B-SIDE

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Live Music Sings the Blues During Covid 19

Written by Anna Armstrong
Design by Jessie Yang

Just over a year ago, the world went dark; the live music scene was silenced by the surging COVID-19 pandemic. Music halls with no music, venues with no lights, and hundreds of thousands of people out of work. As a music lover, I was devastated to see concert after concert and festival after festival canceled. I kept thinking about the poor bands and artists who were unable to tour.; how sad it was that their world had come to a standstill. I acknowledge that it is sad for these bands and artists, particularly those who are smaller and lesser-known, but the musicians I loved were not the people being hurt most. Artists and bands still have streaming revenues and on average earn more than the people who make live music possible: venue staff, stage crew, and tour photographers. They are the lifeblood and labor of live music, yet their stories remain untold.

According to Pollstar, a trade publication for the concert industry, in the first quarter of 2020, prior to the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic, ticket sales for live music events reached 39 million. In the first quarter of 2021, a year after the world came to a halt, ticket sales for live music events reached a mere 397, 388. All across the country, small independent venues were forced to close their doors for good. The National Independent Venue Association (NIVA) conducted a survey and found that it was likely that ninety percent of their 2,000 members would have to close their doors permanently. NPR said that the live music industry sits “on the brink of catastrophe.”

These are not just statistics. Behind every venue closure and every cancelled tour are the stories of thousands of hardworking individuals forced out of the industry that they know and love. These are human stories.

I contacted tour photographer, Brittany O’Brien, who has toured with Hippo Campus, Young the Giant, Imagine Dragons, and many others, to learn more. O’Brien knows the live music industry intimately and has seen many of her friends lose their jobs or decide that they are done with the industry for good.

Those out of work are often uninsured and receive very few, if any, unemployment benefits. “There are very few protections in place for these workers. Many people are getting limited, if any, unemployment benefits and don't have a strong enough resume to start over in a new industry. There are no 401k's or health insurance benefits when you're a contract worker, so you're really on your own waiting for the pandemic to end,” said O’Brien.

Jason's family had to delay their plans to move out of their home by four years. Their lives were completely changed. Though the furlough has allowed him to spend more time with family, it has also caused Winfree a lot of stress. He said, "At first, I felt that I didn't have a purpose because all I've ever done is this and I have ventured outside of my comfort zone seeking other opportunities, all while hoping I get my job back."

The ramifications of the standstill of the live music industry have not only been financial, but emotional as well. O'Brien says that the people behind our favorite bands and artists are rarely thought of, but that many of these "gig workers have been touring for decades and have gotten into a routine of life on the road. Having that sense of stability ripped away is pretty intense."

The more I learn about the live music industry, the more I learn how little I knew prior to beginning this research. I think it is safe to assume that most of us who consider ourselves to be music lovers are guilty of this as well.

Chris Gott, a Production Manager who has worked behind the scenes of artists for over 30 years provided further insight into the industry's current state. Gott said that the live music industry is not all partying and fun like many people believe it to be. In fact, working in this industry is often intense and grueling.

"There are many times you load in for a show as early as six in the morning, and you often don't leave until late at night. You're often working 18-hour days." He went on to recount the true size and scale of a singl e concert, noting the strength of the crew behind each show. On his tours, they often travel with 9 buses and 14 trucks. "This is a smaller tour," he tells me, "There can be up to as many as 100 trucks." Each of these buses and trucks holds all of the crew members who are no longer touring right now. The man power behind the scale of these productions is at a stand still, left with nothing but continuously rescheduled shows

"It is not the management being hurt. It is not the artists being hurt. It is the base, the people who need the entertainment industries to support their families who are being hurt," concluded Gott.

No matter how devastating, the fate of live music is far from sealed. There is so much we individually can do. You can support the live music industry by going to the website MusiCares, donating to organizations like Save Our Stages, and by streaming virtual concerts that your favorite artists put on.

The most important thing you can do, though, is tell these very real and very human stories. "Reminding those around you that it exists and talking about concerts will continue to keep the spirit of the industry alive and well," concluded O'Brien.

TABLE for ONE

Playlist Code:

R&B Inspired Recipes to Feed Your Soul

Written by Tovah Popilsky
Design by Lohana Chiovarou

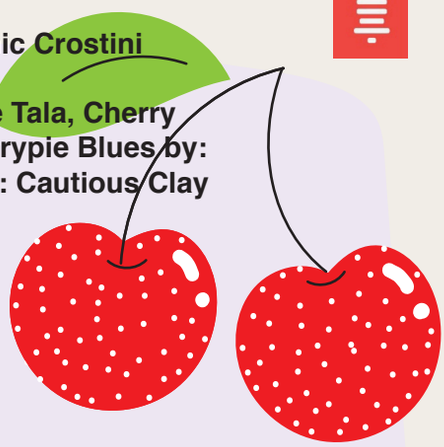
This past year has definitely been a rough one, and whether you have gravitated towards learning a new hobby, embracing TikTok trends, or just binging a new show, we can all agree our definition of normal has changed quite a bit. For me, there are two things I have missed the most throughout this pandemic — sharing meals with friends and hearing live music.

In place of live shows, my go to has been blasting my favorite tunes, loud as I can, while I do things around the house, and if you know me at all, you'd bet I am blasting R&B. Since I've had a lot of time to myself in quarantine, I've been thinking about all the people I haven't seen in so long and fanta-sizing about the meals I plan on making when I can finally invite them over again. These two pandemic hobbies of mine are what led me to creating these R&B inspired recipes.

For now, until I can make these recipes for my friends, I'll simply sit at my table for one and enjoy this meal and listen to the music that inspired it.

Appetizer: Cherry Balsamic Crostini

Songs: Cherries by: Hope Tala, Cherry by: Rina Sawayama, Cherrypie Blues by: Noname, and Cheesin' by: Cautious Clay



1 tsp Lemon Juice
2 TB Brown Sugar
1 TB Balsamic Vinegar
2 cups Cherries
1 Baguette
Olive Oil

1. In a bowl, combine halved cherries, balsamic vinegar, brown sugar, lemon juice and some fresh cracked black pepper. Stir until the brown sugar is dissolved. Let the mixture sit at room temperature for about an hour while you prep the rest of the dish.
2. Slice the baguette, at a bias, into ½ inch slices. Place baguette slices on a baking sheet and brush both sides of each slice with olive oil, then season the slices of baguette with salt and pepper to desired taste.
3. Place baguette slices in a 375° oven for around 5 minutes per side or until toasted/golden on both sides.b
4. After the baguette slices are toasted, let them sit for a minute or two so they aren't too hot to handle, then spread goat cheese onto one side of each baguette slice.
5. Use a spoon to place about 3-4 cherry halves onto each crostini slice and drizzle with some of the cherry balsamic in the bowl from before.
Garnish with some finely chopped chives

Cocktail: Bourbon-Spiked Peach Lemonade
Songs: Peach by: Kevin Abstract and Lemonade by: Papa Holt

For syrup:
2 Peaches
2 cups granulated sugar
1 cup water

For lemonade:
6 small lemons
3 cups cold water
Ice

Drink assembly:
Sliced peaches
Thyme
2 oz bourbon (per drink)

1. Chop your peaches and heat them in a saucepan with water and sugar and bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 5-7 minutes or until peaches are soft. Remove from the heat. Cool, strain, and discard the remaining peach chunks.
2. Use peach syrup to sweeten the lemonade you made to desired taste

3. Take a cocktail shaker and fill with ice. Pour 2 oz of bourbon into the shaker and pour in 10-12 oz of the peach lemonade made earlier. Shake!
4. Pour shaken cocktail into a glass with ice. Garnish with a slice of peach and a sprig of thyme. Enjoy!

**Lemonade portion of recipe makes a small pitcher's worth, but this is meant to make single cocktails (10-12 oz of lemonade for each drink)

Entree: Crispy Skin Salmon with Honey Miso Sauce
Songs: Poke Bowl by: Radiant Children, Honey by: Kehlani, Honey by: Raveena, and Sauce by: Remi Wolf

1 Salmon filet
1 inch knob of ginger
1 ½ tsp white miso
1 ½ tsp neutral oil
1 ½ tsp vinegar
1 ½ tsp honey
1 ½ tsp water (to reach desired consistency of sauce)
1 ½ tsp sesame toasted sesame seeds
1-2 scallions

1. Prepare the honey miso sauce by starting to peel and grate a 1 inch knob of ginger and add the white miso, oil, vinegar, honey, and water to the bowl with the ginger and whisk vigorously until combined.
2. Prep your scallions by cutting off the roots and thinly slicing them
3. Season your salmon filet with salt and fresh cracked pepper on each side and place into a cold cast iron skillet, skin side down
4. Turn heat on to medium and cook undisturbed for about 5 minutes then begin to press down lightly on the filet to make sure all parts of the skin are getting crispy.
5. Keep cooking until most of the salmon filet looks opaque and then try to flip (If the skin is still sticking to the pan at this point, don't try to un-stick it. Once it's ready it should release on its own.)
6. Flip filets and cook for an additional 1-3 minutes depending on desired doneness and thickness of filet.
7. Spoon honey miso sauce onto a plate and place the salmon filet on top of it. Garnish with scallions and sesame seeds.

Side: Spicy Honey Brussel Sprouts with Crispy Rice
Veggies by: Amine

Olive oil
3 cups brussel sprouts, halved
3-4 TB honey
1-2 TB sriracha
½ cup Rice Krispy Cereal

1. Heat a large pan with olive oil and place all of the brussel sprouts cut side down in the hot oil until golden brown, then flip all of the brussel sprouts.
2. After both sides of the brussel sprouts are golden brown and crispy, place them on a plate with a paper towel to get excess oil off.
3. Take a small bowl and mix the honey and sriracha together. Taste and adjust spiciness and sweetness to desired taste.
4. Transfer over the brussel sprouts to a large bowl (big enough to toss them) and drizzle the spicy honey over them.
5. Add the Rice Krispy cereal and toss the brussel sprouts. Enjoy while it's hot!

Dessert Option 2: White Chocolate Chip Matcha Green Tea Cookies
Songs: Cookie Chips by Rejjie Snow and Green Tea Ice Cream by Linda Diaz

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 TB matcha powder
½ tsp baking soda
½ tsp salt
1 cup packed brown sugar
¾ cup unsalted butter, melted
½ cup granulated sugar
1 tbsp vanilla extract
1 egg
1 egg yolk
1 ½ cups roughly chopped white chocolate or white chocolate chips

1. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. Grease baking sheets or line with parchment paper.
2. Sift the flour, matcha, baking soda, and salt together in a bowl. In a separate bowl, use an electric hand mixer to beat the brown sugar, butter, and granulated sugar together in a bowl until fluffy.
3. Beat the egg, an egg yolk, and vanilla extract into the sugar and butter mix until creamy and fluffy again.
4. Mix the flour mixture into the creamed butter until the dough is blended, then fold in the white chocolate using a spoon or rubber spatula.
5. Place 1 TB of cookie dough at a time on the baking sheet and make sure to leave a couple inches of space between each cookie.
6. Bake for 8-10 minutes (until the edges of the cookies are golden)
7. Once baked, leave on the tray for a couple minutes and then transfer the cookies to a wire rack.

