



Mercedes-Benz

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Let's talk Mercedes – Episode 8: The Sound of Success

Abstract: Sarah Elsser meets Thomas Küppers, Mercedes-Benz sound designer and Felix Jaehn, DJ, music producer and Mercedes-Benz brand ambassador

In an ever-changing world, sound remains one of the most important forms of communication, whether emotional or factual, positive or negative. But just how significant a role does sound play when it comes to cars? How do certain sounds influence our experience of driving, enhance our enjoyment and amplify our emotions? And with the growth of e-mobility, how do we make sound count in vehicles that are renowned for being quiet? In the latest episode of Let's Talk Mercedes, the Mercedes-Benz podcast, show host Sarah Elsser puts these questions and more to two people who know exactly what it takes to engineer the right tone for maximum consumer enjoyment; Mercedes-Benz sound designer Thomas Küppers, and Felix Jaehn, DJ, music producer and Mercedes-Benz brand ambassador.

The following text contains some of the discussion's key takeaways, which have been edited for readability:

- Thomas Küppers on sound as an essential part of driving: "It gives you trust because you get information when you're touching the car, when you're interacting with it and you receive the sound, it's just one added channel to your personal human sense and this creates trust. So I can understand that people want to hear when they interact with the car, but on the other hand, I think the biggest fail on EVs, is if you're not recognising that it's a very new product, and sticking to the old habits of a combustion engines or engine cars, even the way we use the cars."
- Thomas Küppers on the challenge of creating sound for electric cars: "It needs to meet the exact requirement, the exact association you would like to have. So if you push the throttle, maybe right now in your head, there goes a story which you hear, what your association is about pushing the throttle. And we want to create exactly that sound. And it's quite hard to know because many people have different associations, but I guess in general, there is a big thing you can combine in everyone, or you can find in everyone. So it might be different styles, but on the one hand, pushing the throttle, you know, that even if a car goes faster, you know the frequencies are going up, that's a physical law and that's something you can then lean on and it gives you also back the trust."
- Thomas Küppers on the Mercedes-Benz 4D sound system in the all new S-Class: "The 4D Sound is a new cool feature we have in the seats integrated shakers, which lets you feel some of the frequencies played back in the music. So it's also a thing you can't only hear with your ears, but you can also feel it. You get more and more involved in the sound and included in the atmosphere. And maybe can relax and shut down, cut off the world around you."

- Felix Jaehn on his creative process: "I just try not to think too much and feel more. And if a sound like moves me and touches me, then I go with it. And usually I try to, my main thing is always trying to mix electronic sounds and real instruments. And I noticed like listening back over the last couple of years, that the sound is constantly changing and it's a never ending story. Like I personally changed and my life goes on and I develop as a human being. And with that development also the songs and the sounds change, and I don't only notice this with the sounds itself, but also with the overall composition and vibe and lyrical content of the songs too."
- Felix Jaehn on the ease of launching new music: "In my early days before I had a big team and the pressure to make radio hits all the time, I was just myself in the bedroom making beats and uploading them to SoundCloud and sharing it with the people. And like one day later, I know, you know, I'm going to see by the reaction of the people, are they listening to it? Are they sharing it? Are they commenting on it? That's the beautiful thing now, that I don't really have the release pressure like you have probably for a car where everything has to be perfect. And you know, the cars is launching worldwide and being manufactured so and so many times. It's like we just upload the song on Spotify. And one day later you see, you can watch the algorithms, you can see like the skip rates and collection rates. And then we know, you know, if it touches people or it doesn't."
- Felix Jaehn about his experience with the electric Mercedes-Benz EQC: "I really enjoy it. And I also love that it's so quiet inside, because it's just more pleasant. I don't need noise around me. That's distracting me from the engine. I feel like I can hardly hear what's going on outside as well, like just enough to be aware and to like to drive in traffic. But it's a really beautiful thing, if you want to have a conversation or listen to music or just enjoy the quiet, it's like, "Wow, it's so quiet!" I really like that."

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Mercedes-Benz AG at a glance

Mercedes-Benz AG is responsible for the global business of Mercedes-Benz Cars and Mercedes-Benz Vans with over 173,000 employees worldwide. Ola Källenius is Chairman of the Board of Management of Mercedes-Benz AG. The company focuses on the development, production and sales of passenger cars, vans and services. Furthermore, the company aspires to be leading in the fields of connectivity, automated driving and alternative drives with its forward-looking innovations. The product portfolio comprises the Mercedes-Benz brand with the sub-brands Mercedes-AMG, Mercedes-Maybach and Mercedes me - as well as the smart brand, and the EQ product and technology brand for electric mobility. Mercedes-Benz AG is one of the largest manufacturers of premium passenger cars. In 2019 it sold nearly 2.4 million cars and more than 438,000 vans. In its two business divisions, Mercedes-Benz AG is continually expanding its worldwide production network with over 40 production sites on four continents, while aligning itself to meet the requirements of electric mobility. At the same time, the company is developing its global battery production network on three continents. Sustainable actions play a decisive role in both business divisions. To the company, sustainability means creating value for all stakeholders on a lasting basis: customers, employees, investors, business partners and the society as a whole. The basis for this is the sustainable business strategy of Daimler in which the company takes responsibility for the economic, ecological and social effects of its business activities and looks at the entire value chain.