
Open the Door Projects on Music/Power/Politics A Collaborative Source Guide

Music/Power/Politics, post-1945 / summer 2023
Brooks / Crane School of Music

A brief explanation on process and scope:

What follows are more than 150 introductory topics (a paragraph or two, plus a few sources) connecting music, power, and politics after 1945 completed by you and your colleagues in summer 2023.

These were conceived as “opening the door on a subject” (so named because you're opening the door on this topic, not doing something complete or finished)—mini research projects completed in the course of a few hours, with the hopes of finding a few sources, doing a brief bit of research, and coming up with some preliminary ideas and concepts on the topic.

As such, by design these projects contain ideas that would need editing or tweaking in another context, would need fuller context, a deeper dive into additional sources, may have typos or errors, etc.....but as preliminary jumping-off-points for future work, they are invaluable.

My hope is that you might find something in here you can use in some way....a spark for a future project or idea. Obviously the sources will be helpful, as are some of the opening ideas from your colleagues (again, I'd encourage further research of your own on the topic if you'd like to use something, and any direct quoting of someone's project would need to attribute the source). Enjoy returning to these, and happy if they generate something for you at some point!

They are arranged in the following five chronological groupings:

1. 1945-1960
2. 1953-1968
3. 1968-1991
4. 1991-2008
5. 2008-today

Open the Door Projects—Week 1: 1945-1960

1933-1945

Richard Wagner and the Manipulation of Germany during World War II

1942

"Praise the lord and pass the ammunition" performance/ recording by Kay Keyser and his orchestra

1944

"This Land is Your Land" by Woody Guthrie

1945

Carson Robison: The Granddaddy of the Hillbillies and Anti-Axis Power Music

1945

Post World War II Gender Roles through *Carousel's* "Soliloquy"

1945-1946

The Origin Story of Magnetic Tape Recordings

1945-1946

Darius Milhaud, "Deux Marches pour la Libération"

1946

Atom and Evil: A Dangerous Duo

1946

Woody Guthrie, "Don't Kill My Baby and My Son"

1946 (and through the 1950s)

"Bone Music" or "Ribs" : X-Rays used to Bootleg Music in the Soviet Union During the Cold War

1947

Arnold Schoenberg, *A Survivor From Warsaw*

1948 (and after)

Cleo Laine and Mona Baptiste: British Black Jazz Post WWII

1950-53: Korean War Topics

"Dabang's Blue Dream" by the Kim Sisters: Outside influences on Korean popular music during the Korean War / Bordering on Redundancy: How the Korean War Served as the Transition from Patriotic to Protest in Popular Music

1954

Bill Haley and "Rock Around the Clock," or how did rock n' roll cause a generational divide in the 1950s?

1955

The Cold War and State Department Tours of *Porgy and Bess*

1956

Super-Sonic Jazz, Sun Ra, and Racial Politics in 1950s Chicago

1956: Topics around "Hound Dog"

How Elvis Presley's use and performance of "Hound Dog" challenged societal music norms during the 1950s / "Hound Dog" / Big Mama Thornton: Paving the Way for Women in Rock & Roll / Controversy of Elvis Presley's "Hound Dog" and ties to the youth movement and prejudices of the 1950s

1956: Jazz Ambassadors Topics

Louis Armstrong's Jazz Ambassadorship and Impacts on Systematic Racism / The Jazz Ambassadors - A Reflection of the Values within the Program / Jazz Music and the Cold War

1957

Racism and Racial Stereotypes in West Side Story's 1961 film adaptation

1957 (and other years)

We Shall Overcome—A Civil Rights Anthem

1958

The Formation of the Israeli Musical Aesthetic: The Influence of Josef Tal

1959

Miriam Makeba (Lakutshon Ilanga/Come Back, Africa)

1959

Dion and the Belmonts, "A Teenager in Love"

1959 (and throughout the 1960s)

Freedom Songs during the Civil Rights Movement

1960

We Insist! Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite!

1960

High Hopes: How Frank Sinatra and JFK Changed Elections Forever

1961

Krzysztof Penderecki, "Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima"

1962 (to today)

The Freedom Singers and the Civil Rights Movement

1933-1945

Richard Wagner and the Manipulation of Germany during World War II

Richard Wagner's music became a nationalistic niche for many Germans during Hitler's reign of world war II. Hitler praised Wagner's work at a very young age and eventually his efforts established the Reichsmusikkammer which pushed for making the composer mainstream. Potter (2005) states that Wagner scholars have analyzed that much of the ongoing discourse regarding Hitler, the

Germans, and the Nazi party stems from the suggestion that the Germans offered this under exile if it wasn't a part of German culture (pg. 447). Hitler's actions toward Wagner's music showcase a clear path as to why his music was glorified throughout the German totalitarian society. Hitler would make annual ventures to the Bayreuth Festival to worship his works as a national effort. Further, Wagner was noted to be outspoken on his views of anti-semitism as he published *Das Judentum in der Musik* to undermine and reticule Jewish composers. (Moller, 1980, pg. 42) Racism and hatred were linked to art for Hitler and he utilized Wagner's contributions as a propaganda tactic toward German citizens. Despite Hitler never being able to meet Wagner, he worked tirelessly through the Nazi regime to have his totalitarian state resonate with his art because he did.

Moller (1980) also states that through the work *Der ring des Nibelungen*, many German people saw it as a new gospel of the Germanic race and resurrection of ancestral myths transporting and mesmerizing its civilians away from the horrors that were occurring in concentration camps (pg. 42). Another work that was heavily influenced by Hitler was *Die Meistersinger*, Adolf's manipulation of the long opera work became a "nazi anthem". (Dennis, 2003, pg. 99) Hitler greatly connected with *Die Meistersinger* since one of its main characters is rooted in anti-Semitic symbolism within the characters' vocalization and actions. However, before Nazi Germany, it was never explicitly addressed that the character Beckmesser is supposed to represent Jewish stereotypes. It was Hitler's influence through Reichsmusikkammer that portrayed the perspective of Meistersinger portraying Germans as superior over the religion of Judaism. (Dennis, 2003, pg. 105). It's also prevalent to acknowledge that Bayreuth had opened the opportunity for Nazi interpretation of *Die Meistersinger* and made Wagner's compositions a symbol of German pride. (Applegate and Potter, 2002, pg. 95) Through Wagner's work musicologists must ask themselves if they feel Wagner had shaped a pre-nazi society's idea of anti-Semitism or if these notions were manipulated by Hitler through a warped lens on his compositions. Based on the data, it is clear that Hitler's ideologies heavily inflated and constricted interpretations relating to anti-Semitism for nationalistic pride. Wagner's compositions were banned from many opera houses around the world until the end of World War II as a stance of solidarity with the Allied powers. (D'amico, 2016, pg. 5) However, through an evolving time Wagner's music is now highly accessible around the world and nazi ideologies within his work are now looked at by most as a skewed perception as Wagner never even got to witness the brutality of World War II.

* E. Becker

Sources:

Potter, P. M. (2005). What is "nazi music"? *The Musical Quarterly*, 88(3), 428. Retrieved from <http://potsdam.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/what-is-nazi-music/docview/194397629/se-2>

Dennis, D. B. (2003). "the most German of all German operas": Die Meistersinger through the lens of the Third reich. Wagner's &Meistersinger&, 98–119. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781580466165.007>

Moller, L. E. (1980). Music in Germany during the Third Reich: The Use of Music for Propaganda. *Music Educators Journal*, 67(3), 40–44. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3400616>

Applegate, C., & Potter, P. (2002). In *Music and German national identity*. essay, University of Chicago Press.

D'Amico, G. L., Atlas, A., & MacIntyre, B. (2016). "Die meistersinger", New York City, and the Metropolitan Opera: The intersection of art and politics during two World Wars (dissertation). CUNY, New York, New York.

1942

"Praise the lord and pass the ammunition" performance/recording by Kay Keyser and his orchestra

For this first Open Door Project I have decided to write about the theme of Music invoking patriotism, rallying morale, or reflecting the experiences and emotions of soldiers and civilians during the second world war. When searching for sources on this topic, I came across an article that argues the music industry adapted itself to perpetuate the concept of war with the purpose of benefiting monetarily. The author of this article argues that patriotism and national pride have always been important themes in American popular music. The article then goes through a timeline of events in which music was written with the intent to bolster morale, increase patriotism, and define the national values of the United States. Throughout the article the theme of the power of music to influence the American people is stated, and that many of the intentions of the actual music industry had little care for these values. Their main care was to line their pockets with money (Hajduk, 2003).

A song performed in 1942 that is a great example of a song that invoked patriotism, rallied morale, and reflected some of the experiences and emotions of soldiers and civilians during the second world war is "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition!," written by Frank Loesser, and performed by Kay Kyser and his orchestra. The Smithsonian website provides details behind the origins of the song and stated that this performance of the song had

reached number 1 on the billboard chart for the year. A link to this song's audio recording can be found here: <https://youtu.be/HVQ3ourS8BI>. The explicit message of the song can be understood from the lyrics which has the title as the main chorus of the song. The fact that this reached number one on the billboards in America demonstrates the impact and power of music in the public American discourse.

The final article that I read wrote a review about the book *One World, Big Screen: Hollywood, the Allies, and World War II*, written by M. Todd Bennett [was unable to find a free copy of the chapter I would like to use from the actual book]. In this article it goes further to state that not only was the music industry involved in the promotion of patriotism rallying morale, or reflecting the experiences and emotions of soldiers and civilians during the second world war. The entire entertainment industry was involved and sometimes coerced by the government to promote these materials (Graves, 2014).

* F. Desiderio

Sources:

Hajduk, J. C. (2003). Tin Pan Alley on the March: Popular Music, World War II, and the Quest for a Great War Song. *Popular Music and Society*, 26(4), 497-512. <http://potsdam.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/tin-pan-alley-on-march-popular-music-world-war-ii/docview/208065596/se-2>

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Non-Scholarly:

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1944

"This Land is Your Land" by Woody Guthrie

Despite its prominence in American patriotic song literature, Woody Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land" has an ironic history as a protest song. Written in 1940 and first recorded in 1944, Guthrie wrote this song in direct

response and criticism to Irving Berlin's nationalistic tune "God Bless America." Hearing this song over and over again frustrated Guthrie, as he knew that not everyone had experienced this beautiful and perfect America described in Berlin's song. Guthrie bore witness to homelessness, cultural tension, and human misery in rural and urban areas alike. Disillusioned by the unfair distribution of wealth in America, he began inserting his own activism in his music with songs like "Dust Bowl Refugee" and "So Long, It's Been Good to Know You." Therefore, when he had to keep listening to people play Berlin's "God Bless America" on repeat on the jukebox, he decided to transmute his frustrations into the composition of "This Land."

The original lyrics of "This Land" feature two verses critiquing American privatization of property and distribution of wealth. These include verse four: "was a great high wall there that tried to stop me/ A sign was painted said: Private Property, / But on the back side it didn't say nothing— / God blessed America for me," and verse six: "One bright sunny morning in the shadow of the steeple / By the relief office I saw my people— / As they stood hungry, I stood there wondering if / God blessed America for me." When he recorded the song in 1944, he decided to change the lyrics "God blessed America for me" to "this land was made for you and me," and for some reason, out of the two protest verses, only the one regarding private property is present. Another version he used on his radio station, both protest verses are removed. The version that eventually became the standard is from 1947 New York City recording sessions, where only three verses (and the first verse turned into a chorus) were present.

Although these constant additions and subtractions may appear puzzling, there are a few reasons that Guthrie may have made these changes that do not involve self-censorship. By the time he recorded the song in 1944, the relief issue in America had mostly disappeared due to the booming postwar economy. There are also times when Guthrie simply unintentionally changed or forgot the lyrics.

As years progressed, this song continued to be used for a variety of different intentions. Schools taught children "This Land," leaving out the protest verses, which Guthrie is recorded as being dissatisfied about. It was published in magazines and songbooks, and artists like Pete Seeger covered the song with added protest verses that were far more overt, like: "Maybe you been working just as hard as you're able / And you just got crumbs from the rich man's table / Maybe you been wondering, is it truth or fable / This land was made for you and me." Unfortunately however, throughout decades of the song's use (with omissions of the protest verses) in advertisement and political campaigns, US ARMY recruitment efforts, and

schooling, and popular culture, it has been reduced to a nationalistic jingle.

* S. Taylor

Sources:

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Jackson, M. A. (2008). *Prophet singer : The voice and vision of Woody Guthrie*. University Press of Mississippi.

Rapp, P. (2005). Roll Over, Woody Guthrie. *Voices*, 31(1), 37.

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1945

Carson Robison: The Granddaddy of the Hillbillies and Anti-Axis Power Music

Carson Robison was one of the most prolific performers of country music in the 1920's and 1930's. As his career continued to extend into the time of World War II and after, his songs began reflecting the American sentiments of anti-axis powers. In the middle of the war, Carson Robison created a selection of songs that would serve as mock letters between the figure heads of the axis powers (Hitler, Mussolini, and Hirohito). These "letters" reflected the thoughts that would have been shared between the leaders throughout different points of the war. They were set as a way of mocking these leaders because the American public began viewing them as near satanic figure heads; especially Hitler who was viewed as the most satanic of them all. Anastasiia Gordeeva states, "Ordinary Americans started to identify Hitler as a threat to democracy and an enemy who had to be defeated. Carson Robison created a series of songs about the Fuhrer's letters to the Axis leaders: "Mussolini's Letter to Hitler," "Hitler's Reply to Mussolini," and so on. The series ended with "Hitler's Last Letter to Hirohito" from 1945. Americans started to label the Fuhrer a minion of Satan" (Gordeeva 2021). The two songs that I have decided to focus on today were both written in 1945 and marked the end of the song set. They are titled "Hirohito's Letter to Hitler", and "Hitler's Last Letter to Hirohito". Although the lyrics are obvious remarks about what events were going on during the war (bombing of Berlin and Japan in this year), what is most striking to me is the use of a German polka for both songs. The same instrumentals are used for both songs, and they are used as a comedic way to further insult the axis-powers while they are being defeated. Another discussion point that I found interesting was the discussion about the different types of anti-axis powers. Samuel Jennings Parler describes the differences in the

treatment of each axis-power in these songs. He states, "The language in Robison's Axis-bashers is raw and vindictive, delivered either with utmost solemnity or with cruel humor that celebrates violence enacted upon America's enemies and scorns their cultural differences. And yet not all of the Axis Powers are treated equally in song lyrics. While hatred towards Germany and Italy is usually directed specifically at Hitler and Mussolini, attacks against Japan indict the whole citizenry, with figures like Hirohito mentioned only in passing. And unlike Germans and Italians, the Japanese enemy is explicitly racialized as 'yellow,' a pun which both referred to skin color and served as a metaphor for cowardice or underhandedness." This shows that although the axis-powers were despised as a whole, Germany and Italy were merely only despised because of Hitler and Mussolini; whereas, people of Japanese descent were mocked and marginalized.

* B. Worden

Sources:

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1945

Post World War II Gender Roles through *Carousel's* "Soliloquy"

In the late 1940s as the soldiers are returning from war, gender roles are once again being reexamined in the United States. Roger and Hammerstein's *Carousel*. The story of the musical revolves around the love of Billy Bigelow and Julie Jordan. "Soliloquy," the penultimate number of act 1, is Billy processing his emotions after Julie reveals that she has become pregnant. "Soliloquy" goes through the variety of feelings that Billy is going through as he processes this news of pregnancy. The beginning of the song finds staccato dissonance in

the strings as Billy is processing what his responsibility will be as a father. During this time, Billy is seen as a representation of the struggles that World War II veterans dealt with as they transitioned back to American culture; he struggles to find a good job and to stay out of trouble with the law. Billy sings "But she won't make a sissy out o' him Not him! Not my boy! Not Bill!" the texture in the orchestra changes. Brass is added to the texture to show the excitement of the idea of having a son and prospects he may have. The tempo in this section becomes march-like, a bright and spirited pace with lots of energy. This section sheds light on how men during this time period were viewed to have great potential. Billy talks of all of the possibilities that "[his] boy Bill" will have for his life. When Billy makes the revelation that his son could be a daughter, the instrumental texture and vocal technique takes a complete turn. The texture now draws more on legato, string lines. Even the vocal line throughout this point of the song contains more *sostenuto*, vibrato, and long held notes. A repeated melodic line, heard on words such as "my little girl," has a trill-like feeling to the texture. These textures are all very delicate. The message being sent through this portion of the song is how delicate his daughter will be. The text even transforms from the potential his son will have to the ways that he will protect his daughter.

"Soliloquy" in *Carousel* depicts many of the ways that gender was perceived post World War II. Despite the extraordinary efforts that women have made throughout wartime, they were still being perceived as delicate and needing protecting. Men, on the contrary, were perceived as full of potential and powerful.

* J. Benedict

Sources:

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1945-1946

The Origin Story of Magnetic Tape Recordings

The concept of sound recording originated in the 1860s with Edouard-Leon Scott de Martinville's invention of the phonograph. Though this was a tremendous feat for mankind, and a leap into accessibility of historical records, it was not until 1944 clear sound recording and editing became possible. Magnetic tape was utilized in tandem with a recording device to allow for clean audio with the ability for live playback.

The origins of magnetic tape lay deep within the history of Nazi Germany, where it would be utilized to record and broadcast propaganda material through local radio networks. This device was introduced around 1935 in Germany and was not very useful when attempting to deliver clear audio. The initial sound produced mirrored that of clay or wax recordings. (grainy and muddled). Fritz Pfleumer was accredited for inventing the first magnetic wire recording device by utilizing a powdered-iron compound on steel wire. (Museum for Communication Frankfurt). In order to play back these recordings, devices called Magnetophones were implemented in radio stations throughout the country. (Wolpin, 2016). As a result, this device was used to record and broadcast a large number of Symphonies and Propaganda filled messages over German radio.

In the American post-war effort toward technological advancement, soldiers were sent to Germany in search of intelligence. On these missions, they discovered Magnetophones and retrieved them back to their base in Paris. (McMurray, 2017) Jack Mullin was part of that cohort assigned to explore the technology, and as a result ended up retrieving multiple Magnetophones and 50 roles of red oxide BASF tape (Wolpin, 2016). In his exploration, he recalled nights during the war, when he would be infatuated with the sounds of orchestral recordings broadcasted over the radio. With this excitement, Mullin reverse-engineered the machine and improved the quality of sound of which it was able to produce. The primary difference in sound came from the switch from iron-coated wire to iron-infused tape. This new magnetic tape shocked the United States and allowed for the creation and distribution of audio to continue with extreme clarity. In 1946 Mullin met with the Institute of Radio Engineers (IRE) to give the first public demonstration of the recorder, in which he compared the sound of a live jazz band to a recording. This demonstration was a success and many companies started reaching out, inquiring to use this device. Bing Crosby was a great supporter of Mullin's efforts, as this new device cured his hatred for the sound of his previously wax-recorded shows. (McMurray, 2017) In using the modernized tape recorder, Crosby influenced other radio hosts and musicians to try it out.

The possibilities were endless when it came to recording with Mullin's Tape Record, now known as the "Magnetophon type K4 sp". This device allowed for the tape to play, pause, and rewind with intense quality. This new form of tape "offered fidelity, portability, and frugality for amateur and professional recordists alike, as well as a physical medium to be (literally) cut up, reversed, recombined, and otherwise manipulated by its users." (Bohlman, 2017).

The ease of editing, clear quality, and reproduction value of Mullin's Tape Recorder revolutionized the world of audio recording. With the support of the American Government, the IRE, and Bing Crosby; Jack Mullin was able to utilize the most impactful German "tool of war" and revolutionize the world of music recording.

* M. Suffern

Sources:

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Museum for Communication Frankfurt (2023) Photograph of the inventor of the tape recorder, Fritz Pfeleumer, with his tape recording machine. Frankfurt am Main, Germany

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1946-1946

Darius Milhaud - Deux Marches Pour La Libération, Op. 260 (1945-1946)

Darius Milhaud (1892-1974) was a composer born in Marseilles, France. His parents were both of Jewish descent and music enthusiasts. By the early age of four, he was an accomplished pianist and decided on a life of music. After graduating from a prep school, he began attending the Paris Conservatory where he eventually became a member of Les Six.

In the late 1910s and early 1920s he began to travel London and New York City, where jazz would make a significant impact on his composition process, leading to the culmination of one of his most well-known works *La Creation du Monde* (1923). Though he enjoyed traveling between the US and Europe to give presentations on his works, he began to slow down in the 1930s due to health conditions. However, once World War II began, he quickly fled and emigrated to the United States in 1940. Once

settling on the west coast, his frustrations about America's lack of involvement in the war grew stronger. He expressed this through pieces such as *Suite Francaise* (1943), where he wrote different movements highlighting folk melodies where the allied forces were fighting to liberate his country. Unexpectedly, the attack on Pearl Harbor initially brought him relief, because it meant America would finally get involved in the war and free his homeland.

Prior to the end of the war, Milhaud was commissioned by G. Schirmer to write his *Deux Marches Pour La Libération* (Two Marches) after Schirmer heard the Goldman Band perform Milhaud's piece *Suite Francaise*. Milhaud used this as an opportunity to write two marches to signify the war - one dedicated to the victims of Pearl Harbor, and the other as a victory march as seen below.

Deux Marches Pour La Libération, Op. 260 (1945-1946)
In Memoriam; Dedicated to the Victims of Pearl Harbor
Gloria victoribus; World War II Victory March

The two pieces contrast greatly in musical style, with *In Memoriam* written slowly and in a minor key, while *Gloria Victoribus* was written with a brisk and light mood to it. Though contrasting in style, analysis of both movements reflect his compositional style including simple form, influence of popular music, and polytonality.

Although Milhaud has some well-known works, researching this piece in particular made me realize just how little information there is on this specific piece. Other than the four articles listed below, there isn't a lot out there other than a few things on other websites such as windrep.org. Even when searching for recordings or a full score of it, I was unsuccessful in finding one and had to rely on information about form and tonality from the Towner & Johnson article.

* E. Mavraj

Sources:

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1946

Atom and Evil: A Dangerous Duo

On July 24th, 1945, President Truman authorized the use of two atomic bombs to be dropped in the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the month of August. According to the book written by Rijn (2006), "Many people believed that mankind was on the verge of total destruction," leading to many musicians performing music that was written based on the fear that the apocalypse was near (p. 31). The 1946 Zaret-Singer composition and Golden Gate Quartet recording of "Atom and Evil" was a piece of music that strongly warned listeners about the many dangers associated with the use of atomic power in warfare during the wake of its use in Japan. Essentially, this song consists of a metaphor, comparing Atom and Evil to the religious reference of Adam and Eve. Atom, within the song, represents the atomic bomb and the lyrics of the piece warn that Atom on his own is innocent, however, when paired with Evil and placed into the wrong hands, the duo would be a very dangerous romance. The overall sound of this piece is also something to be noted as it incorporates "a jubilee style with close harmonies and restrained singing but with strong musical technique," (Howell & Callahan, 2016, p. 85). The singers seemed to take a very dark topic that can be difficult to discuss and added a general tone to the piece that one may consider to be catchy and spirited.

Another interesting component of this piece is that the Golden Gate Quartet is a group of black gospel singers that were very well-known among white audiences at this time (Titus & Simich, 1990, p. 13). While it is not explicitly stated anywhere what connections these singers had to this topic, it is worth noting that there were about seven thousand workers that were people of color that worked on the creation of the atomic bomb at the Oak Ridge atomic bomb plant. However, these workers had no idea what they were working on as "they could see huge quantities of materials coming in, but nothing going out," (Rijn, 2006, p. 31). The idea alone that these workers were contributing to something that became so destructive to a large population of people would upset or infuriate many workers that were left in the dark, especially when many of these workers experienced segregation while working at Oak Ridge and received little resources for themselves or their families. As the song states, "Miss Evil got him drunk on prejudice and hate, and she taught him how to gamble with humanity's fate," (Klar, 2009). This lyric from the song shows how hate and evil can lead to destructive behavior towards humanity itself.

* H. Gotham

Sources:

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Research & Practice, 11(2), 80–91. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SSRP-02-2016-B0006>

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1946

Woody Guthrie, "Don't Kill My Baby and My Son"

Woody Guthrie was born in Oklahoma in 1912 and died in 1967. He was a songwriter and political activist. From 1939-1940 he wrote a column for *The Daily Worker*, a New York city newspaper. In one article, he gave an account of two images that haunted him and inspired him to pen the lyrics of a song called Don't kill My Baby and My Son. The first image was a painting he had recently seen in 1940 depicting a man hanging from a tree, having been hung for "excitement and entertainment. In the painting also was a man being hit by clubs, chains, and fists. Guthrie wrote, "it takes all of the fun and good humor and good sport out of you to set here and realize people could go haywire as to hang a human up by a gallus pole..." This painting reminded Guthrie of a postcard he saw as a child, with an image that haunted him ever since. The postcard image was a photograph of a mother and son hanging from a bridge.

In response to these images, Guthrie learned the history of the photograph and wrote, Don't Kill My Baby and My Son.

As I walked down that old dark town
In the town where I was born,
I heard the saddest lonesome moan
I ever heard before.

My hair it trembled at the roots
Cold chills run down my spine,
As I drew near that jail house
I heard this deathly cry:

O, don't kill my baby and my son,
O , don't kill my baby and my son.
You can stretch my neck on that old river bridge,
But don't kill my baby and my son.

Now, I've heard the cries of a panther,
Now, I've heard the coyotes yell,

But that long, lonesome cry shook the whole wide world
And it come from the cell of the jail.

Yes, I've heard the screech owls screeching,
And the hoot owls that hoot in the night,
But the graveyard itself is happy compared
To the voice in that jailhouse that night.

Then I saw a picture on a postcard
It showed the Canadian River Bridge,
Three bodies hanging to swing in the wind,
A mother and two sons they'd lynched.

There's a wild wind blows down the river,
There's a wild wind blows through the trees,
There's a wild wind that blows 'round this wide wide world,
And here's what the wild winds say:

O, don't kill my baby and my son,
O, don't kill my baby and my son.
You can stretch my neck on that old river bridge,
But don't kill my baby and my son.

* K. Francom

Sources:

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1946 (and through the 1950s)

"Bone Music" or "Ribs" : X-Rays used to Bootleg Music in the Soviet Union During the Cold War

Today we take our Spotify accounts, Youtube access, and Apple Music for granted. We can select any song we want at the touch of a screen, and immediately hear excellent quality music. This was not the case in the Soviet Union during the cold war. Under the communist regime many of the things we view as basic human rights were curtailed, including the right to listen to many types of music. As a result, people became very creative in finding ways to still have access to the music they were interested in, and one of the stranger things to come out of this situation was "Bone Records" or "Ribs." As the recording industry, and permissible music was tightly controlled by the state, many types of music were outlawed and impossible to buy. As the vinyl plants were unavailable, people discovered that

they could use x-ray film, which was easy to attain, and rework a gramophone to create a press that would carve grooves into the film, and create a record that would play on a normal 78rpm record player. These records are short lived, and can only play the songs a handful of times before becoming too damaged to be useful, but for a brief time the listener could hear rock and roll, salsa, tango, the saxophone and many other banned musical sounds. This was a highly illegal practice, these music deals went down much like drug deals, with people having to meet after hours, in clandestine ways, with questionable results. In the podcast, they mention that if asked for a specific song, the dealer would sometimes go over to an already pressed record, and write the name of the requested song on the record. Rudy Fuchs, interviewed by Stephen Coates, for NPR's podcast, "As it Happens," and interviewed at length in Stephen Coates' book "X-Ray Audio: The Strange Story of Music on the Bone," mentions that he had to donate blood to get the machine to create bootlegged records. He was discovered and thrown in jail for two years, and started all over again when he was released despite having, as he states "no money, no equipment, no friends, nothing" (Goldsmith 2016). This is a testament to the value and importance of music and makes me question how far I would go to listen to music that is important to me.

Interestingly, there is a company that is reviving the practice of making these records on x-rays. Blank City Records, in Los Angeles California will take x-rays, and press a song.

This link is to a podcast which has a recording of some of those records:

[Bones And Grooves: The Weird Secret History Of Soviet X-Ray Music : NPR](#)

* L. Baldwin

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1947

Arnold Schoenberg, A Survivor From Warsaw

My topic for this project is Arnold Schoenberg's music alluding to the Holocaust. For this specific Open the Door Project, I will be focusing on his piece "A Survivor From Warsaw." Schoenberg, a Jewish composer, fled to the United States during the chaos occurring during and after World War II in Europe. In 1947, he composed "A Survivor from Warsaw," which Wlodarski refers to as "a Holocaust cantata that enacts traumatic memory explicitly in its libretto" (Wlodarski, 2007, p.584). The piece begins with a narrator's voice stating the following:

"I cannot remember ev'rything, I must have been unconscious most of the time; I remember only the grandiose moment when they all started to sing, as if prearranged, the old prayer [the Shema Yisroel] they had neglected for so many years—the forgotten creed! But I have no recollection how I got underground to live in the sewers of Warsaw for so long a time" (Schoenberg, 1947). This text refers to the post-traumatic-stress response of a Holocaust survivor when attempting to recall their experiences. The reference to the Shema both draws upon Schoenberg's Jewish faith, as well as a cry for help from the survivor. This parallels Fisher and Gilboa's work, which emphasizes the prevalence of traditional music in concentration camps. They state that, "despite the systematic extermination of the Jews, including Jewish musicians, Jewish music prevailed in almost every place that Jews were detained or deported to" (Fisher & Gilboa, 2016). Then Wlodarski proceeds by delving into the introductory fanfare, which repeats in measure 25, representing the survivor attempting to recall a memory. In Argentino's article, he discusses the tripartite structure of the piece, as it includes "three languages, three points of view, and tripartite text descriptors" (Argentino, 2013, p.1). He also notes that "A Survivor from Warsaw" is Schoenberg's only work written in three languages: English, German, and Hebrew, each of which signifies political positions, ideologies, and states. The survivor is assigned the English language and describes their trauma experienced by the members of the concentration camps throughout the piece. The use of German is assigned to the role of the sergeant and represents tyranny. Hebrew, on the other hand, which is language sung at the climax and conclusion of the piece, "represents spiritual triumph of the prisoners through prayer" (Argentino, 2013, p.1).

Similarly to Wlodarski's commentary, Argentino refers to Schoenberg's use of repetition to represent the survivor's recollection of memories from the Holocaust. In addition, Argentino notes that these cycles of repetition are placed into groups of three.

* L. Sperber

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A Survivor from Warsaw

Post world war two the western world was left with a collective amount of trauma over all of the collective atrocities and loss of life. As a way of coping with what the world had just experienced there would begin to be a lot of art dedicated to those affected. Schoenberg, a Austrian-Jewish composer who was living in the United States by the 1940's had written a 12-tone cantata titled "A Survivor from Warsaw". This piece is said to have been inspired by a story relayed to him by Corrine Chochem, a jewish dancer who was involved in Jewish dance in New York City. Chochem had hoped to compile a commemorative album of the holocaust that would include music from prominent jewish composers. Because of this she had asked that Schoenbug participate. This piece premiered on November 4th 1948 at the University of New Mexico, eventually making its way through Europe and Western Germany with mixed reviews from music critics. This piece is set in three different languages throughout to give the listener the true experience of what the singer is recalling. The piece begins with a male singer, in a sprechstimme style, recalling in English the terror within a concentration camp. He recalls a roll call, abuse of prisoners, and the selection of those would be murdered. This would be interrupted twice with speech now in German such as "feldwebel" (Nazi sergeant). At the end of the narration, the singer recalls that his peers who were

about to be sent to death “all of a sudden, in the middle of it, [they] began singing the Schema Yisroel.” The work ends with a male chorus singing in Hebrew a portion of “Hear, O Israel,” known as a very significant prayer within the Jewish faith.

The reception of this work reflected the public opinion of the world post war. The world was still haunted by persistent anti-semitism, memories of the Holocaust, discomfort about American military presence in Europe, and a struggle to find a new German musical identity. Critics within the United States had noted this piece's effect within the audience. Many listeners were silent; an Albuquerque journal noted that the “audience was rendered “a little breathless and bewildered,””. Many of these critics raved that the piece had shaken them to their core and that it was “music of experience, precisely appropriate for our time.” Other critics within Europe such as Hans Schnoor, a past member of the Nazi Party had a very negative reception to this piece at the time, calling it “disagreeable piece that must strike all decent Germans as a mockery.”

This piece serves as an interesting case study of the world sphere immediately post world war II. Specifically the way it was received worldwide allows for an interesting deep dive into the minds of the Western World, their trauma, their hopes and their anxieties for the future.

* N. Nicotri

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1948 (and after)

Cleo Laine and Mona Baptiste: British Black Jazz Post WWI

During World War II, the British Empire created the West Indies Regiment which allowed men from the West Indies (Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Puerto

Rico) to serve in the military to aid in the war efforts. This led to a large increase in migration of people from the West Indies (Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico) to Britain in the 1930's-50's. These peoples were, because of proximity, earlier migration, or tourism, more closely connected to the original source of jazz in the United States and brought their own cultural influence to the jazz scene in Britain, specifically, Bebop. Some of these musicians included Coleridge Goode (Jamaican), Lauderick Canton (Trinidadian), Dick Katz (American), and Ray Ellington (Black American) who formed the Ray Ellington Quartet. In the recording attached below, you can hear a drum fill of bongos, which is likely due to the Cuban influence from the migration of musicians from the West Indies during WWII.

Pre-1948 there was a tolerance, not acceptance of people from West Indies in Britain, probably due to the West Indies Regiment aiding in the war efforts, but post 1948 there was a clear change in the racial relations. Jazz was deemed as minority music for a minority audience. John Dankworth, music educator, jazz composer, and performer hired Cleo Laine, a half Jamaican British jazz singer.

Because of her Jamaican father, Laine in her autobiography notes that her father “was known as a “Darkie” in Southall” (Stratto, 2010) and reflects on the racial discrimination he faced. Her biographer suggests that her English accent was slightly modified to reflect her Jamaican father but because of her recognizable English accent, faced less discrimination than the migrant musicians from the West Indies. This discrimination caused some of the musicians that migrated from the West Indies to regret their decision of traveling to the UK. This included Trinidadian musician, Mona Baptiste, who traveled to the UK in 1948. In the song attached below called “Calypso Blues,” the singer discusses feelings of loneliness sitting by the ocean wishing she was back in Trinidad but not having the financial means to do so.

* K. Tai

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1950-53

"Dabang's Blue Dream" by the Kim Sisters: Outside influences on Korean popular music during the Korean War

Korea had been colonized by the Japanese from 1910-1945. During this time period, Japanese culture dramatically impacted the culture of Korea. Due to the Japanese affinity for jazz music, Korea's own popular music styles began to resemble jazz. The foxtrot, a popular form of music and dance, gained particular traction in Korea. "Trot" is the style that emerged. The song "Dabang's Blue Dream" by the Kim Sisters is a fantastic example of this "trot" style of music. Trot music gained popularity and was prominently featured on the Korean charts.

During the Korean War, 1950-1953, Chinese propaganda music also held an important role for the North Koreans. The North Koreans used these songs to try and rally support for the communist party. This music was used to stir communist pride as the North attacked the South, trying to unify the country under communist control. The United States backed South Korea and a stalemate was eventually reached between the two groups. The Korean Demilitarized Zone that was created in 1953 still separated the two countries to this day.

As Korea gained independence from Japan in the 1950's, many Korean thinkers argued that the prominence of trot music within Korean culture was dangerous. They argued that Korea needed to reclaim their identity and called for a resurgence of Korean traditional music to redefine the popular music of Korea. Along with the reintegration of traditional Korean music into the popular music of the time, the Korean government was also interested in creating "healthy popular music." This healthy popular music focused on themes of love and unity. It was aimed at developing a positive global image for South Korea and generating economic wealth for the country. The government invested money in developing this music and thought that it would help to spur a sense of unity, nationalism, and pride. As the Korean Cold War ended and the Japanese left the country, Korea had some difficulty in music recording. Many of the popular musicians, studio owners, and recording engineers were Japanese and left or were forced out of the country before training any remaining Koreans how to use the technology.

There were musicians successful in reaching a global market. As discussed earlier, the Kim Sisters reached a high level of success performing in the United States in

the 50's and 60's. The Kim Sisters performed in Las Vegas and were invited to perform on the Ed Sullivan Show over twenty times.

* M. Hogan

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Musical Example: "Dabang's Blue Dream" - The Kim Sisters 다방의 푸른 꿈(노래) - 김시스터즈

Bordering on Redundancy: How the Korean War Served as the Transition from Patriotic to Protest in Popular Music

Most of the 20th century was plagued by consistent war spreading across the globe, and the period from 1945-1960 was no different. The United States was a common war contributor during the 20th century, shifting from World War I into World War II, and then further involvement in Korea and Vietnam. The more conflict that occurred, the less that the general public saw the military as our saviors, but rather our sinners.

After the engagement of U.S forces into World War II, nationalism was at an all time high in the music industry. This nationalism not only served as a means for military support, but also financial support for the musicians involved. Music that showed support for soldiers overseas proved time and time again to be very lucrative, and that was a trend that record companies, jukebox companies, and performers within the music industry jumped to capitalize on. Nothing lasts forever, however, as this trend did not behave the same when the United States sent troops to intervene in the ensuing conflict between North and South Korea in June of 1950. Acting as the midpoint between the Vietnam War and World War II, popular music commenting on the Korean war does not fit neatly into either box that encapsulates the others. Artists and listeners alike did not share the same gusto for American brawn that was so successful in WWII, however did not

also reach the blatant criticism heard in songs such as “Masters of War ” by Bob Dylan in the Vietnam conflict. Music surrounding the Korean police action can be more accurately summed up in “pain, patriotism, and faith.” Faith that God would keep soldiers safe and bring them home, faith that American forces would prove success over communist influence, and a numbing pain about a war that everyone could have sworn ended five years ago. An example highlighting this pain is Stewart Powell’s “Rotation Blues,” which was most famously covered by country star Elton Britt. The song speaks about a “lonely soldier sittin’ in Korea” waiting for the rotation that’s “gonna set [them] free.” The narrator laments how “This rain in Korea sure gets cold and wet” and how “them rotation papers sure is hard to get.” The glory of war is gone at this point, and though there is still support for the soldiers. Another Elton Britt song that reached audiences was his tune “Korean Mud” that encourages citizens to donate blood to soldiers that can be used in the war effort.

All in all the Korean War sits in a unique transition point between the second world war and the Vietnam War in that Americans started to feel the fatigue of conflict and question the war efforts of the United States more and more. Soldiers weren’t villains, but American might wasn’t the hero everyone once thought it was.

* C. Reid

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1954

Bill Haley and “Rock Around the Clock,” or how did rock n’ roll cause a generational divide in the 1950s?

As I started my research for this ‘Open the Door Project,’ I came across articles about Rock n’ Roll influencing teenage rebellion in the 1950s. I immediately was interested in searching for specific songs that propelled this Rock n’ Roll movement. Bill Haley and his Comets

performing, ‘Rock Around the Clock’ had a significant role in the divide of adults and teenagers in the 50s. When Rock n’ Roll was born, there were numerous controversies including its issues of race, sexuality, generational and cultural divide. For this project, I focused my research specifically on the generational divide created. Although this type of music was around in some degree prior to the 1950s, it was the type of music that was listened to in a secretive way. After Bill Haley and his Comets performed ‘Rock Around the Clock,’ this type of music entered a generation that would not let it go away. Rock n’ Roll music implied messages to people to act free and included explicit language at times. These ideas were quickly rejected by adults, especially with the influence it had on teens. Although the song lyrics of ‘Rock Around the Clock’ in particular does not have any explicit language, the message being sent is what deemed it as “unacceptable.” Putting ideas into teenagers’ minds of staying out late, and dancing all night was something that was not at all appropriate during these times. One source states that this music “turned young men and women into wild rebels,” all for listening to a different type of music of the time that strayed away from the “norm.”

The sources I have included all discuss this movement and divide of Rock n’ Roll music. One article discusses the challenges faced in airing Bill Haley and his Comets’ performance of ‘Rock Around the Clock,’ while another compares this divide to the development of punk in later years. I have also included a few articles that describe how music creates identities within the listeners. These articles can directly relate and explain the immediate rejection from adults with the emergence of Rock n’ Roll. If I continued research on this, I would like to answer the following questions:

- What did adults do to try to stop this rebellion?
- Would teens push back on adults trying to cut off this genre of music?
- What other Rock n’ Roll artists at this time created a similar influence that Bill Haley and his Comets did?

* B. Cripps

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1955

The Cold War and State Department Tours of *Porgy and Bess*

My topic for our first Open the Door Project starts with the Cold War, then goes into talking about the Soviet Union Propaganda that took place, which then leads into the opera *Porgy and Bess*, then concludes with the song "Summertime." The Cold War began March 12th, 1947 and ended December 26th, 1991. It was a period of tension and rivalry which lasted from the end of World War II in 1945 to 1991. This War primarily involved the United States and the Soviet Union as well as their allies. There were many different key aspects of the Cold War, some of which included ideological divide, nuclear arms race, proxy wars, space race, the Berlin Wall, the fall of the Soviet Union and the propaganda that was utilized. The Soviet Union used propaganda as a powerful tool for them to promote communist ideology, project an image of strength and superiority, and shape public opinion both internationally and domestically. Some of the different propaganda that was used by the Soviet Union were radio broadcasts, films, newspapers, posters, and literature. The main goal/aim of the Soviet propaganda was to control information and share public opinion while omitting unfavorable aspects of their system. During the Cold War, propaganda played a huge role because it not only influenced international perceptions, but it also maintained domestic support for the regime.

Soviet musicians and ensembles, during the Cold War, toured the world. Since the Soviets were successful in the system of international music competitions, it helped to persuade the Soviet leadership of their superiority in their system. In 1955, the Everyman Opera Company staged *Porgy and Bess* which was a very popular production that toured Europe and Latin America which was funded by the U.S. Department. However, when Robert Breen, the owner of the opera company, negotiated a performance to go to Russia, the American government denied funding

because they stated that the production would be too "politically premature." It was also because the state department feared Soviet negative propaganda. So, they challenged the opera's negative stereotypes, fearing essentialist interpretations from the Soviets. One specific song that I recognized from this opera was the song "Summertime" which was written by George Gershwin. This is a song that I have performed before in my own jazz band in High School, but it was really neat to research about the opera where this song is also performed and the role the opera had when touring during the Cold War.

* V. Vespucci

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1956

Super-Sonic Jazz, Sun Ra, and Racial Politics in 1950s Chicago

Avant-garde jazz musician Sun Ra is perhaps best known for the eclectic combination of sounds used in his music as well as his unique iconography and philosophies which would place him retroactively within an ideology termed Afrofuturism in 1993. While most of his views were utopian in nature, Sun Ra focused after the war on developing a forward-thinking social consciousness in black communities in response to what he perceived as a resistance to self-preservation. Post World War II, Sun Ra settled in Chicago for a time where he was a prolific in the world of big band but by the 1950s was very much engaged in development of his own musical style with the formation of the Arkestra in 1952, complete with cosmic centered philosophies and iconography to accompany the compositions themselves. The music of the Arkestra was renowned for its unique blend of both a very familiar sonic language and a decidedly avant-garde sound. An example of this is the album "Super-Sonic Jazz," recorded in 1956 and released on Sun Ra's own label, El Saturn, along with his business partner Alton Abraham.

Some of the characteristic qualities heard on this album are at times similar to his fairly traditional big band experiences while also exploring much less familiar sonic areas. One technique unique to Sun Ra's compositional style was the use of he referred to as the "space key," which was essentially a drone used to add continuity to the large amounts of improvisation occurring throughout. As much as he would seemingly attempt to depoliticize himself and his music by placing increasingly more emphasis on the cosmological aspects of his philosophy and practice (e.g. identifying himself not as a human but an angel and that he originated from Saturn) later on in his career, especially in the 1950s, Sun Ra was very much involved in the politics of black entertainment in Chicago. Sun Ra's use of various technologies and openness to nontraditional instrumentation certainly presented as a deliberate attempt in the 1950s to bring black communities towards some kind of utopia.

* B. Poole

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1956

How Elvis Presley's use and performance of "Hound Dog" challenged societal music norms during the 1950s

The song "Hound Dog" was recorded by both Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton and Elvis Presley. While originally recorded by Thornton in 1953, the song's popularity exploded when Elvis performed it in 1956. As performed by Big Mama Thornton, Hound Dog was conceived as a rhythm and blues song. Rhythm and Blues, or R&B emerged in the 1940's that originated in African American communities and combined styles such as jazz, blues, and gospel. In her version of Hound Dog, Thornton's lyrics are sung in more of an improvisatory style, and there is a prominent solo guitar throughout the recording that intersects between lyrics as heard in other blues tunes. Thornton's recording quickly rose to the top of R&B charts after its release, but the song did not rise to the same level on national charts due to the genre not being valued as

much with its association with black culture. Elvis' version places the song within the newly emerging "Rockabilly" genre, which blends styles of rhythm 'n' blues with country, or "Hillbilly". The emergence of Rockabilly in the United States during the 1950's disrupted popular styles and created a turning point for both music and culture. The style was wildly popular amongst teens for its change of pace compared to other styles like big band and ballroom swing which older generations of white Americans appreciated. On the other hand, older generations resented Rockabilly for combining foreign, predominantly black styles of music with their familiar swing and country styles. Elvis Presley's position of popularity allowed him to take musical elements from R&B songs like Hound Dog, and present them to new audiences. While this created upheaval in both American society and the music industry, it contributed to the development of Rockabilly and ultimately led to the development of later genres such as Rock n' Roll.

* W. Hope

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"Hound Dog"

I am interested in exploring the various ways that race played into both the increasing popularity and the culture surrounding rock n' roll music. Within this scope, the 1950's produced a number of cover songs that were essentially white versions of black music. Among the most popular of these is the 1956 Elvis song, "Hound Dog." Today, Elvis is often credited with the song, despite it not being originally his. Elvis' version of the song is a cover of a 1952 blues number by Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton. Unfortunately, Elvis struck a larger audience, even making a televised performance of it on the Ed Sullivan show in the same year of his version's release. Mahon suggests that Thornton's legacy in rock n' roll history stands mostly as a preliminary member of a group of women of color responsible for rock n' rolls roots. It is often noted that she did not make much money from her music, even "Hound Dog," and died in poverty. As short a time ago as the

1990s saw a time where we almost entirely excluded women from discussions regarding rock n' roll influence, and put white male artists in the limelight instead. Contrast this to the legacy of Elvis Presley, or even his success at the time. Before he was an international figure, fans would riot after his performances when he was known only within the American South. Elvis was sensationalized around the release of his version of "Hound Dog," to the point of judges ordering Elvis to stop making provocative movements on stage. Throughout 1956, Elvis had gone from a relatively unknown name to an international star, with radio time as far as Denmark. With artists well known for the same song, the differences in race and gender overshadowed musical elements contributing to their success. There is nothing inherently "better" about the Presley rendition, but it was almost infinitely more popular, and still is today. While today there have been efforts to shift that narrative, and place artists like Thornton into a more foundational position of rock n' roll's history, the influence of artists like Presley is hard to erase, particularly given his unique position as one of the early mega-stars of the music industry, with a following more sensational and seemingly dangerous to established American culture than we had seen before.

* M. Smith

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Hound Dog – "Big Mama" Thornton (1952)

Hound Dog – Elvis Presley (1956)

Big Mama Thornton: Paving the Way for Women in Rock & Roll

Big Mama Thornton is known to be an influential musician who helped establish the sound and elements of early rock and roll music, specifically, with her recording of the song "Hound Dog." As a black woman in the 1950s, Thornton struggled to gain the proper public recognition for her music and accomplishments and financial security. However, this did not stop her from continuing to pave the way for women (especially black and queer women) in addition to all musicians in rock and roll music. This resulted in artists such as Janis Joplin and Elvis Presley recording renditions of her songs "Hound Dog" and "Ball and Chain," and receiving great success and acclaim from

both. Thornton challenged the 1950s gender roles, sporting fashion that was typically associated with both women and men. She would often appear on stage in three-piece suits with hats and shoes typically worn by men during the time. Her music continued to challenge these societal norms. Many times even in her performances, if a drummer was not playing up to her standards, she would order the drummer away and take over the part. "It's a characteristic that indicates her commitment to her craft, but it also represents a breach of conventional gender behavior, and she unnerved some of the men she encountered" (Mahon, 2020). Her song "Hound Dog" was one that challenged the role of women in romantic relationships by speaking up on the topic of infidelity. In the 1950s, women were expected to devote themselves and their lives to marriage and then upon marriage, to their husbands. The song was thought to be a feminist anthem of the 1950s.

"'Hound Dog' anticipates the sound of rock that departed from the horn-centered style of rhythm and blues" (Mahon, 2020). Although she was a rock and roll artist, she would tell her band to "play the blues," and thought of rock and roll music to be a sped up version of the blues, sparking the blues revival. "Hound Dog" was first released in 1953, and then spent fourteen weeks on Billboard's Top R&B Charts. "[Thornton] added a female voice to the primarily male contingent associated with the blues revival" (Mahon, 2020). "Hound Dog" also did not have the typical instrumentation of blues music. In the song, Thornton is supported by guitar, bass, and drums. This instrumental combination is what we later see as the rock and roll set-up as rock takes off in the 1960s. In a live performance of the song, Thornton initiates a call-and-response with the male players of her band. "Now wag your tail. Now get it, get it," (Mahon, 2020) Thornton improvises. "Commanding a man to wag his tail marks a gender-role reversal that encapsulates the disruptive and dangerous form of femininity that Thornton embodied" (Mahon, 2020). Thornton's confidence paves the way for outspoken women to join the R&B scene. Furthermore, helping to set the style for rock and roll, using play on gender norms and expectations and sexuality.

* C. Perticone

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Controversy of Elvis Presley's "Hound Dog" and ties to the youth movement and prejudices of the 1950s

The post-war era of the 1950s can be categorized musically by the emergence of Rock and Roll. The leader of Rock and Roll in America is widely accepted as Elvis Presley, who is remembered also as one of the most prominent leaders of American music as a whole. These leaders often gain their fame by doing something unprecedented, and Elvis was no stranger to this: he heavily influenced the "provocative" youth culture in the 1950s, which some consider to have been a culture shock (PBS). The song "Hound Dog" was one of the more notable examples of Elvis's promotion of such "provocative" culture. On June 5th, 1956, Elvis performed "Hound Dog" on The Milton Berle Show. This, along with Elvis's other songs and performances, sparked a divide between parents and their children. The concept of the American "teenager" was quickly being defined by freedom of expression and the challenging of social norms. Older generations were outraged by Elvis's performance of "Hound Dog" on The Milton Berle Show. He danced in an overtly suggestive manner, with hip gyrations and the generally scandalous way he occupied the stage. He faced criticism that eventually led to an "anti-rock" movement amongst the conservative older generation in America, who claimed that consumption of rock music led to juvenile delinquency and drug use. It is interesting to see that the appeal of Elvis's dance style amongst American teenagers has prevailed to the present day, with the surge of TikTok and dance trends (Zeng, Abidin, 2021). TikTok dances have become a global trend- there is even a dance trend happening right now with Doja Cat's "Vegas", which directly quotes "Hound Dog." The dances tend to be suggestive in nature and are primarily performed by female users. There is a conservative movement existing today as well that wishes to censor TikTok or remove it altogether. The other, more hidden, controversy of Elvis's music, specifically of "Hound Dog", was the "stealing" of Black musicians' content that shaped

Rock and Roll. I was unaware that "Hound Dog" was originally written for and sung by Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton (Mahon 2011). Unfortunately, she never made much revenue from her recording. It is noteworthy to draw a connection between conservatives viewing Elvis's music as vulgar or dirty, causing youth to become delinquents, and the truth that Rock and Roll was developed by Black Americans. This may be a more subtle, yet telling reminder of the prejudices the white, religious, conservative population had over Black people and Black musicians.