MARY LOU WILLIAMS & CATHOLICISM

Written by Stanley Quiros Design by Kala Fejzo

I first heard of Mary Lou Williams after she was mentioned near the end of a lecture in Music 27: The History of Western music. She passed away forty years ago. This year an album titled Mary Lou Williams Quartet was unceremoniously released. Last year I enjoyed remasters, re-releases, and deluxe versions of records by rock's finest: Prince, John Lennon, and the Replacements. Even in the world of older vocal music and jazz, every few years one can expect a compilation of Edith Piaf's best. Why was I just hearing of this "jazz missionary"? (thanks Google!) now? Why was there literally no fanfare on music sites, or anywhere for that matter, about a reissue of her music?

Any course on Western music goes over the origin of organized music in the medieval Catholic Church. Williams was mentioned in class for "Kyrie Eleison (Lord Have Mercy)" from Mary Lou's Mass (1975), her work channelling the traditional format of the Catholic Cyclical Mass. This is a piece meant to be performed in worship, yet at the time there was major backlash against performing music "with drums" (okay?) in parish. Blurring the lines between religious and secular music, I was reminded of the time I was scolded for trying to play "Across the Universe" on the piano in my school parish. Things were always a little too rigid. Why could one not laugh during any time of Mass?

Williams was a convert to Catholicism. I was born into it. It is often said that the convert is wiser than the born and raised. You must question and ponder, and come to a conclusion. Juan Diego was wiser than the Spanish colonists because he had open ears and a pure heart. Catholicism is universal, that's in the name, from the Greek katholikos. Still, Juan Diego's Catholicism was not the same as the colonists'. I increasingly find this to be the case in Mary Lou's America, and my own.

It turns out Mary Lou Williams Quartet is not previously unreleased, or complete. It is a sequel to In London (2020). Both albums are 11-track halves of 1953's Mary Lou Williams Plays in London. Quartet is at least in order, the last eleven tracks of the original laid out in their original order. The only mishap here is that whoever was in charge of this compilation switched the labels on the two takes of "Yesterdays" present; the original's alternate take is now labeled proper and vice versa. The title is also misleading: a few tracks sprinkling some bongos over a piano-bass-drum outfit does not a jazz quartet make. Still, this is nothing compared to In London's setlist, that one would assume comprises the first half of the original, if out of order. A quick comparison reveals that while In London does have 11 songs, five of them are also available on Quartet. These two reissues not only mislead and unnecessarily complicate things; listening to both would be both redundant and insufficient! You would miss three alternative takes, as well as "For You" and "Don't Blame Me."

Williams fought intersectional racism and sexism alone while managing to keep up with shifts in Jazz trends for over half a century. It was during her stay in Europe that music's tool on her life forced a reevaluation and her conversion. This reissue is a disrespectful mess, but it also symbolizes the kinds of struggles she took on during her life. The Catholic Church in America was built for Irish and Italian immigrants. They had their struggles, but Williams went head on into a religious community that, historically, was unaccommodating to her, and kept her Catholicism her own.

We're very different, but our love of the piano unites us, as does our faith. I may have been born into a Catholic family, but I know what it is to experience faith taught to you from white preachers, and have pictures of white Jesus, and to feel like your place in the larger community is both unacknowledged by those within it and defining to those outside of it. Anyone can see the conservative higher ups fighting back against Pope Francis's broader, more inclusive Catholicism. The latest homophobic message from the Vatican Office was signed by Cardinal Luis Ladaria, a Spaniard. I doubt I will see another Latin American Pope during my lifetime.

I cling to the cross around my neck. My Catholicism is hers too. To quote Mary Lou, "They Can't Take That Away From Me."

ODE TO

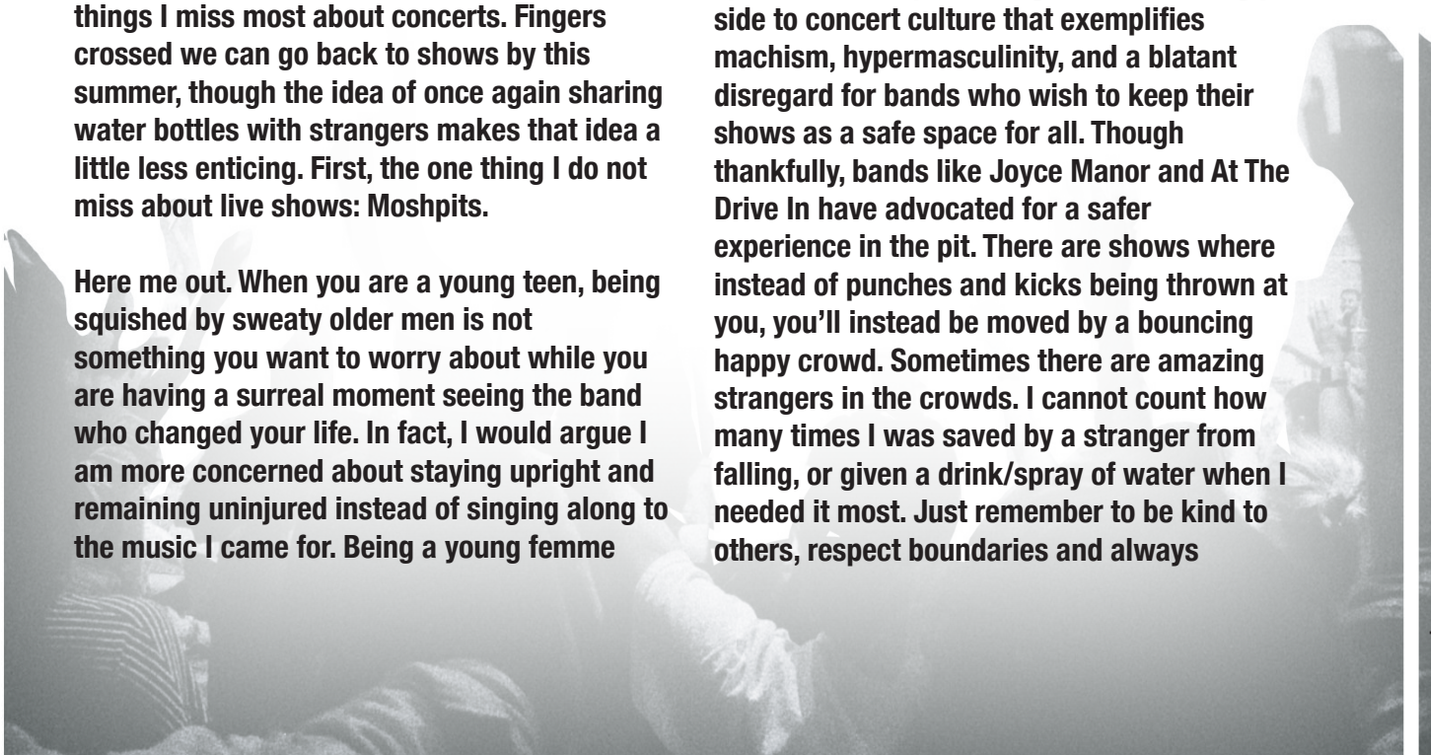
CONCERTS

Written by Anna Armstrong
Design by Ana Light

My first concert was in 6th grade. My older brother surprised my sister and I and took us to watch the Airborne Toxic Event. During one of my all-time favorite songs “Sometime Around Midnight” I cried and knew instantly I wanted to experience the beauty of music again as soon as possible. By the time I turned 17, I had already seen all of the bands on my bucket list; a myriad of bands like Interpol, Vampire Weekend, and my top band on that list— The Strokes. Throughout the years I’ve learned how to overcome concert obstacles like mosh-pits, getting the set-list post-show, and knowing where to stand for an ideal view of the band. One of the effects of this pandemic was the erasure of a full year of potential concerts and music events that would’ve enticed both new and old fans.

As a self-proclaimed veteran concert-goer, I want to include tips on how to make the most of your own concert experiences, along with things I miss most about concerts. Fingers crossed we can go back to shows by this summer, though the idea of once again sharing water bottles with strangers makes that idea a little less enticing. First, the one thing I do not miss about live shows: Moshpits.

Here me out. When you are a young teen, being squished by sweaty older men is not something you want to worry about while you are having a surreal moment seeing the band who changed your life. In fact, I would argue I am more concerned about staying upright and remaining uninjured instead of singing along to the music I came for. Being a young femme concert attendee, oftentimes attending shows alone, made moshpits that much harder for me. I had no alliance with any of the friend groups who attended together, so I was left to fend for myself and ward off people twice my size – and who were five times as drunk and sweaty as me. Being in the pit in general comes with its own set of obstacles...like your shoes falling off, bottles being thrown around, feeling anxious, and getting kicked in the face by someone stage diving. It all comes with the territory of stepping into the pit. There is no organization, there is no timer for when it starts or stops. It’s beautifully chaotic and if one is prepared, it can be a much needed release from work and stress. The criticism and overall relief from not being able to attend moshpits this year stems from those instances where you get unwillingly injured, you experience anxiety from being pushed around, or you get nonconsensually touched by someone with no regard to your personal space and safety. Moshing can show an ugly side to concert culture that exemplifies machism, hypermasculinity, and a blatant disregard for bands who wish to keep their shows as a safe space for all. Though thankfully, bands like Joyce Manor and At The Drive In have advocated for a safer experience in the pit. There are shows where instead of punches and kicks being thrown at you, you’ll instead be moved by a bouncing happy crowd. Sometimes there are amazing strangers in the crowds. I cannot count how many times I was saved by a stranger from falling, or given a drink/spray of water when I needed it most. Just remember to be kind to others, respect boundaries and always

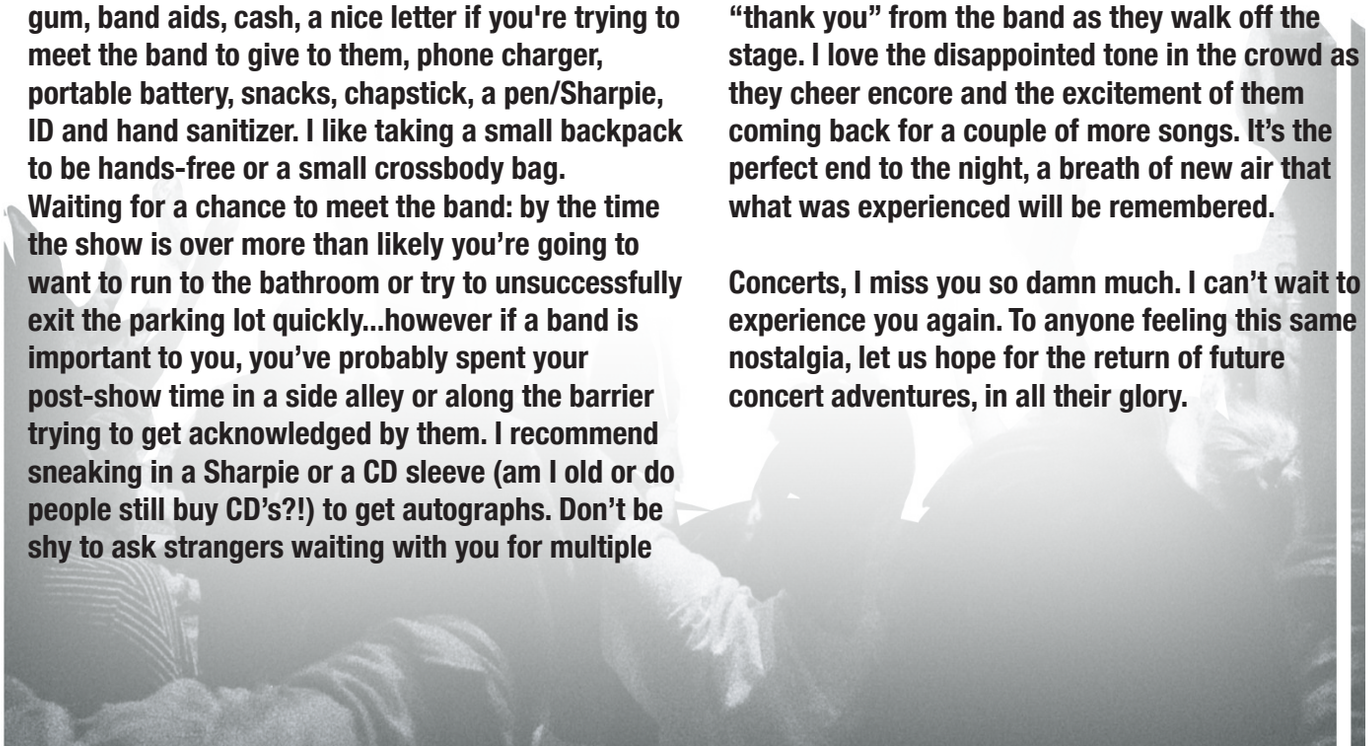


apologize when stepping on someone or getting pushed into them. The pit really has a mind of its own sometimes, but don't ever let it ruin a show for you or jeopardize your/others safety!

