, as it includes more small labels and borderline cases): <http://www.omnifoo.info/pages/eMusic%20Labels.html>

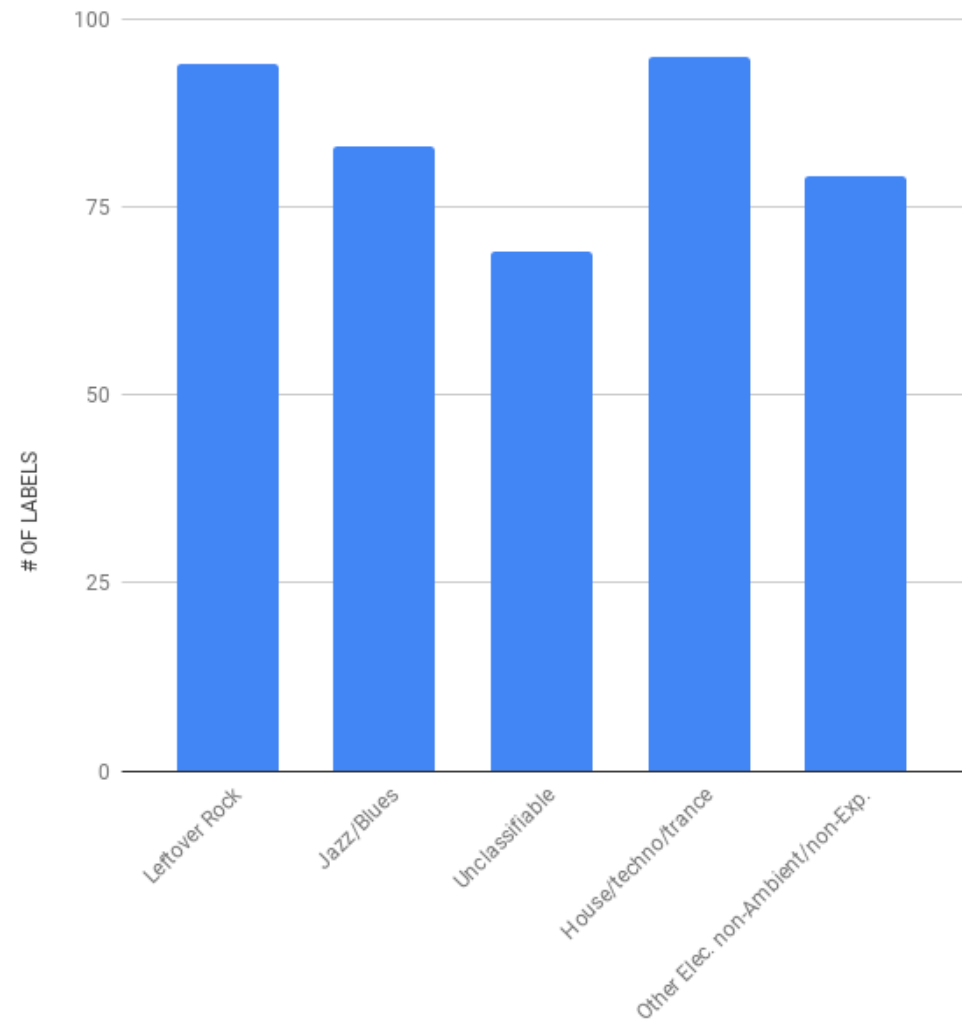
The next two charts are going to break down the largest categories, Indie/Alt. Rock, Electronic, World/Reggae/Dub, Hip-Hop/Funk/Soul/R&B/Urban Electronica/Pop (badly labeled at left as “Hip-”), and Other/Experimental into their component parts. This’ll make the charts pretty ugly, unfortunately.