* S. Berkley

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1956

Louis Armstrong's Jazz Ambassadorship and Impacts on Systematic Racism

One area of interest was the Jazz Ambassadors. According to Von Eschen, Jazz Ambassadors were jazz musicians sent to specific areas of conflict or global crisis during the Cold War to serve as a method of making positive international connections. These musicians that went on tour helped embody the essences of American nationalistic freedom and pride to the people that they were performing for. A majority of these jazz musicians were Black people, and during the heat of segregation and civil rights movements of the 1950's, these musicians encountered cold, sometimes violent treatment by both the US foreign service personnel abroad in whatever location they were expected to perform in and with conservative people and politicians in their respective areas.

One Jazz Ambassador was Louis Armstrong, or Ambassador Satch as author Stein refers to him as. Armstrong was a prominent and innovative artist that got his start in the 1920's, although other artists at the time, like Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis, criticized Armstrong for "racially self-deprecating and submissive performance antics" that ultimately led to his popularity (Stein 2012). Armstrong serves as an anomaly to the Jazz Ambassador mold because white audiences loved and supported his artistry. During his time as Ambassador Satch in the Cold War, he was deemed an unofficial "spokesperson for racial integration" (Stein 2012).

Despite being deemed the aforementioned spokesperson and loved by white listeners, this does not diminish the ability of people that have been impacted by racism to resonate with his music. A song that Armstrong performed with his band during an unofficial ambassadorship trip to the Gold Coast in Ghana in 1956 according to the Meridian International Center and the Institute of Jazz Study and Rutgers, was titled "Black and Blue." This song was about internalized racism and the pain of wanting to be someone else. The audience seemed to find solace and appreciation in this work, cheering, applauding, and even making Prime Minister Dr. Kwame Nkrumah tear up, showing how even though Armstrong may have been criticized by other artists for his "performance antics," his music still held value to people that have experienced structural racism.

A year later, Armstrong and his band was supposed to start their official tour in the USSR, however this was occurring at the same time as the Little Rock desegregation attempt. In response to what occurred there, Armstrong replied by saying "I don't think they should send me now until that mess in the south, and for good, not just to blow over", foreshadowing what would be in his future (PBS, 2018). In another interview related to the desegregation efforts, Armstrong said "the government can go to hell" and his tour was promptly canceled (PBS 2018). As a result, PBS claims that "the official aims of the program backfired tremendously," since people worldwide were able to see his comments and truly highlight racial issues within the US, showing how more coded messages through music could be a different way to speak out about issues without too many governmental limitations, though maybe not making as much of an impact (PBS, 2018).

* C. Zanetti

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The Jazz Ambassadors - A Reflection of the Values within the Program

I would like to open the door to the history behind the "Jazz Ambassadors" program in the United States in the mid 1950s. Following World War Two, the U.S began to shift their cultural views from how to recover politically, economically, and socially from the effects of war, to high tensions between themselves and the Soviet Union. Also following the civil war came a massive style change in the type of jazz music that was being performed by musicians. There was a shift from the large swing bands, to smaller combos that would play in different styles of jazz like bop, bebop, and hard bop. Through this format, many jazz musicians started to become celebrities not only in the U.S, but in other countries around the world. The "Jazz Ambassadors" program was designed for certain famous jazz musicians to tour Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Central and Southern Asia, and Africa to promote American values. The US State Department was responsible for arranging the tour and selecting musicians to be involved with the project. The musicians selected for the project were Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Dave Brubeck, Benny Goodman and Duke Ellington. Each of these musicians gathered a band of musicians together to tour the world and to sell the "dream" of living in America. To this day, the US State Department in partnership with the "John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts" still funds the Jazz Ambassadors for performances, lecture recitals, and master classes all around the world.

The research that I would like to pursue are the following questions related to the Jazz Ambassadors:

- What were the "American values" that were sought to be taught through this tour?
- Did anyone take into consideration the idea that the U.S was experiencing their own injustices?
- What was the efficacy (short and long term) of the Jazz Ambassadors?

* T. Hayes

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Jazz Music and the Cold War

Jazz Music played a crucial role in the Cold War, as it was exploited by the United States in its efforts to gain influence and global dominance. Other countries used movies and television to further their agenda, but the United States had a different approach. The United States Administration was using Jazz musicians as pawns, or "ambassadors of goodwill" in their propaganda war (Bratton, 1998). In 1956, Dizzy Gillespie led the first Jazz band sent on a tour by the State Department in places that had treaties with the U.S. or had U.S. military bases, including concerts in the Soviet Union. Gillespie grew up modestly, and his music transcended boundaries of culture. His upbringing was relatable to many listeners, and his tour would promote the idea of hope and freedom in American culture. Jazz music was believed to have bridged the gap between capitalist and communist countries, as many people, including Russians, were showing up to listen to American jazz.

Another interesting message that was sent with these jazz performances around the world is the false message that African Americans had freedom in the United States. Discrimination against minority groups in the U.S. is well known in our culture, and looks bad to other countries. Therefore, these Jazz performances around the world were able to temporarily paint our culture as something it is not. This message was important for the U.S. to convey, since Russia commonly exploited the racial tensions as a result of the Civil War in America, and challenged our hypocritical belief that we are a country that provides freedom to our citizens. The Eisenhower administration, who funded these Jazz tours, strongly believed that cultural influences are directly related to political influences, and were not shy in shelling out large amounts of money to fund this initiative (Castagneto, 2014).

American broadcaster Willis Conover explains a slightly varying perspective, and explains that "the jazz musicians' job was to advertise an idealist notion of American-style democracy and connect the political yearning for personal freedom and the musical experience of pleasure with a desire to purchase American consumer goods." This perspective examines a more capitalist approach, while also acknowledging America's desire to be seen as a free nation (Devlin, 2015). America's successes were often quantified in terms of finances, or described in terms of automobiles. Eisenhower wanted to dispel the notion that America was so concerned with materialism (Morton, 2005). Overall, jazz musicians were used as a political pawn to convey U.S. propaganda.

* K. Masters

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1957

Racism and Racial Stereotypes in West Side Story's 1961 film adaptation

Over 60 years ago, Leonard Bernstein composed a critically acclaimed and touchstone musical, *West Side Story*, which carved the pathway for the modern musical. *West Side Story* was created in collaboration with Jerome Robbins (choreographer and director), Arthur Laurents (librettist), Leonard Bernstein (composer), and Stephen Sondheim (lyricist), premiering on Broadway on September 26, 1957. Four years later, in 1961, a film adaptation of the musical was released and quickly rose to fame and notoriety around the world.

The musical portrays a modern adaptation of Shakespeare's tragic love story of Romeo and Juliet revolving around conflicting gangs of Whites and Puerto Ricans in 1950s New York City. In 1961, a film adaptation of the musical was released and quickly rose to fame, starring Natalia Wood (Maria) and Richard Beymer (Tony). Since its release, it has been criticized for its inaccurate representation, discrimination, crude stereotypes and overt racism.

Latina critics, artists and performers have condemned and spoken out against the way Latina characters are

racialized in the 1961 film adaptation. First off, the majority of the cast playing Puerto Rican characters were white actors who were brown-faced for the performance. Natalia Wood, playing Maria, the leading “Puerto Rican” role, was a white American, playing a racist stereotype, alongside many others. Even the voice actors for Maria and Anita, were white American actresses. This musical, also written by white men, portrays its’ Latina characters as racist stereotypes; playing roles of criminalized youth, sexualized women, and hungry immigrants. In Act I of the musical, the song “America” is a critically acclaimed dance number that portrays overt racism, by depicting Latina’s as assimilated, uneducated, sexualized, and easily colonized. This narrative is built upon throughout the musical and paints a picture displaying a “political campaign in favor of assimilation” for Latinas/os (Peredez, 336).

In analyzing this film and the musical itself, there is general consensus among critics that it is in no way about Puerto Rican culture. In fact, there is nothing learned about the Puerto Rican community, culture, or living from watching the musical or movie. There is a blatant disregard and ignorance by the creative team to the Latina/o experience. Boricua spectators insist that the musical and film do not accurately represent them as a “people,” (Negrón-Muntaner, 60). Even Leonard Bernstein himself wrote, his portrayal of Puerto Ricans in *West Side Story* is “superficial” (Negrón-Muntaner, 60). So, one must wonder, why? Why would a composer unethically, wrongfully, and inaccurately represent a culture, race and group of people in this manner? What and who does this serve?

* K. Lyubomirsky

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1957 (and other years)

We Shall Overcome—A Civil Rights Anthem

During the Civil Rights Movement, music played a significant role in bringing people together for a common purpose and cause. One such piece of music was “We Shall Overcome” sung by Pete Seeger. This song can be traced back to the hymn “I’ll Overcome Some Day” from 1901, but became most well known as the anthem for the Civil Rights Movement. It would later be covered by a multitude of artists throughout the rest of the century. Martin Luther King first heard the song outside Highlander Folk School in Tennessee in 1957, where Pete Seeger led a large crowd in singing the tune. King would later say that the song was stuck in his head and had a haunting quality about it. The song would spread throughout the United States, being sung by protesters at rallies, sit-ins, and marches. Seeger notes that part of what makes it such a good protest song is the fact that it is relatively simple in its melody and rhythm. You only need to hear it once or twice before you can pick up on it and join in the singing. When the legislation banning segregation was passed by president Lyndon Johnson, he actually used the phrase “We shall overcome” in his speech, showing how big of an impact this song had on the Civil Rights Movement and how it had permeated the consciousness of the nation. I find it interesting that Pete Seeger is a white musician and sang what became the anthem for the Civil Rights Movement. Many places in the South were trying to actively segregate white and black musicians, so Seeger’s singing of this song helped to actively unify the movement. It helped to show that everyone was in the fight together. Seeger had changed the lyrics from an earlier version from “I shall overcome” to “we shall overcome” again showing a sense of unity and connection. It is very powerful to listen to and think of the struggles that people were facing at the time and how it connects to things that still occur in our society today. The royalties for the song, until recently when it was placed in the public domain, had gone back to the Highlander Research and Education Center, where the original performance took place. This money was used to fund Black artist-activists across the south through the We Shall Overcome Fund. Even many years later, this important anthem was still giving back to the community and helping it to thrive.

* A. Cranmer

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1958

The Formation of the Israeli Musical Aesthetic: The Influence of Josef Tal

Josef Tal was a trailblazer in the establishment of Israeli art music, representing the emergence of the country and consequently, of its own aesthetic renaissance. Tal was born in Germany in 1910, with his family coming to the area that would later become Israel in the 1930's. The establishment of Israel in 1948 was meant to be a testament to the "European" version of Zionism. Predominant music in the newly-formed Israel at the time was heavily influenced by European Jewish people, consisting largely of Eastern European melodies. "Music came from synagogue, family gatherings on holidays and festivals, and from Yemenite prayers..." (Horowitz, 2010) which was perpetuated throughout many communities of the infant nation. With the political uproar that Israeli statehood brought, new musical styles were forced together in a way that created a new aesthetic space for a music that would be shaped into uniquely "Israeli" music. This concept broke barriers, and served as separation between European aesthetics and traditions, crystallizing Israeli culture as its own entity.

Josef Tal is widely considered to be one of the founding fathers of Israeli art music. He would go on to become the chair of two major institutions of music in Israel: the Rubin Music Academy, and the Hebrew University department of musicology. He also created the first electronic musical center in Israel at Hebrew University, though he created very few electronic compositions. He was a musician who was unafraid and vocal about straying from traditional paradigms of Jewish music. He created "disillusionment with romanticism nationalism in modern Hebrew poetry and composition approaches..." (Shelleg, 2019). Drawing inspiration from Schonenberg, his music is considered to be mostly atonal and serial. His music caused a great deal

of controversy, as critics felt it strayed too far from the Romantic, poetic biblical origins of European-Jewish music. Tal rejected the previous school of thought of other Mediterranean-Israeli composers, as he was "...against nationalism in music that is based on folklore". He created many stageworks, writing numerous oratorios, cantatas, dramas, and operas. The texts were mainly in Hebrew, based on biblical stories. One such opera was *Amnon and Tamar*. (Etan, 2013). Composed in 1958, this work combines elements of atonality, incorporates eastern modal melodic influences, and is sung entirely in Hebrew. It premiered in 1995 as a celebration of the New Israel Opera House in Tel Aviv. Tal served to push the envelope, and serves as a symbol of Israeli self-determinism as a cultural icon.

* E. Weber

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1959

Miriam Makeba (Lakutshon Ilanga/Come Back, Africa)

Miriam Makeba was a South African Singer whose music, as a reflection of her life and home, was used all around the world to bring attention to the injustices happening as a result of Apartheid. Her fame, activism and music making brought attention to South Africa's people, and gave her the nickname "Mama Africa". The song *Lakutshon Ilanga* that she sang in the anti-apartheid movie *Come Back, Africa* became the launching point for her fame in the United States and other countries across the globe, and this song in particular was seen as a politically charged piece of music by the South African people for its message, and also for its connection to the movie, which was made and quickly smuggled out of the country. Makeba's music was banned in South Africa for a time, and she herself was denied reentry into her home country

in 1960. The song *Lakutshon Ilanga* continued to be used in an anti-apartheid context, as its message was one of searching for loved ones in neighboring houses, hospitals, and even prisons, until they were found. The song's lyrics translate to "when the sun sets" and narrates a story of someone searching for their loved one, and continuing that search even when the sun sets. This was of course a very familiar and powerful message for many people during Apartheid. In an interview, Makeba states that she was always branded a political singer, but her home and her life in South Africa happened to be an oppressive one because she was growing up in Apartheid, and so her music being a reflection of her life was bound to hold an anti-apartheid message that carried with it a heavily political connotation, whether that was her intention or not. She was known for saying "people say I sing politics, but what I sing is not politics, it is the truth." I find this message to be incredibly powerful, and I think it carries through to a lot of different music that has been used throughout history (and music that is used today) to protest injustices. Personal truths are a powerful thing, and when combined with music the impact of them can be used to inform, to incite activist mindsets, and to unify people.

* C. Higgins

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1959

Dion and the Belmonts, "A Teenager in Love"

What it meant to be a "teenager" was relatively new in the 1950s in the United States. The political and social phenomenon of the "teenager" emerged as young adults didn't have the societal pressure to leave their education and start a job, but were spending more time in school. In

addition, they were not marrying as young, so the idea of "dating" came to be. The automobile made more private dates possible, as before the courting would take place in the presence of family members.

Released in March of 1959, "A Teenager in Love" makes commentary on the experience of being a "teenager," at a time that the social idea was recently developed. The song reached Billboard Top 5 by November 1959, and was even covered with three popular versions in the UK (Vickers, 2013). The song was written for the singing group, The Blemonts, by Doc Pomus and Mort Shuman, who worked as a team. The song-writers originally aimed to give the song to a group called the Mystics, but Laurie Records decided that the song was "too good" for the Mystics (Vickers, 2013). Interestingly, the lead singer Dion DiMucci "was a teenager when this was released, but he turned 20 about a month later" (SongFacts). Pop music came to be consumed by "teenagers," and the crooning heart-throb DiMucci, flanked by equally attractive backup singers, surely impacted the success of the song. The style of "doo-wop" is prevalent in this song, with the "wah ooo" syllables, and the backup singers in harmony, echoing certain lyrics that the soloist sings. DiMucci was initially doubtful that the song would be "cool." However, he says, "but the Belmonts started doing this ooh-wah thing and I just knew right away it had such a good sound, I started skipping over those ooh-wahs" (Vickers, 2013). "Ooo-wahs," as Vickers describes, surely delineate the style of doo-wap. This track also reveals its time period because it has a fade at the end, which was created for a radio host to smoothly talk into to make commentary on the song or introduce the next topic of interest on the radio show.

Race impacted the profile of a teenager. Beth Fowler asserts, "Although these profiles of white and black girls use similar language when describing their identities as teenagers, racialized distinctions among their experiences are not difficult to pinpoint" (Fowler, 2021). Therefore, the "teenage" experience of gathering in diners over a milkshake, as seen in popular media today, did not necessarily describe the experience of all teens, but probably privileged teens.

All in all, "A Teenager in Love" by Doc Pomus and Mort Shuman can be analyzed as a musical case study of the political and social phenomenon of the "teenager" that emerged in the 1950s.

* A. Budd

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1959 (and throughout the 1960s)

Freedom Songs during the Civil Rights Movement

The Civil Rights Movement was a significant social and political movement in the United States that aimed to secure equal rights and end racial segregation and discrimination against African Americans. It spanned the mid-1950s to the late 1960s and had a profound impact on American society and the struggle for racial equality. In response to the injustices, social change was made through nonviolent protests, civil disobedience, legal challenges, and grassroot organizations.

Freedom songs played a crucial role in inspiring, mobilizing, and uniting activists to bring social change. Bruce Hartford, a civil rights activist, states that Freedom Songs were "the 'emotional' arm of nonviolent marches and demonstrations, which allowed demonstrators to dramatize the ideas of the movement. The psychological impact of songs, he explains, is much more powerful than slogan chanting, because songs last longer and convey a whole range of ideas and emotions. This is confirmed by Guy Carawan, an American folk musician of the Highlander Folk School. Recalling a nonviolent demonstration during the Nashville movement, he comments on the immediate, physical impact of singing. 'I think I ran into C. T. Vivian for the first time in front of the mayor's office in Nashville,' he says. 'It was probably the first time that 'We Shall Overcome' was used at a mass gathering as part of that movement, and you could see tears in people's eyes. Singing really had that kind of impact" (qtd. in Adams 1998: 155).

As stated before, freedom songs originated in mass meetings and would be carried over to other places. The song, "We Shall Overcome", was one of those songs that would be carried throughout the movement. Its unclear on how it originated due to the many versions of the song. Originally a slave work song, it was published as a hymn, "I'll Overcome Someday," then became "We Will Overcome" after the black members of the Food and Tobacco Union in South Carolina took it over in 1945. The leaders of the Highlander Folk School 10 later adapted it for the civil rights movement. Septima Clark, of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), changed "will" into "shall," folk singer Pete Seeger and others added verses, and it finally ended up in Albany,

Georgia, where the singers slowed the tempo and gave it the form that became the anthem of the 1960s Movement (Hartford 2011). One last contribution was made by an African American Methodist Minister and composer named Reverend Charles Tindley developed a gospel version of the song titled, "I'll Overcome Someday" which influenced the lyrics and melody of "We Shall Overcome". The song had went through many variations using different elements of music (melodic lines, emotive dynamics, african american influence) which carried into an anthem representing the African american culture.

Another song that contributed to the Civil Rights Movement was the song, "I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free." The song provided aspirations and hopes of equality and breaking free from the constraints of racial oppression and discrimination. Its lyrics and melodic lines conveyed a sense of resilience, urging individuals to persevere in the face of challenges. Two popular versions were made by Billy Taylor and Nina Simone. Billy Taylor provided a jazz rendition fusing together elements of jazz, gospel, and soul. Nina Simone provided a powerful and soulful interpretation which helped popularize the song into an anthem of hope and liberation.

Lastly, the notable song that originated in 1900 as a poem and has been referred to as, "The Black National Anthem", Lift Every Voice and Sing has inspired the Civil Rights Movement and has continued to become a testament for African Americans for unity and equality. Lift Every Voice and Sing became associated with the Civil Rights Movement as a symbol of resilience and a call for justice. It has been sung in rallies, protests, and gatherings to uplift and inspire activists. One particular non-violent protest where the song was sung was during the Nashville sit-ins where protesters sat by lunch counters in downtown Nashville, Tennessee.

* J. Garcia

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1960

We Insist! Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite!

Drummer Max Roach was very politically active during the civil rights movement in 1960s America. His 1960 album, "We Insist! Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite", is about the fight for civil rights both in America and South Africa. In 1960, American protesters had started staging sit-ins, and a crowd of black peaceful protesters in South Africa were massacred by the police, resulting in the deaths of almost 70 people. Both groups were engaging in nonviolent forms of protest, and were being praised for their resilience in the face of danger.

The songs on this album are split by subject matter. The first two tracks on Side A are about the fight for civil rights in America, and Side B is about the fight for civil rights in South Africa. The songs about America are performed by a chordless sextet consisting of trumpeter Booker Little, tenor saxophonist Walter Benton, trombonist Julian Priestner, bassist James Schenck, vocalist Abbey Lincoln, and Max Roach on drums. There is also a solo from Coleman Hawkins on the first track, "Driva' Man". The first two songs both start in C minor, modulate to Ab, and then move back to C minor. The songs about Africa on Side B add Afro-Cuban percussion from Ray Mantilla and Tomas DuVal and conga from Nigerian conga player Michael Olatunji. The songs on this side modulate through the circle of fifths, starting in C and moving through the flat keys.

The third track on Side A is about the struggles faced in both countries. This track consists of three parts: "Prayer," which Alisa White describes as "the cry of an oppressed people," "Protest," which is 90 seconds of screaming with drums, and "Peace," the only section of the three that has a clear meter, and is about the sense of relaxation and exhaustion after doing all you can to fight for your own rights.

The cover of this album is also very important to contextualize this album. As I said before, this was released at a hot point in the civil rights movement, and the album cover was very controversial at the time. It pictures three African American men sitting at a diner counter, staging a sit-in. This album was also used on

posters to promote performances of "Freedom Now Suite", and was unusually explicitly political for the time.

* M. Coons

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Link to album Max Roach - ["We Insist! Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite"](#)

1960

High Hopes: How Frank Sinatra and JFK Changed Elections Forever

Frank Sinatra was one of the first celebrities to publicly advocate for political candidates and ideas in American media. Throughout his career, he took stances in politics such as his support of FDR's bid for a fourth term as president and his advocacy and campaigning for civil rights. None were as influential in shaping the future of American politics as his close affiliation with and intense advocacy for John F. Kennedy's presidential candidacy in 1960.

In 1950, 9/10 American homes did not own a TV. In 1960, 9/10 homes did. With this rise in popularity of television at the time, Kennedy saw the potential of the new medium and took advantage of the tools that were at his disposal thanks to the new technology and his family fortune. This fortune, along with help from Sinatra, allowed Kennedy to pay for ads to run as commercials on TV, reaching an amount of people that had never been done before. He labeled his potential presidential cabinet the "new frontier" and stated that the torch was being passed to the next generation. Being potentially the youngest president in history if elected, and announcing his candidacy at the age of 42, his use of modern technology ushered in a new strategy of campaigning that has impacted elections ever since. A pivotal moment in the development of the utilization of television was Kennedy's debate with Richard Nixon, where Kennedy can be seen "as someone who was poised, who was witty, charming, handsome and deserved to be president of the United States" (Gonyea). Also a pivotal point in the election, as well as in the involvement of celebrities and musicians in political campaigns, is the

recruitment of Frank Sinatra to record a theme song for the campaign.

Kennedy's father Joseph P. Kennedy approached Sinatra in the summer of 1959 to help raise funds, recruit other celebrities, and record a theme song for John F. Kennedy's campaign. Sinatra, being at the peak of his popularity, agreed as he was a long time supporter of the democratic party and saw the affiliation with Kennedy as a chance to rid himself of the rumors that he was involved in organized crime that had been circulating for years. The song, High Hopes, was recorded with modified lyrics such as "Everyone is voting for Jack/'Cause he's got what all the rest lack" and "Oops there goes the opposition kerplow." This song could be heard blaring from Kennedy's sound trucks across the streets of the nation, and alongside the two's public appearances together, Sinatra's collaboration with several labor and crime figures such as the Teamsters Union, and his recruitment of Hollywood stars to raise funds for the increased campaign costs, it set a new precedent of celebrity-politician collaboration for elections to come (Nelson)(Frontani)

Between Kennedy's utilization of new technologies and Sinatra's willingness to involve himself in politics publicly, they forever changed the way campaigns are run and the degree to which celebrities interact with politicians.

* J. Flores

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1961

Krzysztof Penderecki, "Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima"

The piece I gleamed at is called "Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima", written by Krzysztof Penderecki in 1961. This piece is considered abstract and avant-garde that reflects the horrors caused by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in World War two. This music can be characterized as dissonant and has unsettling tones with its use of extended instrumental techniques. Penderecki uses block sounds, col legno and glissandi to create unique and haunting sounds. This not only had significant impact on the development of contemporary classical music, but it has an impact on the listener as you are able to hear the emotional and expressive power this piece provides. The piece begins with a cluster chord, with all of the instruments playing in the upper register. The music then increases with more textural density and dynamic volume leading into quiet glissandos and quiet lines. The original cluster returns and this time becomes wider and narrower in range. Then there are more destructive outbursts of noise, that can be heard from the playing on the bridge of the stringed instruments. The cluster chords return and finally ends with decrescendos and crescendos.

The score presented is in nontraditional notation. The picture I provided, has the performers picking a note and then continuing to crescendo. Each line represents an instrument section. This piece is meant to bring awareness to those who only heard of Hiroshima, and the significant impact it had on Japan. When the time this piece came out, the United States and Russia were also in the middle of a cold, so it had an impact on the people of the United States as well. This piece aimed to evoke the sensation of devastation, grief, and tragedy associated with this event. Penderecki used this bombing to comment on this political issue.

* I. Newman

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1962 (to today)

The Freedom Singers and the Civil Rights Movement

My topic examines the influence of The Freedom Singers on the Civil Rights Movement, with special attention to the song "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize." The Civil Rights Movement took place from 1954-1968 and was a nonviolent social movement with the intention to abolish segregation and discrimination. Among these activists was a group called The Freedom Singers who became representative of the civil rights movement. The Freedom Singers were a group of four black musicians whose origin can be traced back to the sit-in movement that began in Greensboro, North Carolina in 1960. They would sing four concerts each day to spread the Civil Rights Movement's message. During their performances, the Freedom Singers reflected their heritage. They did so by performing without accompaniment since many black musicians did not have access to instruments. They chose to perform this way because that is how they saw their ancestors make music. An organization called the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) recruited groups of young advocates to travel and educate the southern public on their basic freedoms and raise funds for their organization. The freedom singers raised about \$50,000 to use in spreading the message of the Civil Rights Movement. Their repertoire consisted mostly of spirituals and hymns that spoke of slavery, sadness, and desperation, and some did not want to hear it. They acknowledged this by changing the text to reflect the current times. In the Freedom Singers' repertoire was an old work song called "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize," formerly known as "Keep Your Hand on the Plow," "Hold On," or "Gospel Plow." The "prize" referenced in this song refers to freedom for black Americans and harmony among the races. "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize" became an anthem for the Civil Rights Movement. It had been sung at many marches and rallies, and inspired those who listened and sang it. The exact origin of this song is unknown, but it was adapted for the Civil Rights Movement by an activist named Alice Wine, who added verses and changed some lyrics to adapt it. Here is a video of "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize." The reason this song and music during the Civil Rights Movement was so important was not because it substituted for political protest, but it became a significant part of that protest rather than a background feature. Music can educate, recruit, and help people beyond awareness to join a movement and become a supporter, despite their own identity. I believe this is what "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize" did because it helped listeners remember what the "prize" was in the end; freedom and harmony. "When the song was played, there wasn't anybody in that room who was not singing at full power, which is why it had such

intensity... all of those people were people who were risking their lives, and that's what it takes to raise a congregational song: you put yourself at total risk." (Woodard, p. 13).

* M. Kilker

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Open the Door Projects—Week 2: 1953-1968

1955

Pete Seeger's Impact on the Political Sphere in the 1950s-1960s

1955-1975:

Anti-War Protest Songs During The Vietnam War

1955, 1968:

Serialism in Film Scores: "The Cobweb" (1955) and "Planet of the Apes" (1968)

1956:

Coded Queer Messages: *Candide* and the Lavender Scare

1956:

Harry Belafonte and "Banana Boat Song (Day-o)": Labor Movements in the Caribbean

1957:

West Side Story → Music as Protest → "Gee Officer Krupke"

1962:

Dick Dale, "Miserlou," and Surf Music as an Agent of Appropriation

1963:

Lesley Gore, "You Don't Own Me"

1963:

The Politics behind Bob Dylan's Music: "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll"

1963:

Portrait of a Backup Singer: Darlene Love and "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)" / Darlene Love: Powerhouse in the Background

1963:

The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady by Charles Mingus and his experiences and views living through the 1950's and 60's

1964:

Dancing in the Street: Motown Music and the Civil Rights Movement

1964:

Sam Cooke, "A Change is Gonna Come"

1964, 1967:

The Beatles, Johnny Cash, and their sides of the counterculture coin

1965:

John Coltrane's "A Love Supreme" and connections to the ideology of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

1965:

Nina Simone, "Four Women"

1965:

Nina Simone, "Strange Fruit"

1965:

Barry McGuire, The Vietnam War, and "Eve of Destruction"

1967:

The Beatles, "All You Need is Love"

1967:

Aretha Franklin and her Popularized Version of "Respect," originally by Otis Redding / All Aretha Franklin wanted was Respect

1967:

Pata Pata and Miriam Makeba's influence against Apartheid

1967:

Pauline Oliveros, "Bye Bye Butterfly"

1967:

Nina Simone, "Backlash Blues"

1967:

Hair the Musical and the Vietnam War

1967:

Arlo Guthrie and "Alice's Restaurant"

1967:

[REDACTED], [REDACTED] and Rock and Roll: Censorship of Rock Music in the 1950 and 60s

1968:

The Doors, "Five to One," and Rebellion

1968:

The Beatles, "Helter Skelter"

1968:

The Beatles, "Revolution" / The Beatles: 3 "Revolutions" in One Year / "The Beatles & Revolution: A Controversial Political Position" / John Lennon's "Revolution" and its Reception

1968:

Johnny Cash, *At Folsom Prison*

1968:

Sounds of nationalism, fear, and tragedy in Karel Husa's "Music for Prague 1968"

1955

Pete Seeger's Impact on the Political Sphere in the 1950s-1960s

The 1960's represented a period of deep unrest globally. The assassination of many prominent political figures, the Korean and Vietnam war, and a shift away from the conservatism that characterized the preceding decade created prominent change in American society. Young people in particular found multiple outlets for their rage

against the injustice they were experiencing, with music being an especially powerful one. A product of this was the revival of folk music, which experienced a resurgence during this time as artists began writing their own material reflecting the topical discourse of the time. A most notable figure in the folk revival, and prominent activist of this time, was “Pete Seeger... (who) had a huge influence on the emergence of topical songwriting during the turbulent 1960s” (Ruehl, 2018).

From early on in his career, Pete Seeger was an outspoken political figure. His father organized some activities of the Communist Party, and Pete himself aligned himself with this ideology in his early days: “I became a communist at age seven when I read about American Indians. They had no rich, no poor, and I decided that’s the way people should live” (Cohen, & Capaldi, 2014). Seeger and his quartet, The Weavers, (Lee Hays, Ronnie Gilbert, and Fred Hellerman), expressed pro-war sentiments with songs like “Dear Mr. President” and “Round and Round Hitler’s Grave”. Seeger was later blacklisted in 1950 in the era McCarthyism, choking off his source of income. Despite being blacklisted, Seeger would experience a resurgence of his career with his powerful musical messages and activist work. Seeger was a big supporter of the Civil Rights movement, working for the Highlander Folk School in Mouteagle, Tennessee: an integrated space for the gathering of civil rights leaders to learn southern gospel songs and other new material relevant to the movement. Alongside activist Zilphia Horton, “She collaborated with Pete Seeger... who introduced many of these songs to Northern audiences” (Whitehead, 2007). He would further the genre of folk-music when his songbook *American Favorite Ballads* was picked up by Oak publications in 1960. “Moe Asch praised Pete for helping ‘to spread the folk music seed’” (Cohen, & Capaldi, 2014). Folk music was a way for Americans, including American youth, to reconnect with their identities and feel a sense of belonging. His song, “Where Have All the Flowers Gone?” (Seeger, 2015) was first written in 1955 and later published in 1960. Seeger gained inspiration from a poem called “Koloda Duda”, in which the question of “where” echos whistfully through the piece. The song’s “deep mourning at the ghosts of war concealed in a cheerful folk melody” (Ellingham, 2022). was utilized by multiple artists in the years following the song’s release. Although Pete Seeger’s career was at times a rocky one, his influence on folk-music represented his deeply rooted activist beliefs in doing what was right, no matter what came his way.

* E. Weber

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1955-1975:

Anti-War Protest Songs During The Vietnam War

During the 1950s-1960s, the Vietnam War was a conflict that took place from 1955 to 1975 between the communist forces of North Vietnam, supported by China and the Soviet Union, and the non-communist forces of South Vietnam, supported by the United States and other anti-communist nations. The central conflict was North Vietnam (communist) wanting to reunify with the South to create Vietnam as a unified communist country. The United States became involved in fear of the spread of communism by providing military and economic assistance to South Vietnam. This resulted in a high number of casualties and had a profound impact on both Vietnam and the United States.

During this time, many protests in the U.S. and Vietnam incited against the war in Vietnam. One of the ways protest was expressed was through ca khúc; in translation means song. During the war ca khúc became a powerful medium through which people expressed their opinions, frustrations, and opposition to the conflict. In South Vietnam, some musicians and songwriters used ca khúc to voice their dissent against the government and the war. They composed songs that criticized the corruption and inequality within South Vietnamese society and questioned the legitimacy of the war effort. These songs often carried messages of peace, unity, and a desire for a better future.

One notable genre that emerged from Vietnam War was the *Vọng cổ* genre, which blended traditional Vietnamese music with contemporary lyrics expressing anti-war sentiments. Some examples are with a composer and songwriter named Trịnh Công Sơn. Trịnh Công Sơn's song "On the Road," became an anthem of the anti-war movement in Vietnam. another prominent song of his was, "Liberate the South." The song is in the style of a Folk March and involved specific lyrics that gave rise to unity and support.

Rise up, heroic people of the South! Rise up, and face the storm.

Pledge to save our country.

Pledge to fight to the death.

Advance with guns and swords in hand.

Trinh Cong Son's song brought attention to American musicians like Pete Seeger who later contributed to the Anti-War protests. Peter Seeger created the song, "Waist Deep in the Big Muddy", which uses metaphorical language to critique the United States' involvement during the war. The song tells the story of a captain leading his troops through a treacherous river and despite the warnings, the captain dismisses the concerns and leads them deeper into the water until they are submerged. One last artist was Phil Ochs who created the song, "I Ain't Marching Anymore". This song conveys the refusal to participate in wars and highlights the themes of patriotism, the costs of war, and the responsibility to question authority and strive for peace.

Anti-War protest songs became a sentiment of the frustrations of people who were opposed to the Vietnam War. They have expressed their feelings through creative composition and lyricism. With that, These musicians were able to unite and create a strong foundation against war and violence.

* J. Garcia

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1955, 1968:

Serialism in Film Scores: "The Cobweb" (1955) and "Planet of the Apes" (1968)

Serialism (or 12-tone music) was the dominating compositional form of the Cold War era because of the push to have a new sound from the tonal music that was being created by the Soviet Union. Composers in America began to be hired by universities and academic institutions to push this style of composition to the next generation. Another important way that serialist composers could put their work into the mainstream was through film scores. "When twelve-tone composition

began to blossom in this country in the 1950s and 1960s—what I have called the second wave of twelve-tone music in the US—a significant amount of activity did take place within the university, as part of a large-scale trend that affected composers of all orientations, but many of the most important twelve-tone composers, then and now, never had any long-standing university affiliation" (Straus, 2008). Even though serialist music was the most prominent form of musical composition, it was not popular for mass audiences. Audiences were not accustomed to the new types of sounds that were being produced as they were not the typical compositions focused on structured tonality. "Although influential in concert halls and conservatories during the mid-20th century, serial composition was rarely used in film scores—precisely due to its alienating effect on audiences whose ears were accustomed to the traditional systems of Western music" (Takis, 2004). This made serialism a hard genre of composition to use for the film industry. The first film score to feature serialist compositions was "The Cobweb".

Leonard Rosenman, who was a former student of Schoenberg, was tasked with the composition for the film. "His score for The Cobweb is not notably aggregate-based, but it uses a twelve-tone series as a source of motivic material, and these motives are subjected to various kinds of development, including the use of the familiar twelve-tone transformations: transposition, inversion, retrograde, and combinations of these. Rosenman employed this compositional style, as many later film composers did, to express intense and often negative emotions: '[I didn't do it] simply because I felt it was important to write a serial score. I felt that the film really could have used this kind of treatment. I also felt that it would have set off the film as not simply a pot-boiler melodrama which happened to center around an insane asylum but rather a film in which this kind of expressionistic music could be, so to speak, mind reading or, as I say, super-real'" (Straus, 2008).

One of the later uses of serialist music in film scores was for the 1968 film "Planet of the Apes". This movie requires a score that makes audiences feel like they are in a foreign territory and makes them feel a bit uneasy. The use of serialism allows for this setting to be created. The movie was met with much critical success due to the use of the score which snagged an Oscar nomination for best score. Jerry Goldsmith used many techniques to create many film scores using different techniques. "His second technique is the musical language of serialism. An extension of composer Arnold Schoenberg's dodecaphonic technique, serialism involves variations and permutations on the twelve notes of the chromatic scale ... Goldsmith had used it before in Freud, and he would use it again—but not often; for most films, it would have been devastatingly inappropriate. It worked wonders, however, for Planet of the Apes. The film, and score, are dominated

by brooding, eerie landscapes and ferocious explosions of activity. Any recognizable humanity must be leached from Heston's iconic, over-the-top performance" (Takis, 2004). While serialism wouldn't have been the appropriate choice for most films, there are many instances that the use of this structured framework of composition enhances the films that were being created of the time. Without the creation of serialism due to the growing tensions of the cold war, films and their scores wouldn't have had the same effect on audiences as these films did.

* B. Worden

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1956:

Coded Queer Messages: *Candide* and the Lavender Scare

Through much of the 20th century, being gay or engaging in homosexual behavior was seen as a mental illness. Because of this, queer people would try to be hidden, sending hidden messages to one another. Performing arts, such as operas and musical theater, were often places where queer people could find some sense of solace. Leonard Bernstein's *Candide* is one example from the 1950s that contains many of these hidden messages. Many times, gay men in particular identify with the lyrics and themes of the female characters in musicals. These themes helped them to feel that they could survive the status quo that society was currently giving them was also giving them hope for a better future.

Leonard Bernstein has a fulfilling career as a conductor and composer. He had married actress Felicia Montealegre, who had a full career on the stage before resigning her role to "Mrs. Maestro." While she gave up

her career to be Bernstein's wife and a mother to their kids, Bernstein struggled internally with his own sexuality and identity. Following his wife's death, it is rumored that Bernstein had several male lovers.

In the realm of music, Bernstein was often pushing the envelope. He was often getting in trouble for his music and his musical *Candide* was no different. *Candide* is based on the 1759 novel of the same name by Voltaire. The original version of *Candide* was seen as a "succès de scandale," meaning that it was quite successful because it was so controversial. Voltaire's *Candide* is an attack on the corruption within the Catholic Church of the time. This was extremely divisive for the time. Bernstein sees the seemingly ideal world that Dr. Pangloss imagines in the book as comparable to the 1950s in the United States. The 1950s saw great economic prowess due to the boom post World War II; however, there were still some deep fears underneath. Cold War nuclear tensions were high; along with this, we have the red and lavender scares, causing many people, particularly gay people in the United States, to be afraid for their livelihoods and their lives.

"Glitter and Be Gay" can be read in relation to many fears and tensions queer people in the United States were facing in the 1950s. The song is an aria from Cunegonde; she is being used as a sex slave and is longing for freedom. In the song, Cunegonde is in her room alone and longing to be free. She sings of the ways that she plays the part of the happy and beautiful woman despite wishing more than anything to be free. This piece also borrows melodic lines from "Sempre Libera" in Verdi's *La traviata*. "Sempre Libera" tells a similar story of a woman longing for freedom. Queer readings of this song relate these themes to their present-day lives. Gay men of the time were living in fear and feeling trapped by the societal expectations and potential consequences of if those were not followed. *Glitter and Be Gay* can be read as a queer story of being trapped by the standards set forth by society.

* J. Benedict

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1956:

Harry Belafonte and "Banana Boat Song (Day-o)": Labor Movements in the Caribbean

For historical context, post-World War II, it was the US and British aim to eradicate any labor movement which was influenced by the Communist party. Pinpointing Latin America, in 1952, Jamaica was rid of any Communist influence from the Norman Manley's People's National Party, the social-democratic political party, and the Trades Union Congress, a federation of trade unions in England and Wales. A year later in British Guiana located in Northern South America, a socialist party led by Cheddi Jagan, called the People's Progressive Party was shut down by British troops who suspended their constitution, and re-instituted direct colonial rule.

While all of this was happening, a man named Harry Belafonte was about to start his entertainment career. Harry Belafonte was born in Harlem New York, and moved to live with his grandmother until he was old enough to join the Navy and fight in WWII. Belafonte never went overseas, however, he ended up going to a drama workshop in NYC. In the 1950's Belafonte's songs made top charts. Harry Belafonte is best known as the King of Calypso. Calypso is a music style originating in the Caribbean, more specifically Trinidad and Tobago during the mid-19th century. Calypso music can be characterized by highly rhythmic and harmonic vocals. Calypso is a range of genres in the Caribbean which eventually influenced ska and reggae.

In 1956, Harry Belafonte released the Banana Boat Song (Day-o). Harry Belafonte was considered a major force in expanding the mainstream popularity of folk music and introducing Americans to the Jamaican sounds of Calypso. He was also an activist on behalf of civil rights and labor movements. The Banana Boat song is based on a Jamaican folk song called Hill and Gully Rider. It originated in the twentieth century where there was a high banana trade in Jamaica, This was sung by dockworkers at night to avoid harsh heat conditions and when the sun came up, they knew it was time to go home. Belafonte brought

attention to the labor conditions of Caribbean workers with the call response section of "Day-O." A lot of these workers were immigrants facing exploitation and discrimination. The chant "Day-O" is the represented of the workers' call to end their backbreaking labor. This song can be seen as a protest song against labor inequality and an appeal for better working conditions. This song helped change views of what most Americans had about people living in the Caribbean. This song presents workers working all night with low wages on banana plantations owned by rich landlords. Harry Belafonte opened the door for Calypso music and enlightened America on Jamaica.

* I. Newman

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1957:

West Side Story → Music as Protest → "Gee Officer Krupke"

On September 26th, 1957 *West Side Story* opened on Broadway at the Winter Garden Theatre and ran for 2 whole years. *West Side Story*'s music was composed by Leonard Bernstein and lyrics were written by Stephen Sondheim. This musical reimagines Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet in a 1950's New York setting. The whole story revolves around two rival gangs known as the Jets and the Sharks. These two gangs were respectively composed of white Americans (Jets) and Puerto Rican immigrants (Sharks). The two main characters of the musical, Tony who is a member of the Jets and Maria who is the sister of the Shark's leader, meet and instantly fall in

love with one another even though there's tension between their gangs. While their love story is developing, the tensions arise between the Jets and Sharks which lead to tragic consequences. There are many different themes that are explored throughout this musical, some of which include prejudice, discrimination, and the destructive nature of hatred. It also dives into the different challenges faced by immigrants and the systematic issues of social inequality and power struggles within society. The story concludes with a somber reflection on the senseless violence and the need and the need for change. *West Side Story* leaves the audience with a sense of the tragic consequences of societal divisions and the urgent need for understanding, compassion, and unity.

The musical *West Side Story*, connects to music power and politics in many different ways. Some of which include music as a unifying force, cultural clash, social inequality and discrimination, political realities, and music as protest. The one that I will mainly focus on and talk about is music as protest. In the 1950s there was a great deal of gang life in New York City. Jerome Robbins, the director of *West Side Story*, made stage changes to the musical to show the audience what these gangs were really like in New York City. He wanted to really have the show reflect what was actually happening in real time. Some of the songs in *West Side Story* act as vehicles for protest and social commentary. The characters in this musical use the music and its lyrics to express their frustration, anger, and desires for change. One song in particular in which the characters express their frustration, anger, and desires for change is "Gee Officer Krupke." This song is sung by the Jets otherwise known as the white American gang. They mock and parody the various societal institutions and authorities in which they believe have failed them. All of the Jets express their frustration with society and claim that they are not responsible for their actions, but instead are victims of their environment. Overall, the song serves as a humorous commentary on the societal structures and institutions that contribute to the gang members' delinquent behavior.

* V. Vespucci

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1962:

Dick Dale, "Miserlou," and Surf Music as an Agent of Appropriation

Early 1960s surfing culture in California was home to the burgeoning of a new genre of music. Surf rock or more generally referred to as surf music consisted of both instrumental and vocal musics that became popular among the post war youth culture on the beaches of Southern California. Musicians like Dick Dale and the Bel-Airs held dances on the beach that became an important place for youths at the time. Instrumental surf music was widely popular among surfers themselves as they felt it represented the experience of riding the waves. Dick Dale, known as the "king of surf guitar," was enormously popular for his version of the folk song Miserlou (which was further popularized much later when it was used in the opening credits of Tarantino's "Pulp Fiction" in 1994). He was a surfer himself and became an important figure for surfer-musicians in Southern California. Vocal surf music was made most popular by the Beach Boys, who were not surfers themselves. They recognized surfing as being a major fad in that place and time and began writing fairly typical sounding songs with lyrics about surfing and various aspects of surf culture.

Dick Dale's "Miserlou" exemplifies the sound of surf music and became an important part of how this culture was transmitted outside of California in the early 1960s. Dale was known for his very aggressive style of playing the guitar, notably going through guitar strings and picks with great frequency. The primary instrumentation of surf music features guitar, drums, bass, and occasionally saxophone or trumpet. Dale collaborated with Fender on development of the Stratocaster as well new amp technology because of the great volume at which he played. The song "Miserlou" itself is a folk song of possibly Arabic, Greek/Turkish, and/or Jewish origin. Dale recalls being asked by a child if he could play a song on a single string of the guitar, at which point he thought back to his Lebanese grandparents performing Miserlou on a single string of the oud. He then translated that technique to guitar, adding elements of rock music that he believed would appeal to the youth culture he was used to playing for on the beaches of Southern California. His performance style has been described as hypermasculine, contributing to the image that surfers were white men.

Even vocal surf music described women as the reward for surfing well, making it very clear who should be performing what role in this subculture.

The firm establishment of surfer culture in California is evident in the imagery that still remains today of surfers being predominantly white, male, and Californian. Surfing was an important cultural practice to native Hawaiians and was the source of the craze that developed in America. Towards the end of the 19th century there were stories that surfing as a practice was dying out coming from primarily European sources. This may have been a response to the fact that missionaries traveling to Hawaii carried diseases that killed a large percentage of the population of native Hawaiians. As a result, tourism to Hawaii and adoption of surfing greatly increased by white Americans. Eventually, this was transmitted to the U.S. and took root in California as an important part of youth culture (referred to as New Surfing by some). Surf music as well as surfing movies played a crucial role in the dissemination of this cultural iconography beyond the limits of Californian beaches. American capitalism worked quickly to commercialize surfing to contribute to this. Additionally, Californian beaches were still segregated at the time so surf music was a notably white music form. Interestingly, just as there existed the idea that white jazz and blues musicians felt the need to prove they were capable at a traditionally black art form, white surfers experienced a similar desire to prove they could surf despite their not being Hawaiian.

* B. Poole

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1963:

Lesley Gore, "You Don't Own Me"

Feminism has long been defined as the advocacy of women's rights on the basis of the equality of the sexes. This definition has shifted as generations have passed, but the struggle for equality still remains. There have been four significant waves of feminism in the history of the United States. The first wave started in 1848 and was considered finished by the start of the great depression, with the main objective being to obtain the right to vote.

The second wave of feminism started in the 1960 and focused on issues of equality and discrimination. Some historians believe the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s to be the "largest social movement in the history of the United States". (Gordon, 2005) This revolution coincided with the civil rights movement and also had the primary oppressor of white males. During this time period, the United States functioned within the framework of a patriarchal society. This often led to the viewing of girl groups and women singers as a source of entertainment meant to appease the male gaze. Though many performers reluctantly conceded to these gender roles, there were a few stand-out figures that utilized their voices to fight back against the patriarchy.

"You Don't Own Me" by Lesley Gore has been an anthem for feminism and women's fight for equality since its release in 1963. This song "became very famous, ending up right behind the Beatles in the charts, and is actually even said to have been a hymn for second-wave feminism" (Pougin, 2020). This song, like many of the time, was not actually composed by the accredited artist, but rather by their producer. The producers in this case were the legendary Quincy Jones and John Madara. (Ulaby, 2019). When interviewed by NPR, Madara said the writing of this song was "shaped by his upbringing in a multiracial Philadelphia neighborhood and his participation in the civil rights movement." Both men had faced significant struggles in the fight for racial equality and utilized this platform as a way to speak out against oppression as a whole. Jones often alluded to the fact that the lyrics can be spoken from multiple perspectives, such as that of an independent young woman fighting against misogyny or a strong black man standing up against racism. This piece was purely declarative, evident in its lack of question marks and demands for equality. The universal proclamation laid out in this work could be relevant to many people, all around the globe, during the revolutionary years of the 60s. In this setting, it acted as a powerful-protofeminist statement [in which Gore] defiantly declared, "I'm not one of your many toys." (Greene, 2015). In examining the political climate, in which this song was written, it is not hard to see why women felt as though they were being played with, by men. During the post-war era, "sexist and racist discriminatory practices that resulted in layoffs of women, unsuccessful efforts to resist the loss of their wartime positions, and employers reestablishing the prewar sexual division of labor" (Meyerowitz, 1994) reaffirmed the gender inequalities present in the United States. Women, people of color, and the suffered as a result. This occurrence is not beyond the current generation, as proven by the fourth wave of feminism starting in 2012. This song is still seen as a symbol of women's empowerment and was used as the anthem for the 2018 Women's March. (Gordon, 2005)

* M. Suffern

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1963:

The Politics behind Bob Dylan's Music: "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll"

Bob Dylan's music in general is quite impossible to separate from his politics, as he makes his left-wing beliefs very clear through his music. Peoples' attitudes at this pre-World War 2 time were generally that folk music, such as Bob Dylan's music, were used to promote political beliefs. However, Bob Dylan's music mostly focused on telling the story of individuals, such as Hattie Carroll in his song "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll" (1963) (Dunlap, 2006). This particular song speaks on the racial climate in America and encourages people to speak out against the inequality and injustice that Black people face on a daily basis. He also addresses the inequalities in the justice system, as Hattie Carroll's murderer, William Zantzinger, only received a six-month sentence. This song was considered to be one of the most brilliant protest songs he had ever written (Gaffney, 2012). This particular song is interesting because of Bob Dylan's approach to telling the audience the story. He speaks directly to the audience with an accusatory tone, calling out the listeners who might try to justify the murder of Hattie Carroll, or in his words, those who "philosophize disgrace" (Dunlap, 2006). In his lyrics, he also assumes that people won't want to cry for Carroll, and urges them not to do so. He reveals the real reason to cry at the end of the song, when he reveals that William Zantzinger only received a sentence of 6 months in prison for his heinous crime.