Other honorary mentions on concert adversaries:
Having to pee in the middle of a set (fighting your way back through the crowd is one of the hardest physical feats ever)
Waiting in lines...for the bar, bathroom and to buy merch
Drinking: having to balance a drink in the middle of a crowd, trying to figure out what to do with said drink once it's empty (and never wanting to litter!)
Tall people in front of you (I know y'all have absolutely no control over this but c'mon!)
Opening acts: most of the time you get a gem of a band who you end up supporting after, but sometimes you get that one band who makes you antsy for the headliner (and by then your feet are hurting)

99.9% of the negatives are forgotten almost instantly when the lights dim, the waiting music fades away, and you see shadows of the band members walk across the stage to their instruments. In a very condensed list, these are the things I love and miss most about concerts:
Prepping: there is something very exciting about the hours leading up to a show. I double check my bag to make sure I have all of my essentials and I'll listen to the band's music to get amped up.
Some essentials: tissues, makeup (to touch up), camera/phone (I like taking my disposable camera), gum, band aids, cash, a nice letter if you're trying to meet the band to give to them, phone charger, portable battery, snacks, chapstick, a pen/Sharpie, ID and hand sanitizer. I like taking a small backpack to be hands-free or a small crossbody bag.
Waiting for a chance to meet the band: by the time the show is over more than likely you're going to want to run to the bathroom or try to unsuccessfully exit the parking lot quickly...however if a band is important to you, you've probably spent your post-show time in a side alley or along the barrier trying to get acknowledged by them. I recommend sneaking in a Sharpie or a CD sleeve (am I old or do people still buy CD's?!) to get autographs. Don't be shy to ask strangers waiting with you for multiple photos, I've never encountered a rude person!
Speaking of band interactions: getting the set-list/guitar pick is one of the most insanely turbulent experiences. I've had them snatched out of my hands, so keep them close to your chest. The best tip I can give for this is to ask the crew nicely and even asking before the band performs gets you that 1v1 interaction for them to remember to give it to you. Oh! Also, try asking the sound technicians usually in the back of the room, they tend to have one as well.
Photos/videos: hate given to people who record videos during a set is super unnecessary! The only slander I support is when their phones are straight up blocking your view of the artists. I personally try to limit myself to a maximum of three clips of songs, only because I really do rewatch them. I try to do a small clip of my absolute favorite song, but 10 seconds max in order to enjoy the song hands-free. Do what makes you happy!
Tip: standing to the side of the stage is so underrated. You get to edge close to the side barrier, get a nice view of the crowd, and you get to avoid the moshpit. You get easier access to the bar for a refill and won't have to fight your way through as many people. You get to make an easier exit than those stuck in the lowered GA too!
Hearing that one song: speaking of favorite songs, there is something so intimately beautiful about hearing a live song performance that shaped your life or one that documents a special moment. For me, these moments confirm my love to continue going to shows until I am old and gray.
Encore: I love the bittersweet moment of hearing a "thank you" from the band as they walk off the stage. I love the disappointed tone in the crowd as they cheer encore and the excitement of them coming back for a couple of more songs. It's the perfect end to the night, a breath of new air that what was experienced will be remembered.

Concerts, I miss you so damn much. I can't wait to experience you again. To anyone feeling this same nostalgia, let us hope for the return of future concert adventures, in all their glory.



An Ode to Movie Soundtracks

Written by Daniella Ivanir | Design by Stacey Ramirez

One of the most amazing things about music is the way that it seeps into our subconscious and has the ability to elicit a very specific feeling before we even know the artist or the name of the song. Maybe there's a song that was played a lot in your childhood and every time you hear it now you get a wave of nostalgia about Sunday mornings in your kitchen. Or an album that played while your first love broke up with you and now it stings every time you hear it echo through a store. One of the most explicit examples of this sensation is the feeling of hearing a song from a movie you've seen. Without even knowing what song you're listening to, you're transported to whatever world you were in when watching that film. You're cruising with the *Dazed and Confused* seniors of 1976, singing in the tour bus with Still Water in *Almost Famous*, or playing in the snow in Cambridge in *Love Story*. Songs in films play just as much of a role as characters do, and when a scene is perfectly paired with just the right song, it is embedded into our brains as if it's a memory from our own lives. To honor all the music directors, sound engineers, and movie score composers that are behind every perfect pairing, I want to highlight three of my favorite movie scores.

The Graduate:

If you haven't listened to this soundtrack on a cloudy day while pretending to be Elaine Robinson walking around UC Berkeley's campus, you're really missing out. Simon and Garfunkel's folksy, Americana sound is a perfect match to the film's satirical take on coming of age and criticism of the 1950s era of uniformity and the white picket fence family. The duo was asked by director Mike Nichols to underscore the commentary with music written for the film. This proved difficult as Simon only produced one song for the film which was rejected by Nichols, forcing them to use existing songs for the final cut. Interestingly enough, "Mrs. Robinson" was originally a tune that Simon wrote as a tribute to Eleanore Roosevelt — "Mrs. Roosevelt"— and was re-named for the film because Nichols needed one more song.

Despite the songs not being written for the plot of the film, the songs perfectly accompany the scenes and we can't imagine it without them. For example, "Sound of Silence" plays as Benjamin, a recent college graduate, basks in the California sun by the pool and then lays stoic as Mrs. Robinson, an adult woman he is having an affair with, unbuttons his shirt. His face unchanging, the song reiterates the melancholy theme of the scene, "Hello darkness my old friend/ I've come to talk to you again." The scene segues into, "April Come She Will" as Benjamin indifferently moves through the motions of life. The song accompanies this sentiment impeccably as we hear, "August, die she must/ The autumn winds blow chilly and cold/ September, I'll remember/ A love once new has now grown old." This beloved film came at an important emergence of a counter-culture movement that rebelled against the mundane and rigid confines of American society and these songs will always have this cultural association.

Palo Alto:

Once and a while, I come across a movie that I think would be nothing without its music. Don't get me wrong, I love this movie. I just don't think I would love it as much without the moody and perfectly 2010 indie soundtrack. Blood Orange's, Dev Hynes scored the film, bringing in tracks off the album "Coastal Grooves" along with melancholy synth-pop interludes named after the scenes they accompany. What I love about Palo Alto is

that the film successfully encapsulates the nervous, youthful excitement as well as the deep sorrow of being a teenager. The feeling you would get smoking a joint with a person you barely know as you hear muffled music and the sound of drunk teenagers, and then the devastation of seeing someone who once kissed you in their childhood bedroom, with someone new under their arm; that kind of perfectly bitter-sweet pain of being young and just wanting to feel accepted and desired.

Dev Hynes is able to communicate this feeling through a synth board and some dreamy vocals in a way that shows that he's felt it before. "Futbol American" by Robert Schwartzman and "Does this Sound Okay" by Coconut Records contribute this same effect, while all fitting together so well in this ode to suburbia and feeling of being lost. This soundtrack is a perfect example of a package deal; the music, and the film complement and complete each other.

Call Me By Your Name:

This soundtrack is really what inspired this article. It was the first time that music from a film truly destroyed me. Following seeing *Call Me By Your Name* with my mom in theaters, I spent the following couple of weeks driving around Los Angeles in my Volvo listening to "Mystery of Love" and mourning the heartbreak of two fictional characters from a fictional world. Sufjan Stevens created nothing short of magic with the tracks that he contributed to this movie, managing to capture the warmth of summer, the softness of a pure romance, and the gut-wrenching feeling of heartbreak in a way that I have never heard before.

Stevens was asked by Lucas Guadigino, who had built a scene around the existing "Visions of Gideon" to produce a couple of original songs for the film. In an article with the Los Angeles Times, Stevens describes his intention with writing the music: "So I just did what I do, which is just write, you know, the typical forlorn love song that's based on these concepts from the film like first love, summer love, transcendence, but also deep sensations, deep feelings, sorrow — just that relationship between passion and confusion." It's this relationship between passion and confusion that plays with the border between pain and desire; with infatuation and distrust. The rest of the score features 80's hits and tracks by Ryuichi Sakamoto that transport you straight to being a couple of glasses deep into red wine, dancing on a humid Italian night. This collection of songs stands on its own as its own story, its own piece of art.

...

I think it boils down to intention; I love the idea of someone pulling the strings behind the scenes and doing the matchmaking between song and scene. Every melody, every chord progression was chosen within the context of the story and the tone of the film. In hopes that one day, as we are out and about, we'll hear a song and feel just as we did as we sat, with wide eyes, as we lived in that movie world for two hours.

Neorealism in Music

Article by Jackie Samsell and Noah Larsen.
Design by Amabelle Morning.

As movie-goers, we naturally seek a plot; it makes sense to have a beginning, middle, and end, neatly packaged into a digestible hour-and-a-half. However, some movies subvert these expectations by rejecting a plot altogether and instead favoring a more “realistic” approach to filmmaking. Arising from postwar Italy, neorealism is the renowned genre of film that takes a different approach to filmmaking, featuring the struggles and activities of everyday life in the working class. The goal was to capture life as it is, and filmmakers such as Roberto Rosselini achieved this by creating a documentary-style method of filming on location and often using non-professional actors. Today, while major motion pictures tend to follow the classic hero’s journey, movies like Roma often achieve a similar emotional effect despite not having a tangible plot.

Although the Italian neorealism movement began nearly a century ago, its core messages can be found in today’s music. Artists like Lorde use prose in their songs to focus on the banal activities everyone engages in, while presenting them in a way that makes us appreciate them or reflect upon them fondly. In her sophomore album, Melodrama (2017), Lorde walks her listeners through the events unfolding at a house party. The opening track “Green Light” echoes how one might feel when they first walk into a party. The beat itself is intoxicating and makes one want to dance, but the contents within the track reflect on the sensation of feeling alone despite being surrounded by people.