This first chart, above, shows most generally where the significant labels still on eMusic as of Aug. 2019 may be broadly categorized. It’s based on a “brute force” sample that attempted to compile a list of all the record labels still on the site that met the following qualifications to be “significant”: 1. Not being mainly “trash compilations,” defined as MIDified, “tribute,” lapsed copyright, karaoke, kidz, or otherwise compiled songs on albums not credited to the original artist. As many think those are what’s mainly left, I won’t give examples. I don’t think those “labels” constitute more than a tenth of what’s currently on eMusic (i.e. a random label search would just as likely turn up a world/reggae/dub label as one purveying trash comps), but I’ll leave it to someone else to run the numbers on those. 2. Having at least 10 titles available, of which at least two are full-length LPs rather than EPs or singles, and not v/a compilations (which aren’t all trash either!) except in cases where an underrepresented subgenre is the majority of the titles. (i.e. a tiny label with only a few jazz LPs will be included, but a house label with 50 singles might not be). 3. Having at least two different artists/bands among these titles, on the assumption that a “label” with 10+ releases by a single artist is not a record label but a vanity project. Caveats on the sampling: This is a sample of the population of eMusic labels. While it attempted to be exhaustive, it has inevitably left a lot out and thereby might not be representative of the whole site’s labels, especially if systematically biased. Other than conditions 1, 2, and 3 above, the sample probably oversamples jazz and hip-hop as a result of trying hardest to find examples of them. It undersamples classical, as a result of there being a lot of unreputable classical compilations on the site, and the composer is far more likely to be separate from the performer than in any other genre. It also vastly undersamples house and techno labels, as after a while I just got tired of sorting through them. Even if the sample vastly undersamples from the population as a whole (i.e. the sample totaling 610 is entirely too small to represent the remaining labels on eMusic meeting requirements 1, 2, and 3), in the degraded state of the Aug. 2019 site, it is hoped that the best quality labels have been included, and the ones not found by “brute force” (see methodology at the end of this brochure) **TOTALLY SUCK!**

This sample was of record labels, not of albums, artists, or tracks, and so probably doesn’t represent the population of music overall. This is simply because labels vary greatly not only in whether you like the music (and some must see this as very frivolous b/c they claim not to like ANY of the music left) but more significantly here, a lot of those “unclassifiable” labels have up to 1,000 titles, generally several times greater in quantity than the labels in each genre which a dedicated listener might consider “good.” In other words, to sample the best remaining music (rather than all of it, especially the worst), it is assumed that trying to include the best labels in every genre will yield the best sample of music remaining on the site. In the good old days, when eMusic’s catalog could fairly well represent the actual population of (Western) music labels, the largest might have hundreds of titles of high quality, but of course, those days are gone. That’s not to say that everything in the unclassifiable labels is crap; a lot of labels still do a great job in multiple genres. But the ones that do well in multiple genres and are still on eMusic almost never seem to have more than 100 titles. But that’s just my opinion!