On February 8th, 1963, William Zantzinger drunkenly hit many people at the Emerson hotel while saying racial slurs. He used a 25 cent toy cane as his assault weapon. He yelled at Hattie Carroll, a worker at the hotel, who he claimed took too long making his drink. He eventually

ended up hitting her in the head with his cane. She did not die instantly, as she headed into the kitchen to tell her coworkers that she felt "deathly ill" (Greene, 2009). The next day, Hattie Carroll died in the hospital, with her cause of death being an enlarged heart and high blood pressure. Zantzinger was found guilty of involuntary manslaughter, and as Bob Dylan stated in his song, received only 6 months in jail as a sentence. Apparently, Zantzinger was haunted by the song for the rest of his life, and famously disputed many of the key facts in the song as incorrect. The reaction of the Baltimore community was very strong after this incident, as 1,600 people showed up to her funeral. Rev. Theodore Jackson Sr. took this as an opportunity to share his thoughts that the "ministers of this city, the doctors, the lawyers, all people should come together as never before and let people know that colored citizens are not going to stand for certain things." (Nagoski, 2023). Besides Bob Dylan's song recognizing her death, little has been discussed about her life beyond that.

* K. Masters

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1963:

Portrait of a Backup Singer: Darlene Love and "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)"

Race, privilege, and power all played roles in the music industry in the 1950s and 60s. The 2014 film, *20 Feet From Stardom*, gives voice to backup singers who have been overlooked for decades. Voices of black women, in particular, who were backup singers were honored, as

they faced much discrimination and hardship in their time. These women made the records in terms of success and style. One singer ironically notes, "sometimes that's the part you remember of the whole song - the background part!" Backup singers were not recognized for their contributions to the music, and especially women of color were always in a state of proving their worth in the studio dynamics where white men dominated decision making and monetary gain.

Darlene Love's story is one such case study. Her original name was Darlene Wright. Her performance of "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)" is one that still graces top Christmas playlists today. The producer was Phil Spector, a notoriously unfair producer, who was known for his "wall of sound" appeal. Love was first known for "He's a Rebel" (1962), where she sings the lead describing a rebellious love interest, singing, he's "not just one of the crowd," and "if they don't like him that way/ they won't like me after today/ I'll be standing right by his side." The lyrics were a bit scandalous for the time. In an emotional account, Love tells the story of when she was housecleaning in the early eighties "to survive," and her 1963 song came on, "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)." Hearing the song was the catalyst for her to decide that she needed to sing again, that singing was a part of herself. She was singing "come home" - could it be a message to "come home" to singing? Love attempted a comeback and then worked with producer Steve Van Zandt, with whom she felt that she was "part of the process." She went on to gain great fame after the movie shared her story to the world.

* A. Budd

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Darlene Love: Powerhouse in the Background

Darlene Love was the consummate background singer of the 1950's. Don Randi the owner of the Baked Potato Club who played piano and performed with Love often, says "Without question, her voice is like an angel's, but what makes Darlene one of the best vocalists of any day is her natural talent to pick up on a song and musical arrangement and enhance it" (Randi 2015). She grew up in LA, a minister's daughter, and was brought up in the gospel style, starting to sing in church at ten. She begins her musical career in high school in a mixed gender doo wop group, The Echos, and later the girl group The Blossoms. In a big break, Phil Spector hired the Blossoms, a little known girl group, to fill in for the Crystals, a girl band from New York, when they couldn't make it to a session. Darlene sang lead on "He's a Rebel," which was hurriedly published as a Crystal's song, without giving Darlene, or the Blossoms any credit (Barnett 2001). Phil Spector really seemed to be threatened by her talent, and repeatedly undercut her career. After this recording she signed a record deal with Spector, and changed her name from Darlene Wright to Darlene Love at Spector's suggestion. He got her to record "He's Sure the Boy I Love," which Love thought would be put out under her own name, but credit went to the Crystals again (Barnett, 2001). He also had her record "Da Do Ron Ron," but gave that song to a different artist. Love was most well known for her "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)," performed yearly on the Phil Spector Christmas specials. She has a very soulful style and contributed to the musical arrangements of many hits songs, and a vocal facility that was amazing, able to do very technical riffs. She is able to harmonize on the spot and sound polished without rehearsal. There is a story where they wake her up out of bed, and she shows up in her pajamas, with curlers in, to record with the Rolling Stones (obviously later). The Blossoms also were unique because they could change their sound to match many different styles. They sang backup to an incredible amount of music, including the Ronettes' "Be my Baby," Shelby Farares' "Johnny Angel," Bobby Morris Pickett's "Monster Mash" Frank Sinatra's "That's Life" the Crystals "Da Do Ron Ron," and many more. The Blossoms also recorded many singles which did not meet with as much success. They landed a spot on "Shindig!" one of the main music tv shows of the time, and sang backup to many Johnny Rivers songs. Love continues to sing backup into the 70's. When Love's contract was up, she went and signed with another record label, only to have it almost immediately sold back to Spector. This was so discouraging, that she finally quit music for a time, and became a cleaning lady. She says in "20 feet from Stardom," that she heard herself on the radio as she was cleaning someone's house, and knew that, that

was where she belonged, making music (Neville 2013). In the 80's she had a huge revival and finally was able to have the career she deserved. She started as herself on Broadway, in *Leader of the Pack*, and performed in *Hairspray*. She was in many movies, and continues to sing and record today.

I am amazed by the amount of control that Spector was able to have over her career, and wonder what she might have produced if she had been nurtured instead of quashed. She remains gracious to this day, saying if she had a chance to speak to Spector today, "I would say thank you. Really, I would. I never hated Phil. I just disliked what he was doing. I never got the money I should have, and my name never was on records," Love said. "But it never went to hate. If it wasn't for those records, I wouldn't have a career. Even today, people love those songs" (Ruggieri 2013).

* L. Baldwin

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1963:

The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady by Charles Mingus and his experiences and views living through the 1950's and 60's

I remember waking up during a morning in April of 2020 to the sounds of music that I had never heard before. There was beautiful alto saxophone playing that sounded like it was a person wailing surrounded by an ocean of other instruments. Dr. Edmund Pollock described this sound as "a voice calling to others and saying "I am alone, please, please join me!". As I read the liner notes for the

album I found out that this work of art detailed Mingus' personal feelings of wanting and needing love. These feelings are mirrored to the experiences of a Black man living in America during this time in the 1960's. Dr. Edmund Pollock writes this piece was "a plea to change the evil in man and to end hatred. The titles of this composition suggest the plight of the black man and a plea to the white man to be aware".

This album was recorded in New York City 1963 and released later that year. This piece relied heavily on the improvisational abilities of the 11 performers. Mingus gave a layout of the piece but encouraged the performers to take everything further. Mingus also used this opportunity to make this the first jazz album to utilize overdubbing technology. Through this advancement he included alto saxophone player Charlie Mariano to perform the iconic alto saxophone lines included throughout the album. It was heavily influenced by the music of Duke Ellington and includes a variety of styles and techniques such as flamenco guitar and polyphony. The piece was also intended to be a ballet and some companies have added choreography to the music.

The idea that Mingus would apply activist sentiments to this piece is not far-fetched. Mingus had included protests and spoke out against racial injustices especially in the music industry throughout his career. He even spoke out against Louis Armstrong for portraying African American performers stereotypically. It has been said that Mingus' musical freedoms (improvisation, polyphony, etc.) included in his works mirrored the goals for the civil rights movement. Mingus believed that "freedom is achieved by a necessary, collective struggle."

Ultimately the message and music spread by Mingus in "The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady" influenced generations of musicians and organizations such as the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians and the Black Artists Group of St. Louis. For the Black Saint and the Sinner Lady the music is "theater and the soloists are characters on the stage." These characters and themes portray the life that Mingus led as a black man in the United States from his birth in 1922 through his death in 1979.

* S. Foti

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1964:

Dancing in the Street: Motown Music and the Civil Rights Movement

The music of the Civil Rights Movement in the late 1950s and 1960s has been defined by music styles such as jazz, rock and roll, songs of protest, and avant-garde, among others. In 1959, Berry Gordy established Motown records in the city of Detroit, paving the way for a new musical sound to represent freedom. Motown created a space for black musicians to flourish and integrate during a time of racial segregation. The song "Dancing in the Street" by Martha and the Vandellas, produced by Motown records, was a reflection of the concept of racial integration and black excellence. This song was different from other Motown record hits because it was "upbeat, positive and had lyrics that told a more general story" (Leitko, 2013). Berry Gordy attempted to distance himself from political statements to avoid offending white buyers and listeners, however, "Dancing in the Street" became seen as "a call to riot" (Kerndole, 2008). Even later in history, this song is still seen as a dangerous encouragement towards riots. "After 9/11, the radio conglomerate Clear Channel put together a list of some hundred and fifty songs it advised its stations to avoid playing" (Romig, 2013). This list included "Dancing in the Street." Romig shares how "Dancing in the Street" was written by three men: William Stevenson, Ivy Jo Hunter and Marvin Gaye. The inspiration for the title came to Stevenson on a hot summer day, as he drove past kids playing in the sprinkler outside. Although the song was interpreted by many as a radical anthem, according to Stevenson, the only message of the song was integration and coexistence" (Romig, 2013). Stevenson shared "[kids] would play out there as if they were brothers and sisters of every creed. So the song comes from that idea" (Romig, 2013). Out of context, listeners interpreted the lyrics to be a call of insurrection. "In October, 1965, the S.N.C.C. member Roland Snellings wrote an article called "Keep on Pushin': Rhythm & Blues as a Weapon" for a black-power journal called *Liberator*: "WE ARE COMING UP! WE ARE COMING UP! And it's reflected in the Riot-song that symbolized Harlem, Philly, Brooklyn, Rochester, Paterson, Elizabeth; this song, of course, 'Dancing in the Streets'—making Martha and the Vandellas legendary" (Romig, 2013). While on tour in England, British press "angered [Martha] Reeves by asking her if she was a militant leader"

(Smith, 2001) due to the rumors surrounding the song. Although Reeves deemed it as a "party song" (Smith, 2001), the group could never escape this assumption of violence due to the politically and racially charged ways of the 1960s. However, the music of Motown continued to enter the homes of many, black and white, creating a path for musical freedom and success. The music of Motown did not need to be political to achieve crossover success. This is why Motown can be recalled as the "Sound of Young America" (Leitko, 2013).

* C. Perticone

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1964:

Sam Cooke, "A Change is Gonna Come"

For this project, my topic is Sam Cooke's protest song "A Change is Gonna Come." The song was released in 1964 and was inspired by events that took place in Cooke's life, most notably when he and his friends were prohibited from staying at an all-white motel in Louisiana. The song has been used to advocate for Civil Rights since its release, illustrated by Barack Obama referring to the song after winning the presidential election in 2008, in which he said to supporters in Chicago, "It's been a long time coming, but tonight, change has come to America" (Stefani, 2015). Sam Cooke served as a "transitional figure" in regards to gospel's entry into the pop mainstream, indicating a major breakthrough for black musicians (Fitzgerald, 2007). He was also seen as a representation of

the shift in popularity from sacred to secular music within African American communities.

Trigg mentions that the song refers to two types of narrative: impersonal and personal. The title of the song is impersonal in that it refers to our society as a whole, rather than individuals. The rest of the song recounts personal events of the narrator, which allows listeners to get a closer look at the life and experiences of an African American during this time. In addition, these two types of narrative demonstrate that racism is both systematic (impersonal) and individual (personal), impacting people on a variety of levels (Burford, 2012).

Most blues songs are lyrically “open,” meaning that they accumulate new lines that are passed from singer to singer. This is usually paired with a twelve-bar-blues pattern. “A Change is Gonna Come” does not follow this expected pattern, yet is cyclical in nature, which is very common in blues songs. Thematically, blues songs often circle constantly around their chosen subject area, “with each verse offering a new perspective on the issue at hand before returning to its lyrical tonic” (Trigg, 2010). Although “A Change Is Gonna Come” strays away from a twelve-bar structure, it dives into the relationship between form and thematic content similarly to the blues. In Cooke’s song, the narrator is unable to escape from his reality. Similarly, much of the thematic material of the blues is the juxtaposition of pleasure and pain, so the anticipated change in ‘A Change Is Gonna Come’ is an object of fear as well as hope. In both blues and Cooke’s works, important themes are human mortality and death. Trigg articulates this by stating, “change is the very word through which the lyric participates in the protest genre. If it were to be stricken from the text, the song would have no political referent, nothing to take its meaning beyond the confessional and personal” (Trigg, 2010).

* L. Sperber

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1964, 1967:

The Beatles, Johnny Cash, and their sides of the counterculture coin

As time moved on through the 1960s, the desire for many popular artists to “fall in line” with the crowd as was standard in the post World War II and Korean War era began to dwindle. While the sentiment to remain apolitical was felt strongly by many musicians and record companies, some thrived off of the controversy, and sought to have their opinions heard. In very contrasting methods, the counterculture perspectives of both the Beatles and Johnny Cash are undeniable.

Firstly, the Beatles. The Beatles are often characterized by the so-called “British Invasion” that flooded the popular music landscape in the 1960s. They were also emblematic of the so-called “counterculture” movement of the 1960s, which had its roots in anti establishment ideology and challenging of social norms. From their political beliefs, to the way they dressed, to the way they styled their hair, the Beatles were very outward about their stance on social norms, particularly in the case of the “bloody politicians” that they deemed inadequate. Taxation was a major point of contention for them, as in general their point of view was anything that the government got involved in “turns to crap, not gold.” They were irked by any sort of government involvement in personal life, particularly in the case of radio censorship and drug use. The Beatles have been very public about their liking to various hallucinogens and desire for sexual freedom, particularly in the release of the Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band album in 1967. Several instances of referring to wanting to “turn [people] on” and “get high with a little help from [their] friends” are spread throughout this “flower power” infused album. The Beatles were emblematic of the counterculture movement, and were not shy about expressing their beliefs to politicians and the public alike.

On the other side of this argument, are artists such as Johnny Cash. At a first glance, Cash seems different from the Beatles in almost every way: he is a country singer as opposed to pop, he is representative of the Southern “working man’s” culture as opposed to the world’s youth, and took a much smaller role in the world of politics. He did not however, stay completely out of it, and he would make several of his opinions known (albeit in a more subtle manner) through his many performance locales and songs over the 50s and 60s. One example of this was his interest in prison reform and rejection of conservative “law and order” type policies that were endorsed by many politicians of the “new right.” Cash encouraged others to feel sympathy for those in prison, and to imagine

themselves from the perspective of the prisoner. Songs such as “Folsom Prison Blues” were emblematic of this stance, but even more striking was Cash’s string of concerts in prisons that trace back all the way to the late 1950s, including major state penitentiaries such as San Quentin. Furthermore Cash was vocal on his support of soldiers (being a veteran himself) and of the rights of Native Americans. Songs of Cash’s such as the “Ballad of Ira Hayes” describes a Native American veteran that fought in World War II and helped raise the flag on Iwo Jima, only to return back to the United States to the same injustice he faced before, and eventually die an alcoholic. Cash represented a different demographic, and although was not as abrasive as the Beatles, still contributed strongly to anti-establishment rhetoric.

* C. Reid

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1965:

John Coltrane's "A Love Supreme" and connections to the ideology of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“A Love Supreme” is an avant-garde jazz album recorded in one session in 1964. The album was recorded in New Jersey for Impulse! Records. The record enjoyed massive success, selling over half a million copies by 1970. The label was backed by ABC, which had massive distribution power. This album is regarded by many jazz enthusiasts to be Coltrane’s masterpiece among his many works. The album features John Coltrane on saxophone, McCoy Tyner on piano, Jimmy Garrison on bass, and Elvin Jones on the drums.

“A Love Supreme” is a through composed, four part suite. Its themes focus on many of the civil rights issues of the time. The piece shows the African American struggle for equality. The titles of each of the four movements add to

the meaning that can be drawn out of the music.

Acknowledgement, Resolution, Pursuance, and Psalm.

This record brings to light many of Coltrane’s personal beliefs and explorations regarding religion, purpose, and the human condition. Coltrane was an avid scholar in the field of music, science, theology and more. After a near death overdose on heroin, Coltrane leaned heavily into spiritual explorations. He delved deeply into the traditions of both Hinduism and Buddhism. These traditions, along with his reverence for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. fed into his idea of a higher love. He believed in a love that permeated all of existence, “A Love Supreme”. The third movement, Pursuance, can be viewed as his, black American’s, and all of humanity’s search for enlightenment. Inspired by MLK, this work can be seen as a call for love. MLK believed that in order for there to be change, in order to lead a people, one must love that person first. This album therefore could be seen as the quest for this love, and the quest for a connection to the supreme being that Coltrane believed permeated all things.

The Villanova Law Review created an interesting take on the connections between MLK and Coltrane, citing the similarities between their beliefs on social justice and how it affects the American legal system. Parks asserts that the two believed racism and the structures that the American legal system have been built around are an “affront to God’s will”. (Parks, 2015) MLK, having been immersed in Christian traditions often talked of love, quoting the Bible’s Book of Corinthians:

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.” (Parks, 2015)

* M. Hogan

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1965:

Nina Simone, "Four Women"

Nina Simone first recorded her song Four Women in 1965, one of the first songs within the Black Arts Movement to involve gender in relation to civil rights activism. There are many different videos of her singing this song live, and each performance has a very distinct feel to it, but I chose this one primarily because it fit within the timeline we are looking at, and also because she speaks at the beginning of the song (as she often did in her live performances) and gives a little bit of insight as to the songs story. Nina stated that her political priorities were centered around the civil rights movement and the black american experience, and that she had no play in the womens liberation movement. That being said, this song became an anthem in a way for black feminism, and started a conversation about the duality in discrimination that black women were facing at the time. This song calls listeners to recognize the fact that black women are still being defined in limited terms (hair texture and skin color). While the civil rights movement was fighting to free the black community from discrimination, there was little to no acknowledgement of womens struggle at this time being stigmatized both for their gender and their race. This song articulates some differences in black womens experiences, and seeks to shed light on the fact that there was not just one black experience as a women, contrary to the opinions of the time.

Simone's political and musical ideas are well documented, and she has spoken a lot on the subject of this song in particular. One statement she made on the meaning of this piece stuck out to me: "All it ["Four Women"] did was to tell what entered the minds of most black women in America when they thought about themselves. Black women didn't know what the hell they wanted because they were defined by things they didn't control and until they had the confidence to define themselves they'd be stuck in the same mess forever. The song told the truth many people in the USA--especially black men--simply weren't ready to acknowledge at that time." There was a lot of controversy surrounding this song, and there were many black radio stations that refused to play it, under the opinion that it was "insulting to black women" and was too raw in its lyrics. This of course was a very male centered view point, proving in a way Nina's earlier mentioned point that the female experience was in some ways considered a non-issue within the movement.

* C. Higgins

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1965:

Nina Simone, "Strange Fruit"

Abel Meeropol's poetry in "Strange Fruit" sparked the conversation of the ethical issues related to lynching in America. Meeropol eventually took the horrifying text and made it into the piece we now know as "Strange Fruit". "Strange Fruit" was originally brought to fame in 1939 by the singer Billie Holiday with the agenda of giving context to the brutalities of slavery. Holiday presented the piece at Cafe Society which at the time was the first integrated club in New York City. Many would account that Holiday's rendition would put civil rights into the spotlight. However, as we fast forward twenty-six years to 1965 social activist and artist Nina Simone covers the piece but with a very different conveying lens. (Pallegrinelli, 2009) Particularly Simone's version reached audiences beyond the United States as a way to globally recognize the racism that was still occurring in the US. Feldstein (2005) states "she 'attacks 'Strange Fruit'" or raised the hope for "a perfect world, in which a White is worth the same as a Black." When she performed these and other civil rights songs in Paris, she generated enthusiasm among both jazz lovers and the "general public.... A British teenager completed a school assignment on American race relations by playing Simone's version of "Strange Fruit" to his high school class because "she was my introduction to civil rights." (p. 1372) I'd also like to address the fact that this song is typically gender specific and vocalized by a woman. Carvalho (2013) states that the text elicits a correlation between women with nature, fruits to bearing life and nurturing life. Further, they point out the vocal technicality that Simone uses as a "searing wailing lament at the foot of a tree bearing tortured forms of life" of which we can only assume that Simone was relating it to her recently born daughter Lisa living in a society that

oppressed African Americans in America. (p.115)The contrasting difference between Holiday's and Simone's versions is that one artist was trying to surface previous brutality in slavery and the other was trying to bring action against issues relevant to the time that had evolved from slavery. (Jefferson, 2022)

The relevance of "Strange Fruit" continues to be appropriate today because it uncovers and draws attention to issues that are still not rectified (Jefferson, 2022). Artists are still utilizing Simone's voice to evoke current issues of society. For instance, Kanye West's song "Blood on Leaves" samples Simone's vocals in the introduction. West uses Simone's voice to depict socio-economical issues between fame, wealth, and relationships. The question arises from an analytical standpoint if utilizing Simone within current pop culture is appropriating and shallow. (Said, 2019). Despite Nina not being able to speak for herself, from a historical standpoint she was always an advocate of vocalizing and bringing to the forefront issues within society. Hence, even in the present time, we could still find relevance in Meerepols writing despite the literal historical context being over one hundred years old.

* E. Becker

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1965:

Barry McGuire, The Vietnam War, and "Eve of Destruction"

The topic I have chosen is music during the Vietnam War, with a special focus on the song "Eve of Destruction" by Barry McGuire. The Vietnam War took place from November 1st 1955 to April 30th, 1975, however the US only took part in the war for a portion of that time. During this time, there was a lot of chaos happening all around the world, specifically in America. There were anti-war protests, fear of being drafted, and more. A lot of people did not support America's involvement in the Vietnam War because they felt that we were interfering with a civil war between North and South Vietnam over communist and anticommunist ways. Another controversy was over the draft, because although Americans did not want any of their civilians drafted, it turns out that young African American populations were affected the most, which is ironic considering the Civil Rights Movement was happening around the same time. The war as a whole was incredibly tragic for the United States, mostly because of the high casualty numbers, long duration, and the trauma that came with the aftermath of participating in the war. Eventually, all of these factors caused President Richard Nixon to withdraw United States troops from Vietnam in 1969, with the last combat troops leaving in 1973 ending America's direct involvement with the war. "As he watched the body of a dead American soldier being lifted off by helicopter, he felt 'the eyes of the unseen insurgents watching their every move,' along with another, subtler presence." (Ross, 2013). This quote resonated with me because I feel it sums up the experience and trauma that Vietnam War veterans now endure.

In terms of the music that was impacted or inspired by the Vietnam War, there is lots of material and resources.

"There was also widespread opposition to the war among artists, playwrights, authors, musicians and other intellectuals, who made use of their various media and popular culture generally to protest the war and to name and confront those they deemed responsible for it."

(Eyerman, p. 27, 2017). Many of these musicians wanted to convey the anxiety, pain, and suffering that their fellow civilians were feeling through song. "Eve of Destruction," written by P.F. Sloan, sung and released by Barry McGuire, is an excellent example of this. "Eve of Destruction" was released in 1965. Many other artists released a version of this song as well, but it is most popularly known from Barry McGuire. This song was a protest song, most closely associated with the folk genre. The vocal track that is heard in the final song was not intended to be used because of McGuire's raspy sound from recording for so long. However, once it was released it became an instant hit. It is said to be so popular because it conveyed everything that was wrong with the younger generation during this time. Some people actually thought the lyrics

were pretty controversial, and some American radio stations banned the song, as well as some British radio stations. One of the most striking lyrics from the song is “Don't you understand what I'm trying to say, can't you feel the fears I'm feeling today? If the button is pushed, there's no runnin' away, there'll be no one to save with the world in a grave.” This lyric conveys the message that if they kept going the way they were going, it would annihilate the population. I think music like this is one of the reasons that the US was eventually pulled from the war.

* M. Kilker

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1967:

The Beatles, “All You Need is Love”

The Beatles became popular in the US during The British Invasion in the 1960s, and their song All You Need Is Love became the anthem of the Flower Power slogan.

All You Need Is Love premiered on June 25th 1967 on the first live television broadcast “Our World.” Coordinated by the European Broadcasting Union, this broadcast had 14 countries from around the world performing, with The Beatles representing Britain. The broadcast reached an over 400 million people and 24 different countries worldwide.

With their album *Sgt. Peppers Lonely Heart Club Band* being released about a month before the broadcast, The Beatles were gaining even more popularity leading up to the performance. Although they were between different songs such as Paul McCartney's song Hello, Goodbye, which was to be released later on in the year as part of

their Magical Mystery Tour album, they decided on John Lennon's All You Need Is Love because it was more relevant to society at the time. With this song being relevant to the protests and opposition of the Vietnam War, it ended up being the anthem of the slogan itself as it was released as a single on July 7th 1967.

The verses of All You Need Is Love alternates between two bars of 7/4 and one bar of 8/4 (although, some argue that it alternates between measures of 4/4 and 3/4). The chorus of the song doesn't have nearly as many time signature changes, because it only changes time at the end of the chorus when the lyric “love is all you need” is sung. The frequent time signature changes can be seen as rhythmically unconventional or disruptive. Another aspect of the song that is seen as unconventional is the use of melodic references from other songs. For example, the beginning of the All You Need Is Love references the French National Anthem while the end of the song references The Beatles song Yesterday, the folk song Greensleeves, and Glenn Millers In the Mood.

* E. Mavraj

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1967:

Aretha Franklin and her Popularized Version of “Respect,” originally by Otis Redding

For this second open the door project I decided to look into Aretha Franklin's re-recording of Otis Redding's song Respect. Otis Redding recorded his song Respect in 1965, but Aretha Franklin only recorded the song two years later in 1967. Despite being based on the same song, both renditions sound incredibly different due to Aretha's take on it. And, as a result, Aretha's version is the more well known version, so much so that “multiple social movements claimed Franklin's ‘Respect’ as their anthem” (Malawey 2014.) I think it's interesting how a song that did well by a man was made popular again by a woman,

however Aretha's rendition of it got more fame and recognition.

Aretha Franklin had been singing since she was young, starting her singing career in her dad's gospel church. From there, with more gigs and exposure, she was able to build her legendary discography. Even though Franklin already knew of Redding's version of Respect, her producer Jerry Wexler and sister Carolyn helped her create the hit we all know today in the studio in New York City. Although it is unclear as to how and why Franklin's version overshadowed Redding's, scholars infer that a combination of her vocal abilities and passion, purposeful ad-libs, and "her fierce, gritty conviction" (O'Dell 2002.) helped propel her version of the song to number one. Otis Redding, originally from Georgia, had a history of recording for Stax Records and was known as "the ultimate soul man" (Fine 2015.) Redding unfortunately passed away due to a plane crash only a few months after Franklin recorded her version of Respect, but he did share this anecdote about Franklin's version: "'This is a song that a girl took away from me, a good friend of mine'. He laughed as he said it, 'This girl, she just took this song. But I'm still gonna do it anyway.'" (Malawey 2014.)

After listening to both renditions of the song, a few musical differences can be spotted. The first difference I noticed was that Redding's version immediately hit with a solid brass section, meanwhile Franklin's version was more of a laid back combo of brass and guitar. The second thing I noticed was the difference in both the tones of their voices and the inflections they used while singing. Franklin's tone seemed more aggressive and pressing, meanwhile Redding's voice seemed more light and playful. When I first started this Open the Door project, my initial question was if it was just a coincidence of time and place for Franklin for her to boost her song or does her sexuality come into play? After doing the research, There's potential for more aspects to come into play here, like the musical characteristics of the songs.

* C. Zanetti

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All Aretha Franklin wanted was Respect

As I began my research for our second 'Open the Door Project,' I found it challenging to narrow in on just one topic. So many crucial movements and events occur during this time frame, which can make it difficult to only focus on one artist or song. I decided to focus my research on the life of Aretha Franklin and the impact she had, especially during the year 1967.

Aretha Franklin comes from a family heavily involved in social movements. Her father, a Civil Rights activist, who helped organize the Detroit Walk to Freedom, and her mother, a gospel musician. Primarily by her father, Franklin was influenced at a young age from performing in the gospel programs he led around the country. I think this background of her family is important to know and understand when studying the rest of her career. When we think of the song "Respect," we almost all immediately think of Aretha Franklin and the impact she had on both the Women's Rights and Civil Rights Movements. While Franklin was very involved in addressing social injustices, she was not the first artist to record this hit. Otis Redding recorded his original version of "Respect," in 1965, but two years later Franklin reworked it into her own style. Franklin re-recording, while also changing the structure and lyrics, sent its own message in itself. Her lyrics changed Redding's message from a plea to a woman he is interested in to love him, to Franklin demanding respect from people or her country. One of the lyrics I found most interesting that was changed, was the ending of the song. Redding phrases this in wanting and needing respect, while Franklin is phrasing it as a means of respect is expected.

Otis Redding

Respect when I want it
Respect when I need it
Got to, got to have it
You got to give it

Aretha Franklin

When you come home
Or you might walk in

And find out I'm gone
I got to have, a little respect

Many saw this rework of the song as a new “Anthem for Women’s Rights and Civil Rights.” Amongst the numerous assassinations, protests and the beginnings of the Vietnam War happening, people saw “Respect” as a monumental piece of music of this time, despite that not being Franklin’s goal.

What I found interesting during my research was the different meanings people interpreted between Redding’s version and Franklin’s. Some people believe Franklin’s version of the song was “overtly sexual” compared to the original, while others saw it oppositely. If I continued this research, I would be interested in looking into how gender roles during this time may have played in these differing opinions of the impactful song. Despite these differing opinions, there is no question that Aretha Franklin’s “Respect,” had a huge impact on the social movements in the late 1960s.

* B. Cripps

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1967:

Pata Pata and Miriam Makeba’s influence against Apartheid

Miriam Makeba earned the title “Mama Africa” from her efforts against apartheid in South Africa throughout her career. Although her lyrics did not outwardly challenge the ruling white party, she used her voice and status to bring global attention to the issues black South Africans experienced. In 1948 apartheid was established by a white minority in South Africa which severely impacted the lives of black Africans. A series of laws were passed aimed at stripping the rights of black Africans. Some examples include laws that prohibited interracial marriage as well as allowing the displacement of black Africans from their

homes and communities. All of this occurred as Makeba, a native of Johannesburg, was growing up.

As a young musician growing up during apartheid in South Africa, her music was entirely reflective of her culture.

Ultimately, her experiences as an artist early in her career lead to an opportunity that brought her music to audiences worldwide. A brief feature in the documentary “Come Back, Africa” brought her music to audiences in Europe and the United States. This came at a time where South African music was not widely circulated or popular in these countries. The popularity of Makeba's music put a spotlight on the South African herself, giving her the opportunity to share her own personal lived experiences to audiences that were uneducated or unaware of apartheid’s impact. Makeba’s experience growing up in apartheid shaped her perspective and ultimately led to her taking a more aggressive stance against the injustices that existed in South Africa. Although initially hesitant to speak out while she rose to fame in the US, she voiced her feelings to the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid in 1963. This came just after becoming exiled from South Africa. At this point, Miriam Makeba became a champion for South African music and the anti-apartheid movement in the United States.

In 1967, she released her greatest hit “Pata Pata”, and the song quickly reached the tops of charts worldwide. This hit came at a time where Makeba herself resembled the apartheid opposition movement and the song had a direct association with its cause. Its popularity gave a voice and spotlight to black South Africans under oppression, and was truly representative of their culture musically. Additionally, the popularity of the song worldwide highlighted the music of an oppressed black South African population. This was important because it came at a time where the white oppressors were trying to subvert black culture in the country. Overall, the song created more global awareness of apartheid and strengthened the opposition movement within South Africa and the United States.

* W. Hope

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1967:

Pauline Oliveros, "Bye Bye Butterfly"

Pauline Oliveros was an important figure in the electronic and tape music movements, she was a member of the San Francisco Tape Music Center. She was also an outspoken feminist and an out lesbian who regularly challenged the role of women in society and how women are talked about by others. *Bye Bye Butterfly* is a tape piece written by Oliveros in 1967. There are many possible readings of this piece, and most of them do have to do with gender, sexuality, sensuality, and race.

Bye Bye Butterfly gets its name from a pun, the piece uses an excerpt from Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, and the "Bye Bye" comes from the musical *Bye Bye Birdie*. Though Oliveros does not use any music or musical ideas from the musical, it is another show in which the female lead is "pinned" down by another man, much like the lead in *Madama Butterfly*. By using electronic sounds and a delay effect alongside the excerpt from *Madama Butterfly*, Oliveros is saying "goodbye" to 19th century music and gender roles. The musical change is very much challenging the expectations of aesthetically pleasing music. The challenge against traditional femininity and women's sexuality also comes through by taking this well-known and beautiful aria and manipulating it. This challenge to the way women are perceived isn't just limited to gender. The choice of *Madama Butterfly* also incorporates race. Asian women in our society are seen as even more fragile, naive, and submissive than white women, and are often fetishized because of this. Oliveros also challenges how the opera house tends to tell the story of *Madama Butterfly*. When this opera is performed, there is a large focus on Butterfly's beauty and they glorify the tragedy of the story. There are readings of the music that suggest the electronics are meant to represent the circulatory system, referencing Butterfly's suicide. The politics of the opera, the way it presents women, are largely ignored. Oliveros was speaking out for women in music throughout her entire career, she was very upset by the way the world of music ignored women, especially women composers. She also often spoke out against the language used to talk about women, and the words used in place of "woman" that she saw as infantilizing, sexist, or otherwise discriminatory or derogatory.

* M. Coons

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Pauline Oliveros: Bye bye butterfly (1967)

1967:

Nina Simone, "Backlash Blues"

The topic that I had decided to dive into for this open the door project was Nina Simone's song "Backlash Blues". This song was released in 1967 on her album "Sings the Blues". For some context this piece was released right in the middle of the United States in the Vietnam War. This war had disproportionately been drafting African Americans to fight for "democracy" overseas while they were fighting at home to simply desegregate schools. This piece was a collaboration with the writer Langston Hughes. Nina Simone had taken his poem "Backlash Blues" and set it to a 12-bar blues. The song had been written from the perspective of African Americans' oppression from "Mr Backlash" meant to symbolize the American institution. The piece in typical blues style was set to harmonica, electric guitar, piano, bass and drums. Lyrics within the first two verses state:

"Mr Backlash, Mr. Backlash
Just who do you think I am?
You raise my taxes, freeze my wages
And send my son to Vietnam

You give me second-class houses
And second-class schools
Do you think that all colored folks
Are they just second-class fools?"

These lyrics not only mention the struggles of a person of color socioeconomically but bring up the frustrations of the Vietnam war. These sentiments could also be tracked back to Martin Luther King Jr's 1967 speech at Manhattan Riverside Church. Within this speech MLK touches on the violence of the war and its disproportionate effect on the African American community. "We were taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them eight thousand miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia and East Harlem."

The piece was well received by the general public and became a staple within Nina Simone's setlist. Writer

Morgan Monceaux, when sent a recording of this piece is quoted saying "I played it over and over again. The anger and passion matched exactly my feelings that America was going crazy in Vietnam."

* N. Nicotri

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1967:

Hair the Musical and the Vietnam War

In the mid 1960's the hippie movement began in the United States as a countercultural movement against mainstream societal norms. The youth movement was focused on the desire for personal freedom, peace, love, and an opposition to the Vietnam War. The hippie culture was characterized by its beliefs of environmentalism, love, peace, and harmony and its practices of communal living and psychedelic drug use. The musical focuses on the story of Claude, who grew up in a middle class conservative family and grapples with the idea of accepting or denying the draft into the Vietnam War. The musical was very controversial, some critics calling it "loud, chaotic, and confusing" but many others praise the musical for bringing rock music to Broadway (where it premiered just a year after its original debut) and for its liberal approach to issues of race, class, the growing generational gap, youth culture, and the Vietnam War. Clive Barnes from the New York Times said that *Hair* "is

the first Broadway musical in some time to have the authentic voice of today rather than the day before yesterday."

Between its original debut at the Public Theater and its debut on Broadway, the show was rewritten and revised many times. Because of its controversial stances on hippie culture, the producers at the time called for rewrites to make it more palatable for the general audiences of Broadway. In the original script, Berger, one of the main characters sexually assaults one of the other main characters for buying him a shirt he didn't like. In more recent versions of the musical, this was rewritten as Berger scolding Sheila and slapping her before storming off. Elizabeth Wollman, who praises *Hair* for its revolutionary innovations on the Broadway stage, criticizes it for its sexist depiction of women. Wollman calls out the underdevelopment of the female characters and even goes on to say that Sheila, one of the main characters, main purpose in the show is to complete a love triangle between the other two male leads, Claude and Berger. Wollman also points out that in many of the songs from the musical, when women are mentioned they are almost immediately sexualized or objectified and are often treated only as love interests for other male leads. In more recent productions of the musical, the ending is often changed depending on the production. In the original Broadway production, Claude decides to enter the military to fight in the Vietnam War and in the end is killed in the war which is revealed during the final song "The Flesh Failures/Let the Sunshine In," but in the film adaptation in 1979 which I attached a video from below, leaves the fate of Claude more ambiguous. In the 2009 Broadway revival of the musical, the director, Diane Paulus, changes the plot and shows Claude returning home from Vietnam. The changing ending of this musical makes me consider its message in the narrative of the Vietnam War through each director point of view and its implications on the perspectives of the Vietnam War at the different moments in time.

* K. Tai

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1967:

Arlo Guthrie and "Alice's Restaurant"

In 1967 the United States was involved with the Vietnam war and actively drafting young men to serve overseas. Arlo Guthrie was called in for a physical examination to see if he was qualified to become a soldier and was denied. Guthrie wrote the song titled Alice's Restaurant to explain why, in 18 minutes of satirical talking blues style with simple guitar and light brush on snare accompaniment, he was rejected. On Thanksgiving in 1965, Guthrie and a friend dumped some garbage over a cliff. The next day they were arrested for littering, taken to jail, summoned to court, fined, and required to clean up the trash. Because of these events, Guthrie was rejected from the draft. Guthrie points out the irony with these lyrics, "I'm sitting here on the bench because you want to know if I'm moral enough to join the army and burn women, kids, houses, and villages after being a litterbug." When asked in an NPR interview if this was an anti-war song, Guthrie replied, "it's celebrating idiocy." Alice's restaurant was released in 1967 at the height of the folk music revival in the United States which lasted from 1940-1970. The 'folk boom' was between the late 1950's and early 1960's during which time mass protests against the Vietnam war were emerging. Critics asserted that the war was unjust, the draft was a violation of human rights, and the Selective Service was an institute of racism. People of color who resisted the draft used in their defense that the overwhelming majority of draft board members were white and four states had no blacks serving on the board. Alan Lomax and Bob Dylan were iconic folk musicians of the time who advocated for civil rights. "Bring em' home," by Pete Seeger and "Saigon Bride," by Joan Baez, represent influential anti-Vietnam folk protest songs of the time. Alice's restaurant gained popularity in the U.S. as well as among U.S. soldiers in Vietnam. Guthrie received pictures and letters from troops showing signs on their tents reading "Alice's Restaurant." Soldiers told Guthrie about how they would refer to lyrics from his song in a sort of code language with each other and their superiors were none the wiser. Post war, Alice's restaurant remained popular as a Thanksgiving radio song until at least 2005.

* K. Francom

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NPR

November 26, 2005 12:00 AM ET

Heard on *All Things Considered*

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1967:

[REDACTED], [REDACTED] and Rock and Roll:
Censorship of Rock Music in the 1950 and 60s

Entering the fifties, we see rock and roll music emerge as the genre of the upcoming generation. Like many styles of music that came before and after it, this music was not met without resistance. Becoming the music of a generation often means becoming associated with teenage rebellion in some shape or form, and rock music was no exception. Older generations did not appreciate rock's subversive nature with allusions to sex, drug use and other activities (Flood). In particular, this moral panic was brought on by the introduction of 'mass media' (radio, television, etc.) that allowed these newfound ideas into the average American home (Nekola). Some of the most vocal objections to the genre came from the religious right, many of whom argued that the genre's culture threatened their morals and that the music itself was harmful to the body and soul (Nekola). If we follow this thread for another decade or so, we will see this discourse spiral out into the association between rock music and the "Satanic Panic" of the 1980's. It was common during this time to take steps such as changing lyrics or song titles to make them more palatable to the American public (Flood). Some of the most famous examples of this censorship of rock music took place on The Ed Sullivan Show, a late night variety show that had a reputation for turning music acts into household names. The program played a large part in the meteoric rise of the Beatles, among many others. Elvis Presley, The Rolling Stones and The Doors all had their run-ins with censorship on the show. Perhaps most famously of the bunch, Presley was filmed from the waist up in his appearances on the show as to exclude his gyrating hips from the broadcast (Flood). The Stones, on the other hand were asked to change the lyrics of their new single from "Let's Spend the Night Together" to 'Let's spend some time together.' While Mick Jagger expressed his distaste in this change, the

group went through with it in performance for the opportunity to be on the show. Finally, The Doors are an example of a group that did not follow the approved party line in their performance on The Ed Sullivan Show. When asked to change one of their lyrics to avoid a suspected reference to drug use, the group agreed but went on to sing the original lyrics during the performance. Sullivan banned The Doors from performing on the show again, but the public embraced the group for not bending in the face of authority. (Inglis)

* R. MacCarthy

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1968:

The Doors, "Five to One," and Rebellion

This week, I chose to open the door to The Doors song "Five to One." In the late 60s and 70s, the Doors were well known as being a leading name in the counterculture movement. This movement came out of the conservative nature of the 50s and the desire for rebellion among young people. While Jim Morrison often tried to say that the band was not expressly political, he did refer to themselves as "erotic politicians" because of their emphasis on sex, drugs, and rebellion. Morrison claimed that their politics were of a sexual nature and that is where their power came from. The band did find power in their sexuality, with many riots being incited by the Doors at their live shows.

The song "Five to One" is a bit of a political mystery. Although Morrison claims it was not meant to be political, many people have read into it as such. It was released in 1968 on their album *Waiting for the Sun*, and Morrison begins the song with a whisper and slurred words, many speculating he was intoxicated when recording it. The title of the song is speculated to have several different meanings. One of the most common is that it referred to

the Vietnam War and the ratio of American troops to Vietnamese troops. Americans were outnumbered in this war five to one. Another reading could be that it refers to young versus old, with the younger generation needing to rise up and take control from the older generation, especially since the student riots of 1968 were happening at the time of the song's release. Finally, it may have been a reference to the Black Power movement, as the ratio of Black Americans to the population was similar at the time. The lyrics to the song seem to support all three of these readings. " Five to one, baby; one in five. No one here gets out alive. Now, you get yours, baby; I'll get mine. Gonna make it, baby, if we try. The old get old, and the young get stronger; may take a week, and it may take longer. They got the guns, but we got the numbers. Gonna win, yeah; We're takin' over. Come on!"

Because of the rampant drug and alcohol abuse that was happening within the band, there was little time for real activism. The Doors may have just wanted rebellion for the sake of rebellion. And so too may their listeners. After several decades filled with war and political turmoil, it would seem natural for the young generation to latch onto a song that they felt encouraged them to take a stand and find their seat at the table.

* A. Cranmer

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1968:

The Beatles, "Helter Skelter"

For this open the door #2 project I decided to take a look at the multiple interpretations of music - the intent of the musician, response of the audience, and response of institutions - and its impact on the groups just listed. Specifically, I studied the song *Helter Skelter* by the Beatles (1968). Originally when exploring this song I was thinking of exploring protest music, specifically surrounding the idea of anti-establishment. When exploring this song though, I found that it was very interesting to see how this song's intent by the artist

ended up being interpreted and used in so many different ways.

In the article *The Great Debate*, written by Dave Thompson, the author writes how Paul McCartney wrote the song in response to an interview with The Who's Pete Townshend, published in one of the music papers. McCartney stated the song was "a ride from the top to the bottom, the rise and fall of the Roman Empire." However, this interpretation meant little in how the song was perceived due to its connection to Charles Manson, who interpreted the song as having encoded messages about race wars, which inspired Manson to orchestrate racially motivated murders. Manson is even quoted saying "it's The Beatles, the music they're putting out. They're talking about war. These kids listen to this music and pick up the message. It's subliminal." in reference to the murders. Thompson digs deeper into this idea of subliminal messages encoded into music continued to permeate surrounding The Beatles, as years later the religious right too, declared that the music of The Beatles (and many others besides) contained secret messages designed to drive impressionable youth to magic, mayhem and worse. This shows that people and institutions interpret music differently from the intent of the artists, and can result in distorted messages that are used to push their own political ideas.

Following this article, I looked at the article *Towards an Ethics of Creative Sound*, written by James Andean. In this article Andean writes about musical symbols, and to what extent an artist can be responsible for the symbols that are created from music. He states that it is taken for granted that no artist can be responsible for every individual's interpretation of their work. This was interesting to me because many of the songs that we have explored in this class have been more politically charged, and were written with the purpose of politically charged symbolism. However, in this example, not many people blame The Beatles for the murders that Charles Manson committed, even though Manson stated it was The Beatles who told him to do this. Even though this is the case, the institution of the religious right still used this as an example, in order to justify their message that pop/rock music is bad. Finally, I was interested in the public response to this song. From the website *The Paul McCartney Project*, there is a description of the song *Helter Skelter*, and they provided a completely different interpretation of the song, that it was more of a sexualized song, for young men. It wasn't until after Manson that this song was mythologized into the idea that it incites violence. Overall, it seems that The Beatles image was not harmed too poorly by the negative interpretation by Manson, but the overall view of rock music was harmed. The Manson example was used as a means to promote the idea that rock music promotes and incites violence.

* F. Desiderio

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1968:

The Beatles, "Revolution"

In 1968, the Beatles released "Revolution", which quickly became one of their most controversial and overtly political songs to date. This piece was written by John Lennon in a time of turmoil in his personal life, surrounded by social and political upheaval. The year 1968 was one of social and political change and turbulence throughout the world. With the civil rights movement in the United States, the anti-Vietnam War, cultural revolutions in Europe and Latin America, women's liberation movement, and the first comprehensive coverage of war and resultant famine in Africa. John Lennon wrote the song "Revolution" while he was in India, removed from the turmoil enveloping globally and given the space to reflect upon this. He, at this time, was going through a personal "revolution" in his life, while simultaneously witnessing the global revolutions surrounding him.

Lennon has stated when he wrote this piece, he was intentionally writing it as a political statement. He stated "I wanted to say what I thought about revolution. I had been thinking about it up in the hills in India and I still had this, you know, God will save us feeling about it, it's going to be alright" (Platoff, 244). To this effect, Lennon wanted to release this song as a single, as a statement of their stance on the Vietnam War and revolution as a whole. However, Ian MacDonald and Paul McCartney thought the initial take of the song was too slow and overtly political. This was a very important song to Lennon and he wanted it to be showcased, so he decided to go back and remake it to be faster, and more distorted.

After its' release, there was a strongly felt and mixed reaction from listeners, critics, and fans. The majority of critics fixated on the lyrics of the song, rather than the music itself. Many criticized the candid line "you can count me out", which Lennon added in the second, revised

version of this song. This overt rejection of revolutions was offensive and off-putting to those fighting tirelessly for their rights. Many view this song as a “let them eat cake” type of mentality on Lennon’s part. Another example of this is when Lennon sings “it’s gonna be alright” repeatedly throughout the song. For many, this reads toxic positivity and gaslighting. Who knows if it actually is going to be alright? It is not alright now, so stating that one shouldn’t fight poignant and imperative battles to gain rights because it’s not worth it, is not exactly what listeners want to hear. Overall, this song, although well-intentioned, was discourteous and insulting to those fighting long and tirelessly for basic human rights.

* K. Lyubomirsky

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The Beatles: 3 “Revolutions” in One Year

I would like to open the door to the history behind the song “Revolution” by the Beatles. In 1968, the Beatles set off to create their next single that was to be released prior to their last album “Magical Mystery Tour.” The A side of that single was “Hey Jude” which went on to become one of the most recognizable Beatles songs of all time. The B side of that single however, has a long story behind it. In 1968, the Beatles traveled to India to study meditation and the sitar with Ravi Shankar. For two of the Beatles (John Lennon and George Harrison) they endured a spiritual transformation. The trip to India inspired John Lennon to write the song “Revolution 1” as a result of all of the hatred that he felt in the world.

“Revolution 1” is characterized by musical elements including a mellow and slow rhythmic bluesy drive, acoustic guitar, and doo wop vocals. John Lennon even recorded the main vocals while lying down on his back in the recording studio. The song is obviously in response to all of the political issues happening around the world,

however, John is not entirely clear on where he stands on the issues. John Lennon recalls having his judgment of the events clouded by his spiritually uplifting experience in India, and believed that everything was “gonna be alright,” as the lyrics mention.

Where the controversy comes in is that John Lennon in “Revolution 1” includes the lyrics, “Don’t you know that you can count me out/in,” in the original version. John reveals how he was torn between direct action and a non-violent way of bringing about change, which is why he includes the words in and out in his original song.

In the second iteration of the song “Revolution,” John leaves out the word in for every refrain of the song. John says “...and I left out the ‘count me in.’ Because I’m a coward – I don’t want to be killed.” This version ends up becoming the B-side to “Hey Jude” and ultimately ends up becoming the most popular version of the song.

The final version of the revolution trilogy which was “Revolution 9,” was released as the penultimate song of the “White Album,” and Lennon describes the song as more of an abstract than a song. Made of samples and loops, the song depicts feelings of uneasiness and tension that was felt during this time politically.