Much like a neorealist movie, Lorde focuses on commonplace actions when she sings, “I do my makeup in somebody else's car / We order different drinks at the same bars.” There is nothing particularly special about either of these lyrics, but they entrap us in her world. These lyrics make us reflect on the actions we engage in and how simple, but spectacular they can be. These seemingly “plotless” lyrics actually make us more inclined to enjoy Lorde’s music because they are something everyone — regardless of their background —can surely relate to. Lorde’s lyrics aren’t about a particular protagonist or anyone special, they’re just about us.

Lorde's lyrics are only one example of neorealist lyrics in today's pop music scene. Phoebe Bridgers, who was recently nominated for four Grammys, frequently writes about the details of daily life. While her songs do craft a narrative, they do so by capturing a snapshot of her surroundings. With lyrics like, "Windows down, scream along/ To some America first rap country song/ A slaughterhouse, an outlet mall/ Slot machines, fear of God," she paints a picture with seemingly disconnected images of daily American working class life. Woven together, these images have an emotional impact that transcends plot altogether.

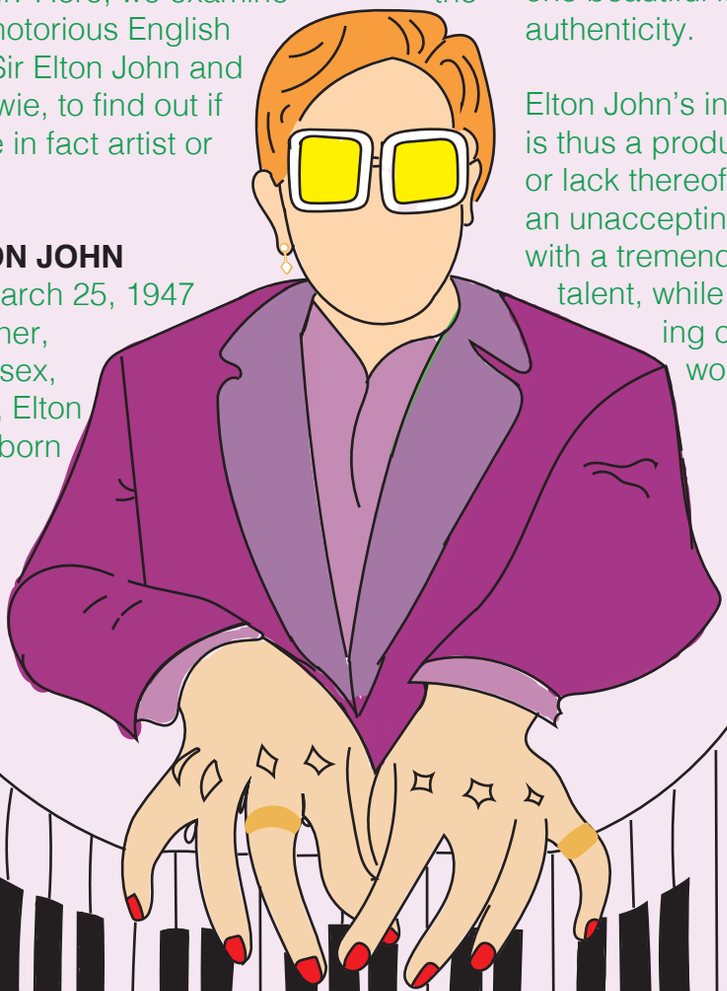
As a result, these artists have become wildly popular in today's music culture, despite having a reputation for writing sad, indie music. Just open TikTok and you'll see plenty of videos from self-identified "Pharbz" (fans of Phoebe Bridgers), who are also often members of the LGBTQ+ community. Similarly, despite being released four years ago, people are still tweeting about Lorde's Melodrama. Why has this lyricism moved so many people, especially young queer people? Because of the scenes created by their lyrics, listeners can fully absorb the song and its environment. These songs allow listeners who might not fit into a cisheteronormative experience to not only place themselves in the world of the artist, but reflect on their own lives.

Just like neorealism in film, these songs allow their themes to shine through the mundane, typically-ignored elements of life, and as listeners, we can focus on the emotions brought up in each song. Who needs a plot when you have the world around you? Just look around, and you'll notice life is all around you, and the details are beautiful.

AREA 51: ARTIST OR ALIEN

Written by Kennedy Rogers & Monique Savner
Design by Lohana Chiovarou

In music history, we've been graced with a handful of artists who transcend musicianship beyond sound into something supernatural, or quite possibly, extraterrestrial. These, ladies and gentlemen, are the aliens of the music industry; they are musicians capable of taking expression beyond the breadth of what is known on Earth. The idea of exploring these dichotomies in musicianship was inspired by a Rick Rubin interview with Pharell Williams, where Williams explained his creative process. When he is striving to make music, he recreates a feeling that an experience evoked in him. While Williams is an uncontested genius, his explanation of his creative process implies that music serves merely as a reproductive art, one that can only reflect a musician's own reality, rather than their creation of a completely new one. When an artist explains a feeling beyond anything we know on this planet, is it possible that they are not of this planet at all? Here, we examine the work of two notorious English musicians, Sir Elton John and David Bowie, to find out if they are in fact artist or alien.



ELTON JOHN

On March 25, 1947 in Pinner, Middlesex, England, Elton John was born under the name, Reginald Kenneth Dwight with an extraordinary talent for piano. As a young queer child, Elton John consisintely struggled to both discover and accept his own self and then convey that to the world. Not surprisingly, Elton channeled his talents into performing. He dropped out of school at 17 to pursue music more seriously. In 1967, John and Bernie Taupin began working together at Liberty Records to write songs which would launch John's career as an international, intergenerational icon. He and Taupin have released over 30 albums together since 1967. What makes each one beautiful is their unadulterated authenticity.

Elton John's incredible artistry is thus a product of nurture, or lack thereof. Growing up in an unaccepting household with a tremendous amount of talent, while also questioning conventions, would just

so happen to be the perfect storm to launch Sir Elton John into unprecedented fame as a pianist, singer, songwriter, composer, producer, Grammy winner, Tony winner, Academy Award winner, Rock & Roll Hall of Fame member, etc.

Three Elton John songs which exquisitely illustrate his unique ability as an artist rather than alien are “Your Song” from Elton John (1970) his debut album with Bernie Taupin, “Goodbye Yellow Brick Road” from the 1973 album, and “I’m Still Standing” from Too Low for Zero (1983). In “Your Song,” John and Taupin reflect on simple hopes and dreams; the album Elton John was an immediate success. Not long after his rise to fame, John released “Goodbye Yellow Brick Road,” which incorporates motifs from The Wizard of Oz to reminisce simpler times before the corruption that accompanies the luxuries of Hollywood. Too Low for Zero was released ten years after Goodbye Yellow Brick Road, and to say he hit rock bottom in the time which had elapsed would be an understatement. Finally finding the light at the end of a long dark tunnel, “I’m Still Standing” is a powerful testament of perseverance, recovery, and a refusal to be overshadowed even by himself.

DAVID BOWIE

David Bowie was born “David Robert Jones” in Brixton, London on January 8th, 1947 to a conventional middle-class English family — supposedly. It is of my opinion that David Bowie was without a doubt not born to human beings on January 8th on the planet of Earth, but rather emerged from somewhere extraterrestrial.

Bowie’s debut album was an entirely Earth-bound, conventional and nonconceptual piece of work. Most are not familiar with this phase of his career because the album was both a commercial and critical flop, and is to this day consistently ranked as Bowie’s worst release ever, with nearly every song on the 12 track album feeling disconcerting, contrived, and inauthentic. Hearing Bowie sing about topics most Earth-bound beings experienced and understand feels as if I am listening to someone with a gun pointed at their head, negotiating for their life. Piggybacking off the concept that Pharell subscribes to, which dictates that achieving an accurate, genuine reproduction of an emotion is the key to making good music and having one’s music be well received, I have come to the conclusion that David Bowie (1967) was so poorly received because Bowie sought to reproduce a feeling he himself was not familiar with.

After his debut, all subsequent albums explore things existing exclusively within the realm of imagination, rather than the real world. Every one of these albums is ranked higher than his debut album, indicating that listeners felt he more accurately relayed an emotion from the “imagined” space realm, rather than the Earthly one. The album most generally regarded as his masterpiece, The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars (1972) is the most narrative, conceptual album about his alien, space-bound “alter ego,” Ziggy Stardust. Following Pharell’s ideas, this means that Bowie most successfully articulated an emotion he’s felt somewhere outside of the human realm. For any human being to accomplish this feat, making other human beings empathize and relate to subject matters from a completely alien, imagined world rather than from their own planet, is, in my distinguished opinion, impossible. The reason Bowie’s otherworldly music resonates with us so deeply and permanently is not because of a hyper creative, human mind, but rather the fact that his origins are closer aligned to those of Ziggy Stardust’s than the alleged “David Robert Jones.”

Elton John’s artististry is a reaction to his earthly experiences. His unconventional costumes and insane stage presence stem from a desire to be seen, loved, and understood beyond normal conventions. This is a desire so distinctly human it becomes recognizable to his audiences, despite the grandeur of his performance; Elton John is the epitome of an artist. David Bowie, on the other hand, is anything but familiar; his inability to resonate with his listeners when signing about mundane, human issues is proof. Bowie transported his fans to a world entirely outside of their own in a way so consistently shocking and novel yet genuine that it’s difficult to grasp how he could be anything but a “starman waiting in the sky.”

Feminism on Pause: TikTok's Fixation on Misogynistic Songs

Article by Baylie Raddon.
Design by Amabelle Morning.

One of the first things I noticed when I downloaded TikTok was many of the songs users lip synch to are quite problematic— and oftentimes harmful. I was unaware, however, TikTok users apparently classify certain songs as ones they "put their feminism on pause for." I wouldn't have paid much attention to this phenomenon had I not stumbled upon a video by TikTok user safthegiraffe and her Spotify playlist called "women can have a little misogyny...as a treat." Her caption reads: "seeing people talk about the one song that makes them put their feminism on pause...but [she has] a whole playlist." Before listening to the playlist, I was very confused because I thought people were past listening to problematic music. Initially, I rolled my eyes and scrolled on, thinking I was exempt from putting my feminism on pause; I assumed I listened to mostly unproblematic music. That is until I got a catchy, misogynistic TikTok song I didn't know the name of stuck in my head. I opened Spotify, knowing if I looked hard enough, I would be able to find the playlist I brushed off so quickly before. When I found it, I was shocked by the number of likes the playlist had. At the time this article is being written, it has 42,492. I've been confused and intrigued by it ever since.

I ended up finding the song I was looking for mixed in with other viral songs on TikTok. Most of the songs that weren't popularized by TikTok, however, were songs I listened to as a kid. There were songs such as "Girlfriend" by Avril Lavigne, "Misery Business" by Paramore, and "Better Than Revenge" by Taylor Swift. Looking back now, these songs were quite misogynistic. Even though listening to these songs now leaves a bad taste in my mouth, I cut the artists some slack because they were young women raised in the same culture that prompted me to like their music in the first place. The same excuse cannot be made for songs such as "Dear Maria, Count Me In" by All Time Low, "If You Can't Hang" by Sleeping With Sirens, and of course, "I Write Sins Not Tragedies" by Panic! At the Disco, all of which are featured on "women can have misogyny...as a treat." When I first listened to these songs when I was younger, I had no awareness when it came to issues of misogyny, internalized or otherwise. I developed attachments outside of the issues with the songs, so when I saw them on this playlist, I began to understand the desire to "put your feminism on pause."