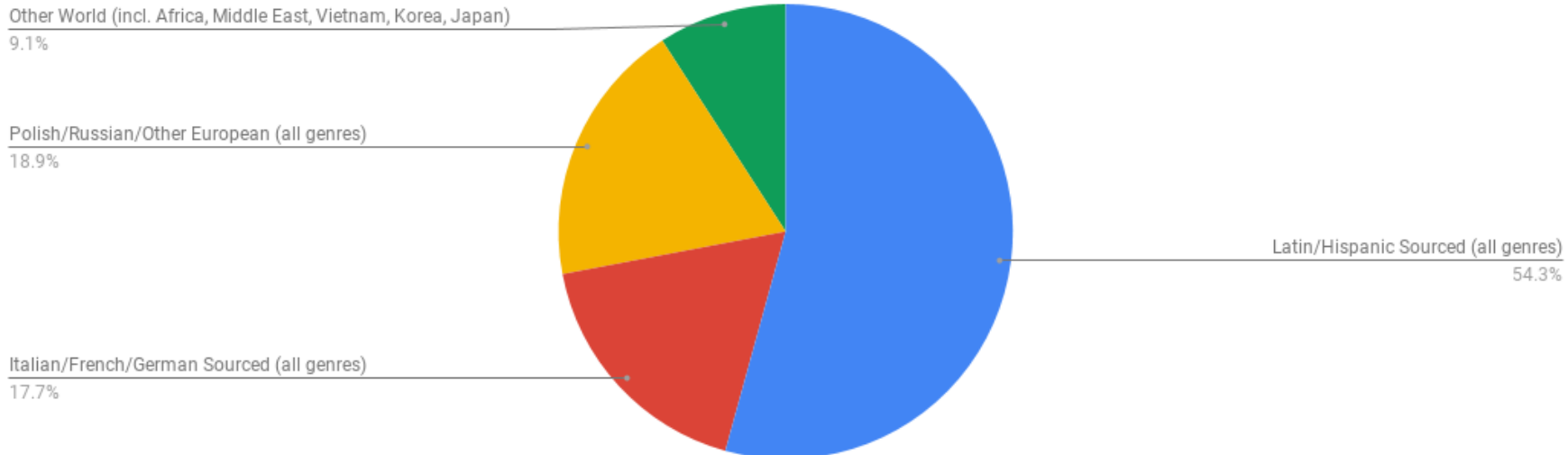


Above, a more detailed version of labels' genre distribution. Note that "Mixed World Multi-Region" is meant to capture world music labels that would be similar to World Circuit, Harmoniamundi, Strut, etc. (were they still on eMusic) rather than pop/rock/hip-hop from a particular, non-Western part of the world. Each of Metal, Punk, Rockabilly & Surf, and Industrial/Goth/EBM were subtracted from Indie/Alt. Rock in the previous chart. Unfortunately, no labels focused mostly on progressive rock, post-rock, math rock, etc. were discovered (but that doesn't mean there isn't any on eMusic!).



Leftover rock is all the labels, including from European, Latin/Hispanic, and non-Western sources, that didn't fit any of the subgenres just listed. Similarly, Other Elec. covers all the electronica labels that don't appear to specialize in Drum & Bass/Dubstep, House/techno/trance, Ambient, or Experimental (such as IDM and labels whose catalogs are mixed). The big takeaway for me here is that inclusion of all the house/techno labels would dwarf everything else on the site if the whole population were included. Try searching randomly for a label that meets requirements 1, 2, and 3 but you've never heard of--I bet it'll be a house/techno label almost a third of the time. Note again that both charts on this page are from the same sample of 610 labels and are mutually exclusive.

OBVIOUSLY NON-U.S./UK/CANADIAN/AUSTRALIAN LABELS BY SOURCE COUNTRY/REGION



Above is a geographic distribution of where labels that obviously aren't from the USA, Britain, Canada, or Australia (basically, English-speaking countries) come from on eMusic. Note that the total number of labels represented in the graph is 175, leaving the great majority, 435, that at least appear to be from an English-speaking country. It's especially important to note that the labels in the chart above are not necessarily counted as "world" music labels in the charts on the previous page. On the contrary, most are categorized, for example, as "Latin sourced" pop/rock/hip-hop/house/electronic/folk/etc. Even in its diminished state, one might conclude, eMusic provides a lot of downloading options unlikely to be available at even an excellent record store or many streaming services focused mainly on particular regions. As a non-streamer, I don't know how much Polish jazz or Iranian pop music Spotify or Tidal has, but I think once you're zeroed in on labels that specialize in it, it's more enjoyable to browse and sample.

A word on sampling methodology, particularly the "brute force" characterization of the label search: The 610-label sample was compiled in part from suggestions from forum users, including scavenging decimated label lists, and previous knowledge, but the vast majority were painstakingly searched in the following two main ways. 1. In the eMusic search bar, labels were systematically sought by typing all letters A-Z, then all consonants followed by all vowels, then by combinations of common English phonemes (i.e. "str," "th," "bl," etc.) with all vowels. Definite articles such as El, La, Los, Las, L, Les, Das, etc. were used to find international labels. Several common words in record label names such as "music," "records," "discos," etc. were also searched. 2. Finding method 1 increasingly tedious and yielding decreasing returns, albums containing words such as "dragon," "tiger," "snake," "bird," "dust," "tierra," "Africa," etc. were selected based upon the perceived quality of their album art, in hopes that they would lead to significant labels that had eluded method 1. In short, the search was not random, but it was intended to be very thorough. It took the better part of a month to compile. That said, much has inevitably been left out, and any list should be considered a work in progress. For the benefit of all remaining eMusic subscribers, if you know of significant labels on the site which have been wrongly excluded, by all means, contact DJ Poseur/chartreuseeye/omnifoo, and your suggestion will be treated with all the respect and care that our massive staff of 1000 employees can muster. But seriously, I'll try to keep adding to the list and subtracting as labels go the inevitable way of the big, departed names.

This document was typed up on Aug. 8th, 2019, and probably contains errors of commission and omission. Revision will likely be necessary.