* T. Hayes

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“The Beatles & Revolution: A Controversial Political Position”

In 1968, the Beatles released a single on the B side of their track “Hey Jude.” This single called “Revolution” was what some would consider to be a strong political statement in the form of a song written by John Lennon. There was not

only this faster-paced, rock version of “Revolution” released, but also, a version known as “Revolution 1.” “Revolution 1” was released later but was performed at a slower tempo with a slight variation in lyrics, stating “count me out” of the revolution with a quick “in” called out after the initial statement, indicating that Lennon was conflicted and contemplating his position and standing. According to DeRose (2020), “Revolution 1” was the version that Lennon had in mind when writing and recording the song initially. Platoff (2005) discusses the differences between the musical sound of “Revolution” and “Revolution 1” stating that “Far from being removed or preachy, the single track of ‘Revolution’ is urgent, immediate, and even desperate. It is ‘Revolution 1’ that philosophizes from a quiet armchair and gives the impression of being above it all,” (p. 253). “Revolution 1” featured a foundation of blues music as well, which is interesting to note as people in Britain seemed to be less concerned with identifying with a specific culture and focused solely on the slight change in style rather than any implications associated with changing styles and genres such as the emergence of “country rock” in America (MacDonald, 2007, p. 285). Many people shared strong but mixed opinions regarding the controversial single that was released, unsure of the positive or negative impacts that this song could have on the political views of this time. Nina Simone was one musician who criticized the Beatles’ song by creating her own “Revolution” song (DeRosa, 2020, p. 205). Specifically, at this time, there was violence against protesters who were protesting against the Vietnam War, even peaceful protesters would be subjected to police violence (Platoff, 2007, p. 244). Lennon’s hope with the release of “Revolution” was to make a statement about the Beatles’ position on the Vietnam War (Platoff, 2007, p. 246), however, McCartney believed that this would potentially be an “overt political statement,” (MacDonald, 2007, p. 286). In general, “Revolution” and “Revolution 1” consist of lyrics that call for disengagement and separation from the idea of revolution. The lyrics indicate that the Beatles (2018) had no interest in being a part of the revolution at hand because everything was “gonna be alright” and they continuously repeated the statement “We all want to change the world,” encouraging the listeners to focus on freeing their thoughts instead of focusing on aspects of the world that seem to be irreformable. Wilkinson (2008) states that the song “Revolution” calls for a “personal, pacifist response,” telling us that it is more focused on relaying a message of peace and nonviolence rather than starting a revolution within a time of great political turmoil and war (p. 193). Wilkinson also discusses how Lennon seemed to clearly want to bring about change within the world, however, it seemed that he felt he could not trust any leadership or any of the movements at the time that would achieve the reform that he was anxious to see in

the political institutions of the world (p. 192). Platoff (2005) focuses on the politics of leftist views in America at this time, discussing that the “New Left” were the political activists who had become increasingly willing to participate in violent confrontational situations in order to create change while the “Psychedelic Left” were essentially the hippies who felt they should experience a personal transcendence in which they search within themselves as a way of responding to the oppression taking place at this time (p. 265). Lennon seemed to align more so with this idea of the “Psychedelic Left” through his lyrical statements and seemed to feel that he should resort to something he can control, his own mind and his own thoughts, encouraging the listener to do the same rather than to try and rectify the world in which we live in through violence and protest.

* H. Gotham

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John Lennon's "Revolution" and its Reception

Throughout the Beatles' rise to popularity in the 1960s, there were many different political changes being protested for. From the civil rights movement to the opposition of the Vietnam War, people all across the world, and especially in America, were looking for positive change in the world and were often unsure on how to bring that change about.

Due to the rising tensions in Europe and the US in 1968, many feared a violent revolution would spur (Platoff). Several anti war protests came about With demonstrations in West Berlin the American embassy in London Columbia University France and many more. Many of these protests were not entirely peaceful which added to the worries of a revolution breaking out. This movement of social and cultural rebellion was called the counterculture movement, and was led primarily by young people across the globe. The movement opposed war, social injustice, and imperialism and valued freedom, peace and equality. Some of these ideas were taken to the extreme through violent protests and riots.

While in India in the beginning of 1968, John Lennon began writing "Revolution". He and The Beatles stayed in Rishikesh, India from February to April, and this was a productive time in which they composed more than half of the songs that eventually were seen on the White Album (Platoff). The song was originally released in August as the "B" side of Hey Jude (Howell). This first version was seen by some critics as Lennon showing his support of the counterculture movement, while others interpreted it as his disagreement with the more radical views of the counterculture. This original release was not the end of the song's controversy, however. In November of 1968, the White Album released with a different version of the song titled "Revolution 1", having a slight variation on the line "when you're talking about destruction you can count me out - in." This hesitation to participate in violent protests from Lennon represented the uncertainty in his political views at the time. Since "Revolution 1" was released after the original song, many saw this change in lyric as Lennon questioning his belief in peaceful protests. It was the

opposite, since the version seen on the White Album was actually recorded first, Lennon was unsure of his stance on violence and later solidified his belief in peaceful change (Platoff). Lennon stated in an interview from 1971 "On one version I said "Count me in" about violence, in or out, because I wasn't sure. But the version we put out said "Count me out," because I don't fancy a violent revolution happening all over" (Wenner).

The song's ambiguous nature resulted in a controversial reception from fans. Lennon demonstrated his belief in peaceful protests, and among other references to the counterculture movement, expressed his disinterest in violence among activists.

* J. Flores

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1968:

Johnny Cash, At Folsom Prison

One element of music related to politics and power in the 1960's is the way that Johnny Cash broke boundaries of the oppressed through his perception of prison inmates in the 1950's and 60's. While his performance at Folsom Prison is among the most popular of his performances throughout his entire career, it was not his first time making an appearance in that setting. He has previously demonstrated his ability to connect with inmates through music. He was also able to convince his record label to record the Folsom Prison Performance, which they were unsure of, but obliged. Cash was often critical of elements of the United States during his life, from the Vietnam conflict (featuring a performance at the White House where he criticized the war), and the historic treatment of Native Americans by the U.S. government. The album

recording, *At Folsom Prison*, featured some tampering by Columbia Records based on the way that a prison performance would be perceived. The greatest example of this follows the line from the song “Folsom Prison Blues.” Following the line “I shot a man in Reno just to watch him die,” Columbia produced an edited version of the recording meant to demonstrate the inmates cheering at hearing that line.

This is not the case, as the inmates were likely not interested in furthering tension between themselves and the prison guards by encouraging lines that promote violence. Another misconception that comes out of this detail is that the prisoners were silent for the entirety of the performance. This is also not true, as they made normal cheers at generally acceptable times, such as when Cash walks onto the stage and announces himself. Performing at a prison like Folsom or San Quentin (which Cash also performed at) solidified his style of music with the working class, and the success of these recordings, combined with Cash’s outlaw aesthetic, turned him into a massive act almost overnight. As Streisguth states, “[Cash] went from playing county fairs to major rock arenas such as Madison Square Garden and the Forum in Los Angeles, and he attracted international audiences which opened markets for the wider country music industry.”

This also tied into Cash’s views of prisoners as they related to his religion. Following his success, Johnny Cash was provided with a televised program for performance, which he frequently used to express his beliefs regarding prison reform, citing that he could have been in a similar position had circumstances been different. This both played within and contrasted the image that Columbia placed him into, as almost the criminal of the country music world. In reality, he had spent a rather short amount of time in a few jails for minor offenses.

* M. Smith

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1968:

Sounds of nationalism, fear, and tragedy in Karel Husa’s “Music for Prague 1968”

In discussions of the Soviet Union, the Eastern Bloc, and cold war politics, a country/conflict that does not receive much attention is the then-Czechoslovakia and Prague Spring. Like other Eastern European countries at the time, Czechoslovakia took part in their own political reformation and liberalization, which became known as Prague Spring (Bradley et al., 2023). The Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries strongly opposed this movement, who feared their control and influence were being threatened. On August 20, 1968, Czechoslovakia was invaded by Warsaw Pact troops, which officially marked the end of Prague Spring (2023). One significant musical response to this event was the creation of the masterwork “Music for Prague 1968”, written by Czech-born American composer Karel Husa (Negrea and Burbank, 2019). This piece was commissioned by Ithaca College for the Ithaca College Concert Band around the same time of the invasion, and was produced in just six weeks (2019). The ICCB premiered this piece in 1969, and recently performed it again at Lincoln Center in 2019 for its 50th anniversary. I was lucky enough to perform in this concert and grow to understand and appreciate a piece of such power. This piece went on to be performed thousands of times by other collegiate and professional wind ensembles. It is widely accepted that MfP was a Czech nationalistic piece. Listening to any of the four movements would confirm clear notions of war, fear, and attack- it even references the Hussite War Song, a nationalistic theme, throughout the entire work (Wilson, 2023). Husa wrote this piece to reflect his personal emotional response to the invasion of his home country (2023). After studying the musical censorship of composers like Shostakovich, I wondered why this piece was not shunned or halted during production. Cairns reminds us that at the time of composition, Husa was an American citizen living in the US (Cairns, 2015). He, as well as Wilson, also note the irony in the non-Czech style musical writing with chromaticism and quasi-serialism (2015) (2023). I suppose that the piece was distant, both physically and musically, from the Soviet Union. I would still be interested in researching if people or politicians in the Eastern Bloc had any criticisms or response to the piece. One other item of great importance regarding this piece is that it has gone down history as a pillar of wind ensemble repertoire (Skaggs, 2023). Modern wind ensemble repertoire is often categorized by avant-garde, complicated musical sounds, and MfP is no exception. Husa himself claims, “It is not as beautiful a music as one always would like to hear. But we cannot always paint flowers, we cannot always speak in poetry about beautiful clouds, there are sometimes we would like to express the fight for freedom” (2023). The

diverse, laundry list of instruments used in this composition are intentional in conveying internal terror, approach and attack of Warsaw troops, and tragedy. I particularly like the use of piccolo, battery percussion, nearly the entire clarinet family, saxophones and trombone glissandos.

* S. Berkley

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Open the Door Projects—Week 3: 1968-1991

1969

“Fortunate Son,” an Anthem of the Unfortunate

1969: Woodstock topics

Far Out! Woodstock- Mythos or Mess? / Hendrix’s Performance of the Star Spangled Banner at Woodstock

1969:

Frank Sinatra, “My Way”

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Neil Young, “Ohio”

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The Grateful Dead, “Sugar Magnolia”, anti-capitalism and a return to nature

1971

The Men Behind the Wire: Protest Music in Ireland during The Troubles

1972

Helen Reddy’s “I Am Woman”/ Helen Reddy’s impact on feminism and women’s empowerment

1975

George Clinton, “P-Funk”

1976-1982

Rock against Racism—“White Riot” by The Clash

1976

Smile Jamaica Concert (Bob Marley, “War”)

1978

One Love Peace Concert

1978

Gloria Gaynor and “I Will Survive” as Queer Anthem

1979

The Birth of Sampling: “Rapper’s Delight” and Copyright Law

1979

Elton John Tours the Soviet Union

1979

“Joe’s Garage” by Frank Zappa and Censorship in the 1980s

1979, 1981

“California Uber Alles” and “We’ve Got a Bigger Problem Now” by Dead Kennedys

1980

The Popularization of the Rastafari Religion, and Bob Marley’s Final “Redemption Song” / Bob Marley and the Wailers “Redemption Song”

1980

Dolly Parton’s “9 to 5”: The Worker’s Anthem

1980-88 (and beyond)

Annie Lennox & Tracy Chapman’s Use of Androgyny in Music

1981

Ian Dury and “Spasticus Autisticus”

1981

Controversy and the Political Prince

1983

U2 and “Sunday, Bloody Sunday”

1983

Cyndi Lauper, “Girls Just Wanna Have Fun”

1984

“Free Nelson Mandela” by The Special AKA

1984-1985

Springsteen’s Role in Politics & Building Community During the Reagan Administration

1985

The Music of *Back to the Future*

1986

Chess and Cold War Tensions

1986

Ladysmith Black Mambazo and *Graceland*

1986

Space Shuttle Challenger Disaster and John Denver’s “Flying For Me”

1988

Fuck Tha Police: The Anthem of Protest Against Police Brutality / N.W.A., “Fuck Tha Police”

1989

Billy Joel and “We Didn’t Start the Fire”

1989

Billy Joel, “Leningrad”

1989

“One,” Metallica, and the Grammy Awards

1992

MTV’s Rock the Vote

1969

“Fortunate Son,” an Anthem of the Unfortunate

Creedence Clearwater Revival’s “Fortunate Son” was released in 1969 and quickly gained popularity in the United States. The song was released during a pivotal time in America; public support for the Vietnam War was waning and more artists began to use their music as a bullhorn against the government’s war effort. Creedence Clearwater Revival wrote many songs that echoed the

anti-war movement during Vietnam, and *Fortunate Son* became one of the most influential criticisms at the time. During the Nixon administration era of the war, there was a growing disapproval of the Vietnam campaign as the general public in the US witnessed the toll of the war unfold through the media. The public opposition to the war was wide ranging in 1969. There was resentment towards those in power as well as the troops themselves. Many veterans faced protest and condemnation after returning from Vietnam as they were associated with the atrocities portrayed through the media. The implementation of the draft further complicated things as many draftees did not want to take part in the war. The draft was widely criticized for its policies which privileged educated, upper class, white men. These factors contributed to the writing of *Fortunate Son*, which was written from the draftees lens during a consequential time in American history.

The song itself includes lyrics that directly challenge those in power, and takes hits at the political establishment itself for benefiting from the partial draft system. Lyrics like “I ain’t no senator’s son” and “I ain’t no millionaire’s son” supported a growing public perception that the draft was not entirely random, and that money and connections to the establishment could help you avoid getting drafted. Blind patriotism is another criticism of the song as the lyrics below suggest.

Some folks inherit star spangled eyes
Ooh, they send you down to war, lord
And when you ask 'em, "How much should we give?"
Ooh, they only answer "More! More! More!", y'all
These lyrics criticize the government's exploitation of Americans' patriotism in order to meet the needs of the war machine, in songwriter John Fogerty's eyes. Fogerty has since shared his experience, mentioning how he viewed writing the song as “a confrontation between me and Richard Nixon. The haves, the people who have it all... During the Vietnam War, these were the people who didn't have to go to war.” The anger towards the establishment in this song reflected the views of many US citizens who felt they were being used by the draft, while others avoided the bloody conflict. Overall, *Fortunate Son* amplified the criticisms of opponents to both the Vietnam War and the Draft. The stance by Creedence Clearwater Revival is another example of musicians becoming emboldened to use their music as a form of protest, breaking with musical practices of the WWII era.

* W. Hope

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1969

Far Out! Woodstock- Mythos or Mess?

The Woodstock music festival reflected the sentiments of the 1960s youth, and would go down in history as a major symbol of counterculture. Counterculture really cemented itself with the ideals presented by (and later assassination of) President John F. Kennedy. He “...campaign[ed] for civil rights and against discrimination, which many young people wanted...” (Czepelczauer, 2015). The global political climate was incredibly tumultuous, with the Cold War continuing to rage, the student protests of 1968 running rampant, and the beginning of the Vietnam War. The television of the war made the experience all too real to the American public, sparking the “hippie” movement that grew out of a desire for peace. This movement partially drew on ideas of “The Beat” generation of the 1950's. “Hippies” adopted the ideals of material rejection, and controversial political stances. To achieve peace, many felt the best way to do so was to withdraw from society completely and form self-contained communities, which they felt would inspire change more rapidly. This group condoned heavy drug use and sexual exploration. The spark this movement ignited would lead to the creation of Woodstock.

Musically, the political climate reflects the revival of folk music in the early sixties, and the emergence of psychedelic music that emerged consequently from drug culture. In 1969, entrepreneurs Joel Rosenmann, John Roberts, Artie Kornfeld, and Michael Lang ambitiously ventured to make a lucrative music festival in Wallkill, New York. When their original venue fell through, they eventually met farmer/businessman Max Yasgur, who agreed to host the event on his property in Bethel, New York. “...Due to inadequate preparation and sheer expediency on the part of the organizers, Woodstock was declared to be a free festival...” (Lovesey, 2020, pg. 122). Woodstock transformed into a three-day long event of music, peace, and connectivity. Some notable performers include Joni Mitchell, The Who, and Santana, among others who gained significant notoriety for their participation. One performance that can't go without mention is Jimi Hendrix's rendition of “The Star Spangled Banner”. The rendering of musical elements in the piece

“claiming nationalism and counterculture are both ‘simultaneously and antagonistically specified in the sounds of the performance’. (Gattern, 2016, pg. 4). Hendrix responded to the performance saying, “...nowadays when we play it, we don’t play it to take away all this greatness that America is supposed to have. We play it the way the air is in America today. The air is slightly static, isn’t it?” (Steven, 2010).

Conversely, the unspoken flipside to Woodstock reveals a great deal of chaos and disarray. Several venue changes and the massive influx of people that arrived towards the end of the first night into the second day of the festival created a discombobulated atmosphere. Among these challenges were the infrastructure of the event, crowd control, and adequate food and water distribution to performers and attendees. An account from performer Rose Simpson of The Incredible String Band describes being trapped in the performance area for hours on end and not having proper accommodations for themselves or their instruments. She describes the chaos, remarking that “...all available hands were called in to get the show on that evening and customary divisions of labor were disintegrating...” (Simpson, 2020, pg. 130). After escaping the site only to be peer-pressured into returning by other groups, IBS took the stage on day two, and played their set in muddy clothes. The mythos of the event ballooned to epic proportions, as festival-goers still generally managed to form a sense of camaraderie over the course of the three days. For better or for worse, its legacy is permanently idealized at a moment of youth activism, community, and a testament to the power music has in bringing people together.

* E. Weber

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Hendrix's Performance of the Star Spangled Banner at Woodstock

The Woodstock Music Festival of 1969 was the iconic festival known for three days of peace, love, and music. At this festival, there were three straight days of music performances from thirty two musical groups, reaching well over one hundred thousand people throughout the three days. At this point in the United States both the Vietnam war and civil right protests were raging, making the feeling of oppression widespread. Woodstock was a place for people to break away from the feelings of oppression and embody peace and love through music. The last musician to perform at this festival was Jimi Hendrix.

Jimi Hendrix, born in Washington in 1942, became interested in music in his teens. He started out on a one string ukulele, working his way up to a guitar and learning rock and roll songs on it. After being medically discharged from the army, he continued to play gigs and moved to New York City, where he was discovered. Shortly after his world tour, he decided to move to a small town in the Catskills near Woodstock to figure out what he would do next. At that point, his management team and the organizers of Woodstock agreed to have him play his iconic set for a whopping \$18,000 (equivalent to a little over \$122,000 today).

Of the songs that Hendrix and his group performed there, one of them was the Star Spangled Banner. The way Hendrix performed this song can be seen as having politically noted references to the war occurring in Vietnam. Hendrix uses a lot of the effect pedal to warp the longer, more sustained pitches. He also embellishes with grace notes, trills, scoops, and glissandos. At the part of ‘and the rocket’s red glare,’ Hendrix “manipulating the Stratocaster vibrato bar to its lowest position” (Inglis 2006). At ‘the bombs bursting in air,’ he follows that with a tritone siren, the vibrato bar, more descending notes, and chaotic sounding clumps of highs and lows. After ‘our flag was still there,’ Hendrix “leaps up to a kneeling, pure-toned quotation of ‘Taps’” (Inglis 2006). After this and to the end of the song, more vibrato and whaling of the longer sustained notes is played, giving distortion. “Hendrix’s Woodstock Banner rather eloquently summarizes the perspective he gained over the previous year. As he explained in Circus magazine, ‘I still love America--quite naturally--but I can see why people put it down. It has so much good in it, you know, but it has so much evil, too’” (Clague 2014). Even though the political connotations are not clearly stated, they are implied through prior interactions and the analysis of the performance of the song.

* C. Zanetti

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1969:

Frank Sinatra, "My Way"

Frank Sinatra was born on December 12th, 1915 in Hoboken, New Jersey and died on May 14th, 1998 in Los Angeles, California. Sinatra was an American singer and actor who was mainly influenced by the vocal style of Bing Crosby and began his musical career in the swing era. Most of his success came from his solo artist work especially after he signed with Columbia Records in 1943. Sinatra was known as one of the most influential entertainers of the 20th century. Frank Sinatra began his career in the 1930s as a vocalist in various big bands. He gained his popularity in the 1940s as a solo artist and was known for his smooth voice, impeccable phrasing, and unique singing style. In addition, he was also known for excelling in various musical genres, including traditional pop, swing, jazz, and even rock and roll. Some of Sinatra's signature songs were "My Way", "Fly Me To The Moon", "New York, New York," and "Strangers in the Night." During Frank Sinatra's career he released numerous successful albums and singles, won multiple awards, which included 11 Grammy Awards and three Academy Awards. Frank Sinatra was also known for his connections with powerful figures in politics, business, and the entertainment industry, and he was an active supporter of various political causes. Frank Sinatra's legacy extends beyond his music and his acting. During his career he also played a significant role in shaping popular culture and left a lasting impact on subsequent generations of artists. One song of Frank Sinatra's that I decided to focus on research is "My Way." In addition to having an interest in researching more about the song, I also have a personal connection with "My Way" and Frank Sinatra in general. I listened to a lot of Frank Sinatra growing up because my parents would always have his music playing in the living room when we were home. "My Way" specifically, has

been played at so many family parties, events, and even at baseball games that I have been to with my dad. The song "My Way" was released in 1969 and was written by Paul Anka, but this song became closely associated with Sinatra. Frank Sinatra's rendition of the song holds significant cultural and political power. The song embodies the themes of individualism, self-determination, and resilience. The message has resonated with audiences around the world, and it became an anthem for personal empowerment and the pursuit of one's own path. "My Way", in terms of politics, has been embraced by various individuals and groups as a symbol of their ideologies and aspirations. The lyrics emphasize personal agency and independence which have been interpreted in many different ways to reflect political context. In addition, the song became an unofficial anthem for certain political figures who aimed to break away from established norms and expectations. Lastly, it has been used in political campaigns and events to convey the message of strength, resilience, and individualism.

* V. Vespucci

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1970

Neil Young, "Ohio"

For this Open the Door project, I focused on Neil Young's writing of the song, Ohio. Ohio was written in response to the Kent State Massacre on May 4th, 1970. As a young artist, Neil Young had written numerous politically charged songs with his band, Buffalo Springfield. Between being a member of Buffalo Springfield and becoming a solo artist, Neil Young was also part of the quartet, Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young. Originally this group was a trio, but Young made it a quartet. The Kent State Massacre propelled Young to write as a solo artist, about the horrific events occurring during this time of the Vietnam War.

On April 30th, President Nixon had announced that U.S. troops were invading Cambodia to reach one of the Vietnam command bases. This announcement over the television sparked anti-war protests all throughout the U.S, especially student protests on college campuses. Students of Kent State University gathered for an on campus protest on May 4th, despite officials banning any type of protest to happen. National guards had been brought in earlier in the week due to other riots occurring in response to Nixon's announcement about Vietnam. Guard members openly fired at part of the student protest group, killing four people and injuring nine others.

Neil Young wrote Ohio not only for the tragic events that happened at Kent State, but to send a message that what was happening was a "National Issue" in the U.S. The start of this song begins with his lyrics of "Tin soldiers and Nixon coming," insinuating that Young is turning these events onto Nixon, not just the guard members in Ohio. With these lyrics being so politically strong towards the U.S Government, many radio stations ended up banning this song for people to listen to. "Underground FM stations" were the only stations playing this music, but still receiving a lot of attention by the younger generation of this time.

Overall, this song does not have a lot going on, both lyrically and in the actual performance. Containing only 10 lines in the entire song, the simplicity and view he writes from creates a powerful message. Parts are written in a way that could depict that Young was at the protest, although he was in California when these events took place. When listening to recordings of Ohio, Neil Young plays by himself only with his guitar. Again, having such an "empty" sound creates a message in itself on the issues created from the Vietnam War and this protest.

Overall, Ohio created controversy like many other politically charged music of the time. Many students and the younger generation viewed this as a "generational anthem," while some believed Neil Young had no right in writing this piece. Ohio was a strong response in the horrific events that occurred at Kent State University.

*B. Cripps

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1970

The Grateful Dead, "Sugar Magnolia", anti-capitalism and a return to nature

The Grateful Dead were a band that challenged the pre-existing structures of the music industry and consumerism. Founded in 1965, the band portrayed themselves as "non-economically motivated". Though they did enjoy economic success for thirty years, the band was able to reach this level of success in a way that was very different from many artists of the time. Working with the Haight-Ashbury Diggers in San Francisco, the band played free concerts while the Diggers distributed free food and supplies to residents.

The Dead often promoted themselves as "natural". Beginning as a "jug band" they promoted the free consumption of music. They participated in the 1960's counterculture and continued its traditions of free love and drug use throughout their career. This image can be clearly seen in the song "Sugar Magnolia" released in November 1970. The song has clear roots in the folk and blues traditions. Vocal lines reminiscent of acoustic singer songwriters are accompanied by guitar based lines clearly influenced by bluegrass and blues. The band shaped what we call "jam" today, composing short songs whose progressions could be improvised over for long periods of time. The lyrics also help to deliver clear imagery of nature, sex, and drugs to the listener:

Sweet blossom come on under the willow

We can have high times if you'll abide

We can discover the wonders of nature

Rolling in the rushes down by the riverside

The Grateful Dead pioneered new ways of navigating the music industry to allow the best possible balance for the band, its listeners "deadheads", and their record label. They were relentless in their negotiations with Warner Brothers, maintaining full control over their content, production, titles, and graphic design. The Dead were unique in their encouragement of fans to record and distribute their music for free, even going as far as reserving sections in the crowd for equipment to be set up so concerts could be taped. They also participated in displays of anti-commercialism, providing for their fans, while taking from the large companies who maintained power over the music industry. At the Monterey Pop Festival in June 1967, the band and crew drugged festival security guards and stole 1 million dollars worth of CBS

and Fender production equipment. The equipment was then used to put on a week of free concerts in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. The group was compared to Robin Hood, stealing from rich corporations and providing free musical experiences for their fans. The band blended their music with a culture of California Bohemianism. During the last five years of the band's touring, from 1990 to Jerry Garcia's death in 1995, it is estimated that 3000 people nomadically traveled alongside the band. The band operated democratically, and referred to the members, security, roadies and other members of the crew as "family". These values permeated the Dead community. Deadheads often made enough to continue traveling by selling goods in the "Shakedown Lot", a name based on the 1978 song "Shakedown Street". Deadheads distinguished themselves from other fans as a community that followed a code of ethics. They provided each other with food, shelter, medical care, and tickets to each night's event. The anti-commercial, naturalist, and loving ideas pushed by the band's music did seem to have an effect on its listeners.

* M. Hogan

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Sugar Magnolia (2013 Remaster)

1971

The Men Behind the Wire: Protest Music in Ireland during The Troubles

"The Troubles" refers to a period of conflict and violence, primarily taking place in Northern Ireland from 1968 to 1998. This conflict was primarily rooted in political divisions between the nationalist Irish front (otherwise known as Catholic) and English and Northern Irish loyalists (otherwise known as Protestant). What originally began as a civil rights campaign by Catholics to end discriminatory practices, escalated into an ethno-nationalist conflict with paramilitary organizations involved on both sides. (Millar)

The Catholic paramilitaries, which included groups such as the Irish Republican Army or IRA, resisted British rule in the county of Ulster and set out to create a united Ireland. The Protestant side of the conflict, which included the local police and the British Armed Forces, sought to quell this uprising and maintain the status quo. (Wallenfeldt) Both sides of this conflict, Irish paramilitary groups in particular, engaged in bombings, shootings and other violent acts that accounted for a death toll of over 3500, over 50% of which being civilians. (McKittrick et al.) This conflict exacerbated existing tensions between these groups and further divided these communities.

Throughout this long period of turbulence on Irish soil, music was a mainstay of the protest against British rule. One such example is *The Men Behind the Wire*, written by Paddy McGuigan in 1971. McGuigan wrote this song as a response to attacks such as those that transpired from Operation Demetrius, a British operation that focused on the mass internment of Irish republican suspects. This tune went on to become his biggest hit and an anthem for those interned under this policy. The text of the piece paints the British soldiers in a barbaric light, as marauders who "drag[ged] fathers from their beds" and beat them in front of their "crying children" and wives. (Millar) This song comes from a Catholic viewpoint and aims to tell their (decidedly unnuanced) side of the story, so to speak, as much of the media coverage of the Catholic resistance was not favorable at this time. This song went on to become #1 in Ireland for some time and led to the internment of its author and the attempted murder of the owner of the studio who produced it. (Millar)

* R. MacCarthy

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1972

Helen Reddy's "I Am Woman"/ Helen Reddy's impact on feminism and women's empowerment

Helen Reddy was a prominent feminist activist during the height of her career in the 1970s. Through her music and public persona, she became an influential figure in the women's liberation movement. She was a public speaker and activist, participating in feminist events and rallies. She used this opportunity to raise awareness about women's rights and inspire others to join the movement for gender equality. She spoke about women's issues including equal pay for women, and equality in different industries. She defied societal expectations and encouraged women to be strong, independent, and self-reliant as she challenged traditional gender roles and stereotypes in her music. In 1972, she came out with her most famous song "I Am Woman" which ended up become the feminist anthem and a rallying cry for women's empowerment. It resonated with women around the world and earned her a Grammy Award and solidified her status as a feminist icon. In 2006 Helen Reddy releases her memoir talking about her life, and her rise to fame in the music industry, as well as her personal struggles. Challenges included financial hardships and the struggles of being a single mother. Helen Reddy grew up in Australia and had a difficult relationship with her mother and her early dreams of becoming a performer. In the late 1960's Reddy moved to the United States to pursue her dream. Reddy also discusses her experience as a woman in the music industry, shedding light on sexism and discrimination she faced.

In her song "I Am Woman" it conveys empowerment and self-affirmation. The song encourages women to embrace their strength, confidence, and resilience. Women were empowered to challenge societal norms and demand equality. "I Am Woman" was one of the first songs with a feminist message to achieve mainstream success, allowing barriers to be broken and earning widespread recognition. The song provides a rallying cry and captures the spirit of its time. It encapsulated the collective desire for change and became a symbol of the feminist movement's progress. It connected women from different countries and fostered a sense of unity. She has truly made an impact on women's empowerment and feminism.

* I. Newman

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1975

George Clinton, "P-Funk"

George Clinton is funk musician in the time of great political power shifting. He was influence by both the relevance of the Space Race as well as the Civil Rights movement of the 60s to create what he referred to as a collective of musicians known as Parliament and Funkadelic in the 1970s. Clinton adopted a variety of space themed personae in his music and incorporated theatrical elements to his music relating to black empowerment in relation to the future. George Clinton along with Sun Ra were key figures in the development of Afrofuturism.

The opening track on Parliament's 1975 album Mothership Connection is called "P-Funk (Wants to Get Funked Up)." It begins with a section of spoken word over top a funk bass line and light interjections by various band members. Clinton takes on the persona of Starchild here who introduces the music as if he was an evangelical preacher on the radio. Throughout this track he interjects sections of spoken word in similar fashion where he directly comments on white funk saying it "sounds like it got a three on it," referencing the heavy emphasis on beat one in funk music.

Clinton was open and deliberate about his message of black empowerment. Within his space themed performance aesthetic he references a "return to claim the pyramids." Sun Ra also drew influence from Egypt and the involvement of black people in their creation. Clinton seems to treat the pyramids as a deep source of black power. He was very well versed in the black power movement, and intended the Afrofuturist sentiments behind it but was just as deliberate in cloaking his activism in theatricality and humor. Marcus Garvey notably said, "Liberate the minds of men and ultimately you will liberate the bodies of men," and Clinton said on Funkadelic in 1970 "Free your mind and your ass will follow."

* B. Poole

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1976-1982

Rock against Racism—"White Riot" by The Clash

The Rock Against Racism happened in the years 1976 and 1982. The RAR movement was a response against racism by far-right groups in the United Kingdom. It promoted inclusivity and challenged discriminatory views and actions of white supremacist organizations, such as the NF (National Front). The Rock Against Racism movement organized concerts, festivals, and events, bringing together diverse musical acts, including punk, reggae, and rock artists. What became the manifesto of the movement was written by David Widgery was, "We want rebel music, street music. Music that breaks down people's fear of one another. Crisis music. Now music. Music that knows who the real enemy is. Rock Against Racism. Love Music, Hate Racism."

One of the biggest musical acts was from a band called The Clash. The Clash was a British punk-rock band that emerged in the late 1970s and became one of the punk movement's most influential and iconic bands. They blended punk rock with elements of reggae, ska, rockabilly, and other genres, creating a unique sound that set them apart from their contemporaries. Their music was characterized by its energetic and raw quality, socially conscious lyrics, and a sense of rebellion against societal norms and injustices. However, one of the many challenges that they faced was the notion that their punk music was solely a white, working-class movement and that they were culturally appropriating their songs. Others argued that the band formed a musical fusion of cultural exchange and was more of a celebration of multiculturalism. With their engagement with dialogue with their audience and supporters and being true to their principle while maintaining a consistent approach to their music and activism, the band's involvement helped to draw attention to the cause and mobilize a large audience. One of the most impactful songs they have made was called White Riot. White Riot was written in response to the Notting Hill riots in 1976, which erupted in London between white supremacists and the local black community. The song showcased the band's energetic and raw punk sound using straightforward guitar riffs, driving rhythms, and impassioned vocals in which eventually became a punk anthem. As mentioned previously, the song also incorporates the use of reggae influences which can be heard in the bassline. What most audience members can resonate with is the simplicity and

catchiness of the lyrics and repetitive musical structure. It's lyrics encouraged white youths to channel their anger and energy into fighting against racism and injustice, rather than perpetuating violence and racial division. As the Clash's influence grew, it provided a broader perspective on their and highlighted the positive aspects of their contributions.

* J. Garcia

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1976

Smile Jamaica Concert (Bob Marley, "War")

For this open the door project I decided to look at the "Smile Jamaica" concert, and Bob Marley's involvement. For some context, this concert took place in 1976 in Jamaica. The current prime minister asked for Marley to play in a free concert to ease political tensions between two warring political parties. Days before the concert an assassination attempt was made on Marley's life, and he and his family members were shot in his home. He decided to continue with the concert anyway, even with the armed gunmen at large.

What stood out to me about this concert was the dedication that Marley had to the people of Jamaica. The two political groups at the time were the People's National Party (PNP), and the Jamaican Labor Party (JLP). The prime

minister at the time was part of the PNP, and Marley did his best to not be affiliated with the political group, but it is believed that the gunmen that attacked Marley were associated with the JLP. Many saw Marley's performance at this concert as support for the PNP. Interestingly I also read from one of the sources that the CIA was interested in Marley and his music. The CIA had found the reggae music that Marley was performing to be dangerous because it would help to create a consciousness among poor people.

The song that I chose from this concert is the song *War*. The lyrics to this song are very straightforwardly talking about equal human rights, specifically to do with the color of a person's skin. In another source, the author groups Marley's music into "cluster spotlights." This idea that certain songs were about specific injustices. When referencing the idea of war, Marley was really emphasizing human rights, and the struggle for the people in Jamaica to have equality.

One final note about this song is that some of the lyrics were changed for the "Smile Jamaica" concert. On the YouTube video linked to War, there are the lyrics in the description. Here is the adaptation Marley performed at the concert: "What life has taught me / I would like to share with / those who want to learn... / that until basic human rights / are equally guaranteed to all ... / everywhere is war."

* F. Desiderio

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1978

One Love Peace Concert

During the same week as the Willow Island Disaster in West Virginia and the official integration into the United States Army, Bob Marley was on stage at the National Stadium in Kingston Jamaica headlining the One Love

Peace Concert. In 1978, Jamaica was in the midst of a civil war between the Jamaican Labor Party and the People's National Party, in which gunmen unleashed violence against each other and their communities (Burke, 2014). The People's National Party was controlled by socialist Prime Minister Michael Manley and was opposed by conservative Edward Seaga, the leader of the Jamaican Labour Party, who favored development. Marley was very outspoken in his opposition against the violent outbreaks throughout the country and tried to use his platform as a prominent figure to spread messages of love, hope, and nonviolence.

In hopes of easing tensions, "Marley agreed to perform a free non-partisan concert, Smile Jamaica, to be held on December 5, 1976 in Kingston, but almost right after the announcement of this concert, the current PNP Prime Minister Michael Manley called for an election making it seem as if Marley was showing his support for the PNP" (Burke, 2014). Despite being shot and wounded in his home after this miscommunication, Marley and the Wailers proceeded to perform at the concert, which was a major success. Marley and the Wailers then fled to London for exile. In 1978, Marley returned to Kingston and was approached by gunmen who asked him to perform in a concert called "One Love Peace Concert," aimed at easing violence and tensions amidst the Jamaican Civil War, to which Marley agreed.

The Wailers primarily played love songs at this event in order to convey the intended message of love and anti-violence. The purpose of the concert was made clear through the lyrics and message of Marley's song "One Love," for which the event was named (Gallardo, 2003). During the concert, Marley called Manley and Seaga up on stage and urged them to shake hands as a truce. Following the concert, Marley and The Wailers took their initiative on an international tour, and they were quite successful in spreading their intended message. Many of their audience members of this tour were fellow Rastafarians. According to Gallardo, on the tour, "Marley previewed a song entitled 'Zimbabwe.' It was a song of freedom for Zimbabweans, who saw Marley as a black freedom fighter and hero because he was such an advocate of their liberation. Marley was even chosen to perform at Zimbabwe's Independence Day ceremonies, which took place in April of the following year" (Gallardo, 2003). Marley also led similar initiatives in other countries struggling with internal conflict, including Ethiopia (Beat, 1995). This effort demonstrates that Marley accomplished his initial goal not only in Jamaica but across the globe. According to Nangwaya and Onuora, "Marley's attitude or position on ideology does not diminish the fact that he wrote and sang about experiences that are the product of the African-Jamaican working-class being embedded in the systems of capitalism, patriarchy and racism" (Nangwaya & Onuora, 2018). As a result of Marley

risking his and other Jamaicans' lives for this initiative, he was advised not to return to Jamaica after this tour. Unfortunately, while the event brought opposing people together during the concert itself, the event did little to stop any political violence. The event's two organizers were both murdered within the two years following the concert, and with instances of murder on a steady incline across Jamaica.

* L. Sperber

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1978

Gloria Gaynor and "I Will Survive" as Queer Anthem

Gloria Gaynor's hit "I Will Survive" was released in 1978 on the B-side of her album "Love Tracks" and would reach platinum-single status, holding on to the no.1 spot in pop charts from January 20th - May 25th of 1979. The song tells the story of our singer who has experienced a form of heartbreak from a past lover who now wants back into her life. Through her newfound confidence she is able to "kick this man to the curb". The context behind this song shows both the writers and Gaynor going through some hardships as well. Writer Dino Fekaris had recently been fired from Motown Records and had written the song and saved it for an artist like Gaynor. At the time of her recording the work, Gaynor had struggled through the loss of her mother, being dropped from Polydor Records and a stage accident involving her being paralyzed from the waist down for some time. This song became an instant hit in the LGBTQ disco scenes due to its lyrics that many marginalized individuals could relate to. A gay man interviewed about his memory of the song quotes "“This song has a powerful message: that each of us holds our destiny in our own hands, and that we control how we will be after something traumatic happens to us. The message constantly reminds us that we will make it through. And when we hear it again, for the millionth time we recall how we did make it through the last time or the time before that, and that we have the infinite capacity to do so again

and again.” Due to its popularity in clubs of the time, DJ's had even pushed for it to be released onto Gaynor's A-side of her album.

This song receives a second life at the start of the AIDs epidemic in the United States. Again the lyrics lend itself to a reading of perseverance in the face of adversity. The song opens up to a sweeping arpeggiated “E dominant - seventh- flat ninth” chord and tentative singing over nine measures. The song at this point has been set in A minor and stays within this key as the upbeat dance track sets in. Some readings on the irregular minor key within such an upbeat song is that even as our singer has triumphs through her struggles, a part of it stays with her. This song became the soundscape to the environmental shift of clubs in the 80s. They became a place where queer individuals would go to check if their friends had survived another week of uncertainty. Steve Weinstein while reflecting on this time writes “Often, I was relieved to see people at the Saint at large parties”. This song, much to Gloria Gaynor's surprise, would become seen as a highly celebrated ‘gay anthem’.

* N. Nicotri

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Gloria Gaynor, "I Will Survive"

1979

The Birth of Sampling: “Rapper’s Delight” and Copyright Law

The 1960s was a period of despair for many residents of New York City. The city was in disrepair, homes were being destroyed and wealth seemed to be out of the reach of many. The 1970s begins to see a time of rebuilding the city. Discos were a popular scene for many who could afford to go. For those who couldn't or who were pushed out, they began to play their own music. Many people began creating their own music and having neighborhood block parties. At one of these block parties, DJ Kool Herc

tried a method he called the “Merry-Go-Round” where he would loop the same set of tracks. Doing this brought about the birth of a musical style known as hip-hop. Hip-hop is defined more broadly than the music itself; it is a culture that is initially described as containing four essential elements: breakdancing, MCing, DJing, and graffiti.

As DJ Kool Herc’s style became more popular, other people in the city began doing their own version of it. People in New York City would loop the instrumental sections of songs and rap over them for hours on end. Nile Rodgers of the band Chic was shocked when he first saw some of these performances using his song “Good Times.” Rodgers was fascinated with how long these people would rap over the same instrumental loop. It was something he had never seen before. Rodgers was equally shocked when the musician Fab Five Freddie came up onto the stage during a concert and started rapping over the instrumental break of “Good Times.” While these public performances were seen as okay for Rodgers, there was a line that was not to be crossed. The hip-hop group The Sugarhill Gang released their song “Rapper’s Delight” in late 1979. This song directed sampled the instrumental break of “Good Times.” Initially, Chic was not given credit on the album or any royalties. However, after Nile Rodgers threatened a lawsuit against the group for the song, the group gave Rodgers and Chic credit on the album and royalties for the song. This song is a significant turning point in history in regard to copyright law. Prior to this, composers and lyricists would often allude to previous sounds in their works through melodic or harmonic ideas. With developing technology, it was now clear that it was possible to completely take part or all of someone else’s performance and claim it as your own. However, many would argue that this was part of the initial purpose of hip-hop. Hip-hop culture was meant to be a reaction to mainstream culture, a culture that in many ways people of color were not welcome into. Hip-hop was often taking the ideas and concepts of mainstream culture and modifying them to fit within their lived experience.

“Rapper’s Delight” is an excellent example of this, turning an instrumental break of a song that may normally be played at a disco into a rap to be enjoyed by those who were not welcome at the disco. It also shows the line between what is acceptable and unacceptable in terms of copyright. Borrowing music for casual, public performances is seen as okay. However, sampling a song without permission will lead to legal issues with many of the conglomerate record labels whose primary goal is to keep as much money for themselves as possible.

* J. Benedict

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1979

Elton John Tours the Soviet Union

As a new decade approached, Cold War tensions between the US and the Soviet Union still ran high. However, certain cultural exchanges allowed by Russian officials began to foreshadow (or as Richmond argues, partially cause) the end of the Cold War. One such exchange was Elton John and Ray Cooper’s 1979 tour to the Soviet Union. After catching a performance of John’s “Single Man” tour in April 1979, a Russian Cultural Envoy approved him for a tour in Soviet Russia and arrangements were quickly made. Elton John was among the first Western popular artists permitted to perform in the USSR, possibly because Russian officials considered him “safer” compared to other artists like Joan Baez, Fleetwood Mac, or Santana. He did receive some criticism of the tour, being asked how he could go to a country that mistreats “dissidents and Jews,” to which he responded that he had toured in places like Northern Ireland and Israel where one may disagree with their politics, and “I’m not going to say I’m not going to tour the States because because I don’t like Anita Bryant [an anti-gay activist] and how popular she is.”

The tour took place from May 21st to 28th in 1979 and included eight performances: four performances in the first four nights in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), and another four in the latter four nights in Moscow. He was paid \$1000 per night, which would have been a fraction of what he would normally be paid for a concert. The setlist included hits like “Your Song,” “Daniel,” “Bennie and the Jets,” and “Rocket Man,” plus mashups of original work and covers like “Saturday Night’s Alright For Fighting / Pinball Wizard” and “Crocodile Rock / Get Back / Back In the USSR.” All were performed in a rock duo with John on vocals and acoustic piano and Ray Cooper on assorted percussion, including theatrical performances on tambourine, gong, conga drums, and xylophone, just to name a few. Elton had been asked by Russian officials to remove “Back In the USSR” from the setlist, to which he

responded by ending every single show with the Beatles cover.

At the opening night in Leningrad, the audience initially responded politely but slightly subdued. However, starting during “I Heard It Through the Grapevine” after John makes a seamless switch between electric and grand piano, the audience begins cheering and engaging more enthusiastically; by the time the show ended, young people had surged the isles and pressed to the front of the stage, clapping and dancing. In the following shows, John and Cooper were surprised to see the crowd suddenly unmoving—later learning that security personnel would push people back into their seats if they attempted to stand up to dance. The May 28th show had been broadcasted internationally on BBC radio.

This performance had lasting impact on the people who attended these performances. Russian authorities seemed pleased with the cultural exchange, plus both John and Cooper talk fondly of their experiences in Russia. Cooper shares: “I can walk around in America, or London, or wherever, and it’s Russians that come up to me and say, ‘Sorry to disturb you, but are you Ray Cooper?’ And I say, ‘Yeah, I am.’ ‘Oh, I was a little boy and I saw that concert in Russia 1979.’ And I keep using the word ‘moving,’ but it is.” Although bootlegged copies of the BBC radio broadcast had been circulating since the event, an official album *Live From Moscow, 1979* was just publicly released in 2019. I am left wondering what impact this tour had on the common Russian people and their opinion on Western culture, if that affected future easings of Cold War tensions, plus why these recordings were not released publicly until 40 years after-the-fact.

* S. Taylor

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1979

“Joe’s Garage” by Frank Zappa and Censorship in the 1980s

September 17th, 1979. Frank Zappa releases the album “Joe’s Garage” on Zappa Records. If you have never heard this album before or of Frank Zappa, I would describe them both as iconoclastic (a person who attacks settled beliefs or institutions). This album is actually a rock opera. The cover is Frank Zappa in black face, and the opera follows the story of Joe who makes a band with his friends in his garage. In this world music and laws are regulated by a government representative known as the central scrutinizer who addresses how dangerous and dirty music can be. The Central Scrutinizer also serves as the narrator for this whole story. The story starts simply enough with Joe and his band bothering his next-door neighbor by playing music too loud. Shortly after the story goes off the rails including criticisms of the catholic church, discussions of std’s, the sexualization of females in rock circles especially groupies, Scientology (appliantology), various kinks, sexual assault in prisons, depression, and ultimately censorship (Shewey, 1980). In Zappa’s words, “JOE’S GARAGE is a stupid story about how the government is going to try to do away with music (a prime cause of unwanted mass behavior)! It’s sort of like a really cheap kind of high school play ... the way it might have been done 20 years ago, with all the sets made out of cardboard boxes and poster paint. It’s also like those lectures that local narks used to give (where they show you a display of all the different ways you can get wasted, with the pills leading to the weed leading to the needle, etc., etc.). If the plot of the story seems just a little bit preposterous, and if the idea of The Central Scrutinizer enforcing laws that haven’t been passed yet makes you giggle, just be glad you don’t live in one of the cheerful little countries where, at this very moment, music is either severely restricted ... or, as it is in Iran, totally illegal (Zappa, 1979)”. The music itself is very interesting. Zappa uses all different sorts of instruments, keyboards, bass saxophone, baritone saxophone, tenor saxophone, slide guitar, marimbas, drum set, harmonica, as well as a slew of different vocal techniques. There is the inclusion of polyrhythms, frequent meter changes, tempo changes, mixed meter, and intricate melodies. Genres are also blended here such as jazz, funk, rock, and avant garde (Genius, 2023)

This album did not start as an opera but a series of unconnected improvisations where halfway through he decided to relate them all. It was also heavily influenced by the Iranian revolution in 1979 which resulted in music as well as other Western ideas and cultural influences being banned from the country. Hall also claims that Zappa shows the government censoring music is not unlikely and that a future as portrayed in the second and third act of

this album is not impossible (Hall, 2013). This description is so interesting to me because only 6 years later in 1985, Frank Zappa was at the forefront of fighting against censorship in music in the PMRC (Parents Music Resource Center) hearings in front of congress along with John Denver and Dee Snider (of Twisted Sister.) This is essentially where the idea for parental advisory stickers was born. Zappa spoke strongly in his 30 minute testimony. One of his famous quotes from this hearing is "The establishment of a rating system, voluntary or otherwise, opens the door to an endless parade of moral quality control programs based on things certain Christians don't like. What if the next bunch of Washington wives demands a large yellow J on all material written or performed by Jews, in order to save helpless children from exposure to concealed Zionist doctrine?". Ultimately Zappa did not succeed and they applied an explicit lyrics sticker to his next album "Jazz from Hell" which was released in 1986. The album had no lyrics.

* S. Foti

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1979, 1981

"California Uber Alles" and "We've Got a Bigger Problem Now" by Dead Kennedys

Dead Kennedy's debut single "California Uber Alles" was released in 1979, it was rerecorded the following year and included on their debut album *Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables*. The lyrics are an attack on then-governor of California Jerry Brown, a democrat who was socially liberal and fiscally conservative. The song is a sort of role-reversal, with the fictional President Brown enforcing liberal ideas in a fascist manner. There was confusion when this song was released, why was singer Jello Biafra,

an outspoken leftist, going after a fairly liberal politician for the time when Ronald Reagan was right there? Biafra feared the rise of hippie-liberal fascism, the combination of hippies, yuppies, political apathy, and the oppressive government. Punks in general at this time had a dislike for hippies as they had become complacent in the early 70s. There was (and still is) denial that there could be "liberal fascists" as fascism is so closely associated with conservative beliefs. Biafra points out how people's skepticism of this being able to happen could easily turn to blind acceptance with the lines "Close your eyes, can't happen here / Big bro on white horse is near / The hippies won't come back you say / Mellow out or you will pay." The "Big bro on white horse is near" line is a reference to two different things. The "white horse" is a reference to a speech Brown gave early on in his political career where he said America was looking for a leader on a white horse, "big bro" is a reference to George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Two years later, Dead Kennedys reworked "California Uber Alles" into "We've Got a Bigger Problem Now" which released on the EP *In God We Trust, Inc.* This version of the song was about Ronald Reagan, who had just been elected president. This version of the song has different lyrics and the style is a fusion of punk and jazz, where the original is straight up punk. I wonder what prompted this change in style? I don't know what the general public's perception of jazz was at the time, but now jazz is often perceived as a more sophisticated style of music. If this was the perception then as well, maybe this choice was made as commentary on how conservatives try to pose themselves as being very classy while spewing hate.