There were other popular songs from my youth, the lyrics of which I never paid much attention to, even if I knew every word. These were songs such as "No Type" and "Come Get Her" both by Rae Sremmurd, "Whistle" by Flo Rida, and "Gold Digger" by Kanye West.

West. The misogyny in these songs was obvious once I listened to them within the context of this playlist, but to be honest, out of all the songs I've mentioned so far, the songs written and performed by women were the ones I had easily pegged as sexist. I suppose women pitting women against each other was especially offensive to me. As for the other songs, hearing men slut shaming women or referring to them with derogatory words is something I am so accustomed to that it now doesn't phase me very often. It's also worth noting context plays a huge role in whether or not a term offends; for instance, I almost never bat an eye at the phrase "bad b*tch" whereas words like "whore" or "slut" provoke a reaction. At any rate, the majority of the songs on the playlist deserved their spot there because they were both catchy and offensive.

According to the viewers of the original TikTok, singing about grey areas is where they draw the line for what is acceptable to put your feminism on pause for. Though the song "Blurred Lines" by Robin Thicke was originally included on the playlist, it was taken off, per the request of commenters on the TikTok. They also requested the removal of all music by R. Kelly, who has been accused of sexual abuse and was highlighted in the 2019 Netflix docuseries Surviving R. Kelly. Paramore and Taylor Swift were added in their place, and more songs were suggested in the comments. The creator included many of them, and people continued to follow the playlist. The response from the TikTok audience is interesting because they collectively decided on which songs were problematic enough to be put on the list and which ones were so terrible they should not even be listened to.

A song that toes the line for me was actually the song leading me to the playlist in the first place: "DRUGS" by lil aaron. This song is so dangerously catchy I get it stuck in my head often. It contains the line "I only call her pretty when she's taking out her titties. I only say I love her when I want to f*ck her." For this song, I can't tell if the sexism or the just flat-out disrespect to the subject of the song is worse. Still, the line is so ridiculous it can be easily passed off as laughable, despite it being a sad sentiment.

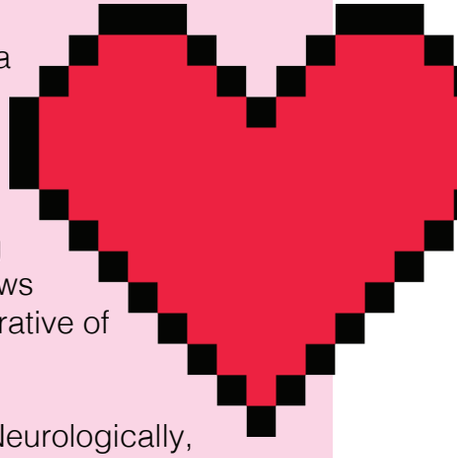
I was almost tricked by one song that was repopularized by TikTok because I only heard 15 seconds of the song whenever I encountered it online as it was used as the audio for many short lip sync TikToks. The line I heard was "When I start drinking, my dick does all my thinking." Again, this was another instance in which I was distracted by how catchy the song sounded and how funny the lyrics were. I knew that these were bad, but as I listened to "Everywhere I Go" by The Hollywood Undead the whole way through I quickly discovered why I never got into this band. Even when I was younger, I didn't listen to this song on repeat because of the other lines like "break up with my girlfriend so I could bang sluts." Similar to the words from "DRUGS," these lyrics are so disrespectful they are ultimately more sad than anything else, but the line "I don't give a f*ck if you're drunk or not" is where I draw the line. If this playlist is supposed to be for guilty pleasure listening, I would expect the implication of taking advantage of a drunk person would take the pleasure out of it. Even so, on TikTok "Everywhere I Go," "DRUGS," and other songs like them each have thousands of videos each using the sound.

While songs from my internalized misogyny and pop punk phases might be the ones I put my feminism on pause for, many TikTok users have a broader idea of what is acceptable for themselves. Perhaps outside of the nostalgic, earworm-worthy qualities of the songs, people who are affected in day to day life by misogyny can somewhat reclaim their negative experiences by not allowing themselves to feel guilty for what the artists have done and said. I imagine that for many inserting themselves into songs where there is a power-struggle might make them feel empowered. While I believe there are better ways to go about this, who am I to tell people how to cope?

MUSIC: THE ULTIMATE LOVE LANGUAGE

WRITTEN BY PALOMA RIVERA MACIAS
DESIGN BY JESSIE YANG

Music captures the untold truths we struggle to emote with one another. It fills the space in our imagination as we imagine the soundtrack for the life that could be. I make manifestations through music. I'll hear a song a create an entire imagined reality around it to fill out my robust daydreams. While in this state of skewed reality strays of light peak behind the back of my eyelids. The piercing light pokes holes in my dreamscape, reality seeps in like green goo coating my brown eyes then dripping out my nose like mucus. In the pools of green gunk that coats the floor, I see the reflection of myself as a large purple monster listening to Sofi Tukker's Purple Hat. Then another imagined reality comes into fruition when my songs shuffle to the soundtrack of the French New Wave. Walking alongside characters like Jules and Jim listening to Le tourbillion our faces move in their freeze-frame manner fanned out across the screen. Each alternate reality cycles across my eyelids like slideshows in a theater. The song is the only pre-determinate to the imagery that follows. From Smerz to Gnarls Barkley to HMLTD songs are an escape accessible to everyone. Once you have tapped into musical associative landscapes you can envelop and dispense these songs out like gifts. Whenever you or someone you know can't communicate how they feel or describe with their words alone what that relationship, conversation, and or what moment meant: just send a song.



One song alone can bring out specific associations but a collection can create a narrative. That is where the art of the playlist comes into play as a tool to elicit a progression of emotions. Someone can say, "I love you" but what the full range of their love means is yet to be determined. Music can step in and provide an explanation as to how someone will love another. The progression of songs can reveal the way in which someone will care for you. Even the detail of pairing songs that they think you may like as well as songs that remind them of you shows their love language as one that listens closely. Once these songs create the narrative of your relationship with another person there seems to be an associative link.

The question struck me, why is it that some songs bring up certain memories? Neurologically, according to Psychology Today, music engages neural networks of the brain that are responsible for "motor actions, emotions, and creativity." These three core receptors can be ignited by the sound of those particular songs. The study noted that when certain memories came to mind they were more likely positive more than the inverse. These memory-inducing modes of entertainment are possibly more diverse than films for example because music creates the sonic-atmosphere to which we provide the visual. When there are no memories associated with any one song in particular perhaps then imaginative scenarios can unfold.

When writing about music over the course of my time at Bside I have been fascinated by the relationships between music and the listener, especially when concerning matters of the heart. Music can give the most expensive gift in conveying a love language shared by many: words of affirmation. The two go hand in hand. Where words fall short music comes in, or the exchange of playlists is a representation of active listening and shared connection. Or, music can expedite self-love as a jumping-off point to always have meaningful company whether you're walking through the world or daydreaming. Music can be an everlasting expression of love.

A-Side Sessions: Moon Drops
Photographer: Lyle Kahney

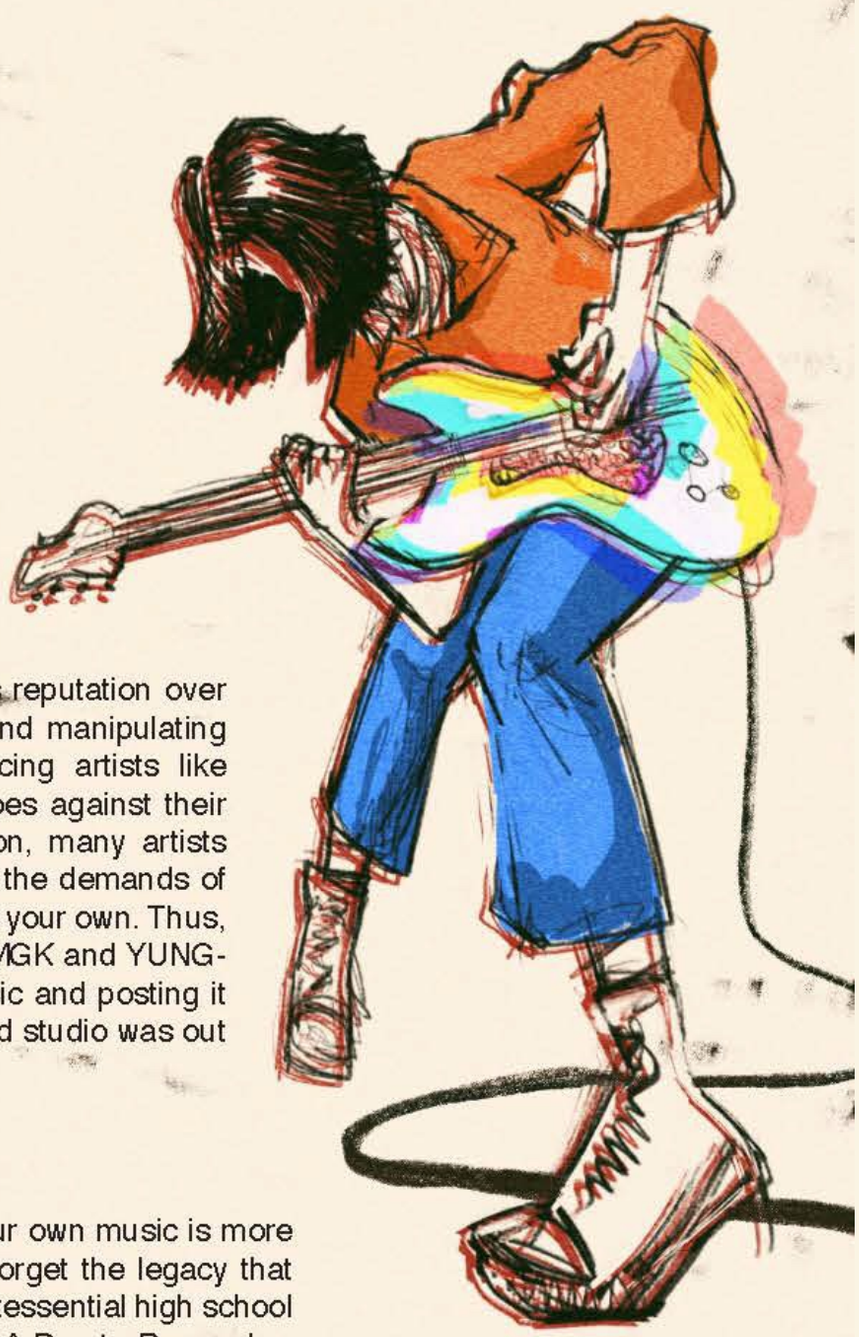
written by: amber ELLERTSON
designed by: natalie KEMPER

how lockdowns have RESHAPED the art of making music

2020 and 2021 have been rough in so many ways. Being in a constant state of limbo has not only impacted the lives of millions of people, but also the workforce as we know it—specifically, the music industry. With concerts cancelled and postponed, meetings in person prohibited, and an overall lack of motivation, it truly is sad to think about how drastically the lives, and livelihoods, of musicians have been turned upside down. However, many have found their own way to survive. In the age of instant everything, it's no wonder that platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, and Spotify have gained so much traction amongst both musicians and non-musicians alike.

