

## ARMIN'S EARLY INFLUENCES

*"I never really had the ambition to become a DJ or to be a producer. I just wanted to do it because I loved it so much. It was really my passion, you know, making little mixtapes for my friends...I still have that passion in me. I'm still that little kid."*  
—Armin van Buuren

### SUBCHAPTERS

- It All Starts With Your Ears
- A Musical Household
- Teenage Rebellion
- The Jedi Master: Ben Liebrand
- Electronic Pioneers
- Important DJs
- Classical Composers and Trance Music

### CHAPTER REVIEW

Armin's father, a doctor, used music to relax. His home was always full of music, and Armin grew up with progressive rock and recorded radio shows playing loudly from the floor beneath his bedroom. At eight years old, Armin received a cassette tape from a friend containing the local weatherman sampled over a beat—that's when everything changed. Armin's love for electronic music grew as he sought out new records and mixtapes.

Armin's introduction to the DJ world came through the mixing of "Jedi Master" Ben Liebrand. Liebrand would create megamixes of tracks—he was one of the first to mix two records together.

Compositions such as Jean-Michel Jarre's *Zoolook* or Vangelis's *Antarctica* demonstrated how electronic music could be popularized. Both Jarre and Vangelis embraced the synthesizer, thought to be a "devilish instrument" at the time for its ability to imitate the sounds of other instruments. This emerging genre of music excited Armin and his desire to become a DJ began to grow. He saved up money from his paper route to buy an Akai S01, an eight-track mono sampler, and began to create his first tracks using everyday sounds such as his mother speaking, TV shows, or the housekeeper. Armin later came to think of this process of discovery and practice as self-education.

### LEARN MORE

- Armin mentions a number of composers whose work with electronic instruments and melodies shaped his understanding of dance music. Expand your knowledge of the foundations of dance music by researching and listening to the music of each of these electronic pioneers.
  - Kitarō
  - Klaus Schulze
  - Jean-Michel Jarre
  - Ben Liebrand
  - Vangelis

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### LEARN MORE CONT.

- Composer Wendy Carlos's *Switched-On Bach* is a collection of Johann Sebastian Bach pieces performed on a Moog synthesizer. Start familiarizing yourself with this album by reading [this article](#) from the Library of Congress, and listen to each track online.
- Explore this charming, yet sarcastic, interactive [electronic music map](#) by Kenneth Taylor. Presenting over 100 electronic music subgenres, this map can give you a basic understanding of the many types and styles of music you may create as you develop your skills as a DJ. Disclaimer: This map was a definitive resource for dance music subgenres in the 90s, but may need some updating. We recommend reviewing this [genealogy of music](#) as well.