* M. Coons

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[Dead Kennedys - California Über Alles](#)

[We've Got a Bigger Problem Now](#)

1980

The Popularization of the Rastafari Religion, and Bob Marley's Final "Redemption Song"

As has been extensively discussed and documented, the 1960s and 1970s acted as a sort of flashpoint in world history, defined by several notable instances of protest, revolt, and advocacy for social change. One such example of this was through the popularization of the Rastafari religion, most notably through the extensive commercial success of Bob Marley, a Jamaican musician that became highly linked with the identity of reggae music as well as a political advocate for universal freedom from the clutches of colonial society. While reggae music became highly synonymous with all forms of colonial oppression (particularly through the slavery and oppression of all who identified within the Pan-African lexicon), it became highly referential to the political unrest happening in Jamaica itself, particularly with the prime minister elections of Micheal Manley in the 1970s. Manley was self described as a democratic socialist, where he "promised independence from foreign control, greater access to social programs, new allegiances with other 'Third World' nations, and a variety of economic reforms", but also an economy that worked to "provide equality of opportunity and social justice for all people" (King, 1998). Manley's experiment horrifically failed, however, as the country fell into significant distress with the International Oil Crisis of 1973-1974 and suspected interference from the CIA for his "socialist" experiment. With this context in mind, Bob Marley, or more formally recognized through his band "Bob Marley and the Wailers" became an international sensation that promoted desires of African excellence and freedom from oppression. Marley often expressed his values in very broad terms, but still directly relevant to the values of the Rastafari religion, particularly through themes of God and the Devil, oppression and freedom, and war and unity (King, Jenson 1995). Although typically described as an agent of peace, Marley was not unknown to treat his music as a call to action, particularly in his song "War" where he advocates for a world where "basic human rights are equally guaranteed to all" (Hagerman, Laurier 2012). In "War," he most commonly refers to the injustices on the African continent, saying "until the ignoble and unhappy regimes that hold our brothers in Angola, in Mozambique, South Africa sub-human bondage have been toppled, utterly destroyed Well, everywhere is war, me say war" (Hagerman, Laurier 2012). Marley's influence was highly contagious, however to varying degrees of legitimacy, as there is dispute over who was legitimately interested in following the practices of Rastafarianism, and who appropriated it for the interest in the clothes, dreadlocks, and consumption of marijuana (ganja) (King, 1998).

To look more specifically at Marley's music, let's look at what is often described as Marley's "swan song," his piece "Redemption Song." Firstly, it is important to acknowledge how this song widely differs from what would be typical of his style. The most recognizable aspect of this is instrumentation, which typically would include "percussion, bass, guitar, keyboards and horns" (King, Jenson 1995), and would stylistically borrow more from ska, rocksteady (traditional Jamaican musics), R&B, rock, and more (King, Jenson 1995). Redemption Song, however, in its studio recording, features Marley with a solo acoustic guitar, and no one else. It does not retain the conversational "riddim" bass that is typically associated with his music, nor does it have the "afterbeats" that are characteristic of Reggae drum parts (King, Jenson 1995). Lyrically, it follows much of what would be expected of a Marley song, with references to the Atlantic Slave Trade, and his growing of strength thanks to the help of "the Almighty," which was Jah (God). The chorus of the song "Won't you help to sing, These songs of freedom? 'Cause all I ever have, Redemption songs, Redemption songs" acts as a final message to the world, urging his audience to sing "songs of freedom" and "redemption songs" in the face of colonial oppression (King, Jenson 1995). Musically, it has been more closely compared to the music of Bob Dylan, with its more folk-like and acoustic approach as opposed to the "hard-nosed reggae" that he was usually associated with. (Webb, 2010). It takes a much more somber and personal tone compared to his other music, as it loses virtually all of its typical Reggae musical characteristics. Redemption Song acts as a final call to action before he passes on, and a final remark on the personal and religious values that he held so dear. Marley would die as a result of melanoma in 1981 at the age of 36, and Redemption Song served as his final live performance, which took place in Pittsburgh in 1980 (Webb, 2000). Despite dying so young, Marley left an undeniable impact on the world, bringing the Rastafari religion and Jamaican music into the mainstream, while also serving as one of the era's staunchest voices for equality and freedom.

* C. Reid

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Bob Marley and the Wailers "Redemption Song"

To understand the origins of Bob Marley's music, we must first recognize the historical significance of Rastafari. Rastafarianism is a religion and social movement that began in Jamaica in 1930, largely due to the preaching of black nationalist Marcus Garvey. Garvey preached the ideas of reparations, redemption, and repatriation. In the later part of the 19th century, he called mass attention toward Africa, as he believed a "black king shall be crowned, [and] he shall be the Redeemer." (Onion, 2017). He pointed to Psalm 68:31 of the Old Testament, which stated "Princes shall come out of Egypt and Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God". This claim was made during the Pan-African movement which sought to unify and connect people of African descent, worldwide. Garvey and other activists of this time called for the formation of "Black States" around the world, which would form under boundaries of segregation. Much like the ideology of Malcolm X, these activists were not interested in integration. They believed in black unification and a subsequent rise to power. In 1930 Ras (meaning King) Tafari Makonnen rose to power as the king of Ethiopia. The people of Jamaica believed that "Rastafari is that Haile Selassie, the late Emperor of Ethiopia is God" (Chevannes, 1990). Jamaican people began to praise Haile Seelassie over King George, who was the technical ruler of the English colony. This colony had faced years of segregation and oppression, in a similar fashion to the history of the United States. British colonizers captured and traded slaves, which would later fuel the revolution and subsequent protest music. (Gray, 1991) Bob Marley acted as an important ambassador of Rastafari, as he used music spread the messages of "Jah" or God. Though many of his songs carried heavy political significance, "Redemption Song" (1980) has transcended

generations as a song for peace with themes of brotherhood, oppression, and redemption. (Onion, 2017). This song is regarded as his last, before dying of cancer-related complications, but it surprisingly does not have any of the rhythmic or harmonic elements of Reggae. Many theorize that Marley knew his life was coming to an end and wanted to create an accessible song to spread his final message. (Giovine, 2011)

This song begins with a call to the slave trade that took African people away from their homeland and to the island of Jamaica, as slaves to British colonizers. "Old pirates, yes, they rob I. Sold I to the merchant ships. Minutes after they took me from the bottomless pits. But my hand was made strong, by the hand of the Almighty. We forward in this generation, Triumphantly". This verse is interesting as it consistently lands on the ii or vi which speaks to the torturous journey slaves may have encountered and the lasting oppression in Jamaica. Marley uses a "V" on the word Triumphantly, perhaps to signify strength and promise of a better future. This is true for every verse in this piece, whether it be a biblical reference or the word Triumph.

He later paraphrases the words of Garvey in stating "Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery. None but ourselves can free our mind". (Chevannes, 1990) These were messages of liberation at the beginning of the 20th century, however, they were often reflected upon during the political unrest in Jamaica during the '60s. Many of the racially motivated forms of oppression were directed toward young Rastafarian men, with "the Coral Gardens Massacre" of '63 posing as an example.

When Marley writes "How long shall they kill our prophets, while we stand aside and look? Ooh, some say it's just a part of it. We've got to fulfill the book", he is referring to the death of great Civil Rights activists such as MLK, Malcolm X, and JFK. This is yet another biblical reference to Revelation 18:24, which stated that the "blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth" would fall on the holy land as part of God's will. Rastafarians often align their religion with the scriptures of Christianity but with slightly different interpretations. In the chorus of this song, Marley asks for help in spreading this message of freedom. "Won't you help to sing these songs of freedom? 'Cause all I ever have Redemption songs". The chorus stands out as it circulates around major chords (I, IV, V), for the most part. He briefly touches the "vi" but quickly resolves, as to say we shall no longer look at the past, but only toward a brighter future. In the final studio recording of this piece, the guitar ends on a V7 chord. This is significant because it was the last recording Marley and the Wailers made before his death in 1981. This left listeners with the anticipation of more to come, possibly referencing the fact that the fight for equality is far from over. "This song of freedom" will

continue to ring true as a call for equality and an end to oppression.

* M. Suffern

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1980

Dolly Parton's "9 to 5": The Worker's Anthem

Dolly Parton's 1980s hit "9 to 5" became an anthem for the working class, particularly working women. Parton wrote this theme for the 1980s movie "9 to 5" depicting gender inequality in the workplace during the 20th century. Historically, country music has been known as a genre to serve as a "vehicle for negotiating the lives of working-class subjects" (Turner, 2021). The theme of the "American Dream" comes into play as we analyze the history and subject matters of a majority of country music. Parton receives backlash from listeners as she uses a genre associated with the "American Dream," a concept associated with the working, middle class, to critique capitalism and workplace inequalities. "Parton's feminist rhetoric challenges the "exploitative labor conditions" to which women are subject and that, in its original context, 9 to 5 "[promoted] a feminist effort to gain workplace reform" (Edwards, 2018). Among many things, Parton has been labeled by critics as a "woke Marxist" or "Comrade Dolly Parton" because she is a woman who has spoken up about workplace inequalities (Turner, 2021). Through the lyrics of this song, Parton calls attention to the "source of these exploitative conditions...through the song's use of "man" and "his" (Turner, 2021). If we analyze the lyrics further, we can see that lines such as "it's a rich man's game no matter what they call it" and "you spend your life puttin' money in his wallet" address "the alienation of labor" (Turner, 2021).

Although Parton is most associated with the genre of country, 9 to 5 seems to "exist in a sort of genre-free nether-region" (Breihan, 2020). During the 1970s and 1980s, genres such as R&B, disco, country, pop and rock

and roll dominated the charts. However, 9 to 5 does not seem to fit solely within any of these styles. 9 to 5 incorporates "dance-pop elements, such as seawind horns, which are reminiscent of the sounds of Quincy Jones-produced Michael Jackson albums of the time (Dowling 2020, np). This showcases the interfaces between country music, which is often seen as exclusively "white", and other music genres that are conventionally coded as Black" (Ben Mna, 2023). What strikes me as most interesting about this composition though, is the instrumentation. Specifically within the instrumentation is the use of Parton's fingernails to represent the sound of a typewriter clicking (Walthall, 2021). This particular avant-garde element aids the idea of 9 to 5 being a song of intersectionality as it blends experimental sounds with the "rural imagery" of country music (Ben Mna, 2023). In addition to this sentiment, 9 to 5 is thought to be "simultaneously a song of angry complaint and immense good cheer" (Walthall, 2021). Parton's success with intersectionality in this piece reflects how "it is possible to connect the experiences of the rural working class to a more professional city-based setting" (Ben Mna, 2023) as well as the possibility for country music to display progressive sentiments of political and social reform.

* C. Perticone

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1980-88 (and beyond)

Annie Lennox & Tracy Chapman's Use of Androgyny in Music

In the 1980's, artists/bands like Blondie were gaining popularity and female artists like Debbie Harry (lead singer of Blondie) had expectations in the way they dressed. They were expected to appear very feminine like sex objects. In this open the door, I'd like to explore how two very different artists, Annie Lennox and Tracy Chapman both used an androgynous look to fight the social norms of the music industry in the 1980's.

Annie Lennox is best known for being the lead singer of the group known as Eurythmics who reinvents herself in each music video. Her style has often been compared to that of David Bowie and Boy George. Lennox was classically trained on piano and flute at the Royal College of Music in London but dropped out one week before final exams to make her own music after she got tired of being constrained by the western classical tradition. After getting together with Dave Stewart and forming the Tourists, Lennox expressed her deep discomfort with the inherent sexism in the pop industry and then formed Eurythmics where she could have more control of how she presented herself in the music industry. Over time, in Eurythmic's music videos, Lennox played both male and female characters and is most famous for her look from the "Sweet Dreams" music video with cropped bright orange hair, a masculine suit, and heavy eye make-up. In the song, attached below, you can hear that a majority of the song is sung in a chest voice keeping the voice vocally ambiguous. Lennox describes her aversion to presenting as a "typical" female at the time in the following quote, "When I started wearing mannish clothes on-stage, it was to detract from what people had come to expect from women singers... I simply wanted to get away from wearing cutesy-pie miniskirts and tacky cutaway push-ups." After so much gender bending in her music videos, specifically "Love is a Stranger," MTV actually demanded proof that she was a woman. Her androgynous look, led the public to question her sexuality to which she responded, "I am very feminine. I am not gay. But I feel as a woman, sometimes, very masculine, powerful." Some have accused her of promoting homophobia from that statement. Since then she has remained quite private about her private life.

Tracy Chapman, a black folk artist was emerging a little later in the 80's and her career blossomed with her single "Fast Car" in 1988. Chapman grew up in Cleveland Ohio but later received a scholarship to attend the Wooster School in Danbury, Connecticut through A Better Chance Program. She is best known for her activism in her narrative "folk" music. Later in her career, played at large venues Amnesty International and co-headlined the worldwide Human Rights Now! Tour and played at Nelson

Mandela's 70th birthday tribute concert. When asked about her musical style, Chapman said "I guess the answer's yes and no. I think what comes to people's minds is the Anglo-American tradition of the folk singer, and they don't even think about the Black roots of folk music. So in that sense, no, I don't. My influences and my background are quite different. In some ways, it's a combination of the black and white folk traditions." Her voice is reminiscent of early black blues like Nina Simone but her simple chord progression and use of acoustic guitar reflect white folk traditions. She is known for her shy demeanor and quiet stage presence and has expressed that she never really wanted to be a celebrity and like Lennox has always been fiercely private about her personal life and sexuality. Novelist and poet, Alice Walker has however acknowledged that she and Chapman had a love affair in the mid 1990's which turned Chapman into a Black Queer icon. Because Chapman never addressed questions of her sexuality and uses ambiguous language in her songs of love, has been accused of perpetuating the invisibility of the LGBTQ+ community in music. In the interview attached below, you can see her quiet demeanor and awkwardness in the interview when the interview pressures her to share who one of her love songs is about. Much of her music covers the issues of gender, domestic violence, class, poverty, and race and she is known for her storytelling in her music. Because of this story telling in her lyrics, she keeps her musical background to a minimum (usually just accompanying herself with an acoustic guitar) and her clothing androgynous. She is often pictured in live performances and in her music videos in comfortable baggy clothing and wore dreadlocks or short natural hair which was often viewed as a male hairstyle. Her songs also show off her soulful alto voice making her register and vocal qualities also androgynous.

It was very interesting seeing how both of these artists used their androgynous look to fight societal norms of female artists in the 80's. While Lennox took on more of a gender bender identity, fully consuming the roles of both male and female characters in her music videos, Chapman used more of an organic/natural look to achieve a similar goal of fighting expectations of female appearances in music.

* K. Tai

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1981

Ian Dury and “Spasticus Autisticus”

In 1981, Ian Dury, a post punk artist in England wrote a song titled “Spasticus Autisticus.” The song was composed in response to the United Nations declaring 1981 the Year of the Disabled Person. Dury found this whole concept to be patronizing. Dury himself is disabled, suffering from polio as a child, but refused to be defined as just that. He mentions that he had many opportunities to compose that year, just because of his disability, none of which he honored. Instead he wrote this song as an anti-charity song.

The chorus is very repetitive “I’m Spasticus, I’m Spasticus, I’m Spasticus Autisticus.” over and over in a rhythmic speak-song chant. He himself describes it as a “War cry” (George). According to Viji Keppan (2017) I’m Spasticus is a direct reference to the movie Spartacus which came out in 1960. Spartacus was a gladiator who fought for and won his freedom, from the Romans. He is seen as a symbol for oppressed people fighting for freedom. It feels like a rallying cry to have disabled people own their own identity, and not be pandered to or pitied.

The funk-punk groove in the back gives an otherworldly incongruous feeling to the whole experience, and the meandering melody in the verses are a total departure from the refrain.

The lyrics of the song are provocative, and tongue in cheek, the word “spastic” for people with cerebral palsy, was being moved away from at the time as it was derogatory. He called able bodied people “walkie talkies” and says that they live in “normal land,” and calls them out as not being able to understand. He pulls no punches with lines like “dribble when I nibble,” and “dribble when I piddle cause my middle is a riddle,” with the sarcastic wordplay blatantly stating challenges that many disabled

people deal with. Other lyrics talk about how the main interaction people have with the disabled is to put “hard earned peanuts in their tin,” to feel better about the awkwardness, or pity felt at the tragedy of disfigurement. The BBC, and other radio stations, banned the song as they were afraid it would be offensive. Rather than hearing the message, and hearing a disabled person’s point of view, they played it safe and protected the public from being uncomfortable. Even the record label did not promote this single. Equally interesting, though out of our timeframe, this song was reclaimed, and performed as an anthem at the 2012 Paralympics, by a band made up of all disabled musicians. The community has reclaimed this battle cry for themselves. Dury is credited with the renaming of the “Charitable Spastics Society,” to “Scope,” and Tim Yeo, the man who banned the song, and was then a Tory MP, recanted and billions of people heard the song through the Paralympic performance.

There are so many interesting things to look at from a power standpoint- who gets to name things? Who gets to ban things, and for what reason? Is it automatically not offensive if the person belongs to the community? Should a record label promote everything an artist creates? How have our views changed to make it acceptable to claim this song back so publicly? If this were composed today, how would it be received?

* L. Baldwin

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1981

Controversy and the Political Prince

In 1981 Prince released an album titled *Controversy* which commenced his stance on antiwar and gun control. When the album was released viewers first gravitated toward the album cover which features a portrait of him with

newspaper headlines in the distance. The headlines read controversial topics released during 1981 such as “Love thy neighbor”, “Christian sentenced to die”, “President signs gun control act” and “Do you believe in god”. Already visually looking at the album cover listeners knew visually that despite just the album name, it was going to heavily showcase political controversy. The album consisted of eight songs that focused on mainly political stances but also demonstrated sexual liberation. Analyzing the text of “Ronnie Talk to Russia,” Prince argues the political issue of President Ronald Reagan being too passive in making a decision during the Doomsday Clock against the USSR which occurred from 1981 to 1984. Prince references the political parties as being encapsulated in a zoo and Reagan feeding a political party that wants to blow up the world. Ultimately, Prince’s stance on being anti-war with the USSR during this time hurt Reagan’s agenda of implementing a new economical plan and the support of a conservative president. Due to the huge political tension of releasing this piece, Prince never performed it for an audience.

Another piece within the album *Controversy* was “Annie Christian”. This piece was Prince’s first composition that explicitly showed a stance on being against the right to bear arms in America. Annie Christian is a fictional character that references killing spree however, Prince sprinkles in true historical events such as the murder of African American children in Atlanta from 1979-1981 and the death of John Lennon.

Through both of Prince’s contributions to American society in 1981, we could see that he had a firm political identity and he utilized music as an outlet of expression for this. Ironically, as our country engages politically with Russia today. Many Americans played the song “Ronnie Talk to Russia” outside of the White House at the start of the tensions with the current Ukraine crisis pressing President Biden to make a political stance on the evolving war. Despite Prince no longer being with us and these pieces being forty years old, they have aged well within our society and continue to resonate with Americans today.

* E. Becker

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1983

U2 and “Sunday, Bloody Sunday”

Sunday, Bloody Sunday by U2 is one of the most influential musical responses to the Bogside massacre, better known as Bloody Sunday, that took place in 1972 in Derry Ireland during a peaceful march to protest the imprisonment without trial of Northern Irish citizens by the British government. The song was first released on U2s album *War* in 1983, and recounts the events of this day from the perspective of someone observing the violence and calling for peace. The band was very vocal about “not choosing sides” and Bono can be heard starting each performance of this song with the statement: “This is not a rebel song.” He is often seen marching a white flag out to the audience, to further represent his statements of peace and a call for nonviolence. There was a lot of political controversy surrounding this song, however, some reading the lyrics as a statement of allegiance with Irish Republicanism, and others stating that the band had no right to speak of the event as if they understood; the band members being from Dublin, and the conflict being between Northern Ireland and the UK.

This controversy became even more pronounced in the aftermath of the IRA bombing of Enniskillen that targeted civilians and killed 11 people. U2 performed Sunday Bloody Sunday in Denver Colorado on that same day. After performing, the band members were met with many Irish-Americans who were in agreement with the violence of the IRA, and the band ceased to play the song for many years after that performance. Bono is quoted with saying “It was made real for the moment, in a way that it’s never going to be again,” about that specific performance in Denver, and the band’s reasoning for stopping their performances of the song. The song reentered their set list from time to time throughout the 90s, and has since been used by the band all around the world as a call for peace in states of unrest and conflict.

* C. Higgins

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1983

Cyndi Lauper, "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun"

I would like to open the door to the history behind the song "Girls Just Want to Have Fun." "Girls Just Want To Have Fun" was actually written and recorded and first performed by the American artist Robert Hazard, who released the song as a single as far back as 1979. Lauper made it notorious, however, covering the track in 1983. Cindi Lauper characterizes the Hazard version of the song to be at face value. "It was a song written by a man, so I don't even have to say anything. If a man sings that song, you know exactly what he's singing about right?" When Cindi Lauper was first asked to cover this song, she didn't want to do it. She says, "What do you want me to do? Kick my dress up and do a can-can?" Rather than dismissing it, she decides to go with it anyway, but she decided that she was going to think about how she can put a feminist spin on it. She had the intention of turning it into a feminist anthem.

She describes women as "disenfranchised" and "derailed" when they are completely bound to the home. She wanted to create a song that allowed young women to see themselves modeled in the music video. Knowing that the song would be played as a music video on MTV, she very intentionally picked out an extremely diverse crowd of women to be used in the video so that all young women could see themselves in the video. The song was written for all young women, not just the overwhelmingly white population that was the majority of MTV performers. Cindi Lauper's casting of the music video played a crucial role in allowing women to see themselves in role models. Cindi Lauper remembers times where she would be constantly asked, "Why do you have to be so political?" Unfortunately, even today, Lauper still sees the same fight being fought today at women's marches that she saw in the 1980's. A sign she sees often is, "Girls Just Want to Have Fun-demental Rights!" Lauper's use of messaging in this song is technically coded, but it was very clear from the start what her intentions were. Since there are no specific lyrics that are a call to activism specifically, MTV understood the song at a very basic level and put the song into a heavy rotation regardless of the messaging. Many people today still don't know that the song is an

anthem of female empowerment and take it at face value, but the song exceeds at making young women feel empowered and that they stand with a community of other strong women that feel the same way!

* T. Hayes

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1984

"Free Nelson Mandela" by The Special AKA

"African music is often about the aspirations of the African people, and it can ignite the political resolve of those who might otherwise be indifferent to politics. One merely has to witness the infectious singing at African rallies. Politics can be strengthened by music, but music has a potency that defies politics" (Mandela 1995: 209). During the apartheid movement, music served as a fundamental beacon of hope, education, awareness and unification worldwide. In 1984, a British pop group named Special AKA released the song "Free Nelson Mandela" at the height of the anti-apartheid movement. This song carries significant political implications and became an anthem for the global campaign to release Nelson Mandela, a prominent South African anti-apartheid activist and leader of the African National Congress.

The song's lyrics serve as a powerful cry against the oppression of the apartheid regime in South Africa. Jerry Dammers wrote this song as a message for what Nelson Mandela stood for. His lyrics read, "Are you so blind that you cannot see?/ Are you so deaf that you cannot hear?/ Are you so dumb that you cannot speak?". This message asks the South African government to acknowledge their wrong doings, and spreads awareness worldwide of these injustices. In addition to the powerful lyrics of the song, the song has a very catchy melody. The chorus consists of only 3 notes, employs a mix of reggae and punk rock music, and has a participatory element that engages and

uplifts audiences. The song is uptempo, employs joyous repetition and is celebratory in nature.

This piece created a solidarity and unification in the apartheid movement, which also established power and awareness for Mandela's cause. Longtime DJ and broadcaster Paul Gambaccini stated that "It is a demand but in a positive way, it brought some sort of hope that the situation could be sorted out.". Not only did this song bring educated and bring awareness to the anti-apartheid movement, but it also altered people's perception of Mandela, whose reputation was previously poor in the West.

Overall, "Free Nelson Mandela" played a crucial role in raising international awareness and support for Mandela's cause, putting pressure on the South African government to release him. The song's political implications extended beyond Mandela's case, becoming a symbol of resistance against racial oppression and a call for justice and equality worldwide. Moreover, this hit single paved the way for many musicians joining this cause, by creating or dedicating music to the anti-apartheid movement.

* K. Lyubomirsky

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1984-1985

Springsteen's Role in Politics & Building Community During the Reagan Administration

Ronald Reagan assumed the presidency in January of 1981, leading to "a feeling that the old values and verities would once again have currency," (Scheurer, 1991, p. 219). There was division among Americans, as some felt inspiration from this new era while others became concerned about the future for the United States. When thinking about Bruce Springsteen's 1984 album, "Born in the U.S.A.," the first thought that may come to your mind may be of a white working class man in his blue jeans with the American flag, showing pride in his country and his

masculinity. However, the historical context of the song "Born in the U.S.A." as well as Springsteen's efforts during his time touring in the 1980s, bring a new perspective to Springsteen's political role during the Reagan administration.

Cowie & Boehm (2006) discussed how Springsteen's performances at this time could be interpreted as "backlash masculinity and whiteness," as well as an establishment of "the boundaries between men and women, black and white, heterosexual and homosexual," (p. 353). This idea of Springsteen setting boundaries between groups of people is reaffirmed by the way in which his tour played out. As Werner (2006) states "It was really about bringing white people together. The standing joke was that there were more black people on stage at a Springsteen show than there were in the audience," (p. 299). Werner also goes on to mention that Springsteen seemed to be aware of the racial implication of the "Reagan Rules," which involved a division of community, separating people once again into "us" and "them." Throughout Springsteen's shows, reminders of what it meant to play pure rock and roll and the message "it ain't a party unless everyone's invited" were prominent within the music (p. 301).

While it seemed Springsteen was creating a divide in the community, he actually was aware of many of the issues that began to associate themselves with his performances. He performed rock and soul energizer songs such as "Out in the Street" and "Spirit in the Night," with the hope to reaffirm "his roots in and commitment to the part of America that had least to gain from the Reagan Rules," (Werner, 2006, p. 302). Essentially, Springsteen hoped to bridge a gap between various groups at the time by incorporating a call for community into his tour. Not only did he make changes to which music he was performing, but he also began to make connections to local organizations in the communities he visited, making substantial donations and meeting personally with organizers of these groups to ensure that he could raise awareness to his audience before going on to his next stop on the "Born in the U.S.A." tour. One of the groups he assisted with was the Vietnam Veterans of America, in which the leader expressed that he felt Springsteen's commitment is what ensured that the organization stayed afloat. Another group was the National Union of the Homeless, whose black head representative expressed that Springsteen raised "the issue of homelessness before the whole country," (Werner, 2006, p. 303).

The song "Born in the U.S.A." lyrically serves as an anthem or protest song, with the "right" words, however, these words are placed in the "wrong" setting musically as this song's framework of electrifying rock and roll contrasts with the message. Cowie & Boehm (2006) emphasize that the chorus of the song is "an outcry of hometown values, the search for a shared national identity, an echo of the

social patriotism that once included a modest amount of equality and fraternity along with its allusions to liberty,” (p. 371). This article also discusses Springsteen’s use of rock and roll as the product of “African-American blues and white country music” and his lyrical quotation of the Motown hit “Nowhere to Run,” (p. 372). Essentially, with his use of musical styles and his quotation of this piece, it could be argued that he is uniting black and white experiences, in a shared but separate sense of “rootlessness” in the culture of America.

It is worth noting Springsteen’s current political views, as he recently went on to write a book alongside former President Barack Obama, which was published in October of 2021. He discussed his experience with performances during tours, as well as racial and political divides in the United States, and stated, “In this era, I may play to 100,000, they’re not all democrats. There would be a lot of empty seats if I was only playing to democrats. Here in America, I get a lot of Republican fans,” (Springsteen, 2021, 21:30). He also goes on to discuss “There is room for common ground and when you come to discuss race, race is fascinating, music is one of the places where racial differences seem to be put on hold. When I was a kid, when Motown music came on, great black music that came out of Detroit, everybody got out on the dance floor, white kids, black kids. And it was a moment when the common values and the common ground of that music was felt and experienced by everyone,” (22:15). Springsteen’s political views and outlook on racial divides in the United States seem to align with his idea of bringing people together and forming community through music and his concerts both then and now.

* H. Gotham

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1985

The Music of *Back to the Future*

Movie music in the 1980s became memorable with huge film series beginning, such as *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones*. *Back to the Future*, produced by Bob Gale and Neil Canton, and directed by Robert Zemeckis, remains popular today, with themes of family, love, and commentary on technology and the passage of time. The soundtrack reveals interesting power dynamics between producers and artists, as well as assumptions about audiences’ preferences in regard to the performance of the main character, Marty McFly.

The music supervisor for the film was Bones Howe. Alan Silvestri composed a heroic theme, but “the producers wanted to find a way to integrate a recording artist of the day into the film” (Gaines, 2015). They landed on “Johnny B. Goode” as performed by Marvin Berry & The Starlighters, as well as “The Power of Love” by Huey Lewis & The News, among others. Interestingly, Mark Campbell, lead vocalist of Jack Mack and the Heart Attack, sang for Marty, and didn’t receive credit because filmmakers wanted audiences to believe it was the actor, Michael J. Fox, singing. Howe was sure to compensate Campbell with a percentage of the soundtrack revenue when he heard of this, but the information causes one to question, who is at power here? The producers? Audiences? Furthermore, in the “Enchantment Under the Sea” scene, Marty’s moves were supposed to resemble the rock stars of the 80s, such as Pete Townshend, Jimi Hendrix, and Chuck Berry, as per choreographer Brad Jeffries (Gaines, 2015). Jeffries allegedly spent four weeks teaching Fox to get the moves just right. In the scene, the musicians and teenagers at the Prom are seen reacting to the surprising music that Marty plays, as a note on the differing genres of music of the times. Fox learned how to play “Johnny B. Goode” on the guitar at Paul Hanson’s teaching. However, the guitar riff Marty uses to wake George in a different scene is actually played by Eddie Van Halen, again not Fox. The film makes commentary on the teenage life, both in the 1950s, and the 1980s, in addition to causing audiences to reflect on family morals and the impact of technology.

* A. Budd

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1986

Chess and Cold War Tensions

This week, I decided to open the door to the musical *Chess*. This show was released in 1986 on the West End and 1988 on Broadway. The music was written by Benny Andersson and Bjorn Ulvaeus, who were half of the band ABBA, with a book by Tim Rice. *Chess* follows two Grandmaster chess players, one from the US and one from Soviet Russia. The musical is meant to be an allegory for the tensions between the USA and USSR in the Cold War era. It shows the similarities between the politics at the time and the manipulations that go on during a chess match. During the arms race, each superpower would watch what the other was doing and respond with a 'move' of their own. This is mirrored in the show during the chess match as well as the scheming that goes on behind the scenes.

In the Cold War, it can be noted that many Russians did not have a negative view of Americans, in fact it was almost to a point of ambivalence. Most felt that Americans were under an arrogant administration. However, US citizens were under the impression that all citizens of the USSR were not to be trusted, which led to the Red Scare. This can be seen in the song from *Chess*, "Press Conference." This song is the American player, Freddie, talking to the press about the match and his opponent, Anatoly. He sings, "All soviets deserve abuse." In the very next scene, we see Anatoly and his second, Molokov, discussing the American and he praises him. "I don't need my army of so-called advisors and helpers to tell me the man who's revitalized chess single-handed is more or less out of his brain when it's very clear he's sane." This exchange mirrors the populations of the time as they would have related to each other.

An interesting musical aspect of this show is the duality of musical styles. At the beginning of the show, it is made very clear who is singing by the use of different orchestrations. When we are meant to be listening to American characters, the instruments are electronic, such as an electric guitar, electric bass, and electric keyboard. Whenever there is a Russian singing, we hear a lot of strings, brass, and percussion. This somewhat represents the musical stylings at the time, whereas American musicians were focused more on Rock sounds, the Soviets were listening to folk music. The larger orchestrations also conjure a feeling of grandness that is often associated with Europe, while the rock style is more relatable to

audiences. This can be heard in the songs "The Arbiter" and "Anthem."

I would love to go deeper into this show and the reception it got. It did very well on the West End, but did not stay open on Broadway for very long. It also had an opening in Moscow within the last few years, and I would love to know what reception it received.

* A. Cranmer

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1986

Ladysmith Black Mambazo and Graceland

Imagine the introduction to the song, the Lion Sleeps Tonight: a wimoweh - a wimoweh - a wimoweh etc. Now superimpose the following words with rich harmonies: (A-wa) O kodwa you zo-nge li-sa namhlang (A-wa a-wa) Si-bona kwenze ka kanjani(A-wa a-wa) Amanto mbazane ayeza. Next, envision South African Zulu men dressed in traditional clothing stepping softly to the rhythm and gesturing smoothly with their arms as they sing this bouncy tune. This is how, in 1986, Diamonds on the soles of her shoes, a hit released on Paul Simon's album, *Graceland*, begins. The world had not been exposed to much, if any, South African music of this genre. It was a mix of isicathamiya and mbube. Isicathamiya and Mbube are similar in that they both represent South African a capella vocal groups that utilize distinct rhythms and harmonies. Isicathamiya incorporates various types of dance. Ladysmith Black Mambazo is the South African group featured in Diamonds on the soles of her shoes. They formed in 1960 but did not gain a world stage until the release of *Graceland*. *Graceland* won Grammy of the year

in 1987. Apart from recording with Paul Simon, Ladysmith Black Mombazo has received 5 Grammy awards. 1986 was a pivotal year for South Africa. From 1948, when apartheid sanctioned the long established practice of segregation, until 1986, non-whites were required to carry documentation in order to enter restricted areas. In 1986 the laws requiring documentation, pass laws, were lifted because of economic sanctions put on South Africa by outside countries who disapproved of apartheid. Cultural sanctions were also in place, however, Paul Simon disregarded those sanctions. This has led to much conversation about the ethics of Simon's decision. According to Wikipedia, Simon did not originally intend for Diamonds on the Soles of her Shoes to be accompanied by Ladysmith Black Mombazo. I'm curious to know if that is true, it leaves me with several questions about the purpose and meaning of the song. It seems to contradict what Simon said in an interview that his intention was to create music equal to the quality of the international artists on the album. Either way, there is a lot more I'd like to learn about the collaboration between Simon and Ladysmith Black Mombazo. The meaning of the lyrics is also unclear to me. But what is clear is that the album was a hit and it still sells today.

* K. Francom

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Paul Simon - Diamonds On The Soles Of Her Shoes

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1986

Space Shuttle Challenger Disaster and John Denver's "Flying For Me"

My topic is about the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster of 1986, with a connection to John Denver's song "Flying For Me." For a little background, the day of this disaster was not the first mission that the Challenger embarked on. In the earlier years, the Challenger was the second shuttle to reach space in April 1983, and successfully made it back to Earth after 62 days, 7 hours, 56 minutes, and 22 seconds in space, and launched into many other missions after this. In 1984, President Reagan announced that a

teacher would be selected to participate in a trip to space, which ended up being on the Challenger's tenth mission. And out of 10,000 applicants who had to undergo interviews, medical screening, and astronaut training, Vice President Bush announced the winner of the competition, New Hampshire middle school teacher Christa McAuliffe. McAuliffe was a social studies teacher who was chosen by NASA to develop lessons and teach about space, from space. She considered it to be the "Ultimate Field Trip." In addition to McAuliffe, the shuttle included six other individuals, for a total of seven people aboard the Challenger. Fast forward to January 28th, 1986, the day of the disaster, the Challenger was scheduled to fly its tenth mission. As many people know, just 73 seconds after liftoff, a seal in the shuttle's rocket weakened in the cold temperatures and failed, and hot gas began pouring through the leak. This caused the fuel tank to collapse and tear apart, and resulted in the flood of liquid oxygen and hydrogen creating the huge fireball. There were unfortunately no survivors. This catastrophe really shook the nation, and had a big impact on NASA. Plans to send other civilians to space were put to a halt for 22 years, satellite launches were shifted from the shuttle to reusable rockets, and astronauts were pulled off duties such as repairing satellites, and the Manned Maneuvering Unit was not flown again, to better preserve astronaut safety. I was curious to see how this event had an impact on music, and was very surprised by what I discovered. John Denver loved being a pilot and he had a strong desire to experience space flight, and he was actually the one who helped develop the program where citizens could go on NASA space missions. He himself was in line to be one of those citizens, having passed all the physical and mental tests required to qualify him for space flight. He was not on this flight because President Reagan decided to send a teacher first instead of him, and Denver was busy filming a Disney movie called "The Christmas Gift." He found out about the crash from his son, Zach, and when he repeatedly watched the footage, out came the song, "Flying For Me," which Denver released in 1986. The song is a tribute to the seven lives lost, especially the Challenger's commander, who Denver was good friends with, and their dedication to space exploration. John Denver performed his song "Flying for Me" at a private ceremony held at the Kennedy Space Center in 1986 in honor of the crew members of the Challenger. The song is a beautiful tribute, and provides comfort to its listeners.

* M. Kilker

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1988

Fuck Tha Police: The Anthem of Protest Against Police Brutality

Police brutality in America has been a topic of discussion for decades, and especially within the musical genre of Hip-Hop. One of the most prominent works in the hip hop industry that confronts police brutality head on is "Fuck Tha police" by N.W.A. The rap group consisted of Dr. Dre, Eazy-E, DJ Yella, Ice Cube, and MC Ren. Their 1988 album "Straight Outta Compton" was a massively Influential work in popularizing gangsta rap and bringing light to injustices towards black communities, particularly in South Central Los Angeles.

Crime is a core feature of gangsta rap, and by extension N.W.A. Every member of the group comes from a neighborhood riddled with crime, drugs, and violence (Green, 2018). Compton was the center of this culture of crime, and this area of the United States became a symbol of authenticity for black culture and gangsta rap (Engels, 2014). Compton first began its rise to being an epicenter of violence in the 70s, with Daryl Gates taking a militaristic approach to drugs and violence in the area during his time as LAPD police chief from 1978-1992. "At the time, Daryl Gates, who was the chief of police over at the LAPD, had declared a war on gangs," Ice Cube recalled in 2015. "A war on gangs, to me, is a politically correct word to say a war on anybody you think is a gang member... It meant a war on every black kid with a baseball hat on, with a T-shirt on, some jeans and some tennis shoes. So it was just too much to bear, to be under that kind of occupying force,

who was abusive. It's just, enough is enough. Our music was our only weapon'"(Grow, 2020). N.W.A. was fed up with how black kids in these neighborhoods were being treated, and members Ice Cube and MC Ren decided to use their "only weapon" to put the police in their shoes. "Fuck Tha Police" strategically transforms typical frameworks in order to convey N.W.A.'s message. African Americans that come from underprivileged neighborhoods are often seen as violent criminals in the media (Green, 2018). N.W.A. flips this assumption on its head, depicting themselves as the victims and putting the police on trial. In the narrative of the song, each member of the group serves as attorneys in a trial of a police officer that has wronged them in some way, shape, or form. Each verse takes the listener through the artists' experiences with racial profiling and police brutality. At the end of this courtroom scene, the officer is found guilty and convicted. This changing of rolls challenges the listeners perspective on police and has them question whether they have too much unchecked power. This idea is demonstrated by Ice Cube's statement that police "have the authority to kill a minority."

The delivery of each performer's verse is direct, in your face, and unapologetic. They have a sense of anger, betrayal, and frustration in their tone as well as their lyrics. The song also features several samples of police sirens, gunshots, police knocking on a resident's door, and courtroom muttering when the verdict is announced. Also of note, in between each chorus and the next verse, there is a conversation between a cop and one of the performers. These conversations are portrayals of the act of violence and profiling the cop on trial is accused of committing. During these scenes, a musical motif can be heard that consists of 3 notes that are constantly being repeated in quick succession, evoking a sense of unease and concern from the listener.

* J. Flores

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N.W.A, "Fuck Tha Police"

In 1988, the N.W.A, released the song "Fuck Tha Police", or FTP. The intentions of NWA in writing FTP were to raise awareness of systematic racism within the justice system, specifically towards Black Americans. FTP consists of artists by the name of O'Shea Jackson (Ice Cube), Eric Wright (Easy E), Lorenzo Patterson (MC Ren). Each member of this group grew up in a neighborhood where black men were a target of injustice, and personally experienced injustices that inspired them to write this song. FTP begins by setting the scene in a courtroom, where all 3 men are testifying in front of a court. The rest of the song consists of each man having their chance to "testify" and tell their side of the story. The song ends with a final jab at the police, where the "jury" rules the police guilty of being a "redneck, whitebread, chicken shit motherfucker", which could be perceived as their final attempt at justice in the song. The general tone of the song is easily perceived as angry, as the artists angrily shout while describing their experiences throughout the song. The song is in a minor key, which helps to convey this angry message, and the beat and sound of the song remains constant throughout. I think that this helps to convey the message that this has been a consistent issue throughout many people's experiences, including the artists who speak in this song. The meaning of the song for the artists was that "gangsta rap offered a way of circulating resistance to dominant cultural forms that dismissed and denigrated their experience and existence"(Edgar, 2016). This song was clearly banned from the radio, but still managed to make waves. Perhaps not their intended target audience, White Americans were entranced by NWA's FTP, and the song "channeled national fantasies about the violence and danger that purportedly consume the poorest and most economically fragile communities of color" (Edgar 2016). Another potential reason could be that white teens enjoyed making their parents crazy with songs about violence, drugs, and profanity. This song launched many controversies, and the NWA eventually promoted themselves as "The World's Most Dangerous Group" (Young, 2019). The FBI sent Priority Records, the NWA's publisher, a letter, condemning FTP and its angry nature, saying that violence and assault are wrong and should be condemned. (Whatley, 2021). After their record label publicized this letter, Ren said that when the group "got the letter from the FBI, that's when we knew right there that shit was big," Ren says. "From then on out, it's just been on" (Grow, 2020). After the letter had been published, the song's popularity grew quickly, and other musical groups such as Rage Against the Machine covered it. In response to this letter, NWA typically kept

this song out of their setlists, except for when the group played it in Detroit in 1989. After the performance, the police reportedly chased them down into a small room where they all sat for a while. The police then came in to ask them for autographs and stated that they liked the song. All members of NWA obliged except for Ice Cube (Grow, 2020). When people hear FTP nowadays, they are still able to connect it to present-day events, and it is still just as relevant to the political climate in terms of police brutality.

* K. Masters

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1989

Billy Joel and "We Didn't Start the Fire"

We Didn't Start the Fire originated from a conversation that Billy Joel was having with a friend of Sean Lennon's. The conversation, as recited by Joel himself in 1994, is summed up below:

Lennons friend states "It's a terrible time to be 21!". Joel replies: "Yeah, I remember when I was 21 – I thought it was an awful time and we had Vietnam, and y'know, drug problems, and civil rights problems and everything seemed to be awful". The friend replies "Yeah, yeah, yeah, but it's different for you. You were a kid in the fifties and everybody knows that nothing happened in the fifties". Joel responds, "Wait a minute, didn't you hear of the Korean War or the Suez Canal Crisis?"

In this Q&A held in 1994, Joel says that this conversation is what led him to writing this song, because it led him to listing off events that occurred, one after another. Though this song becomes well-known, Joel expresses his dislike for the song and criticizes it by saying "it's one of the worst melodies I ever wrote" during a concert in 2014, and he criticizes it much earlier in 1994 by saying "No, I wrote one song already and I don't think it was really that good to begin with, melodically. Look at the melody of it."

Despite his distaste for the song he wrote, it continued to grow popular, to the point that CBS and Scholastic Inc distributed the song to 40,000 junior and senior high-school classrooms within one week in January 1990. There was some criticism to this choice, such as writer Jerry Adler, who says “Commit this song to memory, kids, and you are guaranteed to have learned absolutely nothing.” Other’s respond differently to this song and even find ways to use it in education, such as Michael Longrie who uses it in his first-year American history class. In his article, he describes the form of the song as the following: “For those unfamiliar with “Fire,” the song is made up of a string of terms, arranged in couplets, moving forward in time from 1949. Joel mentions items from each year from 1949 to 1963, then inexplicably assembles a condensed list for the years 1964 to 1989. A refrain repeats after every four years.”

In his classroom, he played the song as students followed along with the lyrics, and they were asked to two terms that they were unfamiliar with and research them. After writing a paper on their term and the impact the term had on history, students were asked to identify two or three terms that they would include in the song if it were written to reflect their generation, thus connecting the song to their present day life.

Two weeks ago, Fall Out Boy released their own cover of We Didn’t Start the Fire, covering news from 1989-2023. Considering how much has happened in the past 34 years, it makes me wonder when/if societal issues will ever be met with justice so that there is some peace. Joels study of events through this song has taught him that “If we don’t learn from the mistakes of history, we’re doomed to repeat them,” and I wonder if we have, if it’s gotten worse, or if it’s just as bad as it’s always been.

* E. Mavraj

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*Informal, not part of my actual source list, [article](#) that talks about Billy Joels reaction to Fall Out Boy’s cover (not to our surprise, he’s cool with it).

1989

Billy Joel, “Leningrad”

I am choosing to examine Billy Joel’s “Leningrad”, one of my all-time favorite songs, for this week’s Open the Door project. Released on “Storm Front” in 1989, “Leningrad” is a lesser-known Joel song- the most popular song on that album, also political, is most likely “We Didn’t Start the Fire”. “Leningrad” is a solemn, poignant song that accounts two personal stories from children of WWII and the Cold War.

Joel toured the then-USSR in 1987, as tensions were finally decreasing between the two countries (Runnymede Times, 2022). In his dissertation, Jones notes that the reason Joel was able to tour Russia during this time was likely due to Gorbachev’s policy of “glasnost”, which was widely interpreted as “freedom of speech” (Jones, 2011). He adds that under glasnost, “Soviet officials became more amenable to bringing Western entertainers to their country, in a kind of cultural exchange” (2011). This did not mean relations were necessarily amended between the US and the USSR, since the regime’s senior representatives left the show early (Brown, 2018). Joel had his staff then move younger people to the front of the crowd to liven up the atmosphere, but even then, the concert-goers were afraid to do so, knowing the sticky political climate (2018).

On his USSR tour, Joel met someone very important, who became the inspiration behind “Leningrad”- a Russian circus clown named Viktor Razinov (2022). The contrasting stories of the two children in this song are of Billy Joel himself, and of Viktor Razinov. The song tells two perspectives of children having to grow up in the atrocities of war, or war-like conflicts. Viktor lost his father in WWII, during the siege of Leningrad. He later enlisted in the Red Army when he was older. He “drank his vodka straight” to drown his pain, and ultimately became a circus clown in Russia. He attended all six of Joel’s performances during that tour and ended up forming a strong friendship with Joel. He wanted to bring joy to the lives of Russian children and made Joel’s daughter, Alexa, laugh (2022). Joel’s story is marked by growing up in “McCarthy times”, with air raid drills, and the constant fear of Soviet attack (2022).

The song has certain musical elements that are significant to the song’s story. First, the tempo of the song is 132 bpm, but is primarily felt in a slow, pesante half-time. It mimics the heaviness and despair in every step of the soldiers - on both sides. The song alternates verses for Viktor and Joel, each with their own distinct melodies. Joel’s verses enter at an octave directly above Viktor’s, with the melody

resolving smoothly into Viktor's next verse. A music video was released that captured real images and video clips from the war and Joel's meetings with Viktor (YouTube, 2009).

Part of what makes this song so touching is that it is another "anti-war" song, but cuts much deeper as a result of adding personal stories. It is another example of a song that highlights and empathizes with the struggle of the opposing force, like in Vietnam protest music. It places an emphasis on the child's lens of war and growing up knowing nothing but loss and fear.

I have wondered about Joel's political affiliation, if any, for a long time. Is he a political writer? He references political events or concepts in a number of songs. Brown notes that Joel has taken varied stances on events/politicians, but has a deep connection to his country (Brown, 2018). Brown writes a chapter on Joel in his book "Popular Music and Public Diplomacy", claiming Joel to be a "blue-collar musical diplomat" (2018). Brown claims that Joel successfully marketed himself as a "cultural ambassador who could transcend the elitism of the political and diplomatic sphere by aligning himself with the general populace in both the United States and Soviet Union" (2018). One funny tidbit: in a concert, Joel dedicated his song "The Entertainer" to Donald Trump, "mocking [him] and minimizing the legitimacy of his standing as a presidential candidate" (2018).

LISTEN TO THIS SONG! :)

* S. Berkley

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1989

"One," Metallica, and the Grammy Awards

For my third Open the Door, I am looking at the performance by Metallica at the 1988 Grammys, as well as looking at the ensuing result of the award for Best Metal

Performance (the first of its kind). Following the death of their bassist Cliff Burton, Metallica released their fourth album, where their attempts at social critique and commentary go into a more direct and pointed direction. One of the largest examples of this is also one of the band's biggest hits. The song "One" loosely follows the story of the 1939 novel *Johnny Got a Gun*, which later received a film adaptation that Metallica used footage from for a music video. The story follows a World War I soldier who is severely wounded by a landmine, losing his limbs, ability to speak, as well as his sense of sight and sound. This explicitly anti-war sentiment is compounded by the idea that ultimately, this atrocity happened for no real reason. Despite the perception of metal music and metal fans (metalheads) as being deranged, violent, and manipulative, the album was an immense success, and eventually went double platinum. By this time, metal music had reached a point of popularity that it was receiving mainstream recognition, and received a category at the 1988 Grammy Awards, with the title being "Best Hard Rock/Heavy Metal Performance." Not only was Metallica nominated for their album, they were also invited to perform the song "One" as the opening performance of the evening. Because of this, many believed that Metallica were slated to win the Grammy, as they were at a peak of popularity and success, and the academy seemed to recognize this rapidly growing fame. However, when Alice Cooper and Lita Ford read the winner, it is shockingly revealed that Jethro Tull won the award, which they failed to attend the ceremony out of belief that Metallica would win. This song and performance stands as a landmark to the establishment of heavy metal in our mainstream culture, as well as the explicit political ties that are directly within the song itself.

For those interested, here is a link to both the performance itself, and the reading of the award: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iKgeG32sZXE>

* M. Smith

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Heavy Metal Groupies, Musicians, and Fans, Self and Identity.

"One." ...And Justice for All. Performance by Metallica. Lossless Records. 1988.

1992

MTV's Rock the Vote

MTV truly changed the way that artists could brand themselves to audiences across the world. They could create music videos that would widen the scope of their careers. The channel was not only used to promote music of the time, but it was a way to educate the youth of America about matters that were affecting them at that time. One of the most prominent examples of this was during the 1992 election. A year before MTV partnered with Patrick Lippert who was the founder of the "Rock The Vote" movement, which was a way to, "Rock the Vote, a voter registration effort which recognizes that we have a mutual stake in increasing voter turnout, regardless of the voters' actual choices at the polls" (Mattern, 1998). MTV recognized the rising support for this movement and wanted to expand its mission to expose young voters to issues about the issues that were affecting them. MTV did not want to limit its potential investors to pull out because of their political stances, so it was important for them to feature political content from both the Republican and Democratic parties. "The network also conducted weekly issue-oriented news specials, covered both the Republican and the Democratic conventions, and aired political commercials. Additionally, the network interviewed high profile candidates such as Al Gore, Bob Dole, and Bill Clinton" (Sommers, 1998). According to an article from Forbes Magazine, "1992 was the first election in decades where the 18 to 24 year old vote grew by double digits. But more than that, the convergence of a youthful President, young adult journalists and the most popular artists of the day drew a line in the sand that would change the tone and voice of political coverage, and who was invited to participate in it. RTV and MTV paved the way for many of the youthful news brands emerging today" (Baltin, 2020).