One such artist who demonstrated the power these platforms have in transforming music as we know it is Machine Gun Kelly, or MGK. From the beginning of the lockdowns in 2020, MGK began a series of recording covers of songs at his house and posting them on YouTube. He also eventually began including Blink-182's drummer, Travis Barker, who would record himself drumming and send it into MGK, who would then compile the two videos into afor ainto a seamless song. The series ended up gaining millions of views on YouTube and went on to start a whole trend of homemade music videos during quarantine.

With such an edge of authenticity and a well-received reaction from the audience, it makes one wonder why home-recorded songs hadn't been as popular before? While there was certainly a rising trend in SoundCloud rappers in years before, typically only a few artists would actually gain traction off the platform and would just get signed off to a record label once discovered. However, there has not been much seen of the opposite effect, of artists already in a record label deciding to release music on their own accord, from home.



Record labels have had a tumultuous reputation over the years, from sexually harassing and manipulating Kesha and countless others, to forcing artists like Green Day to put out content that goes against their desires. With such a mixed reputation, many artists nowadays advocate for going against the demands of record labels to put out music that is all your own. Thus, it is no surprise that many artists like MGK and YUNGBLUD began recording their own music and posting it online at a time when going to a record studio was out of the question.

This does not mean, though, that recording your own music is more popular now than it ever has been. Let's not forget the legacy that garage bands have left on music. From the quintessential high school band practicing out of their parents' garage, to A Day to Remember recording an entire album on the road, there is a certain authenticity which can only be found in creating and recording your own music, —, start to finish.

While this turn to a more widely-accepted world of home recordings and self-written pieces seems promising, there is still much work to be done in the world of music. There is still an overwhelming imbalance in power within the entertainment industry which skews in the favor of big-shot producers, but there will always be hope for a new era in music. One which not only provides artists with the resources they need to be unique and successful, but encourages it.

MUSIC IN THE UNIVERSITY:

A Musician's Reflection

Written by Lily Ramus
Design by Ana Light

Last September, the music YouTuber, Adam Neely released a video titled "Music Theory and White Supremacy." The video, which now has over a million views, challenged academic music departments across the country with its critique of the priority put on teaching Western art music theory and techniques above those of all other forms of music. It argued that university music curricula should more accurately reflect the diversity of the world's music and challenge the discipline's historic eurocentricity. In the week following the video's release, it was mentioned in all of my music classes, and it is understandable why.

As a music major at UC Berkeley, the video hit close to home. In the wake of 2020's extensive Black Lives Matter protests, it made me question the value of what I was learning and why I was working so hard for a degree that reinforced such outdated ideas. But most of all, I felt disappointed; I felt betrayed by the systems that had continued to accept such a narrow-focused curriculum. In a university with so many intelligent minds at work, why hadn't we done better by now?

Growing up, I saw music theory as an absolute, akin to the theorems I was learning in my math and science classes. I understood music theory as a system of conventions that could be used to explain why (Western) music sounds the way it does; understanding that it was a shortcut to knowing what notes to use in different songs and situations. Regardless of its usefulness and priority in the classroom, I knew that I didn't need music theory to make music. I'd been doing it intuitively for years, in garage bands with my friends and with my guitar in my bedroom, writing songs without ever thinking about the theory behind it.

Most of the time I chose to focus on creativity. For me, if something sounded good, it didn't matter what the theory was. I worried that if I actually understood music theory, I would lose my creativity, falling back on the same progressions that have been written for hundreds of years. I was naive, but these ideas, along with my lack of classical training, gave me an outside perspective when I started pursuing a music degree at UC Berkeley.

I decided to study music because I wanted to learn the theory that I had long avoided, but my prior musical experiences had proved to me that music was more than that. When I perform with friends and other musicians at local shows, the focus is never on the music's technicalities; it's about community.
Most of the world's music consists of practices and traditions that focus on participation, intuition, and creativity, the same aspects that governed my early music making. My music history and culture classes aligned with these ideas, exploring how to discuss and appreciate music historically deemed incomprehensible under the narrow guise of Western music theory. Furthermore, they challenge colonial legacies propagated by music theory and question the resulting eurocentric focus of study. It feels almost ironic to take these classes alongside Musicianship and Harmony, courses that reinforce the dominant discourses confronted in the history and culture classes. Why are we still being taught a curriculum that not only promotes these ideas, but also perpetuates the value of them?

Like my perceptions growing up, in Musicianship and Harmony, music theory is taught as an absolute. In Harmony, we learn the rules and conventions that govern Western art, music while in Musicianship, the focus is on aural skill training that prompts us to utilize these techniques in our own music-making. In both, the rigidity of the Western system (theory, notation, etc.) makes it difficult to teach genres outside of Western art music in earnest. When material from other genres is included, the stress on music theory makes said styles seem less refined, reinforcing discursive constructions about Western art music's supreme sophistication. The focus on Western art music theory and techniques not only creates a disproportionately eurocentric curriculum, but also fails to produce well-rounded musicians.

In reality, music theory is not abso-lute

Certainly some of my critique is based on my own disposition. Having long relied on intuition and creativity for my music making, I was bound to be uncomfortable with the sudden switch to playing strictly by the rules. However, it was hard not to wonder if such rules were overvalued. After all, wasn't my music, as well as the majority of the music of the world that's based on participation, intuition, and community, just as valuable?

In reality, music theory is not absolute. By Neely's definition, 'music theory' as we understand it today is the harmonic conventions of 18th century Europeans, an immortalized system of preferences. I've come to see music theory as a tool and my increased understanding has supplemented my creativity, helping me bring the musical ideas I hear in my head to fruition. But ultimately, the harmonic conventions of 18th century Europeans are not the whole toolbox. I can only imagine the boundaries that would be broken, and innovation that would ensue if university music curricula more accurately reflected the diversity of our world. As campus buildings are renamed and history is re-examined, it will be interesting to see how the music plays out.

Written by Erika Badalyan
Design by Kala Fejzo

The Communal Nature Of Country Music

Music pretentiousness is a bore by any standards, but so is the unwritten rule that people with musically open minds try to distance themselves from country music. They look at mainstream country music and refuse to see the history that predates it.

A lot of things have changed in the last year, however. Cultural revolutions, over the internet and in person. Public consensus has shifted on many topics, including

Country music originated as the music that united working-class people. People from the South, particularly in the Appalachian mountains combined European folk songs, English ballads, with a blend of fiddle, mandolin, and banjo added to the mix. Harmonies were simple, and ornamental musical arrangements were used sparingly. After a hard day of manual, blue-collar work, people would sit down on their porch and play the songs that they had grown up with, that had passed down to them generation upon generation. It was something ~~that~~ brought families together amidst the hardships of the difficult climate they endured, and the unpleasant occupations they had.

The story of country music catalyzed in the mid-1920s, with the ever-influential Carter Family. The Carter Family consisted of Sara and Maybelle Carter, and Jimmie Rodgers. Sara Carter married A.P., and he became the head of the Carter household. A.P. would travel around Virginia and Tennessee and collect hundreds of British/Appalachian folk songs that had passed on for generations.

Roseanne Cash, Johnny Cash's daughter, said that "The Carter Family laid down the building blocks necessary for the rest of country to follow." Carter Family – June Carter Cash (neé Carter) was the daughter of Maybelle Carter.

Other notable artists to follow in that era were Jimmie Rodgers, Bradley Kincaid, James and Martha Carson, Charlie Poole, and The North Carolina Ramblers.

Hank Williams had a prolific career towards the end of 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s. He was a superstar at age 24, and dead by age 29. Waylon Jennings cites him as his hero. He has

One former outlaw who heard Johnny Cash sing at San Quentin was Merle Haggard. He and Willie Nelson, a Texan, covered Townes Van Zandt's Pancho & Lefty and gave it a more upbeat feel. Nelson didn't have a lot of luck in Nashville, moved back to Texas and found his crowd there.

There's also Kris Kristofferson, a singer songwriter who wrote "Me and Bobby McGee" (later covered by Janis Joplin) and the devastating "Sunday Morning Coming Down".

In the 1970s, a subgenre called "Outlaw Country" emerged, with rebel Waylon Jennings. Waylon Jennings' "Are You Sure Hank Done It This Way" is about Jennings' disdain with the Nashville country music industry.

Lord, it's the same old tune, fiddle and guitar
Where do we take it from here?
Rhinestone suits and new shiny cars
It's been the same way for years
We need a change

More recently, country has been propped up by female artists like Lucinda Williams and Gillian Welch. In the modern decade, country music has been combined with other genres as artists try out a different sound. Orville Peck is a queer country singer who combines shoegaze elements with steel guitar motifs.

Another take on tradition is The Highwomen, comprised of Brandi Carlile, Maren Morris, Amanda Shires, Natalie Hemby. It is a spoof on the group the Highwaymen, which consisted of Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash, Waylon Jennings, and Kris Krosfterosson. The Highwaymen were formed in 1985, as all its members noticed their individual music started to slip down the charts. Conversely, The Highwomen formed at the highest point of their collective careers thus far. The Highwomen write about music that focuses on real world issues like the gender wage gap, not just songs about unrequited love amidst heterosexual relationships.

Looking forwards to the present and future of country music, I see modern folk artists covering the greats that came before them, but also carving out their own niche within the genre. Look no further than Kacey Musgraves and her Grammy-winning album "Golden Hour". It includes twang and steel guitar, and a wide-eyed look at life, with a psychedelic tinge. Musgraves described the world around her as if she is seeing it for the first time.

In March when the world turned upside down, I gravitated towards acoustic music and early folk releases. Covers have been a common theme during COVID-19, Phoebe Bridgers covered "Summer's End" by John Prine. Courtney Barnett and Vagabon did a rendition of Karen Dalton's "Reason to Believe".

When the pandemic hit, I was looking for simple instrumentation and warm vocals to envelop me with a comforting sound. COVID-19 has caused people to feel isolated more than ever before. Country music's simplicity and inherent acoustic nature brings people together.

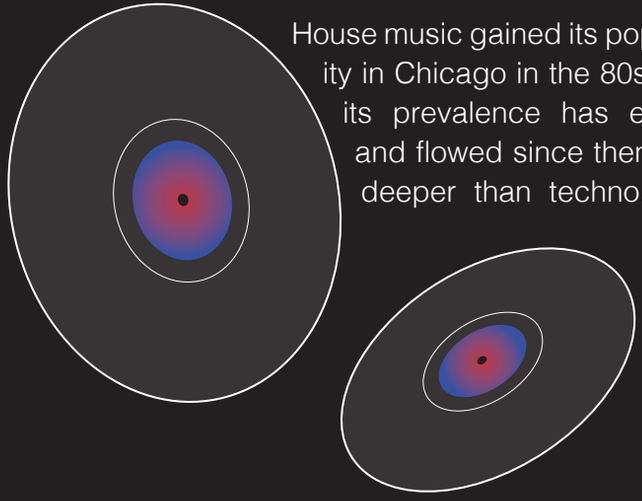
From the Ashes of Disco, Rose the Pheonix of House

Written by Meg Khurana | Design by Serena Wang

When people hear the terms “house music” or “EDM”, a few things often come to mind: beaded rave bracelets, pulsing beats, maybe a headache or some eye rolls. The Bay Area is famous for its EDM and house scene, so it's important to examine the roots of electronic music, which heavily vary from mainstream electronic music.