I think that the youth vote is something that we are seeing a high importance of in today's society. Music and artists are a great way to show young voters the importance of these issues. This is why Rock the Vote used high profile artists to promote these messages. "Music, at its core, is a reflection of the social issues and attitudes of the day. So who better to deliver that message than Madonna, LL Cool J, Iggy Pop and countless others" (Baltin, 2020). Artists were asked to film commercials that represented their work and how it should empower them to go out and vote for the issues that they deemed important. Madonna filmed one of the most controversial but effective

commercials for the movement. An article from Vogue Magazine states, "At the time, the Queen of Pop boasted a Marilyn Monroe-style coif, and was snapping and singing with her backup dancers, all while wrapped in the American flag. (Underneath it, she wears red lingerie.) She sang the song "Vogue" but replaced the word with "Vote." The off-the-cuff tune had the following lyrics: "Abe Lincoln, Jefferson Tom/They didn't need the atomic bomb/We need beauty, we need art/We need government with a heart/Don't give up your freedom of speech/Power to the people is in our reach." (She also rapped: 'If you don't vote, you're gonna get a spanking.') The look was controversial and it drew criticism from Veterans of Foreign Wars for how Madonna draped herself in the flag. In response, her publicist noted: 'It is essential that people should vote. She's trying to get that message across in a humorous, dramatic way. But she's very serious about the issue'" (Satenstein, 2020).

The Forbes article also discusses how the relationship between music and politics changed during this time. "It's not rock and roll anymore. It's a much bigger field of aggrieved musicians, who are part of a community, rightfully aggrieved or pissed off. It's not like white rock and roll musicians are being pulled over by cops. It's a different era we're living in. When we helped elect Bill Clinton he was the first baby boom generation, he was the guy who could play sax. It was easier for us to get kids to vote because we went from a dialogue to a certain extent inventing the idea of a youth vote, of having a significant ability to win a certain election. If the kids vote the whole nature of politics would be different. And that was a thing I really understood quite frankly. You put a youth vote in the mix of politics and politics becomes different" (Baltin, 2020).

* B. Worden

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Open the Door Projects—Week 4: 1991-2008

1991-2014

Controversy and Critical Reception Post 9/11 of Adams's *The Death of Klinghoffer*

1992

"Killing in the Name", Rage Against the Machine, Rodney King and Police Brutality

1992

The Cellist of Sarajevo

1993

The LA Riots and David Bowie's "Black Tie White Noise"

1993-1996

The Notorious Rivalry

1994

One Song Glory/ Will I? from *Rent*

1994

The Cranberries, Politics in Ireland, & The Power and Impacts of Fame

1995

You Oughta Know about Alanis

1996

"Wannabe" by the Spice Girls

1997

Meredith Brooks, "Bitch," and Lilith Fair

1997

Elton John, *Candle in the Wind*

1998

Tupac Shakur's "Changes": A Song for Social Justice

1999

Blink-182's "Enema of the State" and spread of Pop-Punk

2000

"Sleep Now In The Fire" by Rage Against The Machine

2000

Metallica vs. Napster

2001

Why? Jonathan Larson and the AIDS Epidemic

2001

Artists Against AIDS Worldwide, "What's Going On"

2001-....

Soundscaping Iraq - Music for Comfort and Torture

2001

Los Tigres Del Norte and Their Views on Immigration Issues

2002

Eminem, Whiteness, and "White America"

2002

Country Music Post 9/11 and "Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue"

2003

Wicked: Empowerment and Activism

2003

"Not Ready to Make Nice": The Controversy of and Response to The [Dixie] Chicks in the Bush Era

2003

Madonna and Gender, "American Life" / "American Life," Madonna, and the Invasion of Iraq

2004

Green Day, *American Idiot*

2004

"Toxic": Not Just a Song

2005

System of a Down's "Holy Mountains" and the Armenian Genocide

2005

Tween Pop: The Cheetah Girls vs The Pussycat Dolls

2005

Hurricane Katrina, Cultural loss, response by MENC (now NAfME)

2007-2008

The Obama Campaign and "Signed, Sealed, Delivered"

2008

In The Heights, Lin-Manuel Miranda, and Latino Representation

2008

Dead Space

1991-2014

Controversy and Critical Reception Post 9/11 of Adams's *The Death of Klinghoffer*

In 1991 John Adams brought to the operatic world *The Death of Klinghoffer*. *Klinghoffer* is based on the 1985 hijacking of the passenger liner Achille Lauro and the murder of a disabled Jewish American Leon Klinghoffer. Since the attack, the Palestinian Liberation Front has been deemed a terrorist group by the United States Government. Upon release of the opera, it faced immense criticism as having anti-Semitic inklings in the libretto. Further, the opening scene depicting an American Jewish family was completely cut after the Brooklyn Academy of Music premiere as being harshly stereotypical of Jewish American families. Additionally, Klinghoffer's daughters attended the premiere at BAM. They stated the following

after watching the production “We are outraged at the exploitation of our parents and the cold-blooded murder of our father as the centerpiece of a production that appears to us to be anti-Semitic....While we understand artistic license, when it so clearly favors one point of view it is biased. Moreover, the juxtaposition of the plight of the Palestinian people with the cold-blooded murder of an innocent disabled American Jew is both historically naive and appalling.” (Longobardi, pg. 274) Adams addressed the criticism afterward by stating that the opera does not condemn terrorism but rather examines their perspective. The opera became rather more riveting for Americans specifically post the 9/11 attacks. “The opera’s role in this process of grieving was highlighted when the Boston Symphony Orchestra canceled a performance of the opera’s choruses immediately after 9/11, prompting a debate in many publications about the role of art and representation in the midst of terrorism’s devastation.” (Longobardi, pg. 276) Due to the sensitivity surrounding 9/11, the work was ultimately not economically funded by any opera houses around the globe which sparked a television adaptation of the work by Penny Woolcock in 2003. The adaptation called *Klinghoffer* came about as an outlet to show a change in the depiction of racial identities in the post-9/11 United States. (Maeder & Reybrouck, pg. 211)

Fast-forward twenty years since its initial release and criticism the Metropolitan Opera boldly decides to stage the opera for the first time in 2014. Peter Gelb, the Met’s general manager is hit with an immense amount of protest outside the opera house with protesters claiming that the Met Opera is glorifying terrorism and racism within the libretto is still present. Escalating things further the Anti-Defamation League sets up a meeting with Gelb to negotiate terminating the production, but ultimately they reach a compromise to strip the production from being streamed across movie theaters globally. (Rose, 2014) The opera was attended by many stars such as Ruth Bader Ginsberg and Barack Obama. Critically, the opera still gathered mixed feelings, however, a New York author interviewed after the performance stated “There are some, I think Giuliani among them, who immediately bridle at any attempt to understand the terrorist mind,” says Scheid. “But it’s important to look deeply inside implacable conflicts like those in the Middle East, and to recognize that terror is not committed by alien beings, but by human beings. Failure to recognize that dooms us to more of the same.” (Rile, 2014)

*E. Becker

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1992

"Killing in the Name", Rage Against the Machine, Rodney King and Police Brutality

“Killing in the Name” is the second song off Rage Against the Machine’s debut, self-titled album. The song is extremely powerful, beginning with a wave of distorted guitar, and an ominous m9 interval, before moving the main riff. The combination of metal and rap music make for the perfect protest sound. The aggression of the instruments matched with the clarity and punctuation of the vocal message makes for a highly effective political message. The band name itself was taken from a political punk rock fanzine called, No Answers. It highlights the band’s willingness to speak out about the systemic problems that they see in America, one of those being racial profiling.

This song was inspired by the events surrounding the beating of Rodney King in Los Angeles on March 3rd 1991. Rodney King was engaged in a car chase with Los Angeles police, after the car was pulled over, other members of the LAPD came to “assist” in the arrest. Officers claim King resisted arrest, and continued to taser and beat King with batons. King suffered 11 skull fractures, permanent brain damage, broken teeth and kidney failure. A man living across the street, George Holliday, was able to capture the event on his camcorder and gave it to a local news station. Outrage over the incident forced the four officers to stand trial for the use of excessive force against King. Three of the officers were ultimately acquitted and the remaining officer, Powell, had one of his charges dropped. This enraged a city who was already upset about law enforcement’s treatment of people of color. Riots erupted across the city for five days. “Killing in the Name” offered a counter narrative for young people of color, who were often taught at a young age “rules of engagement” when dealing with white authority figures. This song is an anthem of defiance.

Some notable lines include:

“Some of those that work forces, are the same that burn crosses.” This line compares police to the KKK, intentionally stirring fear in minority groups with displays of violence.

“You justify those that die, by wearing the badge, they’re the chosen whites.” This line highlights the drastically white, male dominated police demographics and how the badge gives them the freedom to kill as they see fit.

“Fuck you, I won’t do what you tell me!” This line encourages listeners to stop being submissive to the controlling forces, in this case white law enforcement.

* M. Hogan

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1992

The Cellist of Sarajevo

The break-up of Yugoslavia led to war in several Balkan countries including Bosnia and Herzegovina. After a referendum on independence took place in March 1992 with about 60% of citizens voting in favor of it. Despite the majority consensus, there was a boycott that immediately began, which led to the deadliest conflict of the disintegrating of Yugoslavia.

On the morning of May 26th 1992, the siege of Sarajevo worsened when 22 civilians were murdered while waiting in line to buy bread. Local and principal cellist of the Sarajevo Philharmonic Orchestra Vedran Smailović responded by playing his cello in the ruins of Sarajevo. In full concert attire, he performed Albinoni’s *Adagio in G Minor* in Sarajevo’s National Library for 22 consecutive days, in honor of each of the lives lost. With personal connections to the lives lost, he also played at funerals, bomb shelters, schools, and other locations.

Images of Smailović playing in the National Library ruins brought attention to the violence occurring in the area. Though Smailović was not intending to make a grand gesture, he later stated that “his cello was his weapon” and recognized that playing in the ruins left an impact on those who saw the photograph and sent a message toward peace. In an NPR interview in 1999, he reflects on horrors of ethnic cleansing that he went through and shares that it was painful to see a similar thing happening in Kosovo. He related this to his own experience by saying “I would be happy that each of them have a music instrument and now they go together and play. It will be amazing.”

In addition to thinking about the impact music can have on war-torn countries, Smailović begins composing and releases an album with the title “Sarajevo and Belfast” that were written in collaboration with artists such as Pete Seeger and Joen Baez. Other artists are inspired from his act and write music, including David Wild, who wrote a piece for solo cello titled “The Cellist of Sarajevo,” which was recorded and performed by Yo-Yo Ma. Two additional significant events include U2’s performance in Sarajevo in 1997 as part of their PopMart tour, and the release of a book titled “The Cellist of Sarajevo” written by Steven Galloway, that was published without prior consulting Smailović.

* E. Mavraj

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1993

The LA Riots and David Bowie's "Black Tie White Noise"

In 1992, racial tensions across the country reached a boiling point in the face of the LA riots. In 1991, motorist Rodney King was pulled over by four white LAPD officers following a high speed chase. An altercation followed in which the officers struck King with batons and continued assailing him when he fell to the ground. The incident was caught on film and widely broadcasted, sparking outrage at the violence. Despite growing public frustration surrounding the case, the officers were acquitted on all but one charge. The African-American community in Los Angeles exploded in outrage at the injustice, and "...over six days, carnage took place across Los Angeles and, tragically, 63 people lost their lives, and a further 2,383 suffered injuries. Furthermore, it's also estimated there was \$1 billion of damage to properties" (Taysom and Taysom, 2022). This brought racial tensions across the United States directly into the spotlight, inspiring numerous artistic responses to the event. One such response came from cultural icon and rock star David Bowie. Bowie was an English singer turned American superstar, who left his mark on pop culture through his eclectic musical style, and unabashedness in his artistic image. After meeting Somali fashion model Iman Abudulmajid in 1990, the two were married in Lausanne, Switzerland, and aimed to return to California shortly after to go house hunting. When they arrived however, they were caught squarely in the middle of the riots, forced into sequestering in their hotel room for the duration of the incident. Bowie described the event after, saying it "...felt more like a prison riot than anything else. It felt as if innocent inmates of some vast prison were trying to break out..." (Taysom and Taysom, 2022). Bowie had never understood America's relationship with race, and was an outspoken critic of platforms like MTV that refused to give black artists more airtime in previous years. Bowie wrote his album, "Black Tie White Noise" (Bowie, 2018), as his first solo effort in six years. Combining elements of jazz, funk, rock, and dance music, its confluence of musical styles culminated in an experience that was "...some of Bowie's most accessible music in years" (Newman, 1993). While it was partially inspired by his recent marriage and effort to reflect on the good and bad experiences he and his wife had been through, it was the violence of the riots that moved him into sharing his thoughts. The title song by the same contains lyrics directly addressing the violence: "I'm lookin' through African eyes/Lit by the glare of an L.A. fire/I've got a face, not just my race" (Gilmore, 2016). The album was written to address racial tensions with the hope of improving them. It featured artist Al B Sure! on the track. His sly humor and clever word play are present through the entirety of the album, despite addressing more serious topics. Although "the album still had one foot in an overtly commercial sound... it also looked at the real world and

pain with new understanding" (Gilmore, 2016). Continuing with the trend of his career, Bowie remained outspoken in his stance on racial injustice and was unafraid of sharing his message through his music.

* E. Weber

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1993-1996

The Notorious Rivalry

The rivalry between two iconic figures of hip-hop history, 2Pac and The Notorious B.I.G., marked a tumultuous period in the 1990s. Both artists emerged as pillars of the genre, representing the East Coast and West Coast respectively, and their feud intensified the already existing tension between the two coasts.

Tupac Shakur, known as 2Pac, was born in Harlem, New York and moved often with his mother. They went to Baltimore and then California, where they stayed and Tupac's love of music and poetry began to grow. He joined the rap game in 1991 with his album *2pacalypse Now*. On the other side of the country, Christopher Wallace, aka The Notorious B.I.G., was making waves in the East Coast hip-hop scene, hailing from Brooklyn, New York. A demo of his was spotlighted by *Source* magazine, and his first single "Party and Bullshit" came in 1993 (Chang).

The rivalry between 2Pac and Biggie can be traced back to the early 1990s. Initially, the two rappers had a friendly relationship, which began in 1993 when they met at a party (Milner). Tupac had respect for Biggie due to his talent, and gifted him a bottle of Hennessy. Their relationship

began its decline in 1994, when 2Pac was invited to record on a track for Little Shawn, who knew Puff and Biggie. While approaching Quad Recording Studios, 2Pac was gunned down. He then made his way up the elevator to be greeted by Puff and Biggie, which he said later seemed to look guilty (Milner). This led to 2Pac believing they were involved with the shooting, and left a sour taste in his mouth.

Biggie's "Who Shot Ya?" was released in 1995, shortly after the Quad Studios shooting and featured ambiguous lyrics, leading many to speculate it was a diss track aimed at 2Pac. Though Biggie denied the allegations, the song only deepened the feud. As a response to this, 2Pac released "Hit 'Em Up" in 1996, an aggressive diss track targeting Biggie and his crew, that further escalated tensions. In the song, 2Pac launched scathing attacks on Biggie, accusing him of betrayal and challenging his credibility as an artist. "Fuck Bad Boy as a staff, record label and as a motherfucking crew. And if you want to be down with Bad Boy, then fuck you too." 2Pac's tone is incredibly threatening and filled with rage. He declares war on Bad Boy Records, Biggie's record label, and anyone who is affiliated with them, while also proclaiming himself and his crew at Death Row Records as "Bad Boy killers" (Apple) (Cramer).

Tragically, the rivalry reached its peak in 1996 with the untimely deaths of both 2Pac and The Notorious B.I.G., who were gunned down in separate drive-by shootings just 6 months apart. Their rivalry, while short, intensified the East Coast vs. West Coast feud that had been building during the past decade.

* J. Flores

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1994

One Song Glory/ Will I? from *Rent*

On the surface, Johnathan Larson's *Rent*, based loosely on Puccini's *La Boheme*, displays the stories of a diverse group of friends living and struggling to pay their rent while living in New York City in 1989. While this theme is

pretty universal, Larson's work also serves as a political and social commentary on AIDS crisis. Towards the beginning of the musical, the protagonist, Roger, finds out that he is HIV positive. This is when he sits down and writes one last song by which he wants to be remembered. This leads him to write One Song Glory. Each night, Roger performs One Song Glory, which Carrie McGourdy describes as "the bitter and desperate cry of Roger to fulfill his goal of writing one song before AIDS claims his life" (McGourdy, 2004). When interviewed about his performance of the song, Ryan Link, who played Roger in the Broadway production of *Rent* in 2003, shared that Roger is "on a timeline and goes back and forth between that sense of hope and being able to deliver one song with the despair of dying. It's an internal struggle between creation and destruction" (McGourdy, 2004). Later in the interview, Link shares that Larson's goal with *Rent* was to help us love and accept each others differences and live for the present moment.

This song, along with Will I?, uses repetition in order to emphasize their intended messages and demonstrate that these thoughts and questions are constant for the characters. Both songs serve as self-reflection of life as one is dying of AIDS. Will I? takes place during a Life Support meeting and expresses the pain and fear of living a life with AIDS. This was inspired by a real event that occurred in Larson's life, in which he attended a support meeting to help him grieve the death of a close friend. During one of the Friends in Deed meetings, a man stood up and said that he was not afraid of dying, but he was afraid of losing his dignity, which inspired the song. The people present at the Life Support meeting in the show share the names the names of Larson's friends who died. In the Broadway show, the names of the characters in that particular scene were changed nightly to honor loved ones of the cast members who were living with or had died from AIDS. In this scene, "despite differences in gender, ethnicity, sexuality and other aspects of lived experience, characters at the Life Support meeting interweave the same open and unanswerable questions about their diagnoses" (Ellis, 2011). The song's lyrics are as follows:

Will I lose my dignity?

Will someone care?

Will I wake tomorrow from this nightmare?

The fact that the LGBTQ community was not accepted during this time made the queerness in *Rent* diminish "the show's potential political statement, embodied in Larson's unabashed depiction of Queer life in the East Village of the 1980" (Lewis, 2007). When the show opened on Broadway in 1996, it won Best Musical at the Tonys. Larson also won two posthumous Tonys for Best Book and Best Score, as well as the Pulitzer Prize for drama.

Larson was writing his autobiographical musical *Tick, Tick, Boom!* at the same time as *Rent*'s development. He finished *Tick, Tick, Boom!* in 1991. Larson died the day before *Rent*'s Off-Broadway premiere, and ten days before his 36th birthday of an aneurysm. The performance was made public to only close family and friends. Many of the cast members said that this performance acted as a memorial and tribute to Larson's life.

* L. Spencer

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1994

The Cranberries, Politics in Ireland, & The Power and Impacts of Fame

The Cranberries formed their Irish rock band group in 1990, initially only consisting of men within the group, which created a hesitancy around the initial idea of their name "The Cranberries," as they felt it indicated that the group was led by a female singer. However, Dolores O'Riordan did become their lead singer and the name stuck with the group as "the name was now appropriate for this female-led band," (Metzer, 2008).

In 1994, The Cranberries released "Zombie" and later, in 2009, released the music video that accompanied this song. According to Song (2022), this piece had the sound of "angry grunge" with aggressive lyrical elements (p. 200). This piece expresses the anger and grief that the members of The Cranberries felt as they expressed their feelings regarding the 1993 Warrington bombings in which two boys, ages 3 and 12, were killed. Overall, "fifty-six people were wounded" in the bombings. This was an attack by the Irish Republican Army and particularly was impactful as it "seemed to have been carried out in a way almost calculated to cause harm to ordinary people," (Darnton, 1993). The song's rock-and-roll sound gives the song a powerful foundation for seriousness and authenticity as the group sings about the fighting continuing since 1916 and addresses the depressing images of loss and tragedy as a result of this violence in Ireland.

Not only did The Cranberries address politics and issues in Ireland, but they went on to discuss the power of fame

and the impacts it can have on musicians and other famous figures. They specifically confronted this issue within the song "I Just Shot John Lennon" from their 1996 album *To the Faithful Departed*. The song's general sound is an upbeat rock song, however, features very clear, vivid, and shocking gunshot sounds at the end of the piece. The song's lyrics depict the scene of John Lennon's assassination and state that "he paid the price," (Casanovas, 2023). Unfortunately, as these lyrics express, fame cannot occur without a cost and could potentially lead to costing someone their life. The song's lyrics also state "John Lennon's life was no longer a debate. He should have stayed at home, he should have never cared." These lyrics suggest the idea that John Lennon had been a controversial musician in his activism and also, suggest that if he had "never cared" about social and political issues, his life may have been spared. Dolores O'Riordan mentioned later that this song is about "someone my age being deprived of seeing him in the flesh. I also made sure I didn't mention the name of the man who took his life, because he's as irrelevant as John Lennon is extraordinary," (White, 1996). In another piece by The Cranberries, "I'm Still Remembering," they also mention John F. Kennedy's assassination, someone who also paid the price of fame. Overall, both of these examples express a fear of stalking, assassination, and Dolores O'Riordan's own fears for personal security as someone who was at the peak of their fame.

* H. Gotham

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1995

You Oughta Know about Alanis

In the summer of 1995, a young artist released an album that would change the landscape of the music business forever. *Jagged Little Pill* was Alanis Morissette's third studio album and made her a worldwide sensation. This album focused on many aspects related to the rising third wave of feminism. One of the heavy focuses of this third wave of feminism was the reclamation of female sexuality. "The album is a reflection of a young woman refusing to compromise. It's harsh, tender, vulgar, thoughtful, funny, resentful, self-assured, and above all it's emotionally complex, which is precisely what women are encouraged not to be" (Garland, 2015). This album benefited from the rise of riot grrrl groups in the early 90's. It gave women a space to create music in the heavily male dominated rock genre. Alanis Morissette took the momentum from this movement and became a critical and commercial success. "Jagged Little Pill" was nominated for nine Grammy Awards in 1996, of which it won five. At 21, Morissette became the youngest artist in history to win Album of the Year" (Garland, 2015). What I am looking at in this project is the first single released on the album, You Oughta Know.

You Oughta Know has strong discussions about a previous relationship. It explores the desires of hoping that your ex lover does not have as satisfying of a sexual relationship as they did with you. "This frank discussion about having a sexual past, present, and future is sexually liberating for women. The way she sang the song with such anger is also key to making her vulnerable to hurt feelings, but also aggressive in her own sexual comeback to the man's transgressions" (Schomburg, 2023). Throughout the entirety of the album, Alanis uses a different voice to tell the story of the song. "She was also adept at playing different characters as the songs warranted it. Morissette channels a vindictive, scorned ex with snarls on 'You Oughta Know'" (Zaleski, 2015).

The release of this song was a breakthrough success even with the lyrics that had to be altered for radio broadcast. "While 'You Oughta Know' had to be edited for radio play because of the sexually explicit lyrics, the song still includes a line where Morissette asks her former lover if the one he left her for would 'go down on you in a theater.' Her revenge to her lover for leaving her for an older woman is also described, 'cause the joke that you laid in the bed was me/and I'm not gonna fade as soon as you close your eyes and you know it/and everytime I scratch my nails down someone else's back/I hope you feel it.' It is

unusual to hear women describing sex in such graphic terms on the radio" (Schilt, 2003). This was a liberating song for many women to hear another female describe stories of sexual experiences such as this. Maie Pauts, who was a radio announcer in Toronto during the release of this song states, "I think it blew us away as someone who was not only working in the industry but as also a female listening to other female artists. What stood out to me was that [Alanis] was accepting her vulnerability but she definitely was not, shall we say, a victim. She was very angry, she was very aggressive. And I think the tone of the whole Jagged Little Pill album was one that embraced women for all that we are. Yes, we are women who have emotions and, like anybody else, weaknesses, but that doesn't mean that we don't have our strengths. And I really think that that spoke to us. To a lot of our audience" (Schomburg, 2023). *You Oughta Know* also exhibits this feeling of anger and strength through its use of rock sounds. In the opening, the instruments are soft as there is a hope for happiness in this future relationship. As the song continues to build, and feelings of anger at the thoughts of previous sexual experiments, the drums and electric guitars begin to ramp up until the chorus where she fully unleashes her anger.

* B. Worden

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1996

"Wannabe" by the Spice Girls

The Spice Girls are a British girl group that rose to fame in the 90's and were one of the most successful and iconic acts of the decade. In the 90's they led the teen pop resurgence and were a major part of the Cool Britannia era. The group consisted of five members who each have

their own personality and role in the band. The Spice Girls were formed in 1994 after an extensive audition process and targeted a young female fanbase. After brainstorming a lot of names for their group the girls came to terms with the word “spice.” This was because this word reflected their intention to add some spice to the music industry. The group’s popularity was not just limited to their music, but they became a global cultural phenomenon. The girls’ fashion choices sparked trends around the world and each member in the group’s persona resonated with a broad audience. The Spice Girls were known for popularizing the concept of “girl power” which encouraged young girls and women to be confident, independent, and supportive of each other. In 1999/2000, the group decided to go on an indefinite hiatus. In the meantime, there were occasional reunions and individual projects. However, in 2007, all five members reunited for a successful world tour.

The Spice Girls were known for promoting themes of girl power and empowerment in their music and public image. They had an impact on popular culture and discussions surrounding gender, empowerment, and societal norms. The group’s huge success and message of girl power had sparked many conversations about feminism and the representation of women in the media. Many people including fans saw the Spice Girls as icons of the third-wave feminist movement which sought to empower women and redefine gender roles in the late 20th century. Overall, the Spice Girls’ had a worldly impact on their fans and broader discussions around empowerment and gender roles through their music and message of girl power.

In 1996, the Spice Girls released their song “Wannabe” which became their breakthrough single and established them as global pop sensations. This song is a very catchy and energetic pop song which blends the elements of dance-pop and R & B. The melody and catchy chorus is what made this song of theirs an instant hit. The lyrics specifically in this song carry a message of female empowerment and friendship. In addition, they emphasize the importance of strong female bonds which encourages women to support and uplift each other. That being said, “Wannabe” became an anthem for the third-wave feminist movement in the 90’s. Its message of girl power and empowerment was highly significant in discussion of gender equality. This song in particular as well as the group, represented a new wave of pop culture which their work through this song contributed to challenging traditional gender roles and promoted female agency. They empowered young girls and women to be more confident, assertive, and unapologetic to themselves. Overall, the lyrics address the value of female friends over romantic relationships which became the symbol of female empowerment.

* V. Vespucci

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1997

Meredith Brooks, “Bitch,” and Lilith Fair

For Open the Door #3 I examined the song “Bitch” by Meredith Brooks (1997), in the context of its performance in the Lilith Fair. In the first article by Westmoreland, there is an analysis of Lilith Fair and the song “Bitch.” In the article it states “Lilith Fair and “Bitch” represent a restrained, moderate anger, which highlights a “celebratory” message; the song and festival can be read as responses to the Riot Grrrl movement, which relied on visceral anger to reject rigid gender roles.” (Westmoreland, 2001). There is also some writing about this being a continuation of the third wave of feminism, and had a large focus on the multifaceted fusion of diverse feminisms. More about this idea, the Lilith Fair and the song “Bitch” were promoting the focus of the women-writer. This idea of multifaceted images of women is presented in the lyrics to the song, especially in the chorus. “I’m a bitch, I’m a lover / I’m a child, I’m a mother / I’m a sinner, I’m a saint / I do not feel ashamed”

Another idea that came out of this music and festival is the deification of modern female pop singers. In the article written by Lister, this idea is explored. Lister wrote “The third group of divas displays the renaissance of the singer/songwriter/artist as epitomized by the hugely successful Lilith Fair Festival. This category may reveal the most positive prospects for women in pop music. Instead of simply being celebrated for their physical or vocal beauty,

these performers are also revered for their songwriting, thereby also their introspection and imagination. In the words of Lilith Fair founder Sarah McLachlan, 'there's a beautiful abundance of women in music out there who are incredibly diverse.'" (Lister, 2001). The Lilith Fair was a festival that provided a space for female artists to perform who sometimes have trouble finding a place to perform in a male-dominated rock atmosphere.

Finally, I examined an *LA Times* article from 1997 in response to the song "Bitch." This *LA Times* article is from 1997 and it writes about the response to "bitch," and how people were comparing the song's style and sound to that of Alanis Morissette. Specifically Morissette's Grammy-winning 1995 album, "Jagged Little Pill." The basic argument is that it was ok to be compared to a super successful musician as a beginning artist. This comparison was stated to have done little to damage the image of Meredith Brooks.

*F. Desiderio

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1997

Elton John, *Candle in the Wind*

For my open the door project, I decided to focus on Elton John's rewriting of *Candle in the Wind* in 1997, after the death of Princess Diana. *Candle in the Wind* was originally written in 1973 by Elton John and Bernie Taupin, dedicated to Marilyn Monroe. The song at the time dedicated to Monroe, represented both her exciting life and unexpected death at age 36. After hearing about the tragic events of Princess Diana, Elton John, who was a good friend of the Royal family, was asked to perform at her funeral.

Princess Diana was a Royal icon around the world. Her presence and charisma, along with much of the charity work she was involved in, was attractive to both the public and media (Known as the "People's Princess"). Despite this strong image she held, her marriage with Prince Charles ended in a divorce after being separated for four years. This separation and divorce created more of a media presence in their lives, whether they wanted it, or not. Unfortunately, Princess Diana was killed in a car accident in France on August 31st, 1997. There has been a lot of controversy and conspiracies on the fatal car accident. Some blamed the paparazzi following the car, while others believed it was the driver's fault. After many rulings from judges, the most recent ruling stated that both the paparazzi and the driver were at fault for the accident. Both Elton John and Bernie Taupin decided to rewrite the lyrics of *Candle in the Wind* due to the lack of time prior to the funeral. Lyrics were written to portray the strong identity Princess Diana had. Lyrics such as "Goodbye England's Rose" and, "And your footsteps will always fall here, along England's greenest hills" represent how unexpected this tragedy was, and despite Diana being gone, she will not be forgotten. It is important to note that the lyrics written were sung for the public of Great Britain, not for the Royal Family. John and Taupin wanted an emphasis on her being the "People's Princess." Elton John performed by himself with his piano in a simplified version, compared to the recording of 1973. This simplicity was created in hopes for the lyrics to be heard, rather than the focus being on the actual performance.

Within 37 days of being released, *Candle in the Wind* 1997 became one of the biggest selling singles. The popularity of this song came from Princess Diana's strong appearance to the world, along with her disruptions through the Royal Monarchy. While many already knew Princess Diana was a huge influence on society, *Candle in the Wind* 1997 portrayed to the rest of the world the impact she had in Great Britain.

* B. Cripps

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1998

Tupac Shakur's "Changes": A Song for Social Justice

"Changes" by Tupac Shakur was released as a confrontation of the societal challenges faced by marginalized communities, especially African Americans. Released after his death in 1998, the song has been set in stone as its place as an influential piece of music, addressing critical issues like racial inequality, poverty, and police brutality. Its enduring relevance lies in its ability to raise awareness and spark conversations about these pressing problems. Tupac's powerful voice and incorporation of the familiar melody from Bruce Hornsby and the Range's "The Way It Is" created a song with a catchy hook that appealed not only to gangster rap fans but also to a broader pop culture audience.

The lyrics of "Changes" act as a wake-up call, urging listeners to show compassion and understanding in the face of injustice. Tupac's words reflect the frustration and pain experienced by those who confront systemic discrimination, calling for empathy and unity against these issues. By fearlessly addressing these subjects in his music, Tupac aimed to shed light on the realities of racial inequality and inspire meaningful change.

Interestingly, "Changes" was never intended for release and was recorded back in 1992 under the title "I Wonder if Heaven Got a Ghetto." However, the song made its way into the "Greatest Hits" album after his death, gaining newfound popularity thanks to significant media coverage. The song's composition using pieces of Tupac's earlier recordings adds an eerie element, almost as if his words are speaking from beyond the grave, emphasizing the urgency and significance of the message in today's society.

In an interview with LA Weekly, Hornsby talked about the song. The question asked was "Do you find it weird that the chorus on "Changes" is "Things will never be the same," while the chorus on "The Way It Is" is the opposite, "Some things will never change"? Hornsby responded with "Yeah, well, that's right, but I thought it was a positive message, I didn't think it was a negative message." In the interview, Hornsby had all positive things to discuss on Tupac, and nothing negative.

Released after his death in 1998, "Changes" by Tupac Shakur remains a timeless and influential piece of music, confronting societal challenges faced by marginalized communities. Through powerful lyrics and a familiar

melody, the song raises awareness of critical issues such as racial inequality, poverty, and police brutality, urging listeners to show compassion and unity. The song's enduring relevance emphasizes the urgency of its message in today's society, making it a powerful call for meaningful change and empathy against systemic discrimination.

*I. Newman

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2Pac on Police Brutality "Changes"

Tupac Amaru Shakur, better known as 2Pac, was an American rap artist who created works to address a wide variety of subject matter. Perhaps one of his most notable works was "Changes" from Shakur's Greatest Hits album. This song was initially recorded in 1992 but was released, after his death, in 1998. "Changes" is a commentary on what it means to grow up as a black man in America, during the 80s and 90s. It particularly deals with the "War on Drugs" in urban communities and how it is simply a war against black communities. "Tupac's lyrics reflect a deep resentment of law enforcement and portray police officers as corrupt, oppressive, and racist" (Nisker, 2007). Though Tupac was notorious for his involvement with gang-related activities, and violent crime, he was an outspoken political activist for his community. In an interview with MTV he spoke about his rough upbringing, mentioning the fact that he used to go to a performing arts school, for acting, in Baltimore. (MTV, 1995) At some point during his High School career, he moved to California and had no interest in pursuing academics further. His passion for poetry never left his grasp, and he told reporters that even as a cashier with no high school diploma, he would write raps all day long in hopes of finding success.

"Changes" contains heavy lyrics to encapsulate the depth to which these problems resonate within black communities. One such example is when he acknowledges that although "both black and white is smokin' crack tonight," the truth remains that "Cops give a damn about a negro. Pull the trigger kill a n***a he's a hero." (Nisker, 2007). This quote speaks to the disproportionate incarceration rate of black men in America, which still speaks true to this day. Tupac brought to light the fact that political treatment of drug offenses promulgates a profoundly racist illusion that represents White illicit drug abuse as a private health problem and black illicit drug abuse as a public 'criminal' activity" (Steiner and Argothy, 2001). He was not alone in preaching about the injustice present in black communities. Black Panther leader, Huey P Newton was a source of inspiration for 2Pac, and was mentioned in this song. Newton would often tell his black communities to stay on patrol for police brutality and fight back. (DiscretionTV, 2021) Pac referenced his anti-police rhetoric and alluded to the fact that he was killed at the hands of the government after calling for violence against the police. This is clear in the following excerpt "'It's time to fight back,' that's what Huey said. Two shots in the dark, now Huey's dead". The Black Liberation ideas held by Huey and other Black Nationalists have been echoed in other works alongside "Changes". In the song "Trapped" (1991), Tupac describes the claustrophobic urban environment marked by invasive police surveillance and rampant racial profiling. This is evident when he says "They got me trapped. Can barely walk the city streets, without a cop harassing me, searching me, then asking my identity. Hands up, throw me up against tha wall. Didn't do a thing at all." (Motavalli, 2019). This quote aligns with his stories of growing up in Oakland and living on the streets.

This common theme of speaking out against police brutality and the war on drugs are evident across most-all of his works. He and other rappers of the time mirror the words of great Civil Rights leaders, in hopes of change. Though many attribute rapper, Biggy Smalls for his early death, Tupac's murder has not been solved and remains a mystery to this day.

* M. Suffern

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1999

Blink-182's "Enema of the State" and spread of Pop-Punk

Coming out of my comments on Frank Zappa and PMRC hearings last week Blink-182's historic album "Enema of the State" released in 1999 was also burdened with the Parental Advisory Explicit Content sticker. With lyrics like "I need a girl that I can train", the state looks down on sodomy, we started makin out and she took off my pants, Fuck this place I lost the war I hate you all your mom's a whore, I wished I would've stayed In my bed back at home, watching TV alone, Where I'd put on some porn, or have sex on the phone." These lyrics (geneva convention violations) aside so many songs on this album have been totally cemented in our cultural zeitgeist. Especially "All the Small Things." This album in particular helped solidify a new stream within punk music, Pop-Punk. One of the reasons this is so important is because Blink-182 helped create a bridge between Pop music and Punk music. Punk music including acts like Bikini Kill or the Ramones, Blink-182's pop-punk was more focused on the life of an average middle-class teenager-20 year old. They also made it a point to include more melodic and "musical" ideas within their music. With catchy melodies in songs like All the Small Things, Dysentery Gary, and Adam's song it is easy to hear the distinction between these and "Suck my left one" or "God Save the Queen." However, the energy they include in these songs, especially in regard to tempo, texture, technique, and rhythm is very much related to punk. This distinction between them and punk has been the issue of some debate over the years. "Warped, with its cool clothes, cool sports and cool bands playing beer happy, funloving poppy rock was the epitome of modern punk rock over in the the us, the dissenting voices of some people still alluded to events of 1976 in London where a depressed population and fractured economy led to a roar of revolutionary dissent." One reviewer from london stated he "might as well be watching Hanson...it's so slick and polished that it lacks anything remotely linked to the concept of punk rock." For Blink-182 there wasn't really a political struggle for them to fight for in the late 90s. Contrasting grunge music at the time which was incredibly melancholy was their way to change the world. "By contrast, chugging a few beers back and dancing like lunatics to high energy three minute blasts of power chord melodic rock was a massive turn on. They changed the world in the best way possible; by putting smiles on people's faces..." Tom Delonge would state "Politics and music should be separate... That whole

P.C., vegetarian, anti-drug, straight edge, do it yourself and all those weird things I'm not interested in. I'd rather be in a band and have a cool attitude and act in a way that kids can relate to." "Enema of the State" would go on to be triple platinum in three months and 5x platinum in a year.

* S. Foti

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2000

"Sleep Now In The Fire" by Rage Against The Machine

From 1991 to 2000, Rage Against the Machine rose to national fame as one of the most influential rock bands of the '90s, both for their strong political messages and their rap-metal style that laid the groundwork for nu-metal and future rap-metal bands like Linkin Park. All three of their albums released during their active period went double-platinum or above; but, what most likely remember them for is their political activism, particularly in their seething critiques of police brutality, capitalism and the distribution of wealth, and the imprisonment of Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal, just to name a few. While lyrics like "rally round the family with a pocket full of shells" convey RATM's clear political dissent, their message of resistance and anger is all the more powerful through their musical and visual choices. Such examples include Zack De La Rocha's vocal dynamics ranging from intense whispers to screaming rhymes, his hyperphysical performances that include throwing himself around the stage and utilizing his middle finger, dissonant yet rhythmic bass and guitar riffs, and the instruments being pushed to their absolute physical and amplified volume limit (particularly Tom Morello's excessive use of a variety of pedals to create a quasi-funk sound).

Perhaps one of their most notable examples of visual activism was the recording of the music video for "Sleep Now in the Fire" on January 26th, 2000. Rage chose Michael Moore, director of the controversial documentary *Bowling for Columbine*, to direct the music video, which was to be recorded as a guerilla gig on the front steps of

the New York Stock Exchange. The theme of the song being corporate greed and the evils of the economic system, it seemed only appropriate to film the video in "the belly of the beast." While Moore had a permit to film on the front steps, the band did not have permission to play on the sidewalk, nor did he have loud-noise or parking permits. A crowd formed immediately when the band began playing, to which police also arrived, attempted to stop the concert, and detained Moore. As he was being dragged away by police, he shouted his second directorial edit: "Take the Stock Exchange!" The band and the crowd rushed the building, but were then met with titanium riot doors crashing down to block their entry. For the first time that many could recall, the New York Stock Exchange closed about an hour before official closing time.

This entire affair can be watched in the music video for "Sleep Now in the Fire," intermixed with satirical and political images. These include a parody of the game show *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*, titled *Who Wants To Be Filthy F#&%ing Rich?* With contestants being asked questions like "How many Americans live in poverty? A: 35 million, or B: what poverty?" Plus, the band wearing business attire performing casually in front of a green screen showing clips like atomic bombs detonating and images of cash and the American flag.

These images, Rage's signature sound, and their scathing, confrontational lyrics combined with this music-video-turned-riot not only sent a clear anti-capitalist message, but made history in closing Wall Street, even if for just an hour.

* S. Taylor

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2000

Metallica vs. Napster

Metallica, an American metal band formed in 1981, was known as one of the main musical groups who were opposed to participating in music streaming services in the early 2000's, particularly with the streaming service Napster. Napster was developed in 1999 and combined the practicality of finding MP3s online and sharing personal music online. It was also one of the most controversial events in the history of the music industry. The streaming platform was created by two teenagers, along with their uncle Sean Parker, who is now known as a founding president of Facebook. Napster gained popularity in the early 2000's, but there was a lot of controversy that the service would bring about piracy issues, and led to a lawsuit between Metallica and Napster. Napster eventually lost the lawsuit and shut down in 2001 (Andreeva, 2021). Lars Ulrich, the drummer of Metallica, orchestrated a media event in which he showed up to the Napster headquarters with a list of 334,435 names of Napster users who made 1.45 million Metallica songs available to download for free (Rimmer, 2001). Ulrich told a news company: "If they want to steal Metallica's music, instead of hiding behind their computers in their bedrooms and dorm rooms then just go down to Tower Records and grab them off the shelves" (30). Metallica even hired an Internet detective agency, NetPD, to find the names of the users who had illegally downloaded their music and ban them from the site, as they claimed it was copyright infringement. Certain musicians including Dr. Dre and Elton John sympathized with Metallica, but others including Prince and Courtney Love felt that making their music available on Napster would help them to free themselves from the exploitation of the major record companies. Along with these artists, many Napster users including Metallica fans were not very supportive towards the group's choice to sue the service. (Andreeva, 2021) Reasons included the fact that Napster was run by teenagers and Metallica was a million dollar industry, and people perceive this as unfair. Another reason was that there were other websites besides Napster that were also used for illegal music downloading, and some perceived it as unfair to target only Napster. This eventually led to the downfall of Napster, but also generated backlash towards the band. (Britannica, 2023). An example of the public backlash that Metallica and other recording artists received was on an episode of South Park. In the episode, three young characters were brought into an interrogation room where an officer questions them about downloading illegal music. To teach the boys a lesson, he brings them to the estates of three celebrities: Lars Ulrich, Britney Spears, and Master P. He then explains how because of kids like them, these celebrities will no longer be able to purchase such nice things, and will have to downgrade to a slightly fancier version. For example,

Lars Ulrich can no longer buy a gold-plated shark tank bar installed next to his pool this summer, because he might have to "wait a little longer now" to buy it because of kids like them. Another instance was that Britney Spears had to downgrade her private jet to the older model. At the end, the officer says that "man must learn to think of these horrible outcomes before he acts selfishly, or else I fear, recording artists will be forever doomed to a life of only semi-luxury" (Youtube, 2021).

* K. Masters

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2001

Why? Jonathan Larson and the AIDS Epidemic

Tick, Tick... Boom! is a work by composer Jonathan Larson that is largely autobiographical. Following the failure of his musical *Superbia*, Larson set out to write something more connected to him. There are many themes present through *Tick, Tick... Boom!* One that I am going to hone in on is this ever-present AIDS epidemic. "He wrote the play as a response to a lot of friends' deaths," says director Michael Greif. "It resounds as it does because it's a very honest affirmation of life in the face of death" (Gale Literature). Larson's most popular work, *Rent*, is another work of his that is interconnected with themes of the AIDS epidemic. Many of Larson's friends throughout his life had suffered and died from the disease and it was one that was very close to his heart. In the context of *Tick, Tick... Boom!*, Larson's character gets into a heated argument about pursuing passions with his childhood best friend Michael. At the climax of the argument, Michael reveals to Jonathan that he is HIV-positive. As seen in the show, this news is shocking to Jonathan and completely rocks his world. The following song in the show is a number called *Why?*

Why? walks the listener through Jonathan and Michael's lives together. As life is in a state of constant motion, this song is constantly moving. The eighth note pulse in the piano accompaniment gives this feeling of movement and a longing stop melodic line on the piano rises. The tonal center is also moving constantly throughout the song. The song moves in perfect fourths from Bb to Eb to Ab to Db in

the first verse alone. This motion heightens the emotional states of the listeners. The added pressure helps the listener to feel the heightened state Jonathan is portraying in the song. The song resolves with his resolve: that he will do what he loves and live each day to the fullest. Larson alludes to music from both *Mary Poppins* and *West Side Story*. An intriguing connection to me is that Larson chose the line "Got a rocket, in your pocket" from the song "Cool" in *West Side Story*. This song is about staying calm as the rival gangs are getting ready to fight. The rocket in the pocket is a figure of speech for the gun that they are carrying, foreshadowing the eventual shooting in the song. This can be read as a metaphor for the impending and seemingly sudden death of Michael. Why? gives us perspective on one person's lens who the trials and tribulations of the AIDS epidemic.

* J. Benedict

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2001

Artists Against AIDS Worldwide, "What's Going On"

In 2001, a group of popular artists came together to sing a cover version of Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On" in order to benefit AIDS programs in Africa and other affected countries. They united under the name Artists Against AIDS Worldwide and released a single with several other covers of the song. The participating artists included Gwen Stefani, Christina Aguilera, Mary J. Blige, Bono, Backstreet Boys, Destiny's Child, P. Diddy, Fred Durst, Alicia Keys, Jennifer Lopez, Chris Martin, Nelly, NSYNC, Britney Spears, and Usher, among others. Jermaine Dupri was the producer of the project and Nona Gaye, Marvin Gaye's daughter, also sang on the single. The project was initially only meant to benefit AIDS sufferers and organizations, but the group recorded the song just a few days before the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and decided that part of the proceeds should go towards relief efforts in New York. When it was released on October 30th, it reached number 18 on the Billboard Chart. The project was meant to mirror such projects as "We Are the World" and Comic Relief.

Nona Gaye said about the project, "the song we've done is all about mobilization and action, because the missing ingredient has been political will. We are all asking- What's going on?" This song was very poignant when it was written about the Vietnam War in the 60s, but took on new life and meaning when it was talking about the AIDS crisis. Particularly the lines, "Mother, mother, There's too many of you crying. Brother, brother, brother, There's far too many of you dying" can directly reflect the people who were dying of AIDS and not being recognized by the government and parts of society. Once the song also became associated with 9/11, there are also correlations to the War on Terrorism. This single was meant to bring attention to these issues and show that the music industry stood with the people who were affected.

The music industry as a whole was working hard to bring awareness to the issue, with record labels agreeing to let their artists participate on the project in large numbers, radio stations playing PSA's and sponsoring local events, and many other benefit concerts and albums. There were many artists who were affected by AIDS, most notably Freddy Mercury, that had left a sizable hole in the music industry. Other professionals perished in 9/11 and were also felt as lost members of a community. "What's Going On" is a memorial to those who were lost, as well as a plea to society to pay attention to the crisis that was happening around them.

* A. Cramer

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2001-....

Soundscaping Iraq - Music for Comfort and Torture

The United States was forever changed after the terrorist attacks of 9/11/01. Some of the immediate consequences

that came with this event was the “war on terror” that was launched. In 2001 American Troops were deployed to Afghanistan and then in 2003 Iraq. The Iraq war would continue up until 2011 during the boom of the technology age. The inventions of music players such as Ipods would change the way that deployed troops would be able to consume music but music would also be used for harmful purposes within this timeline as well.

Interestingly enough, there were two perspectives on what music looked like during the war for soldiers. There was one camp that focused specifically on the genres such as heavy metal and rap being used to “amp up” military personnel to commit acts of violence. A specific song that had been talked about in multiple articles was “Bodies” by Drowning Pool. Many considered this song to be “part of a new war soundtrack”. Even going as far as to say that the music helped troops “become inhuman”, “step outside of themselves” or “become monsters”. In interviews with veterans some had stated using the music to give them courage to carry out missions. A soldier is quoted saying “You’ve got to become inhuman to do inhuman things” though admitting that afterwards they could not listen to that music anymore. The other camp about music consumption with soldiers is that it was a way to cope with the daily stress of life and their lack of control over their position in life. There is an account of a soldier recalling a time where his unit had gathered before deployment to have a “We’re All Going to Die” party which included songs like Louis Armstrong’s “What a Wonderful World” and John Lennon’s “Give Peace a Chance”. Within this situation music has been used satirically to cope with a grim situation. Going against the trope of “death metal”, Lisa Gilman in her interviews with soldiers had found that music spanned vast genres. Many of which actually used music as a tool for comfort, calming and connection during their time in Iraq. There was an interview Gilman had with a troop that would listen to Sarah McLachlan because her voice brought a soothing effect he was missing. He had even shared the CD’s with other soldiers who had asked to listen as well. Gilman had even noted that women artists seemed to be more popular overall with troops for similar reasons.

Another way that music had been used during the war in Iraq was as torture or psychological warfare in interrogation settings. Adam Piore reported for Newsweek magazine the use of children’s songs, metal (particularly Bodies by Drowning Pool again) and even tapes of babies crying in the hopes of breaking their captives. Technologies used during these tortures were distorting loudspeakers that would be used as a psychological assault on their victims.

*N. Nicotri

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2001

Los Tigres Del Norte and Their Views on Immigration Issues

Immigration had become very controversial in the late 90s and early 2000s after concerns about terrorism and its social and economic impacts. After the 9/11 attack, it heightened border security, there was more prominent border security at the US-Mexico border, there were economic and employment concerns about undocumented immigrants taking jobs from American citizens, concerns about cultural changes, and strains of public resources such as healthcare and education. This prompted the “Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005” bill, which triggered widespread protests. One of the most notable events was the “Great American Boycott”, on May 1, 2006, also known as “A Day Without Immigrants”. Protestors vowed to not go to work, go to school, or purchase any consumer goods for 24 hours and would chant, “Si Se puede” referencing famous labor activist, Cesar Chavez. Events such as these prompted musicians and artists to help spread awareness on this issue.

One of those musicians was a renowned Mexican-American band called Los Tigres Del Norte. They have advocated for a comprehensive immigration reform and fair treatment of immigrants for a while by using their platform and music to shed light on the struggles and challenges faced by immigrants in the United States. Los Tigres Del Norte’s music often tells stories of the immigrant experience, addressing themes of hardships faced by undocumented immigrants, family separation, border issues, and the pursuit of the American Dream. The genre that best captures their music is called Norteno music, which incorporates a polka and waltz tempo and included instruments, such as electric bass, accordion, drums, and guitar. They also wrote their musical lyrics and form in what’s called a corrido, which is basically a ballad that implements narratives or a poetry tale of oppression, history, or socially relevant topics.

One of their most famous songs, made in 2001, is called, “¡Somos Más Americanos!”. In this song, they illustrate a sense of their national pride, resilience, and unity among immigrants. In the song, the accordion plays an opening

melodic riff that continues throughout the whole song in the vocals and other string instruments. The arrangement uses Mexican folk sounds and a contemporary edgy rock feel creating an uplifting feeling. The lyrics emphasizes the contribution of immigrants to the fabric of American society saying, "We are more American" and "We are of many different colors", highlighting their cultural richness and hardwork. In the beginning, verse one describes discrimination toward migrants and questions the use of the term "invader" to describe them by looking at the history of the United States' invasions into Mexican territory. The second verse explains the title of the song, America was originally inhabited by Native Americans, many of whom mixed with Spaniards long before the arrival of Anglo-Saxon settlers. When that history is taken into account, the song contends, the original inhabitants and their descendants are more American than the descendants of the Anglo-Saxon settlers. This is one of many songs that they have used to promote awareness for immigration reform.

* J. Garcia

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2002

Eminem, Whiteness, and "White America"

Eminem's success in rap music has been very controversial for a plethora of reasons, including his lyrical content and his race. One of the biggest critiques of Eminem has been his race, he is a white man who has made a very successful career out of creating rap music, which is predominantly Black genre of music. There have been people who have likened him to being a 21st century minstrel show, committing a sort of cultural blackface. Others have said that, because he is white, Eminem is incapable of creating good rap music. There are also allegations that Eminem pretends to be Black in his music, but I find this difficult to believe as in 17 of his songs he has bars that either clearly announces he is white, he compares himself to Elvis, Vanilla Ice, or the Beastie Boys, or another artist references his whiteness.

I do think that there is a conversation to be had about his massive success as a white rapper in a predominantly Black genre, especially considering Dr. Dre allegedly signed him to make money off of the white middle class, and would like to look more into this specific targeting of white teenagers with his music. Eminem's song "White America" is about him being a white rapper, and in it he mentions that Dr. Dre signed him in spite of his race in the same verse that he says that being a white rapper helped him sell records. He also points out the irony in the fact that his race is what held him back from getting signed, but is also a significant factor in his "rise to the top" of the charts.

Eminem's lyrics have been another major target of criticism for their offensive content. His lyrics are violent, sexist, and homophobic, among other things, and he received pretty severe backlash for them. There is another intersection with race in his lyrics, this time having more to do with the audience's own beliefs. Black rap artists who have received backlash for their music, such as Ice-T and 2 Live Crew, have received it from conservatives, with them using rap music as a way to demonize Black people and paint them as violent criminals. Most of the backlash against Eminem was from more left-leaning politicians and listeners over his homophobic and misogynistic lyrics. In my research, I did come across an article from 2007 that was peer reviewed and surprisingly racist. This article claimed that listening to even non-misogynist rap music increased sexism, following it with the supposedly oft-repeated statement that "rape and rap just go together a little too well." It also cited a study that claimed that black girls were more accepting of violence towards themselves after listening to non-violent, non-misogynist rap music, but the study only consisted of 50 men. Though the article points out the flaws in both the statement and the study, it does so after presenting them as fact.

*M. Coons

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2002

Country Music Post 9/11 and "Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue"

As has been discussed extensively, the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center was an event that shook the United States to its core. Furthermore, this spawned an array of responses, one notable on being in the area of Country music. For the purpose of this study, I will briefly look at one song released by country music star Toby Keith, "Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue (The Angry American)."

The first aspect to recognize with this music is the "us vs. them" mentality that was endorsed throughout country music at the time (Boulton, 2008). Particularly, this consisted of the dichotomies between the United States vs. The Taliban (often generalized to Iraq and Iran), Freedom vs. Oppression, Good vs. Evil. To see this in action I will look at one of Toby Keith's most memorable (and arguably most controversial) examples, "Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue (The Angry American)." This song has often been categorized as "jingoistic," which is defined by a sense of extreme patriotism that advocates for warlike and aggressive foreign policy (Hudak, 2021). This song in particular took a much more blatant and antagonistic political stance leading up to the invasion of Iraq, much more so than where other country artists of the time tended to lean (Decker, 2019). The music video for this song features Keith on stage, toting a star-spangled electro-acoustic guitar, on stage with the rest of his band, performing for a variety of soldier-filled audiences. Almost every shot of the video is adorned with American flags,

soldiers, and American weaponry, all in service of demonstrating the strength and unity of the U.S conglomerate. This song is much more upbeat, and although still retains some of the instrumental characteristics of country, veers back towards that blend of loud electronic instruments that is often associated with rock. This song does not speak of the downtrodden American soldier (such as in Keith's later song by the same name), but rather the collective and positively P.O.d United States military coming to bring the fight to the Taliban. Keith personifies the United States as one collective person, one who suffered a "mighty sucker punch"... "from somewhere in the back," and who is getting ready to "[light] up [The Taliban's] world like the 4th of July." This song is littered with blatant American imagery, including the likes of "lady liberty" shaking her fist, the Bald Eagle and Uncle Sam. You can even hear the Liberty bell being played in the background, acting almost as a warning of the reckoning to come. Probably the most famous line from the song is in the bridge, with Keith saying "Oh, justice will be served and the battle will rage/This big dog will fight when you rattle his cage/And you'll be sorry that you messed with the U.S. of A/Cause we'll put a boot in your ass, it's the American way." This is not a song of remembrance, but rather one of fury.

Keith would later go on to write several other songs regarding the War on Terror that would take much different (and sometimes more problematic) takes on the conflict, such as "American Soldier" and "The Taliban Song." This is not to be exclusive from other artists with notable recordings such as Alan Jackson and Darryl Worley, as there is MUCH much more that could be discussed on this topic. This song however goes to show the morally unified, but actionably splintered approach country music took in response to 9/11.

* C. Reid

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2003

Wicked: Empowerment and Activism

Wicked is a 2003 musical based on the novel of the same name by Gregory Maguire, featuring music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz and a book by Winnie Holzman. The musical mostly serves as a prequel/retelling of the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*, from the perspective of the villainous Wicked Witch of the West. However, the musical aims to tell a story of how the Witch, Elphaba, is misunderstood and is not as evil as the original story would lead us to believe. The musical has been immensely successful despite mixed critical reception at release, and is currently the fourth longest-running musical to ever be on Broadway. Its act one closer, "Defying Gravity," serves as an empowering number for self acceptance and reliance, going beyond only the music itself and including elements like staging and special effects. At the peak of the number, Elphaba rises high above the stage, as she rises above the audience and the rest of the cast. In doing so, she embraces Oz's perception of her being a "wicked witch" and completes the look that so many associate with the character. She shamelessly embraces the negative criticisms that have been hurled at her throughout act one, and uses that hurtful rhetoric as an asset to her identity. This is in tandem with her controversial Animal Rights stance throughout the musical, which is one of the major points of contention throughout the plot. Elphaba believes in more radical change, while Glinda embraces more moderate change, that aims to fix from within.

However, this musical is not only about Elphaba, but also prominently features Glinda (later Glinda) during her rise to prominence in the world of Oz. She plays the role of a moderate leader, who then aims to promote change from within. Initially, she puts on a face of activism within Shiz University, and even declares to change her name as an animal professor mispronounced, as a statement of solidarity towards the animals being stripped of their rights. Ultimately, this is a falsehood, as she is trying to win over the primary love interest of the musical, Fiyero. While she slowly begins to embrace this identity and role as an activist, she is much more moderate than Elphaba. Eventually, the moderate Glinda and more radical Elphaba find that their activism can benefit from collaborating with one another. This comes to a head when singing the number "For Good," where they change voice parts. Normally, Elphaba is a mezzo-soprano, and Glinda a soprano; however, they flip the division at the end of the number to demonstrate this willingness to change, grow, and learn from one another to bring about positive change.

* M. Smith

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2003

"Not Ready to Make Nice": The Controversy of and Response to The [Dixie] Chicks in the Bush Era

On March 10th, 2003, Natalie Maines, lead singer of The Chicks (at the time, The Dixie Chicks) spoke out briefly at a concert in London against the Bush administration's push to invade Iraq. Her exact quote was "We do not want this war, this violence, and we're ashamed that the President of the United States is from Texas." Due in part to the patriotic fervor of the post-September 11th United States, the group received incredibly harsh backlash and criticism from country music fans who were in support of the invasion. This fairly innocuous criticism led to a boycott of the groups music across most major country stations and a variety of responses from listeners ranging from destruction of their CDs to death threats of the lead singer Maines (Billboard). In response, the group originally doubled down but then went on to apologize for their lead singer's remarks. Maines explained that her comments were "disrespectful" and that her pacifist ideals are what lead her to make the comments. Despite the apology, the performers still faced widespread criticism and disdain from much of the American public. A month later, in April, then President Bush was reached for comment on the matter where he expressed that he doesn't care what The Dixie Chicks have to say, but that they "shouldn't have their feelings hurt just because some people don't want to buy their records when they speak out." The comments from the president caused the group to again renege on their previous comments and rescind their apology, stating that they were proud of their original criticism of the invasion of Iraq and the Bush administration. In the years following the original fallout, The Chicks went on to appear on the cover of Entertainment Weekly, perform for various politically oriented organizations and tours, like

Rock the Vote and Vote for Change and star in a documentary, titled *Shut Up and Sing*, which chronicled the entire controversy up to that point (Adolphson). In 2006, three years after this initial conflict, The Chicks went on to release *Not Ready to Make Nice*, the lead single for their upcoming album *Taking the Long Way*. In this track, Maines, and by extension, the other members of the group address the controversy directly, explaining that they may forgive but they certainly don't forget. This event impacted their careers and their personal lives greatly and despite the metaphorical beating that they've received, they are not ready to compromise their morals and exclude politics from their musical careers. In the chorus, the group sings that they aren't ready to "play nice." In this context, to play nice would be to back down from what they believe. They further drive this point home later when they sing "It's too late to make it right, I probably wouldn't if I could." This statement is particularly powerful, as despite the threats that they've endured for the past few years, they would do it all over again. (Watson) This track and the conversation that surrounds this controversy is very interesting because of the backlash from the patriotic right, a group that typically emphasizes free speech as an ideal of their system of beliefs. This leaves the question, if this is not acceptable use of the first amendment, then we have free speech to say what?

* R. MacCarthy

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2003

Madonna and Gender, "American Life"

Madonna has been an artist known to present social, political, sexual, and religious themes in her music. The American singer, song writer, and actress has influenced pop culture across the 20th and 21st centuries, and is known as the "Queen of Pop" in addition to the "Queen of Reinvention" (Tortajada et al., 2017). She even has her own academic mini subdiscipline, Madonna studies. The "hallmark" of Madonna's career has been the way she performs gender roles (Hallstein, 1996).

Madonna's portrayal of exaggerated gender roles has permeated her performances in countless examples, both in sexualizing herself as a female and conversely playing a masculine, yet still female figure. She is not a wistfully unaware heart-breaker - "her constant winking and posing in front of the camera demonstrates that she creates and controls her own image and that she is acting consciously and strategically" (Tortajada et al., 2017). Madonna has made overt sexual references, especially "as fuel for publicity" (Scherzinger & Smith, 2007). In 1993 in the *Girlie Show*, Madonna was seen cracking a wip as a dominatrix as well as rubbing the Puerto Rican flag between her legs during the show in that country, causing outrage. In one example of Madonna's portrayal of masculinity, in a masculine-acting female character, is in the music video of "American Life" (2003). She wears a pseudo-men's military uniform and claims her own politics. "Far from simply embodying a fluid and ambiguous construction of identity, which transcends the constraints of reified and regulated gender norms, Madonna's variable constructions of identity equally reflect the logic of the commodity form" (Scherzinger & Smith, 2007). According to Tortajada, Araña, and Willem, "although she occupies masculine spaces and roles, she often adopts positions that are in line with a traditional kind of femininity or with representation patterns that are part of and reinforce patriarchal discourse" (2017). In this way she causes even more confusion, as a figure that manipulates her performance of gendered stereotypes, yet with a femme-fatale twist. She seems unafraid of political and sexual implications of her actions, and continues such behaviors. Her music videos are viewed as a "vehicle of protest and controversy since she encourages experimentation with identity while reinforcing the norms of the consumer society" (Tortajada et al., 2017). In general, audiences and critics alike are unsure to view her "refusal to be obedient to dominant and normalizing standards of female beauty" as a positive for feminists or judge her artistic statements as over-the-top (Hallstein, 1996).

* A. Budd

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"American Life," Madonna, and the Invasion of Iraq

The years following September 11th, 2001 were drenched in fear and shifts in the United States national security strategy. The Bush administration adopted a policy of preemptive strikes against potential threats to the United States. This included the fear that Saddam Hussein, the dictator of Iraq at the time, had amassed weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and prompted the debate on an invasion into Iraq in search of such weapons.

Around the same time Madonna, a prominent American songwriter, actress, and business woman, was searching for a way to be taken more seriously as an artist. "I'm not a pop star, I'm a performance artist." This included her album "American Life" that was fully released in April, 2003. On New Years Eve, 2002, she teased her new album, single, and music video by that would be released by posting on her official website saying it was a "panoramic view of our culture, the fashion world, and looming war through the view of a female super-hero portrayed by Madonna" and that "the show escalates into a mad frenzy depicting the catastrophic repercussions of war." Within days, a popular conservative blog run by Matt Drudge, claimed he had inside sources that "leaked" the contents of her video saying that it included bloody people and babies, Madonna in military dress throwing grenades, as well as it overall being an Anti-Bush statement. This quickly was picked up by large corporate newspapers around the world and within days Madonna released another statement saying, "I feel lucky to be an American citizen for many reasons – one of which is the right to express myself freely, especially in my work. I understand that there have been reports about my upcoming video 'American Life' in the media – much of which is inaccurate. I am not Anti-Bush. I am not pro-Iraq. I am pro-peace. I have written a song and created a video which expresses my feelings about our culture and values and the illusions of what many people believe is the American dream – the perfect life. As an artist, I hope that this provokes thought and dialogue. I don't expect everyone to agree with my point of view. I am grateful to have the freedom to express these feelings and that's how I honor my country."

On March 16th, 2003 George Bush with the help of the United Kingdom's Prime Minister, Tony Blair announced that both countries were willing to lead an invasion into

Iraq in search of WMDs without the backing of the UN. 4 days later, on March 20th, 2003 the United States launched the invasion of Iraq. Madonna's "American Life" music video at the time was already released overseas and showed the story of a fashion show featuring "military" outfits followed by Madonna who was also in military dress in a public bathroom with others who were preparing for some sort of event. The fashion show progressively gets more violent and even shows what is to be assumed, muslim Iraqi children getting chased off stage by models in military dress followed by bloody shots of guns, missing limbs, military nurses in bloody garments. While all of this is occurring on the runway, onlookers dressed in fancy garb are laughing and making a mockery of what was happening on stage. Madonna and her "crew" then ride a tank through the stage and she throws a grenade towards the audience. The video that is currently released on YouTube, ends with the grenade ticking on the edge of stage but supposedly the original video showed the grenade being thrown at a George Bush look alike who then used the grenade to light himself a cigarette. Obviously with the controversial nature of the original video, Madonna halted the American release of her video and released the following statement on her website: "I have decided not to release my new video. It was filmed before the war started and I do not believe it is appropriate to air it at this time. Due to the volatile state of the world and out of sensitivity and respect to the armed forces, who I support and pray for, I do not want to risk offending anyone who might misinterpret the meaning of this video." In April that year, a new edited and "sanitized" version of the video was released featuring Madonna singing in front of a slew of flags from various countries in military dress. The full album was released a few days later and although received many negative reviews, "American Life" made it to the number 2 spot on Billboards 200 and sold nearly 100,000 copies. The album is known for its reflection of the new social and political landscape post 9/11 and is described as having "confusion, disorientation, and anger" seep through most of the songs.

* K .Tai

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2004

Green Day, *American Idiot*

Green Day's "punk rock opera" *American Idiot* sparked the band's reentry into the punk scene in 2004. Much of the band's inspiration for writing this album came from the political climate at the time, responding to the presidency of George Bush and his decision to declare war in Iraq, and other major historical events such as the attacks of September 11th. The album as a whole tells the story of Jesus of suburbia, a character meant to depict a generation of young people stuck in a politically tumultuous time, dealing with a population that has been brainwashed by the media. The album's story follows the struggles of the young pseudo anti-hero as he navigates the issues of the time - and avoids at all costs the transition that a majority of the population is making to the "idiot America".

The title track in a way sums up the journey of avoiding the political propaganda, and media brainwashing that has placated a nation. Some lyrics in this song call to attention the homophobic tendencies and right wing beliefs of a seeming majority of the country's population, and the indolent presidency of the time (Well, maybe I'm the faggot, America/I'm not a part of a redneck agenda/Now everybody, do the propaganda/And sing along to the age of paranoia). The lead singer Billie Joe Armstrong, as a bit of a "BiCon" (for lack of a more fun term) himself, was calling attention to lazy and slightly paranoid ideals that may have led to common, ill-informed political beliefs. In his lyrics, he is also shining a spotlight on his own sexual identity, and the common condemnation of people within the LGBTQ+ community.

Though it is a little outside of our timeframe, I wanted to also bring attention to the band's reaction to a bit of censorship which affirms the original message of the album: *American Idiot* (Musical) was meant to be performed at Enfield high school, but was inevitably shut down by the school board and the superintendent. Green Day tweeted "dear Enfield high school board, #enfieldhighschoolmusical #highschoolidiot #enfieldidiot It has come to my attention that you cancelled your high school theater production of *American Idiot*. I realize the content of the Broadway production of AI is not quite "suitable" for a younger audience. However there is a high school rendition of the production and I believe that's the one Enfield was planning to perform which is suitable for

most people. it would be a shame if these high schoolers were shut down over some of the content that may be challenging for some of the audience. but the bigger issue is censorship. this production tackles issues in a post 9/11 world and I believe the kids should be heard. and most of all be creative in telling a story about our history. I hope you reconsider and allow them to create an amazing night of theater! as they say on Broadway .. "the show must go on!" rage and love Billie Joe Armstrong" The school ended up performing *Little Shop of Horrors* instead...

* C. Higgins

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I would like to open the door to the history behind the song "American Idiot," by the band Green Day. The song "American Idiot" is the title track of the album *American Idiot* that was released in 2004. The original song was inspired by the band Lynard Skynard even though we wouldn't think to associate this song with them. The inspiration of the message of the song came after the event of 9/11 in the US and the political aftermath that followed. The lead singer, Billy Joe Armstrong, thought that Americans were being influenced by the media and politicians to give up their personal freedoms through scare tactics. The war on terror was massive at the time and American citizens constantly felt that their national security was at an all time low. As a culture, many Americans were able to give up their personal freedoms to ensure their safety, but how far did the government

really go? Many different groups of people were marginalized more than others (American citizens of Middle Eastern heritage mostly,) and Islamophobia was surging to new heights.

Green Day envisioned the “American idiot” (not the song, the person) to be someone who didn’t critically think about the lack of privacy that the government was taking advantage of. They accepted that increasing the military budget would help fight the war, and were believing every headline that they would read about it. Green Day saw the media as a propaganda machine that would convince them to be fearful of the unknown and to bow down to the government, since they’re here to “save us.”

It goes without saying that Billy Joe Armstrong is overtly political in his messaging in the song, and one particular line sums up his view of the political spectrum at the time. “Well, maybe I'm the f*ggot, America. I'm not a part of a redneck agenda.” Billy Joe Armstrong came out as bisexual 9 years prior to the release of the album and he says that he’s always felt like an outsider. Being a part of the LGBTQ+ community at the time was much less accepted by the heteronormative people of the US at that time compared to today, and Armstrong was making it clear that he was not willing to submit once again to the conservative right agenda of fear mongering.

* T. Hayes

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This is a raw, protest song to the state of America in September 2004. This album was a departure from the previous albums put out by Green Day, and really hit a chord with a public who was tired of war, and disillusioned with the government. This album hit two days before Bush’s re-election. Armstrong mentions that he was driving in the car, and heard a Lynyrd Skynyrd song which mentions being proud to be a redneck, and he thought “how could anyone be proud of that? That is everything I am against.” According to Arbanel, Armstrong “rushed to the studio and wrote out “American Idiot” in one furious

splurge (Arbanel, 14). Armstrong was reacting to the coverage of the war in Iraq, saying that mass media had inspired paranoia and idiocy among the public. He particularly disliked cable news which Armstrong felt crossed the line from journalism to reality television.

Armstrong recalled, “They had all these Geraldo- like journalists in the tanks with the soldiers, getting the play-by-play.” Cool is quoted as saying he “hoped it would inspire people to vote Bush out and make the world a little more sane” (Ali 22). Armstrong referred to George W. Bush as an “Insane cowboy.” Greenday was criticized for being anti-patriotic, especially by those who only interacted with the title, and didn’t listen to the message being portrayed by the rest of the song.

Leading up to this, the band was at a breaking point due to personal issues, they had actually recorded 20 tracks for “Cigarettes and Valentines” which were stolen. They were at a point where they were deciding whether or not they wanted to continue as a band. Eventually they decided to start a new album from scratch rather than re-record. Armstrong took some time to write in New York, where he wrote Boulevard of Broken Dreams. This album took 10 months and \$650,000 to record (Quail 320).

This song in particular is pretty consistent with the punk style. The guitar tracks are uptempo, and in your face with the simple chords designed to hype up listeners. The drums and bass are also simplistic yet energetic.

Armstrong says he wanted to take the rock elements, kick out the rules, and put in more ambition. The title and lyrics are off putting on purpose, but the song does not criticize all Americans, it is more critical of the mass media, the confusion and manipulation that was caused in the way they were covering the war, and profiting from the war. The lyrics are explicit to get a rise out of the listener, and to foster anger, and inspire action.

The music video is played in front of a big American flag with a greenish hue. The flag is hung in a nontraditional way, going against traditional etiquette. At the end of the song the “red” stripes get washed off the flag leaving only the white. Red is supposed to represent hardness and valor while the white stripes represent purity and innocence. The red in this case may also be read as the Republican party, There is green liquid gushing out of the flag which Quail suggests represents mainstream media “flooding” the people with war propaganda. I don’t know if this is the only interpretation, but there is an obvious commentary going on about the health of the nation.

I think it is interesting that the band was kind of faltering, until this album. They criticize the mass media for profiting off the war, but in a weird kind of way they were more successful than ever because of it too. They really hit something that resonated with Americans in this time, and became relevant in a way that their previous albums had not. The song has a resurgence with President Trump’s election campaign. On a personal note, it was kind of a

protest song used by my daughter in our household when we moved from Canada, back to the US. She was twelve and less than thrilled with the move. Interesting how a song specifically written in one context can be used to send a message in so many other situations.

* L. Baldwin

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Green Day "American Idiot"

My topic this week is examining the song "American Idiot" by Green Day. This song was released on September 20th, 2004. For a brief overview of what was happening in the United States during this time, America was dealing with the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the War on Terror, passing of the US Patriot Act, and more. As for the political landscape, George W. Bush was the President of the United States throughout the majority of the early 2000s, aside from the start of 2001 when it was Bill Clinton. The American public was obviously subject to all these changes and engaged in a range of emotions and experiences. Some of these unifying experiences include increased patriotism following 9/11, political divide, economic concerns and challenges, technology advancements, influencing pop culture, themes of fear and xenophobia, and the use of mass media for propaganda. Specifically looking at the use of mass media, themes of fear and xenophobia, which is the dislike or prejudice of people from other countries, are addressed in the song "American Idiot" by Green Day.

"American Idiot" is a protest song off of the album *American Idiot*. "It wasn't until the 2004 election campaign that seemed to spark protest on the part of punk rock bands." (Belikow). This is conveniently the same year that this song was released. This was a politically charged single off of the album, addressing the paranoia and hysteria caused by the media. Musically, the song does not stray from traditional punk-rock expectations consisting of simple chords, rhythmic compliments, syncopation, and solos, so what makes it interesting and

powerful are the lyrics. We see an example of this in the lyrics:

"Don't wanna be an American idiot
Don't want a nation under the new media
And can you hear the sound of hysteria?
The subliminal mind-f**k America"

In terms of its use as a protest song, it critiqued the Iraq War and questioned the Bush administration's foreign policy decisions, was often used at political rallies and protests, was widespread through social media, and was actually adapted into a rock opera. The band says that this song was written out of anger about not being represented by the world's leaders. Interestingly enough, this is why the song is still seen as being relevant today. In one of the articles below, Billie Joe Armstrong explains that these feelings were the same that he felt when Donald Trump was elected into office. Recently, this song was used when Trump was due to visit the UK and a campaign to get the song to the top of the UK song charts was launched so revisit the song's message. It is interesting to see how political protest songs can make their way back around and become relevant once again depending on the political climate.

* M. Kilker

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2004

"Toxic": Not Just a Song

Britney Spears has become a musical and pop culture icon since her rise to fame in the late 90s with her debut single, "...Baby One More Time." She is well known for reviving the "teen pop" genre, winning numerous awards, and being one of the world's best selling artists. Spears' fame has not been an easy journey, despite her persistent tours, performances, and business endeavors amidst challenge. In 2019, the social media hashtag/trend #FreeBritney became wildly popular, in efforts to call for an end to Spears' conservatorship by her father Jamie Spears. Spears' conservatorship was brought to an end in November, 2021, marking 13 years since it began in 2008.

Those 13 years were treacherous and messy, and it is compelling to study Spears' music during that part of her career. Struggles with fame, divorce, being a single mom, and drug/alcohol use led Spears to behave somewhat erratically. She appeared to have been struggling with mental health during this time as well. Spears' spontaneous shaving of her head in 2007 was one of the events that could be considered a "last straw" event. In 2008, Spears was put under total conservatorship, under her father Jamie Spears and a court-appointed attorney, Andrew Wallet (Hogan, 2021). It began as a temporary conservatorship but became indefinite until its end in 2021. A conservatorship is usually utilized for people who are unable to make decisions on how to take care of themselves- usually dementia patients or people with severe mental illness. Under this conservatorship, Spears could not make any financial, health-related, or personal decisions of her own- everything was controlled. She was not even allowed to select her own lawyer.

"Nevertheless, she persisted"- but did she want to? Throughout the 13 year conservatorship, Spears held concert residencies, released multiple albums, appeared in other artists' work, and continued to top charts. Spears often wrote letters and voiced her fear of her father and her desire to take breaks from performing. Despite this, she was forced to continue working. The conservatorship finally ended in 2021 when Jamie Spears endured continued health problems and Spears was given the freedom to appoint her own attorney. She testified that she endured extensive abuse during her conservatorship. Spears' musical style was one that was not uncommon for the early 2000s, marked by highlighting sexuality and suggestive lyrics. MTV's platform for music videos helped artists enhance their musical aesthetics with visuals. Spears' "Toxic," released in 2004 (prior to the conservatorship), showed a clear image of seductiveness in the music video. Hawkins and Richardson (2017) extensively analyze the musical structures in "Toxic" as they relate to the images/storyline in the music video. They urge readers not to ignore this specific aspect: the

violin motif has a "distinct Arabic character," marked by "augmented 2nds and tritones, ornamentation, nasal timbral characteristics, the absence of harmony, and the use of sinking glissandos" (2017). This musical atmosphere, paired with images of Spears as a stewardess on an airplane with visual themes of distress, poses a certain connotation post 9/11, according to the authors (2017). Other artists during this time had similar sexual styles, like Rihanna, Lady Gaga, and Ke\$ha, to name a few. Spears and these artists would embrace "liberal feminism," according to Eriani and Nurochman (2022). They define liberal feminism as "freedom as personal autonomy and political autonomy" (2022). This lead me to come back to a thought that has continued to challenge me throughout this course- in the latest "wave" of feminism, women's overt expression of sexuality in music can be seen as both empowering and degrading. What makes this thought even more challenging is to wonder what motivates this: the women themselves, or the structures of power in society that "buy" it? Would Britney have continued to produce her suggestive style of music had she not been in a conservatorship? Would her career have fizzled out on her own terms? One deeply unsettling fact is the amount of Spears' money her father stole during the conservatorship- an estimated \$6 million (Da Silva and Dasrath, 2022). Spears' story is a truly tragic one, and while not political, brings light to an example of an extremely unjust power dynamic in the music industry.

* S. Berkley

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2005

System of a Down's "Holy Mountains" and the Armenian Genocide

For this week's Open the Door project, I chose to dive into the song "Holy Mountains" by System of a Down, and how it relates to the band's activism surrounding the Armenian Genocide. As an American heavy-metal band, the group used its music, platform, and heritage to shed light on an atrocity that is often overlooked and highly contested globally. The Armenian Genocide took place between 1915 and 1923, and was considered to be one of the first examples of a major genocide in the century even though the term hadn't been created until later. The genocide itself was the result of many years of conflict and aggression between the Ottoman Empire and Armenians. In short, the events of World War I led the Ottoman Empire to believe that Armenians needed to be eradicated in order to preserve the empire. While official statistics vary depending on accounts, between 300,000 to 1.5 million Armenians were murdered. Global recognition of the genocide has been convoluted and highly politicized since, as Turkey has denied wrongdoing and argued that the nation's actions were necessary for its survival in the war. The United States only recently recognized the genocide through resolution presented by President Joe Biden in 2021.

"Holy Mountains" by System of a Down (SOAD or System) represents the group's commitment to sharing perspectives of the political battle in recognition of the genocide. As a band, SOAD has a unique style that broke from other metal bands at the time. In the late 1990's and early 2000's, metal groups were not often known for aligning their music with specific ideologies and remained passive. Frontman-vocalist Serj Tankian and guitarist Daron Malakian are both of Armenian descent. Drummer John Dolmayan described the group as a "socially conscious" band instead of a political band as the media often portrays them. The song Holy Mountains is meant to serve as a representation of the Genocide as a dark part of history, with lyrics that are accusatory such as "Liar! Killer! Demon!". The song itself was characteristic of System's music, which differed from other metal music. Sections of the song contrast with varying tempos, dynamics, and timbres which made for a more progressive style of metal at the time it was released. This created a more disrupted and unpredictable listening experience for the average metalhead at the time, and it could be argued that this helped bring attention to their music. References to the Genocide are also made with the lyrics "Back to the River Aras", which was a significant landmark both physically and meaningfully for Armenians. The writing of Holy Mountains and other SOAD songs promoted awareness of the Genocide not only through lyrics and music, but through controversy as well. System's

messaging was not well received by critics at times, who believed fans only appreciated the group from an aesthetic perspective. Some fans were put off by what they viewed as the politicization of System's music. It was also criticized that their message would not reach mainstream listeners who associated System with other metal bands. Whether viewed as successful or not, System of a Down engaged more people in discussion of the Armenian Genocide through their music. Their messaging in Holy Mountains and other songs created more awareness of the Genocide and the issues surrounding its official recognition. This was also aided by the more progressive style of metal which disrupted expectations of the genre at the time.

*W. Hope

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2005

Tween Pop: The Cheetah Girls vs The Pussycat Dolls

During the postwar era of the 1990s, corporations, including the music industry, saw it profitable to market towards "tweens" through the lens of popular music. Tweens "were [9-12 year olds] seen as children, especially girls, who were aging out of children's consumer products but not yet ready to be marketed to as teenagers" (Bickford, 2020). Tween pop music often incorporates elements from mainstream pop, such as catchy melodies, upbeat rhythms, and relatable lyrics that resonate with the experiences and emotions of tweens. The themes in tween pop songs typically focus on friendships/social life, crushes and school. What sets tween pop apart from traditional or typical children's music is its attempt to fit within the conventions of mainstream pop without being inappropriate- "so while song lyrics downplayed physical sex, they were still full of heterosexual romance, pop music's central subject" (Bickford, 2020). Tween pop aimed for a sort of "vision of innocence, paternal authority, and domestic harmony that continues to structure American ideologies of childhood and the family" (Bickford, 2020). The tween pop category tends to fall more rigidly into the conventions of "consumerism,

whiteness, and femininity” (Bickford, 2020). However, although females were at the center of attention in this realm, “being seen does not guarantee the opportunity to be heard, to express political views, or to take up public voice” (Warick, 2016).

As tween pop develops, we see a rise in media portrayal of Disney and Nickelodeon stars and songs on channels such as “Radio Disney” and “Kidz Bop,” age-appropriate media outlets. Kidz Bop describes its target age group as “kids who have outgrown Elmo but are not quite ready for Eminem” (Bickford, 2012). A representative of Disney’s Catalog, Steven Pritchard, describes Disney’s music as “still safe, but it’s got a little bit of an edge” (Bickford, 2012). Disney Channel’s trick was to “make music that appealed to kids the same way the teen pop acts did, while somehow subtracting the objectionable content or recontextualizing the music to deemphasize those themes” (Bickford, 2012). We can see a prime example of this through Disney Channel’s girl-group “The Cheetah Girls.” The Cheetah Girls are an all-girl singing group from the 2003 Disney Channel movie “The Cheetah Girls” and are an example of Disney recreating mainstream pop and transforming it to fit through the lens of a tween. To do this successfully, Disney “scrubs them of potentially offensive elements” (Bickford, 2012), while still giving them a bit of an edge. They released their first records in 2006, which was around the same time “the Pussycat Dolls” were also popular. Many believe the Cheetah Girls to be a tween version of the “hypersexual” Pussycat Dolls (Bickford, 2012). The similarities between both girl groups start with them both having cat references in their names and both having albums three-letters long containing their initials (TCG and PCD), and both groups’ music being influenced by r&b and dance-pop. One notable similarity is the Disney channel portraying the Cheetah Girls through characters of different ethnicities, which was not very common for Disney to do. However, unlike the Pussycat Dolls, “the Cheetah Girls’ sexuality is thoroughly backgrounded. Their dance moves are never very suggestive and their costumes, though sometimes tight fitting, are not very revealing” (Bickford, 2012). This makes the Cheetah Girls the perfect blend of mainstream pop and edge for the tween gaze. Their 2007 song “Fuego” accomplishes just this. The lyrics portray ideas of friendship and partying: “Ooh, ah, just turn it up. We make it hot from the streets to the club” (3LW Online, 2022), giving the song just enough edge to not be deemed childish. However, in the music video of “Fuego,” this “turning up” appears to be dancing, which is not suggestive either. In addition, “all three Cheetah Girls cover their legs to below the knees in most shots and wear multiple layers” (Bickford, 2012). This transformation of mainstream pop allowed the Cheetah Girls to gain great popularity in the lives of tweens and Disney Channel viewers, paving the way for Disney

Channel, and other tween media outlets, to gain a large following of viewers and musical listeners.

* C. Perticone

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2005

Hurricane Katrina, Cultural loss, response by MENC (now NAFME)

On August 29th, 2005, Hurricane Katrina slammed New Orleans and 80% of the city and surrounding areas were flooded for weeks (Wikipedia). Up to 1,170 people in Louisiana died, (Markwell, Ratard), millions in Louisiana and up the Gulf Coast were left homeless, and some 400,000 people left the city permanently (History.com). The impact on New Orleans’ culture was likened to a cultural Chernobyl (McKernan, Mulcahy, 2008). Known as the birthplace of jazz and famous for its jazz funeral tradition, Mardi Gras Indians, second line parades, Creole traditions, and local cuisine, New Orleans has been renowned for its unique and living culture. After the hurricane, one was left wondering if the culture would revive.

After the hurricane, nationwide relief efforts ensued. Among an array of collaborative efforts arose a partnership between Music Educators National Conference (now known as NAFME) and Feed the Children. In November 2005, the following was published in the MENC magazine, “Involving your students in the World’s Largest Concert and encouraging them in fund-raising efforts to benefit Feed the Children will not just nurture their musical knowledge and social awareness. It can also spark the magical transformation that we all want for our children-the gradual transformation from innocently self-centered childhood into masterful, socially conscious adulthood” (Mahlmann, 2005). I mis-understood that to mean that the concert would have a theme centered around offering relief to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. However, with a closer look and further reading, I came to understand that schools were encouraged to fundraise

solely for Feed the Children. At the World's Largest Concert in Salt Lake City, Utah, MENC presented Feed the Children with a check for the amount the schools raised. Several musical groups, and the amounts they raised, were mentioned in Mahlmann's article. One group was a band that raised \$2,623. They asked that the money be directed to Gulf Coast victims of Hurricane Katrina through Feed the Children (Fehr, 2006).

I found nothing more about the World's Largest Concert in 2006, although I tried. I did find one recording of the World's Largest Concert in 2002. It was performed in the Salt Lake City, Utah Tabernacle. It was a tribute to world cultures featuring children's choirs and instrumentalists from across the U.S. Children wore a variety of costumes and I found the performance to be amazing. I would love to learn more about these concerts and one day involve my students in one. I sang in that tabernacle, it was a memorable experience.

* K. Francom

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2007-2008

The Obama Campaign and "Signed, Sealed, Delivered"

For this Open the Door, I decided to look into how Stevie Wonder's song "Signed, Sealed, Delivered," essentially a song about love, evolved to hold a more politicized connotation due to its use in the Obama campaign. The Obama Campaign of 2008 aired commercials, made playlists, and more to appeal to its audience. I personally remember the commercial from 2007-2008 that featured the Stevie Wonder song "Signed, Sealed, Delivered." Little

did I know that this song was very versatile to use with both its lyrics and other musical elements, and the Obamas also had a personal musical connection with the works of Stevie Wonder.

The song "Signed, Sealed, Delivered" is essentially about being genuine to your one love. In the song he returns to his partner amidst leaving them, referencing the lyrics "then that time I went and said goodbye; Now I'm back and not ashamed to cry" (Youtube). He also mentions that upon returning to them, they are the one that they truly have feelings for, referencing the lyrics "Oo-wee baby you set my soul on fire; That's why I know you are my only desire" (Youtube).

"Signed, Sealed, Delivered" along with other campaign playlist songs, allowed Obama "to forge alliances with women voters and black voters, the two constituencies he needed to win over in order to defeat his Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton." (Gorzalany-Mostak 115). The musical elements of "Signed, Sealed, Delivered" besides the lyrics are worthy of discussion as well. "Signed, Sealed, Delivered" is an upbeat Motown song, providing a funky prominent bass, a rich mix of horns, and a positive and happy sound to his voice. The vocalists in the background also have passion and energy in their voice that adds to the overall effect. Werner stated that Motown and the feel of this music is "what it would sound like to move forward together" (489). This song also avoided excluding "potential buyers with a product that sounded 'too black'" (Werner 488). Blues and Motown music that was inclusive enough for the whole public to understand the message of allowed more people to interact with it in a positive way. "Signed, Sealed, Delivered" also professed a "promise of fidelity to the community that had rallied around him and the vision that had brought them victory." (Werner 489). In addition to the song's ability to reach those of different backgrounds, the Obamas also had a personal connection to Stevie Wonder. Both Barack and Michelle initially bonded over the music of Stevie Wonder and Obama thought of Wonder as "his 'musical hero.'" (Adams) The conclusion of this Open the Door project for me left me with this question of further inquiry: Does every song that is politicized for a campaign need to have a personal connection with the incumbent or can it still make a lasting impact without that personal connection?

* C. Zanetti

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2008

In The Heights, Lin-Manuel Miranda, and Latino Representation

In 1999, a sophomore at Wesleyan College, Lin-Manuel Miranda, began writing *In The Heights* at the age of 20. Just a kid and an unknown artist at the time, Miranda wrote this musical with inspiration from the musical *Rent*, which had been released three years prior, as well as his lived-experiences, culture, and musical expertise. Miranda grew up in a Latino neighborhood in Washington Heights, which is in Upper Manhattan. Miranda set the scene of this musical in his childhood neighborhood and displayed the rich Latino culture that surrounded him growing up. When *In The Heights* released in 2008, Lin-Manuel Miranda did not quietly emerge, rather he exploded front and center stage.

Before 2008, there had not been much of any Hispanic representation on Broadway. Playwrights were not writing Hispanic roles, and Hispanics were, and still are, very underrepresented in the union. The Hispanic and Latino community makes up almost nineteen percent of the United States population, however, only three percent of the actors' equity is Hispanic. Before *In The Heights*, the last time Hispanic culture was "represented" on Broadway, they were depicted as racist stereotypes, and mostly not by Hispanic actors, in *West Side Story*. Therefore, creating a musical that represents Latino culture in a responsive way, written by a Latino, and performed by Hispanic actors, was and is extremely important and relevant. Lin-Manuel Miranda aimed to portray Latino characters in a positive light and mitigate the negative stereotypes that had been established for Latino's in the past. Robin de Jesus, who played the role of "Sonny" in the show, states "Finally a role where I do not have to carry a gun, I am not in a gang, I am not selling drugs. I'm just a normal human being who happens to be Hispanic and who happens to live in this wonderful place called Washington Heights." (Ritchie).

In this musical, Lin-Manuel Miranda uses a blending of hip-hop, rap, ballad and Latin music to establish a nontraditional score that immerses the audience into the culture of the neighborhood Miranda grew up in. This sound was something that had never been heard on Broadway before, and has influenced composers and musicals to come. Not only did Miranda compose the

musical, he also starred in it, playing the lead Usnavi de la Vega. The musical became a huge success, and ended up winning thirteen Tony awards and won five, including Best Musical. It ran on Broadway for almost four years, and has since then been performed all over the world in places such as Japan, South Korea, Europe, Australia, and more.

*K. Lyubomirsky

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2008

Dead Space

Commodification is a major issue in every genre of music. Even the most inaccessible of musics will interact with mass media and popular culture in some way, as is the nature of a capitalist society. For example, classical music in the Romantic style is long and storied tradition that is honored as high art to this day. But in the 20th century as Hollywood began to grow, so called neo-Romantic music could be found accompanying countless films. Here, it had a very clear purpose in affecting the audience's understanding of a scene: when something romantic happened, you might hear major chords with a lot of suspensions, when something sad happened, you might hear minor chords, when something dramatic and sudden happened, you'd hear tremolo diminished chords. This is a vocabulary that we as Western audiences are really adept at dealing with so each soundtrack didn't need to be a master work of art on its own. A similar relationship exists for classical avant garde music as well.

In 2008 EA released the game *Dead Space* with a soundtrack composed by Jason Graves. The game centers around a man named Isaac Clarke who boards a seemingly derelict space mining rig looking for his girlfriend. Fitting squarely in the horror genre, the player follows Isaac through the dark, atmospheric areas of the ship progressing the narrative through environmental cues as well as explicit dialogue. Along the way the player must face monsters called necromorphs that often appear very suddenly. The soundtrack supporting this game features

two very distinct styles of music: neo-Romantic in cutscenes and scripted segments, and experimental aleatoric for the playable game segments. The composer, Jason Graves closely studied the work of Penderecki and incorporated a very similar "sonic palette." Much of contemporary classical music features some element of serialism where the process of creating the music is far more important than the resulting piece and any extra musical associations that come out of it. Graves and audio director Don Veca, implemented a dynamic sound system that changed depending on player actions. In doing this, the soundtrack itself is aleatoric and thus is not the same every time a player engages with it. Graves took great care to experiment in a sound environment in which he was genuinely interested. While he was working on a commercial pursuit, he has mentioned having a great deal of freedom with regard to the actual sound of the music. This means that while composing he focused on creating a system of sound while also valuing the semantic associations it had. For Graves this is a meaningful work of music as well as a commercial product that evokes specific and intended emotional responses in direct relation to the context of the narrative and visual elements of the game. He has also expressed interest in exploring aleatoric music that is not associated with the horror genre.

Dead Space is an interesting example of a very concerted effort to create meaningful aleatoric music that could be appreciated alongside composers such as Penderecki that is housed within a commercial product. The intended experience of the audience is to engage with the semantic associations of this sound language, while the composer designed an interactive, truly aleatoric work within a game engine. There is a great deal of power in the mainstream however, and many modern horror movies and games utilize similar sounds to create soundtracks in a very similar way as Hollywood did for neo-Romantic music in mainstream film in the 20th century. One has to wonder what the effect is then, on the source genre when it begins to be more widely commodified and accepted into mainstream popular culture. Where does that leave composers and musicians who are not necessarily concerned with selling their work to vast audiences?

* B. Poole

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Open the Door Projects—Week 5: 2008-2023

2008-2023

Spotify and the Royalty Revolution

2009

“Almost There” from *Princess and The Frog*

2010

Joanna Newsom’s *Have One on Me*, Gender, and Cottagecore

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Foster the People, “Pumped Up Kicks”—Music and School Shootings

2012

Macklemore & Ryan Lewis’s “Same Love”

2013

“Miley Feminism”

2014-

Parasocial Relationships: (Taylor’s version)

2015

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2015

Kendrick Lamar -- *To Pimp A Butterfly* / Kendrick Lamar, “We Gon’ be Alright” / Do You Hear Me, Do You Feel Me?

2015

Andra Day’s “Rise Up” and the Black Lives Matter Movement

2016

Considering Matthew Shepard

2016

Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812, and the controversial ending to the original Broadway run

2016

Come From Away and *The Day the World Came to Town*

2016

Kanye West, “Ultralight Beam”

2016

Beyonce’s 2016 Super Bowl Performance

2017

Lady Gaga’s Political Persona and the 2017 Superbowl Performance

2017

Kesha, “Praying”

2017

Retelling Their Stories: *Six* and “Greensleeves”

2017

Cardi B, “Bodak Yellow,” and the God Complex

2017

The Real Slim Shady Stands Up: Eminem, Race, & Donald Trump

2018-

Lofi Hip Hop, Nostalgia and Capitalism

2018-

Hyperpop: Electronic Music, Internet Subculture and Developing Trans Identity in the Online Age

2019

Surviving R. Kelly: Using Power to Escape Accountability

2019

Bad Bunny and the Songs of Protest During the Puerto Rican #rickyrenuncia Movement

2019

Taylor Swift, Feminism, and *Lover* / Controversial Allyship in “You Need to Calm Down” by Taylor Swift / Swiftie Politics and “Miss Americana and the Heartbreak Prince”

2019

FOALS, “Like Lightning” and Neil Young, ‘Shut It Down’: Protesting for Climate

2020

One World: Together at Home Virtual Concert

2020

Year of the Protest

2021

Lil Wayne - “Ain’t Got No Time”

2021

Bo Burham—Problematic Politically

2022-2023

The Downfall of A Modern Diva

2022-2023

Taylor Swift and Ticketmaster

2008-2023

Spotify and the Royalty Revolution

In 2008, Spotify was founded by Swedish entrepreneur Daniel Ek, and was created in essence as a monetized response to the Napster controversy, and an opportunity to “create something that made it easier for people to do the stuff that they were already doing, but legally” (Marshall, 2015). In conjunction with the founder of uTorrent to develop Spotify’s peer-to-peer system for sharing music, the company quickly grew and provided an immense library of music that was available to share and stream for free or for a subscription price. Not all that glitters is gold, however, as there has been significant backlash from music artists over the years in regards to miniscule royalties provided back to them for their music.

Furthermore, the current system shows an even deeper disparity when the profits of Spotify, popular artists, less-popular artists, and record labels are compared, and the discourse still continues on today.

First, let's explain the system that Spotify has. Spotify uses a "so-called pro rata system of royalty distribution," in which "all the money collected from subscribers or ads for a given month goes into a single pot, which is then divided by the total number of streams. If, say, Drake had 5 percent of all streams that month, he (and the companies that handle his music) get 5 percent of the pot — meaning that, effectively, he gets 5 percent of each user's money, even those who have never listened to his music." (Sisario, 2021). The first criticism that comes from this is that it is a system that highly prioritizes popular artists over independent artists, as someone as popular as Drake is going to benefit financially even from those who do not listen to his music. However if a user listens "to only one obscure Finnish rapper for the entire month, the rapper will still only receive a very small proportion of the listener's money as the majority of it will be distributed to those artists at the top of the Spotify charts" (Marshall, 2015). The other aspect of all this, is that the amount that Spotify pays artists per stream is variable, as it is percentage based. "\$0.0033 to \$0.0054. That's how much money Spotify paid artists (through their rights holders) per stream in 2021, according to Insider. That means it would take roughly 250 streams for an artist to earn \$1" (Dellatto, 2022). This results in astronomical numbers of streams needing to be had in order to make a living wage. Over the years, artists such as Taylor Swift have gone as far to take their music off of the platform as well (however it is back on there now). This system is highly dependent on the success of Spotify as a whole too, as in 2010 (when the company was still quite new), The Guardian reported that "Lady Gaga's payout from 1 million Spotify streams of her hit song-Poker Face" was a mere \$167.00" (Teague, 2012). This is in significant contrast to services such as iTunes, where artists received significantly more income for each download of their music. There is a deeper layer to all of this that comes to fruition in conflict of interest with artists and recording companies as well. "A search of Sweden's corporation records database confirmed that both the major labels and the Merlin Network purchased about 18% of Spotify" (Teague, 2012). The way that royalties are sent out to artists, are also not directly to artists, they are to the publishing that have contracts with the artists. This means that not only are major publishing companies profiting from Spotify's overall profits, but also the contracts that they hold with individual artists. This means that publishing companies do not need to be concerned with the individual, because as long as Spotify as a WHOLE is still succeeding, they will still make their money, even if individual artists are suffering.

There has been significant discourse on the topic, and Spotify has come with their own defense, however I sadly do not have time to cover all of that here. This is however an ongoing debate, and the future will show how the music industry and the world will approach copyright, the rights of artists, and the dissemination of creative work.

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2009

"Almost There" from *Princess and The Frog*

The movie, *Princess and the Frog*, was released in 2009 by the Walt Disney company and was directed by John Musker and Ron Clements. The songs and score in the movie were composed by Randy Newman who has composed songs for many different Disney films. The movie draws inspiration from the Brothers Grimm's fairy tale "The Frog Prince" which took place in the 1920s in New Orleans. *Princess and the Frog* was a very popular film in 2009 as this movie showcased Disney's first African-American Princess. Tiana, a young and hard working woman with a passion for cooking dreams of opening her own restaurant and honoring her father's wish. One night a prince arrives to New Orleans, but has been cut off by his family's fortune so he goes to see the shadow man, Dr. Facilier, who tricks him and his curse turns Prince Naveen into a frog. At the ball that night Prince Naveen mistakes Tiana for being a Princess so they kiss thinking they will break the curse, however, Tiana turns into a frog herself. They then embark on a long journey into breaking the curse. With their hardwork and determination they do eventually break the curse and Tiana indeed opens up her own restaurant. Although

power and politics is not the central focus of the movie, it does however play a significant role. Some examples of this that are shown throughout the movie are the socioeconomic disparities, the consequences of manipulation, and the transformative nature of characters.