It's disheartening for me to see people dismiss electronic music or lump a label onto it because it’s much more than the novel stereotypes around the genre. However, for those averse to all things electronic, I ask you to frame your thinking this way: Much like learning to enjoy healthy eating or taking on a new language, enjoying house music requires immersion and patience. At its core, house music is more than just a sound – it’s a feeling.

Technically speaking, it's 120-140 beats per minute and contains what’s called a “four-to-the-floor” beat. Put simply, it's a lot of bass —and little variation. House is like if you take the darkly addictive hook of a good pop song and stretch it for as long as you like until it’s the perfect sound for dancing.



House music gained its popularity in Chicago in the 80s, and its prevalence has ebbed and flowed since then. It is deeper than techno, and slower than EDM. At first the sounds may all sound intrusive, and to some maybe even boring, but with a better understanding and more familiarity, one can learn to deeply appreciate the sound.

I have been a house fanatic since I was 10, when I discovered Deadmau5. I would spend hours dancing to what seemed like the same repetitive beats, losing myself for hours at a time. This is precisely the intention behind why house tracks tend to be 8-12 minutes long; they are meant to be immersive. To me, house is simultaneously spiritual and reflective, just as it is energizing and calming. It is inherently meditative. With mindful meditation, you can meditate on anything: drinking a cup of tea, deep breathing, or repetitive motions. Phrases like “lose yourself to dance” and “dance yourself clean” are targeting precisely this. I find it quite laughable that as someone who has trouble focusing I can meditate on house for hours. House speaks to humans' intrinsic need to both dance and connect with oneself.

However, it wasn't until I began to study disco that I started to truly understand the roots, beauty, and intentionality of house music.

The foundations of the genre are set in a club called Paradise Garage, a celebrated New York City discotheque. If you're thinking Paradise Garage was like Studio 54 with VIPs and celebrities, don't. Members of Paradise Garage were regular, everyday people. Yet, as a members-only establishment, it retained a sense of exclusivity. Those who frequented Paradise Garage loved music — soul, funk, and african rhythms. It differed from today's dance clubs; this was music you could sing to. The beats and lyrics were entangled in a romance you couldn't help but be in awe of. A dominating force, instrumentation was paramount. It's important to remember — DJs were the rockstars of this moment.

Paradise Garage was home to DJ and legend, Larry Levan. Playing everything from Jamaican Dub to the Talking Heads, to Aretha Franklin, Levan's mixing was more than enchanting. It was a new craft: an artistic gift. Levan was particularly notable because he didn't simply mix music, he told a story. Evident how Larry was feeling on a given day, emotion and passion oozed as he mixed. He strung tracks together in a way that made them sound as if they made up a collective score. Seamlessly fusing tracks across genres, Levan was nothing less than an artistic genius. Paradise Garage was his canvas, and with each track, he painted an emotional masterpiece. Impossible not showcased his electric taste and varied appreciation of music. In 1987, the impact of the AIDS epidemic, along with Levan's close friend Michael Brody's diagnosis, saw Paradise Garage close.

But the story doesn't end there. A promoter who recently opened his own club in Chicago came to New York City to have Levan join him, but upon realizing nothing in the world could get Levan to abandon his paradise, he discovered "the godfather of house" and Levan's childhood friend: Frankie Knuckles.

The Warehouse was the epicenter of where Chicago's Black LGBTQ+ community gathered, frustrated by the city's uptight disposition. The music was an extended expression of their being.The Warehouse was to Knuckles what Paradise Garage was to Levan. This was where Knuckles could show off the skills he so meticulously honed in on in NYC. The Warehouse was also what gave house music its name. Stores began stamping records with a new label: house, the name for the music at the Ware-house.

House music was branded as the "poor man's effort" to recreate disco: "disco on a budget.". It was disco without the studios. All you needed were two machines: a bass synthesizer and a drum machine. It was music without the typical structure of pop; the groove was the dominant rhythm. What was once seen as a deluded effort to recreate disco soon became an international phenomenon.

RECKONING WITH AMERICAN SIN: RACISM WITHIN THE NFL

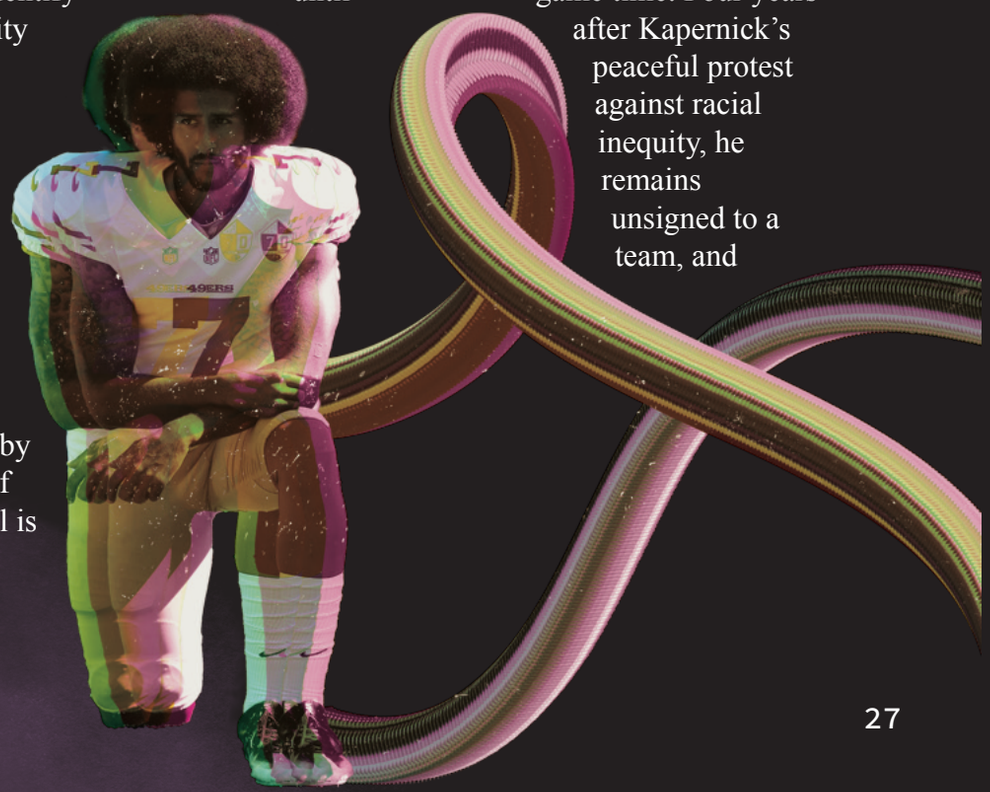
Written by Natalie Gott | Design by Stacey Ramirez

On February 7th, Americans did what Americans do best: binge food and alcohol to glorify sweaty men tackling one other. The Super Bowl is arguably the most American day of the year, practically over shadowing Independence Day with its million dollar commercials and soaring beer sales. Nothing screams patriotism quite like raising an ice cold PBR to a multi-billion dollar industry.

Closely tied with drinking and consumerism, covert racism is the second most American quality of the whole charade. The NFL has woefully utilized the bodies of people of color for decades, using their athletes of color to reign in profits without delivering equitable income for their labor. According to the Institute of Inclusion and Diversity in Sport, 70% of NFL players identify as Black, and 60% identify as people of color. Despite the majority of players being people of color, the NFL's management and positions of power fall dishearteningly short of reflecting their players. As of 2020, the NFL had only 3 Black head coaches and 2 Black general managers, yet had a record breaking amount of Black starting quarterbacks.

In a league so disproportionately led by white men who leech off the labors of players of color, inequality in football is virtually boundless. In 2016, the sheer bravery of Black players came to light as rates of police brutality against Black Americans continued to rise. Colin Kaepernick and numerous other players made the honorable choice to kneel during the National Anthem, using their platform to highlight the oppression and brutality faced by Black Americans. As they took to their knees to make peace, white Americans rose to their feet to make war.

Former president, Donald Tr*mp distastefully commented on the players' actions by tweeting they "shouldn't be in the country." He was not alone in his sentiments; according to a report from CNBC, the league banned this wage of peaceful protest by forcing players who refused to stand during the anthem to the locker rooms until game time. Four years after Kapernick's peaceful protest against racial inequity, he remains unsigned to a team, and



the league wages on under the leadership of white men.

But when the field clears, the commercials end, and half time commences, can we set aside these grave American sins for the sake of entertainment? This year's Super Bowl hosted The Weeknd, yet another Black musician to take center stage during the Halftime show, adding to the expansive list of performers of color before him, such as Beyonce, Prince, Usher, Smokey Robinson, Michael Jackson, and Bruno Mars.

Each time the NFL features a Black artist, I instinctively hear the shrill voice of Donald Tr*mp ring out, repeating his white supremicist dog whistle response to the Black Lives Matter protests, saying, "MAGA loves the Black people." As distasteful as that statement is, so is the measly effort of the NFL to support Black Americans by hosting Black musicians. Rather than reconcile with their actions, the NFL set a twenty minute window to appreciate Black artistry before returning to their regular programming of deep systemic racism.

We've seen this many times before, in shapes too synonymous to ignore. In the era of Jim Crow, Black Americans faced unspeakable acts of racial violence and squandry retributions. As the U.S. was perpetuating institutionalized racism, they were also simultaneously enjoying the music from the groups they harmed most.

These trying times created the fertile soil for blues, ragtime, and jazz to settle their roots into. New Orleans is a prime example of such, poised as an elixir of Black heritage and white supremacist ideals. The city hosts the infamous New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival annually, ringing in thousands of consumers to feast on the fruits of Black culture, yet it stands in a state rampant with white supremacy groups and a state constitution dedicated to barring Black Americans from the legal system.

When white people strip the cultures of other groups to use it for our consumption, we find ourselves amid the unsound dilemma of appropriation versus appreciation. Or more accurately, a false phenomena under the guise of a true dilemma; as long as the matters protested by Kapernick still perpetuate, authentic appreciation of Black culture cannot exist. It's purely appropriation for the gain of white people. White Americans use the culture of Black Americans when it's most convenient and profitable, morphing it into something digestible. When white people rap, they do so without facing the prejudices and stereotypes that plague Black rappers, and sometimes, even kill them. It's just the same when we use fashion and slang coined by Black communities, without the repercussions that Black people have historically faced; it's ignorant at best.

When the next Superbowl rolls around, the only thing supporters should line up to see is Kapernick signed to a new team, a dramatic increase in Black leadership, and a publicized reckoning with the league's racism. That's merely the tip of the iceberg, but anything less would make hosting yet another Black performer unacceptable. Giving a platform to Black musicians is honorable in some respects, but as long as racial inequity continues to manifest throughout the NFL, it's shallow, inauthentic, and inconsistent with the league's morality.

the case for "URBAN"

: revisiting it

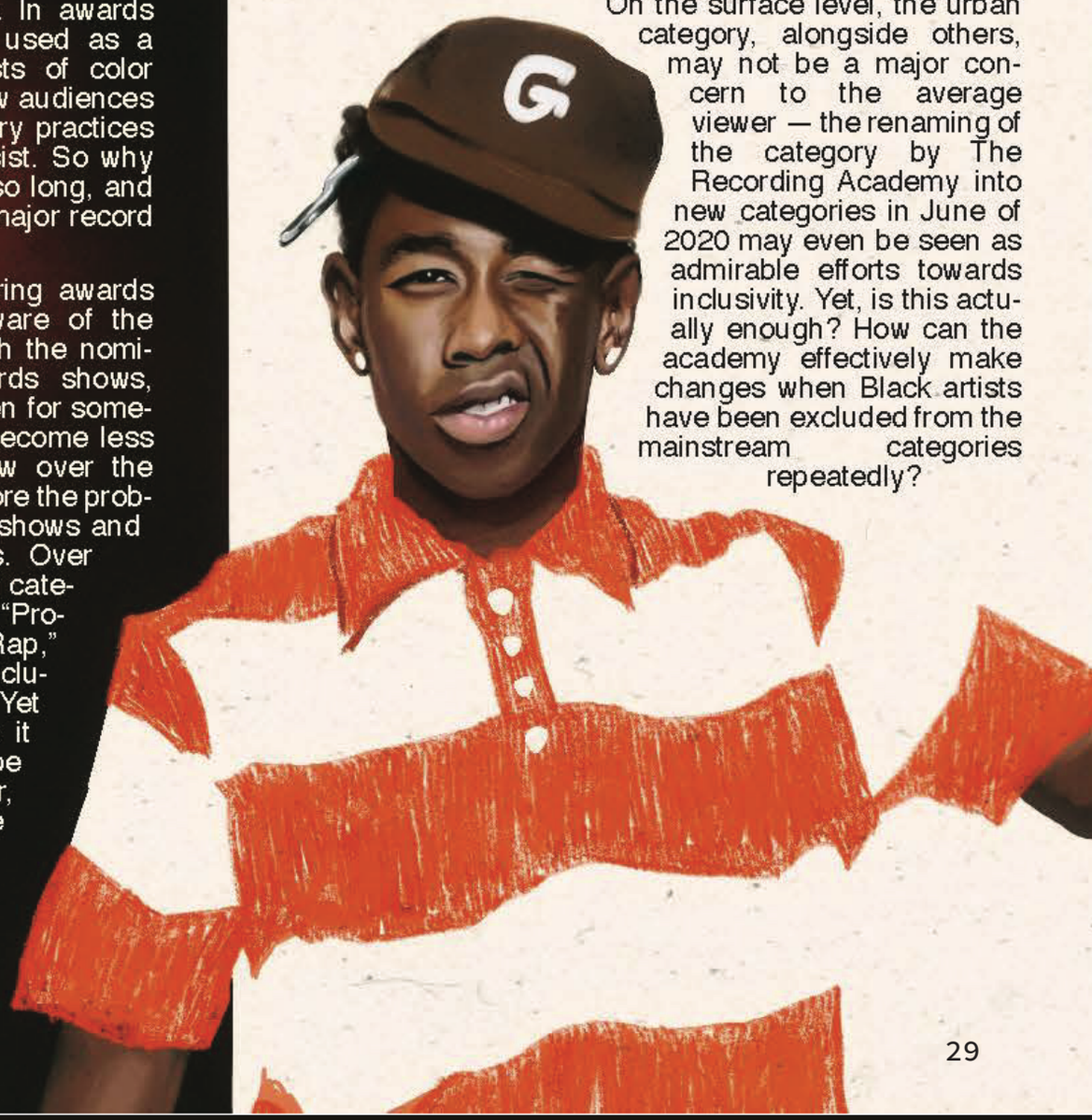
written by: maya BANUELOS
designed by: natalie KEMPER

There is no doubt that "Urban contemporary" is an incredibly confusing category. Personally, I do not know if I have ever heard anyone say their favorite genre of music is "urban" like one would say r&b or pop. The urban category has been used to encompass a wide array of genres by nonwhite artists. In awards shows, "urban" has been used as a sidestep to awarding artists of color prestigious awards that draw audiences in, allowing for discriminatory practices behind nominations to persist. So why has "urban" been used for so long, and why did it take so long for major record

If you are online at all during awards season, you are likely aware of the discontent and criticism with the nomination categories at awards shows, such as The Grammys. Even for someone like myself, who has become less inclined to watch the show over the years, it is impossible to ignore the problematic policies behind the shows and their distribution of awards. Over the past year, reformation of categories such as "Urban" into "Progressive" and "Melodic Rap," pledges to diversity and inclusion have come forward. Yet the Grammys have made it increasingly difficult to be excited as the artists of color, who have shaped the soundtrack of each year, are continuously snubbed and excluded from their rightful recognition, with and without the urban category.

Recent attention brought towards the "Urban" category online and by The Recording Academy can likely be credited to Tyler, The Creator's 2020 Grammy's interview, where he described winning a Grammy for pop album IGOR (2019) in the "Rap" category as a "backhanded compliment," where categories such as "Urban" are like a "politically correct way of saying the N-word". Though his win was not in the urban category, but rather in the rap category, IGOR was not a rap album. Tyler, The Creator's interview and the category of his win indicates the exclusion of Black artists from major categories, instead of placing them into "Urban" and, in this case, "Rap," two categories that often do not describe the work of the artist. The repeated pattern of separation and miscategorization of music by Black artists indicates a refusal by The Recording Academy and major labels to recognize the genre-bending work of artists of color, especially Black artists, who challenge the norms and boundaries of music.

On the surface level, the urban category, alongside others, may not be a major concern to the average viewer — the renaming of the category by The Recording Academy into new categories in June of 2020 may even be seen as admirable efforts towards inclusivity. Yet, is this actually enough? How can the academy effectively make changes when Black artists have been excluded from the mainstream categories repeatedly?



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The term "Urban," coined by radio DJ and broadcaster, Frankie Crocker in the 1970s, bridged the disconnect between music by Black artists and the mainstream charts. Encompassing r&b, hip-hop, soul, rap, disco, and more. NPR reported "urban contemporary" as having become a convenient package, a marketable commodity to white executives of major record labels, selling a new category that would be accepted by white audiences and, in turn, allow for Black artists to receive financial compensation for their work.

While the creation of the term was with good-intentions and allowed for Black artists to receive the recognition and ad sales that their white peers did on the radio, the use of the term has been weaponized in modern awards shows as a consolation prize to Black artists. Frank Ocean's 2013 Grammy in the Urban category for Channel ORANGE (2012), for example, proves that the category separates the work by non-white artists, no matter their contribution to pop culture, whether or not their music cannot be defined by such an ambiguous term. Ocean's Channel ORANGE (2012) has been revered as one of the most influential albums of the 2010s, yet was not recognized for the extent of its influence by The Recording Academy.

The 63rd Grammys this March did not include the "Urban Contemporary" category. In the wake of the George Floyd protests and action of the Black Lives Matter movement, the Recording Academy announced its retirement of the "Urban" category, introducing "Progressive R&B Album" and "Best Melodic Rap Performance," formerly "Best Rap/Sung Performance".

But what does the renaming of these categories mean when there has been little acknowledgment toward the artists that have been excluded from the most prestigious categories on music's biggest night of the year? Even with the renaming of categories, discrimination within the industry persists when Black artists and their record-breaking success are ignored, as we saw with The Weeknd's snub for Billboard-topping single "Blinding Lights."The change sweeps the issue at hand underneath the rug, saying "Okay, we did what you asked!", while insulting not only one of pop's biggest artists but also artists across all genres whose work are ignored completely.

During the 63rd annual awards show, Grammy Chief and CEO Harvey Mason Jr. acknowledged the criticism of the show's lack of diversity and transparency in the voting processes. While acknowledging the well-established critique and discontent with the logistics of the awards shows, Mason's request of artists and audiences to "work with us, not against us,", seems to deflect the issue of diversity and inclusion.

The changes made to the urban category last summer are insignificant when compared to how artists of color are still excluded from The Grammy's biggest awards. As ZAYN expressed in a series of Tweets in early March, "We need to make sure we are honoring and celebrating 'creative excellence' of ALL. End the secret committees. Until then... #fuckthegrammys." His statements are long overdue regarding the lack of transparency and shady practices of The Recording Academy and nomination processes.

Renaming categories whose creations were meant to please white audiences is just a bandaid over the deep wound of racial discrimination in mainstream music. As we see some of the most revered and influential artists of our time continuously ignored and swept aside, we must stand by with people in their protest against the awards shows.

letter from the editor

With immense love, I humbly conclude the 10th anniversary edition of The B-Side's print magazine. Spring 2021 marks our 10th issue, 5th year as a printed publication, and our 9th year as an on-campus collective. Although we are still a young magazine, our content has the semblance of a refined publication, and for this I applaud the efforts of our entire staff.

Throughout the 2020-2021 term, The B-Side has grown to become grander than ever; releasing an array of stimulating articles, refining our production projects to new heights, and having our members grow closer to one another in the name of community. The B-Side brings me immense joy, and it brings me even more joy knowing its positive effects on the others in the magazine. Having conversations about music, life, philosophy, love, etc., with the very same people I work with is a truly awe-inspiring sensation.

At a university like UC Berkeley, it's easy for arts students to feel alienated due to the overall STEM atmosphere running rampant. On top of that, non-white and low income art students feel even more disenfranchised once they see the majority of these organizations are run by upper income white kids who have a disconnect for their personal lived experiences, or they stumble into organizations with high barriers of entry which are unable to be met due to the lack of resources in their pre-collegiate schooling. Prestige and elitism is just as large of a mascot at Berkeley as the Golden Bear, and we take great pride at The B-Side knowing we take the steps we can towards its hindrance.

This spring, despite campus delusions of a "new normal," situations were increasingly worse all around the country. People were falling ill to a global virus, losing their loved ones, and it was, and still is, a very taxing time. I cannot stress how incredible the work of our members has been in lieu of the somber conditions surrounding them. It makes me exceedingly emotional, and I am glad the community we cultivated throughout this year has been able to provide solace and comfort to one another. To B-siders who needed to take a break during this year: we still love you, and this publication is still a representation of you and your hard work.

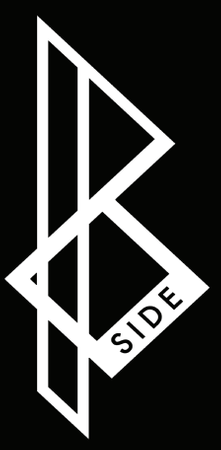
The introduction of our production department has been my absolute favorite addition throughout this year — and I am excited to see it flourish into an even

larger ensemble. This semester, we continued The A-side Sessions into its second season at a new location, Thorsen House, and we covered an array of talented artists, improving our overall production greatly. We also officially launched Therapy Sessions, a podcast centering the mental health of musicians, which is wrapping up on its extremely insightful first season. Being able to provide these platforms, whether through music productions or highlighting the mind of an artist, is so fulfilling to witness flourish.

Everything The B-Side does is a homage to the gifted group of staffers we have here. Best described as a collective of like minded young artists and art connoisseurs, we work together to create musically centered content. I've said it before and I'll say it again, this group is home to some of the hardest working, most creative, and driven students you'll meet on campus. Every single one of them is capable of so much greatness, and it's humbling to have them on our magazine before they go off into the world as post-grads and produce even grander greatness. Working alongside them has been a privilege, and a pleasure, and I would like to thank every single one of our members for their devotion to the publication's growth. Without our writers, without our designers, without our marketers, without PR, without our web staff, without our team, we are nothing. So let this magazine work as a tribute to the power of the collective, the importance of community, and the value of a strong team.

With that, I conclude the 10th edition of our print magazine. We hope you enjoyed, and we hope you continue to enjoy the fruits and flowers of The B-Side as it continues to blossom and grow.

With Love,
Sunny Sangha (they/them)
Editor - in - Chief of The B-Side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