Before and after the release of *Princess and the Frog*, race, racism, and racial representation became the cyberspace and media buzz of the time. This underscored the reality that race matters in America and that matters of race are hardly ever absent from any artistic, aesthetic, and political decision. The movie also highlights the contrast between the privileged/wealthy citizens and the working class in New Orleans. The wealthy in the movie is portrayed by Tiana's best friend Charlotte and the working class is portrayed by Tiana and her family. Tiana's family struggles which is why she dreams of opening up her own restaurant to help support her family. One song from the movie that really shows this message is the song "Almost There." This song is sung by Tiana in the dreams of being able to open her restaurant one day. The song is an anthem of determination, ambition, and the pursuit of one's dream. It also touches on the themes of perseverance and overcoming obstacles which is relevant to discussions in power dynamics and social mobility. Lastly, the song itself can be seen by the public as commentary on the struggles of marginalized people and communities in pursuing their dreams.

* V. Vespucci

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2010

Joanna Newsom's "Have One on Me," Gender, and Cottagecore

Have One On Me is the 2010 triple album by harpist/vocalist Joanna Newsom. Newsom is a classically trained harpist whose music is defined by her unique vocal timbre, pastoral lyrical imagery, and incorporation of elements of Appalachian folk music. Her voice often receives criticism from listeners, often described as shrill or child-like, and is a reason a lot of people won't listen to her. I've had friends ask me if I actually listen to her for fun because they find her voice so off-putting, especially in contrast to the lush orchestral arrangements on some of her songs. I wonder how much of this criticism is tied up in her gender, women are supposed to fit a specific image that is beautiful and doesn't call attention to itself, and her voice certainly sticks out. A good sample of her vocal style is the song "'81" from *Have One On Me*.

Have One On Me is a "freak-folk" album, a genre that invokes a very constructed and nostalgic image of nature. This image is of "untamed" wilderness, of a utopian pre-industrial world that is in stark contrast to our current urban-centered society. This frame has issues, one being that it romanticizes the colonization of the American west through invoking images of homesteading. Though cottagecore as it currently exists on the internet started to gain traction in the time since Newsom released her most recent album (2015's *Divers*), her music is very popular in this subculture, and I see very clear connections between freak-folk and cottagecore. Newsom's music can be interpreted as being about finding a place outside of society, a place that hasn't been corrupted by the patriarchy and capitalism. Cottagecore is an explicitly queer subculture that idealizes a similar nostalgic image of nature to freak-folk, but it also has roots in rural queer communities. The media tends to gravitate towards queer stories between cis, white, gay men, and the same applies to rural queer stories, even though there was a movement of womyn-only lesbian communes. Cottagecore, in contrast, is very much centered around queer women and is generally also inclusive of trans women. Because the modern image of queerness is usually a cis gay man living in the city, many queer women don't feel represented by this and made their own subculture. A major criticism of cottagecore is that the realities of living in a rural community are ignored, like the fact that many small rural communities still harbor a lot of homophobic and transphobic sentiment.

* M. Coons

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Joanna Newsom - Have One on Me (Full Album)

2011

Lady Gaga, "Born This Way"

The song "Born This Way" by Lady Gaga, released on February 11th 2011 and had a significant impact on gay rights and the LGBTQ+ community. The song's message of self-acceptance, inclusivity, and embracing one's identity resonated with many individuals, especially those in the LGBTQ+ community, who face discrimination and prejudice. At the time, same-sex marriage was still prohibited, and it wasn't until 2015 that it became legal nationwide. Additionally, the mere recognition of the transgender community in a major pop song was extremely rare and uncommon. The song's empowering lyrics, emphasizing self-love and pride in one's identity, became an anthem for LGBTQ+ individuals, promoting a sense of belonging and empowerment. Lady Gaga sings "No matter gay, straight, or bi, lesbian, transgendered life, I'm on the right track baby." Through this, she sings loudly about the love and acceptance of all people, no matter their sexuality or gender. It provided a positive representation of LGBTQ+ identities and experiences in mainstream media, helping to combat negative stereotypes and stigma.

"Born This Way" also sparked conversations about LGBTQ+ rights and issues, drawing attention to the struggles faced by the community and advocating for greater acceptance and equality. Protests and backlash against Lady Gaga's "Born This Way" occurred at her concerts, events, and public appearances, with individuals expressing homophobic views gathering to voice opposition to the song's LGBTQ+ inclusive message. One example of this is during her "Born This Way Ball" World Tour performance in South Korea. Conservative Christians in South Korea have accused Lady Gaga of promoting homosexuality and pornography. Nearly 300 Protestant church members gathered in Seoul for a group prayer against her concert. The Alliance for Sound Culture in Sexuality put up posters in Seoul, condemning Gaga's "unhealthy sexual culture" and "lewd lyrics and

performances." The concert was banned for anyone under 18 by the Korea Media Rating Board. Gaga responded on Twitter, advocating for parents' rights to decide for their children. Despite the controversy, Gaga continued her tour in Asia and shared her experiences on social media. Another example of this was during the first stop of her Born This Way Ball tour in Tacoma, Washington, Lady Gaga's Born Brave Bus, an event celebrating individuality and self-acceptance, faced opposition from the conservative group Florida Family Association. The group hired an aircraft to fly a banner reading "NOT Born this way" over the bus before her concert. The Florida Family Association protested that young adults were being influenced to embrace a homosexual or transgender lifestyle. It remains unclear whether Gaga was aware of the banner. However, she addressed the crowd outside the Born Brave Bus, encouraging them that "the change begins with you." Despite the songs' backlash, Lady Gaga's continued to fight for the LGBTQ+ community and continued to resist.

In 2011, Lady Gaga told Billboard, "I want to write my this-is-who-the-fuck-I-am anthem, but I don't want it to be hidden in poetic wizardry and metaphors. I want it to be an attack, an assault on the issue because I think, especially in today's music, everything gets kind of washy sometimes and the message gets hidden in the lyrical play," Before this song, advocating for gay rights was nuanced and tip-toed around by artists, scared about the controversy and backlash they may receive. Lady Gaga faces this head on, and because of this, "Born This Way" plays a significant role in fostering a sense of pride and empowerment among LGBTQ+ individuals, promoting understanding and acceptance in society, and contributing to the ongoing movement for LGBTQ+ rights and equality. The song's positive impact on the LGBTQ+ community has made it an iconic anthem in the fight for greater acceptance and inclusivity.

* K. Lyubomirsky

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2011

Foster the People, “Pumped Up Kicks”—Music and School Shootings

School shootings are becoming a part of the average American experience. As of today (7/23/23) there have been 386 school shootings in the United States, since the Columbine massacre of ‘99. People have many theories as to why the rate of mass shootings has sky-rocketed, but all call for change. Musicians have been blamed for and created music in response to these shootings, that have cast a wide variety of public reactions.

“Pumped Up Kicks” by Foster the People took off after its release in 2011 but was quickly met with backlash after listeners began to decipher the lyrics. Mark Foster was a Jingle Writer, based out of Los Angeles up until this song took off and landed his band on the Billboard Top 10. While Foster had great success in the jingle industry, he and his band were looking to make it into the alt-rock scene. (Walthall, 2022) With a focus on mental illness, the band set out to create a song that would surprise audiences while still delivering a familiar sound. This is evident in the nursery rhyme structure of the chorus and was confirmed in a 2019 interview with Billboard in which Mark Foster said “I want to try and make something sound kind of like Fleetwood Mac... harmonies that were like late-’60s-early-’70s, like Mamas and Papas, kind of Phil Spector-y... When I picked up the guitar for the bridge, I wanted to do something in a style like Jimi Hendrix — like, if he was just casually riffing over this with his hammer-ons and blues influence, Americana style.” (Zellner, 2019). While his intentions did come to fruition and the song was initially well received. It started to pick up traction as it became known as the song about “school shootings” (Kiilakoski, 2011). With lyrics such as “Yeah, he found a six-shooter gun in his dad’s closet, with a box of fun things. I

don’t even know what, but he’s coming for you, yeah, he’s coming for you” and “All the other kids with the pumped-up kicks. You better run, better run faster than my bullet”, it is not hard to see why people would feel this way. Amid this mass shooting epidemic, listeners placed these lyrics into a real-world setting and changed the meaning of the song from its original intentions. Foster responded to these criticisms with the following statement: “It’s really more about this person’s psyche. Obviously, the song is speaking about violent things, but it is a misconception that it’s about a school shooting.” (Zellner). This is just one example of music that has been received in a different way than initially intended. As a result of the public reaction, Foster the People has decided to retire the song from live performance.

Many people feared this song would cause further violence, much in the same way that German/American industrial rock band KMFDM has been accredited with influencing the Columbine shooting of 1999. In this case, one of the shooters wrote in his diary “KMFDM’s new album’s entitled “Adios” and its release date is in April. How fuckin appropriate, a subliminal final “Adios” tribute to Reb and Vodka, thanks KMFDM.”(Harris, 1999). The concept of teenagers being influenced by pop culture is not a new one. This argument is often made about violent video games and other forms of media.

We also have seen music created as a result of these tragedies. An early example would be the Boomtown Rats’ song, “I Don’t Like Mondays”, which was created after a 16-year-old shooter opened fire on Cleveland Elementary, back in 1979. When asked why they did it, the shooter replied, “I don’t like Mondays.” and the band utilized this statement to create their hit single. (Ash, 2018) In a more recent instance, XXXTENTACION and Lil Wayne released a song entitled “School Shooters” (2020) calling out the justice and public schooling systems for not protecting victims of school shootings and not paying attention to the mental health of at-risk students. The music video to accompany the rap utilizes graphic imagery of a school shooting and a police force slowly moving through a building while many are left to fend for themselves. This is evident in the following lines: “The innocent, who the fuck’s protecting us? Boy, you better buckle up ‘Cause I got questions for you fucks I’ve had enough”(Lil Wayne). This work has been resurrected in light of the Uvalde shooting and the response time of the Uvalde police force. Unfortunately, other music that shares a similar message will continue to appear timeless, until a change is enacted.

* M. Suffern

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2012

Macklemore & Ryan Lewis’s “Same Love”

The song “Same Love” was released in 2012 during the LGBTQ+ movement for same-sex marriage by Macklemore and Ryan Lewis. The song was released in part to support Referendum 74, which legalized same-sex marriage in Washington State. When rap emerged into the American mainstream in the 1980’s and 1990’s, its multiethnic roots were forgotten and rap music came to almost represent a form of black masculinity. As a white rapper, Macklemore was already a controversial figure as many white rappers before understood blackness as exaggerated negative stereotypes of which persona they took on to present themselves as more “authentic.” Eminem, who rose to fame years before, replaced the history of racial oppression in rap with class oppression. Macklemore, went a different route and often portrayed himself as a self-aware white rapper who was socially conscious of his privilege. In his raps, he mentions racial inequities, most famously criticizing the 2012 killing of Trayvon Martin in Florida. Macklemore also volunteered at a juvenile detention center when he was younger teaching songwriting and rap to the youth there and mentions those experiences exposed him to the racial inequities present in the criminal system. One of his other hits, “Thrift Shop,” was intended to point out the consumerism and materialism in hip hop but was critiqued by Brandon Soderberg who said the performance “stinks of privilege.” Soderberg criticized Macklemore for not acknowledging the difference between choosing to shop at a thrift store to buy cool clothes to impress women and the economic need to shop at thrift stores. When Macklemore released the song, “Same Love,” it was criticized not only by conservatives who disagreed with the song’s message, but also by members of the LGBTQ+ community for its erasure of queer and trans hip hop artists of color, as Macklemore himself, is a white heterosexual man. Queer black rap artist, Lelf criticized the song on Twitter asking

“Do any proceeds go to any gay people? The HRC [Human Rights Campaign]? Aids foundation? Or does this straight white man keep the money?” Some of the proceeds were donated to Washington United for Marriage.

Another major performance of this piece was at the 56th annual Grammys where Macklemore and Ryan Lewis was joined by Mary Lambert, Madonna, and Trombone Shorty and announced by Queen Latifah. During this performance, Queen Latifah officiates the renewal of vows of 33 couples, representing straight, gay, young, old, and interracial couples. The stage for the performance of “Same Love” begins dark with just neon outlines of archways and as the song goes on, the stage becomes more illuminated, revealing stained glass window effects reminiscent of churches. People criticized the usage of the setting of a church as it normalizes weddings that happen in Christian churches. There are also religious influences in the music as it opens with an open chord on the organ followed by a melodic piano solo. The impact of this opening makes the song feel like the opening to a church hymn, very different from the bustling city street sounds we usually get from rap music of this time. The piano then quotes the song “People Get Ready” which was most famously sung by The Impressions, a black singing group. Through the lyrics, Macklemore makes many connections from the civil rights movement to the movement for marriage equality which becomes very problematic as it historicizes the plights of the civil rights movement and makes racism seem as a thing of the past. This is further emphasized in the music video when a montage of the growing up of a mixed gay child is spliced with clips of Martin Luther King and shots of burning crosses from the civil rights movement. In the lyrics he also says, “If I was gay, I’d think hip hop hates me,” which also further perpetuates the idea that Black hip hop is inherently homophobic. This led to many people scapegoating Black churches for legislation not being passed in California, legalizing same-sex marriage. Through this lyric, he also paints himself as a white savior for the LGBTQ community. With rap music, the words and messages are usually very thought through and intentional so it makes me think about whether this point of view was something that Macklemore considered when releasing this song.

* K. Tai

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2013

“Miley Feminism”

For this Open the Door project, I decided to focus on Miley Cyrus’ performance at the 2013 VMA performance. Her performance of “We Can’t Stop,” mashed with Robin Thicke’s “Blurred Lines” created controversy with her proclamation of her definition of feminism. “Miley Feminism” has been described through a fearless lens; “about being unafraid to make choices, to be yourself, to self-express” (Apolloni, 2014). This was clearly portrayed in her performance at the VMA’s, twerking in a teddy bear onesie, while “taunting the audience with her omnipresent stuck-out tongue” (2). Miley’s performance surged throughout the world, and her single, “We Can’t Stop” reached an all time high of viewers/listeners. Although this performance was such a success in the lens of her fans, her performance and twerking on stage ultimately “masked the black communal roots of the social dance from New Orleans,” through bounce music (Gaunt, 2016). In a TedTalk with Lizzo discussing the origins of twerking, she explains that modern day twerking is in direct parallel to West African dances. A very common dance was called “Mapouka,” where West African women would dance to celebrate joy or through religious worship. New Orleans has a large history of African American culture, and twerking was commonly performed to music labeled as “bounce.” Bounce music is a form of hip hop with an upbeat feel that commonly includes a call and response routine. Twerking was not common in the music industry, until Beyonce released her music video “Crazy in Love” in 2003. Although artists such as Beyonce, Big Freedia and Lizzo were performing and twerking, the world did not seem to notice or take interest in the dance. After Miley Cyrus performed at the VMA’s, “Google trends revealed, interest in the word ‘twerking’ surged dramatically” (Miller, 308). Cyrus’ performance created controversy in questioning her decision to twerk on stage. Black artists perform this dance as a sense of portraying themselves or, a “kind of self presentation of ethnicity and gender” (Gaunt, 2016), while Cyrus may have performed this to portray her empowerment she felt as an individual. Although her performance portrays this fearless, feminist attitude, it resulted in silencing where twerking originated from. Lizzo makes it clear in her TedTalk that the black culture of

twerking cannot be erased, and people need to understand its origins.

Ultimately, people questioned if her VMA performance was an act of cultural appropriation, or if it was to take a stand on her definition of feminism. While there were numerous aspects of the performance that caused controversy, Miley’s decision to twerk on stage sparked a discussion about the intersectionality of race, gender, appropriation and musical performances (Apolloni, 2014).

* B. Cripps

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2014-

Parasocial Relationships: (Taylor’s version)

There is no question that Taylor Swift is one of the most popular of current musical artists. Taylor Swift has been making and releasing music since 2006, and has consistently held a high status as a famous musician. Why is that? It is because of the fans. Or should I say, the Swifties. “Taylor Swift is one of the most influential figures in western popular music. Her influence is so pronounced that in 2021, re-recordings of her previously released songs topped charts as ‘Taylor’s Versions’ for the second time in the United States” (Volpe, 2021). Taylor announced in 2019 that she would be re-recording her albums, and fans immediately supported her, before even hearing what the re-recordings sound like. Taylor has built a strong fan-base over the span of her career, through her mastermind ways. However, this has caused an extremely high number of parasocial relationships among Taylor and Swifties. “Parasocial relationships are born after continuous parasocial interaction, which often occurs with media figures and celebrities who have extensive fan bases. Fans have a desire for connection, but contact is almost exclusively one-sided” (Ward, 2016). We see this early in Swift’s career as she has hosted listening parties for her

fans at her home with homemade desserts, has been seen commenting on fan's social media posts, and had her mother picking fans out of the audience at her shows to meet Taylor (Wong, 2023). However, as her career progressed, we see these relationships become troublesome and inappropriate.

Leading up to the 1989 album release in 2014, Taylor Swift "created rhetoric that invited a relationship that would support her career and identity change. The rhetoric surrounding the 1989 social media posts consisted of engagement of fantasy friendship" (White, 2018). Taylor even defends this. In an interview with Good Morning America, Swift "states that her fans can tell whether or not gossip about her is true because "they know [her]" (Lyon, 2019).

Taylor is known to hide what she calls "easter eggs" in her music and social media posts, as a fun way to get fans excited about her music through clues. But do Swifties take this too far? After a break-up between Swift and Joe Alwyn, Swifties were "outraged" when Alwyn posted a photo of himself on a scooter. Fans read this as an intentional insult to Swift, because her masters were sold to a man named "Scooter Braun," who she had many issues with. "It's hard enough to understand a relationship when you're inside it; trying to piece together a narrative via song lyrics and a few paparazzi photos seems like a fundamental misunderstanding of human relations (Petrusich, 2023). Swifties are known to be extremely involved in Swift's romantic relationships. Because of this, and fan assumptions that her music is about specific exes, Taylor has had to ask Swifties not to send death threats to certain celebrities and exes. Before Swift sings her song "Dear John," allegedly about ex-John Mayer, during her Eras Tour in 2023, she shares this message with the crowd:

"I'm putting this out now because I want to own my music and I believe that any artist who has the desire to own their music should be able to. That's why I'm putting out this album," she said on Saturday. "I'm 33 years old. I don't care about anything that happened to me when I was 19, except the songs I wrote. ... So, what I'm trying to tell you is that I'm not putting this album out so that you should go and feel the need to defend me on the Internet against someone you think I might have written the song about 14 million years ago" (Wigconic, 2023).

We see this obsession continue in her song "cardigan" off of her 2020 album, *Folklore*. Although the lyrics to this track appear to be one of romantic partners, fans created theories that this was indeed about them. Fans on Tik Tok and Reddit analyzed the lyrics "playing hide and seek" to be about the easter eggs Taylor leaves, "giving me your weekends" being in regards to all the weekends fans spend seeing her shows, staying up for album releases, etc. The fan goes on to say "SHE is the cardigan!" (Tsintziras, 2022). The compositional aspects of the song

might even encourage this theory. "In the key of Eb Major, "cardigan" makes good use of the "home" I chord (Eb) as the chorus enters, in place of the minor ii that opens the four-chord progression of fmin (ii) – Bb (V) – Ab (IV) – Bb (V). This lifting moment of tonal stability is matched by the line, "I knew you." (McGrath, 2023). Followed by the lines "I knew you'd come back to me," fans believed these words with the use of the tonic chord was in regards to fans not leaving Taylor after the Kanye and Kim drama back in the day. Because of all of this, Swifties feel like they are part of a community, where they are able to learn secret knowledge and feel as if they are close to someone, as if they are friends. (Resnick, 2021). But, are they?

* C. Perticone

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2015

Copyright Infringement (Blurred Lines)

Since 2015 there have been a plethora of copyright infringement lawsuits involving famous music and musicians. Led Zeppelin was sued over "Stairway to Heaven", Robin Thicke was sued and lost over his song with Pharrell Williams "Blurred Lines", Ed Sheeran was sued over "Thinking out Loud", Katy Perry was sued over "Darkhorse." Coldplay, Kanye, Dua Lipa, Frank Ocean, Justin Timberlake, Sam Smith, and Bruno Mars have all been sued over copyright infringement in their music over the last decade. "Under the copyright laws of the United States, copyright is, by default, assigned to the author of the work. This is done automatically, as soon as the work is created, and without any requirement of registration. However, the law does not indicate who is considered the "author" of a sound recording (Harbeson, p. 253)".

One of the biggest cases involving copyright infringement of music in our lifetimes was Robin Thicke and Pharrell Williams' song "Blurred Lines" "infringing" the copyright of Marvin Gaye's "Got to Give it Up." In 2015 a grand jury for the United States District Court for the Central District of California found Thicke and Williams guilty for their 2013 song. Due to similarities between the background music and the explanations of musicologists Ingrid Monson and Judith Finell, Thicke, and Williams were ordered to pay \$7.4 Million to the Gaye estate (Davidson). Many musicians and people feel that the grounds for this lawsuit were a bit dubious. You can hear that the "Blurred Lines" groove was influenced by "Got to Give it Up" but the melody and lyrics are completely different. "All you need is for somebody, a lawyer, to come out and be willing to work for a percentage of the verdict, and an uninformed jury, and you're gonna get these kinds of suits and people are going to lose them (Beato, 2018)". Cases like this really are a slippery slope for musicians who are trying to create new musical ideas. There are only so many notes, rhythms, and combinations that can be used in a piece and eventually, we may get to a point where everything is copyrighted. In his video describing the lawsuit between Marvin Gaye and Ed Sheeran, Adam Neely discusses the idea of a contrafact and how chord changes such as the chords to "I Got Rhythm" have been copied hundreds if not thousands of times to songs such as the Flinstones Theme, Oleo, Dexterity, and Steeple Chase. It is sad to

envision a world where people are trying to buy the rights to songs strictly to profit from copyright infringement claims that really shouldn't have any legs to stand on.

* S. Foti

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2015

Kendrick Lamar -- To Pimp A Butterfly

In 2015, Kendrick Lamar's album *To Pimp a Butterfly* released to immense critical and commercial success. The album highlights a number of elements of Lamar's life, largely pertaining to his existence as an African-American man in the U.S, as well as highlight the juxtaposition between chasing fame and wealth and remaining loyal to his roots. In the opening track of the album, "Wesley's Theory," Lamar makes reference to a "first girlfriend," meant to represent the temptation of wealth, who later gets represented by the name "Lucy" (short for Lucifer). In contrast, Lamar references a South African beggar in "How Much a Dollar Cost?" meant to represent God. Throughout the album Kendrick Lamar repeatedly reflects upon his role in the rap sphere, and the way that his position is contrasted depending on the perspective he takes. This split of perspective comes to a peak in "King Kunta," where Kendrick makes reference to himself as being a king within the rap industry, while simultaneously making reference to the character Kunta Kinte from the 1976 novel *Roots: The Saga of the American Family* by Alex Haley. This is intended to reflect that, like Kinte in the novel, Kendrick is a slave to the music industry. While other artists will often make reference of slavery and even this particular story, Lamar uses this as a message of embodiment and empowerment, accepting the pain of slavery while rejecting the norms of the "masters."

Kendrick Lamar also implements a few different rap methods throughout the album's runtime. The two main methods are derivative and generative (Mattissich, 2019). Simply put, derivative flows are rooted in the beat of the song, while generative refers to beats that exist more independently. Lamar utilizes both models, while also offering some songs that have features of both. In the song "For Free?", Lamar creates a flow that exists almost completely independently from the jazz combo that provides the instrumental. The piece, including the combo, comprises of five musicians who are more or less improvising simultaneously. Because of this, the song does not follow a standard structure, instead splitting into six distinct sections centered around the repetition of the line "this dick ain't free?" This line roughly serves as a type of refrain, and is one of the rare occurrences of the different elements of the song lining up. This is an effort to produce a musical work that tests the idea that a complete musical work can consist of layers of musical ideas, that are not inherently connected to one another.

* M. Smith

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Kendrick Lamar, "We Gon' be Alright"

Kendrick Lamar was born in Compton, California and grew up in a neighborhood full of violence and poverty. He experiences harsh realities and challenges at an early age. He began rapping at a young age as he found comfort in rapping at a young age. In 2004 Lamar signed a record deal with Top Dawg Entertainment as he continued to rise to fame. Nine years later, Kendrick Lamar's album "To Pimp a Butterfly" came out and on it the track "Alright." The song represents hope and resilience as it covers themes of racial inequality and police brutality. The lyrics message has endurance and determination, emphasizing the idea that even in the face of adversity, everything will eventually be "all right."

The chorus "We gon' be alright," is repeating throughout the song acting as a mantra of hope. Lamar acknowledges the struggles faced by the black community, highlighting

the pain and challenges they endure. He also discusses the temptations and faults that can distract individuals from their hardships, the strength of the community will prevail, and they will overcome.

The music video for "Alright" was released in 2015 and was directed by Colin Tilley. The video is a visual piece of art that complement's the songs message well. It begins with a scene showing Kendrick Lamar standing on top of a traffic light, surrounded by a group of people looking up to him. This can be symbolized as Kendrick is their leader providing them guidance and hope. The video has Kendrick navigating through different scenarios representing the struggles faced by black individuals in America. It shows images of police brutality and racial tensions, bringing attention to the ongoing issues faced by marginalized communities. Finally, Kendrick is rapping on top of a vandalized car, suggesting resistance against the oppressive system. The video concludes with Kendrick levitating above the city, however, at the end, a cop shoots him down.

In an article found, the author discusses the complexities of cultural appropriation in context of Chris Thile's cover of Kendrick Lamar's "Alright." The author questions whether Thile's cover is appropriating hip-hop culture and the harmful effects of such appropriation. They argue that the culture values "keeping it real" which includes writing one's own material and speaking from personal experiences. The author suggests that educators should encourage students to create their own music that reflects their own identities and experiences, rather than appropriating from other cultures.

* I. Newman

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Do You Hear Me, Do You Feel Me?

Kendrick Lamar's song "Alright" is a powerful and influential hip-hop anthem that addresses issues of racial inequality, police brutality, and the struggles faced by African Americans in the United States. Released in 2015 as part of his critically acclaimed album "To Pimp a

Butterfly," the song became a symbol of hope and resilience for marginalized communities and played a significant role in shaping political discourse in America. "Alright" showcases Lamar's insightful and introspective lyricism, where he poignantly expresses the pain, frustration, and aspirations of African Americans in a society plagued by systemic racism. The song's chorus, "We gon' be alright," serves as a mantra of hope and encouragement, reminding listeners that despite the hardships, there is strength and determination to overcome adversity.

Dr. Treva Lindsey recalls a protest in July 2015, a few months after Kendrick Lamar released *To Pimp a Butterfly*. Hundreds of activists had gathered at a conference called National Convening of the Movement for Black Lives. A black fourteen-year-old boy was arrested for being intoxicated. The cops were prevented from taking the boy away by the protesters, who linked arms around the police officer's car. Dr. Lindsey said this about the situation: "We're all at different places on this kind of corner. And we just start singing, 'We gon' be alright.'" I mean, it just happens organically." (Doby, 2022). This was just one such demonstration of the song's impact as an anthem on political protests.

The song became a rallying cry during the height of the Black Lives Matter movement. The song's message resonated with protesters advocating for justice and police reform after the high-profile killings of unarmed black individuals, such as Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, and Eric Garner. It became an anthem for those demanding an end to racial profiling and the excessive use of force by law enforcement.

In the song and throughout the album, Kendrick creates and sustains a metaphor of a caterpillar (a hood denizen), a butterfly (the talent in the hoodrat), a pimp (the caterpillar sells out the butterfly), and a cocoon (an encasing that traps the caterpillar, i.e. institutionalized racism) (Manabe, 2019). "In 'Alright', Lamar uses the modal jazz tradition to deliver a message of reassurance to black America while adding a personification of empowerment to the script of black identity." (Weerasinghe, 2019). Through the lyrics and music, Lamar tells the story and experience of black people in America, and assures black America that, through perseverance, they will emerge from the discrimination they face, sooner or later.

* J. Flores

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2015

Andra Day's "Rise Up" and the Black Lives Matter Movement

The 2010's saw a massive resurgence of racial violence and protests responses on a scale that matched that Civil Rights movement of the 1950's. The Black Lives Matter Movement, as it came to be known, was spurred on by the murder of Black teen Trayvon Martin in 2013 by Stanford, Florida resident George Zimmerman after an altercation between him and Martin. Outrage sparked when he was acquitted of second-degree murder when he finally was tried in 2013. Media coverage of the trial made this movement spread like wildfire, and "three radical Black organizers- Aliciva Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi- created a Black-centered political will and movement building project called #BlackLivesMatter" (Boucicaut, 2021, pp. 376). Tensions would bubble over the course of the next several years as additional tragedies followed. In 2014, Ferguson, Missouri resident Michael Brown was shot and killed by police officer Darren Wilson. This sparked an explosive student protest at the nearby University of Missouri. They were fed up with the inaction being taken by administration in their school grounds, and expressed this frustration through demonstrations, a hunger strike (for grad student Johnathan Baker) and music. Author Stephanie Shonekan of Black Lives Matter and Music: Protest, Intervention, Reflection, states that " ...at the heart of every black liberation movement in the US, there is an accompanying sound of black music that serves as a soundtrack for each wave of the movement" (2018,15). Students participated in prayer circles reminiscent of gospel music derived from black churches, which have had consistent appearances in black activist spaces from the Civil Rights movement to present day. The "prayer warriors" would join hands, cry out, and pray for love and peace in solidarity with their fellow students and community. The students were so fervent in these circles, campus counselors would attempt to intervene, thinking students were experiencing mental crises. These spaces brought about a sense of pride and camaraderie in the face of injustice and oppression. A song that became synonymous with the movement was Andra Day's "Rise Up" (PBS Newshour, 2016), written in 2015. Initially, Day wrote the song as an encouraging reminder to persevere in the face of hardships. Day and her song fell into the timeline when she was asked to sing

“Rise up” at the 2016 Democratic National Convention. “...Day performed “Rise Up” at the Democratic National Convention after the mothers of Trayvon Martin and Sandra Bland took the stage to speak about the Black Lives Matter movement and race in the US” (Selby, 2017). Flanked by a drum corp, Day stands front and center, exhibiting strength and resilience. In an interview with “Global Citizen”, she describes her inspirations like Nina Simone and Billie Holiday, who were unafraid of singing about race despite the risk of physical harm. She expressed gratitude at being able to speak about while being less likely to experience this repercussion, saying “I think it’s a driving force inside me, to not do music just for myself, but to do it because you have a platform and you have a responsibility” (Selby, 2017). Day was adamant about using her voice as an educator, and a source of strength for victims. “Rise Up” was later taken as the theme song for the CNN film “We Will Rise: Michelle Obama’s Mission to Educate Girls Around the World”. This song was a source of hope for many during this turbulent time, and through the hardships that would follow after.

* E. Weber

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2016

Considering Matthew Shepard

On October 6th, 1998, 21-year-old college student Matthew Shepard was brutally beaten, tied to a fence, and left to die in near- freezing temperatures in Laramie, Wyoming. Shepard’s death was one of the most impactful hate-crimes of LGBTQ history in the United States and led to the passing of the The Matthew Shepard And James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act Of 2009 (Rogelstad, 2018). Choral composer and director of the Texan chamber choir Conspirare Craig Hella Johnson was deeply affected by the murder and in 2013 began composing his 2016

oratorio *Considering Matthew Shepard* (Smith, 2016). The Oxford dictionary defines oratorio as “a large-scale musical work for orchestra and voices, typically a narrative on a religious theme, performed without the use of costumes, scenery, or action.” The masterwork is over 90 minutes long and has been widely performed in upper level ensembles throughout the country, including Ithaca College, where I performed in 2019 (Ithaca College, 2019). Matthew’s story gained wild publicity at the time and remained stuck in the heads of Americans even 20 years later, with the release of *Considering Matthew Shepard* and other related works. Ott and Aoki write about the media’s framing of Matthew Shepard in 2002, long before the oratorio was released (Ott and Aoki, 2002). They point out that his story was “good melodrama” for news outlets who exploited Matthew’s helpless body and sexual identity in headlines like: “Gay Man Beaten and Left For Dead; 2 Are Charged,” “Gay Student Brutally Beaten; 4 Arrested,” and “Gay Man Near Death After Beating, Burning; Three Held in Wyoming Attack Near Campus; Hate Crimes Suspected.” (487). Risner notes that while outrage was voiced throughout the US through memorial, vigils, and petitions, mourners were also met with horrific anti-gay protests. While some religious leaders provided sympathy, others weaponized Matthew’s murder to warn against the “dangers” of homosexuality (Risner, N.d.). Matthew was part of a religious family and participated enthusiastically in the church himself. *Considering Matthew Shepard* is organized into three sections: Prologue, Passion, Epilogue. The oratorio fuses narration along with many musical styles together, such as country, western, gospel, and Gregorian chant. When asked about the inclusion of so many contrasting styles, Johnson said, “This is an American story and even more specifically it is a story rooted in the American West. I asked myself, ‘How can I tell a musical story which is a part of this storytelling tradition we call oratorio but which is also rooted in the eclecticism of America, this great cultural merging place?’” (Smith, 2016). The oratorio includes settings of famous poems and religious texts and highlights a variety of aspects of the murder- the animals, the nature, the fence, the stars, and some songs with uplifting messages. Johnson hopes that “this work pays respect to Matthew Shepard by inviting the listener to engage an interior journey of consideration, thoughtfully and deeply” (Smith, 2016). This oratorio can be considered memorial music, yet the composer has no personal connection to Matthew. The music is also relatively calm and doesn’t employ techniques of sound that are intended to cause harm. This makes it somewhat different from other memorial music we have studied in class. I wonder why this particular story gained so much traction in the US, especially following the AIDS crisis when hate was rising rapidly against LGBTQ people in America. I speculate that Matthew’s race and socio-economic background play a large role.

Nonetheless, his memory should be remembered and his life cherished.

* S. Berkley

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2016

Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812, and the controversial ending to the original Broadway run

Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812, a musical that made its way to Broadway in 2016, is a retelling of a small, though incredibly significant portion of *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy. The music, and the source material that it comes from, are both riddled with political themes, to the point where it is slightly difficult to narrow in and speak on just one. For this open the door project however,

I would like to discuss the controversy surrounding the shows shortly lived Broadway run.

For some context, the musical spent five years in different performance spheres before it finally hit Broadway. It got its first run on Broadway at the Imperial Theater in November of 2016, and had for its original cast Denée Benton and Josh Groban in the leading roles of Natasha Rostova and Pierre Bezukhov. It is interesting to note that in the 11 months that this musical lived on Broadway, it was nominated for twelve Tony awards and won two. Josh Groban (the original Broadway cast for Pierre Bezukhov) was replaced by Okieriete Onaodowan (who had just finished his original cast run of *Hamilton* as Hercules Mulligan/James Madison) in July of 2017.

I think it is important to reflect on the perceived opinions of the directors/producers as we look at certain aspects of the original run. Onaodowan's run, starting in July and meant to go all the way through to September, only lasts a few weeks before tickets sales start to drop, and the producers decide to replace him with a new, white actor. The idea that Denée was "accepted" on stage as a black actress filling a main fictional role from a traditional Russian novel, while Oak was somehow not an acceptable choice, is a concerning thing to unpack. (This previous statement regarding Denée's acceptance is of course with its flaws, as Denée received comments from racist members of the public, as a black woman portraying Natasha. The issue here of course being that these comments did not negatively impact ticket sales for the show). There was a lot of discussion about race as Oak (a black actor succeeding a white actor) was to be replaced by another white actor. This opens up a can of worms for sure. It seems that claimed practices of fair and equitable casting based on talent and capacity to do justice to a role go out the window when ticket sales are in question. We can also bring to light another concerning issue when we look at Denée's experience as a black woman filling the title female role for this musical. Is it that her performance was more acceptable than Oak's interpretation? Is this why sales were not negatively impacted by her casting? That is difficult to believe. Is it that the title role of Natasha holds less significance to the public looking to criticize, than the role of Pierre? Not to be cynical, but this feels far closer to a possible truth than the alternative. Whatever the reasons behind Denée escaping some of this controversy, Okieriete certainly does not. Within a few weeks of his run as Pierre, the producers bring in Mandy Patinkin (an older white man, for those unfamiliar with his work) to finish Oak's scheduled time in the show. People are obviously upset by this decision to discard Oak as Pierre, and Patinkin withdraws, leaving Dave Malloy (the writer of the musical, and the original Pierre in the off-Broadway productions) to finish out Okieriete's schedule before the show was taken off Broadway in September of 2017.

* C. Higgins

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2016

Come From Away and The Day the World Came to Town

In October 2016, a group of Broadway performers arrived in the small town Gander, Newfoundland. The cast of the new musical *Come From Away*, only a few days before they opened on Broadway, were there to give a concert for the people the show was based on. *Come From Away* is a “9/12” story that takes place after the terrorist attacks in New York City, when 38 planes were rerouted to the small local airport. Suddenly, the town nearly doubled in population and just under 7,000 people from all over the world needed to be housed and fed. The show follows a group of Newfoundlanders and the “come from aways” as they try to deal with what had just occurred and the reality they had found themselves in. The cast of the show considered this concert to be the real opening night for the Broadway run, with cast member Joel Hatch stating that, “Broadway, that’ll take care of itself. This is the important performance that we’re gonna give.” They got to meet the real life people they were portraying, as well as tour various locations from the show, such as the legion and the school. The show itself is a compilation of various personal accounts from the community members and people on the planes. There are over 100 different people represented onstage by the 12 actors throughout the show.

Come From Away represents a celebration of humanity at its finest while it was at its worst. The concert offered a moment for Newfoundlanders to celebrate their culture and their country, as the show has many different references to Newfoundland traditions, such as the songs “Heave Away” and “Screech In.” These songs exemplified the message of the show, that everyone belonged in this place and this time. Another song from the show is,

“Prayer.” In this song, we hear many different prayers in many different languages, from people who are from all around the world. This is meant to show the blending of cultures and acceptance that people found in this small town. When the plane people got home from Newfoundland, many of them found that this was not the experience of many others in the US. It was a time of distrust, especially towards muslims. But for a moment in the show, we see that everyone can coexist and maybe even learn to live in harmony. The concert in Gander was a tribute to the people who had graciously given up their homes and time for strangers. They welcomed others into their lives and their cultures, and that had lasting impacts on many people. Now, when you see the show, watch the documentary, or read the book, you are motivated to go out and do good in the world. This show is a “happiness machine,” despite it being about one of the grimest parts of our history.

* A. Cranmer

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2016

Kanye West, “Ultralight Beam”

For this open the door project, I decided to explore the song Ultralight Beam, by Kanye West (2016) and featuring Chance the Rapper, The Dream, Kelly Price, Kirk Franklin, and a 10 person choir. In this open the door I am going to briefly examine how this song represents multiple struggles that black people face in America in connection to Black Christianity and Hip Hop.

In the article written by McCune, the argument is made that Ultralight Beam is not a song just about religion, but it is a shift to a new political movement emboldened by the voices of children. In the opening of the song there is a sample of a prayer from a 4 year old girl from an instagram

video (McCune, 2019). I did some more digging into the use of this sample, and it turns out that a couple of years later the adopted parents of the little girl sued Kanye West because West got approval from the girl's biological mother, and not her adoptive parents.

In the same article, another issue unfolds itself in the lyrics of the song - "Foot on the / Devil's neck / 'til it drifted Pangaea / I'm moving all my family from Chatham to Zambia" This was rapped by Chance in the song, and provides a critical idea - that we are in a cultural climate that produces division and decay. The article writes how the comparison of Pangea breaking up connects to how Chicago's Chatham Southside neighborhood has gone from once being an area of Black middle-class prosperity to an area divided between the middle-class and poor, drug-addicted and drug-free, old and young, and invested and disinvested. This division is present across many neighborhoods across the U.S. in response to the housing market crash, income inequality and unemployment, reemergence of crack-cocaine and other perilous drugs, and the cyclical prison-industrial complex (McCune, 2019).

A question that this song - and others like it - presents to its listeners is "How do you view the influence of Hip Hop and rappers like Kanye West on the spiritual lives and mental health of your millennial members and those millennials that you are hoping to bring into the church?" The article written by Robertson tries to answer this question, and found that overall the impact of hip hop, and specifically Ultralight Beam - as an example - leaves a positive impact on its listeners. In this song the cognitive dissonance felt by Black Christians, which is a result of the reality that "Black people are being murdered" is felt and represented in the lyrics. The article found that people in this study want to be honored as human beings, and that the music presented in this example honors these feelings and present a sense of hope. (Robertson, 2019).

Finally, the last area that I explored with this song is the question of God's role in human suffering. In the article written by Marshall, the response to this question is broken into two groups of thought. The conservative response: "suffering is caused by God punishing the sinner. Therefore, the suffering sinners deserve their punishment. This group of thought would be amongst those who would justify enslaving Africans because of Ham's actions toward his father, Noah.6 Ham sinned; therefore, descendants of Ham would be enslaved." The liberal response: "that political leaders are at fault as opposed to simply God's wrath towards sinners. This thought goes beyond the questioning of "why do bad things happen?" to indicating the role that humans and institutions play within suffering. This takes up human suffering in a philosophical manner." (Marshall, 2019). The following lyrics in Ultralight Beam highlight this struggle that Kanye, and many Black Christians face when

answering this question - "I'm tryna keep my faith / But I'm looking for more / Somewhere I can feel safe / And end my holy war / I'm tryna keep my faith / So why send / depression not blessings? / Why, oh why'd you do me wrong? (More) / You persecute the weak / Because it makes you feel so strong"

I am interested to know more about how people view this music in light of Kanye West's radical views politically, and if they are still pondering the same questions and issues that are presented in Ultralight Beam.

* F. Desiderio

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2016

Beyonce's 2016 Super Bowl Performance

Super Bowl 50 took place on February 7th 2016 at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, CA. The show received mixed reviews, as many found the messages conveyed through Beyonce's halftime show were too political. Others viewed the performance as "peak blackness, and a step in the right direction Black Lives Matter. Beyonce is a symbol of black success, and she is "more than a person; she is a public figure, entertainer, and brand" (Wallace, 2017). Because she is such a widely known figure, her messages reach a vast population and have a large impact. The Super Bowl is also one of the most watched performances of the year, so the combination of Beyonce's fame and the Super Bowl's popularity made her message even more powerful. Her performance occurred during Black History Month which also contributed to the strength and significance of the message.

She faced backlash for her song Formation from both white and black audiences, because of both the lyrics and the performance itself, as both were politically charged

with calculated motives. As for her visual presentation, Beyonce wore an outfit that was a nod to Michael Jackson's superbowl outfit from 1993, which was a recognizable image. As for her backup dancers, they wore outfits that paid homage to the Black Panther Party, as they wore afros, berets, black leather, and combat boots. People were upset about this Black Panthers reference, as the group is controversially known for speaking out against Martin Luther King Jr.'s nonviolent approaches to call for freedom. The backup dancers also formed an X to reference Malcolm X, a significant figure of the Black liberation movement. At the stadium, a group of dancers protest police brutality, specifically the case of Mario Woods, a 26 year old black man killed by police officers in 2015.

The first politician to speak out against her performance was Rudy Giuliani, who labeled the song as anti-police. He stated that "you're talking to middle America when you have the Super Bowl. So if you're going to have entertainment, let's have decent, wholesome entertainment. And not use it as a platform to attack the people who put their lives at risk just to save us." Toronto politician Jim Karygiannis wanted to investigate Beyonce's ties to the "radical group" the black panthers, as he believed it caused a concern. Tomi Lahren also believed that her ode to black panthers was not helpful for racial equality.

As for the general public's reaction, people began to protest her performance of "Formation" on February 16th, 2016, about a week after her Super Bowl Performance, and rallied in front of the NFL headquarters in New York City. After catching wind of these protests, a group of black women organized their own counter protest and showed up to NFL headquarters as well. SNL made a parody of her white fans' reactions to her performance. Following her performance, she announced her "Formation Tour", and that the proceeds would go to Flint Michigan, a predominantly black city. Soon after, her husband Jay-Z donated \$1.5 million to black lives matter. Beyonce was unafraid to send many clear messages one after the other.

* K. Masters

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2017

Lady Gaga's Political Persona and the 2017 Superbowl Performance

"When Lady Gaga was announced as the performer of this year's Super Bowl halftime show, many of her fans were curious if the singer would get political during her 13-minute set. But it's possible that Gaga actually managed to sneak in a fairly subversive political moment without most viewers noticing" (Robinson, 2017). This thought of a more politically charged halftime performance was derived from the political persona that Lady Gaga had built throughout her entire career. She has never been one to shy away from topics such as equity, inclusion, LGBTQIA+ rights, and many other human rights issues. She is able to shift her portrayal through a term coined as "multiselfing" by Philip Auslander which entails shifting their performing persona to whatever social need is desired for any given performance. It is said that she has, "ability to produce ever-changing identities in response to different settings and circumstances. Lady Gaga is a randomized algorithm that continuously generates, on demand and just in time, the persona Stefani Germanotta portrays" (Rudolph, 2022). This ever changing performing persona is what makes her impact on many communities, but specifically the LGBTQIA+ community important. "None of this exquisite camp and mild transgressiveness cheapens the advances she has made in terms of acceptance on behalf of the L.G.B.T. community, which has a clutch of champions in the mainstream media but none bigger than Gaga. And there is one unexpected transgression that will carry Ms. Germanotta into middle age: she can sing and play piano like a pro. No matter how much high art and green vomit she shoehorns into her live shows, she always clears out fifteen minutes to sit by herself at the piano and sing into submission those audience members who still care about criticisms like 'prefabricated' and 'packaging.' Gaga is a musician, which is largely buried under the carnival float she has decided to run through pop music. It doesn't much matter, though" (Frere-Jones, 2011). This powerful persona and extensive discography is what made her a highly anticipated performer for the Super Bowl Halftime show in 2017 after the highly contested 2016 Presidential Election. Many expected her to create a politically charged performance after the election of Donald Trump, but what surprised many viewers was a performance that focused on the ideas that her songs touch upon. She stated before her performance, "I believe in a passion for inclusion. I believe in the spirit of equality, and the spirit of this country as one of love and compassion and kindness. So my performance will have both those philosophies" (Robinson, 2017).

The "political" aspects of this performance were stated in an article by Vanity Fair. "Gaga opened her set with 'God Bless America' and then immediately segued into Woody

Guthrie's Americana classic 'This Land Is Your Land'—which, if you've ever heard the full version, is a little edgier than you might expect. It has also become an anthem for protestors fighting against Trump's proposed immigration bans and border walls" (Robinson, 2017). "Later, during a medley of her chart-topping hits, Gaga sang 'Born This Way,' which celebrates the LGBTQ community and people of different backgrounds whether they are 'white, black or beige'" (Howard, 2017). These song choices were subtle picks, but with the correct context for each song, were very pointed in their message. She was calling for unity and love for all using songs that fight against a system that has been historically unjust. God Bless America being segued into This Land is Your Land shows how we need unity in our country in order to have a land that is made for you and me. Born This Way is a way to further enforce this message of accepting everyone for their differences, no matter what they might be. What makes this performance more impactful is that there is a feeling that this is a possibility in a peaceful way, but it needs to be done. There is no extreme call to action, but there is an urge to be kind, and appreciate one another.

* B. Worden

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2017

Kesha, "Praying"

"I've never been more excited about a piece of art I've ever done in my entire life," Kesha said of "Praying," her song of turning pain into strength after living through suicidal thoughts as a result of abuse (Snapes, 2017). The song is about the sexual assault and emotional abuse that

the artist faced by her former producer, Lukasz Gottwald (Dr. Luke) (Shaw, 2022). Kesha, full name Kesha Rose Sebert, born March 1, 1987, American singer-songwriter and pop star, was known earlier in her career for her "rowdy party-girl persona," for instance as portrayed in the song "TiK ToK" (Shaw, 2022). Kesha went into rehabilitation in 2014 for an eating disorder and sued Dr. Luke for emotional and sexual abuse in the same year, causing the public to be aware of her challenges. When the #MeToo movement took off in 2017, Kesha's case caught more attention, and #FreeKesha circulated on social media. Kesha's album, *Rainbow*, marks freedom and life-giving music-making again for her. She said, in an interview with *The Guardian*, "There was a very long, long, long period of time where I was not sure if I was ever going to be able to put out music again, and that's all I'd ever wanted to do since I could remember being a person, so when I couldn't, that was really difficult" (Snapes, 2017). At the 2018 Grammy Awards, something incredible happened as the live performance connected performers and audiences alike through the shared understanding of living through trauma, and the great impact of music to provide progress towards healing. Hearfield writes that live performance in this example "is a uniquely effective mode of processing individual and collective trauma" (2021).

Analyzing the song musically, it features Kesha's super high range, in a cry to break free. In the music video she is seen floating on a raft, near death, in black and white, then gradually growing more hope-filled and more empowered. Throughout, the colors of the rainbow shine brightly, and messages of love and life appear. There is even the overt text in a few instances, "God is love." There is religious imagery in the cross-like raft she is floating on when in the suicidal state, and by the end of the video Kesha is seen walking on water, skirts flowing. This is an example of recording studio politics, as well as a demonstration of male dominance and the stereotype of a woman vocalist performer. Kesha's self-empowerment creates a commentary in line with the #MeToo movement, and makes a statement of a strong solo female overcoming adversity. This is the interaction of music and power in this case study. In an update from June 22, 2023, according to NPR News, Kesha and Dr. Luke have reached a settlement over rape and defamation claims.

* A. Budd

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2017

Retelling Their Stories: *Six* and "Greensleeves"

21st Century musical theater is often used to criticize and recontextualize the ways that society has viewed a variety of issues, both in the historical and modern realm. *Six* is a musical about the six wives of Henry VIII. The story is told as a girl group trying to decide who deserves to be the leader of their band. What *Six* does so well is it helps us to challenge our perspectives and viewpoints on the history of Henry VIII's wives and whose perspective their story is being told through. A way to look at this show is through its use of the song "Greensleeves" and how the meaning of that song changes over time.

"Greensleeves" has a song that has a historical connection to Henry VIII. An old fable goes that Henry wrote this song for Anne Boleyn, his second wife. However, the first evidence of the song is not until 1580, the song after the death of both Anne and Henry. The song itself has been synonymous with Henry VIII, being featured in other retellings of this time in history such as *The Tudors*.

"Greensleeves" is frequently referenced and used throughout *Six*, most notably in the opening number "Ex-Wives" and the closing number "Six."

Six opens with a harpsichord playing the melody of "Greensleeves." This is almost immediately juxtaposed with the melodic being played by a synthetic piano. For the start of the show, it is musically telling us that this show aims to recontextualize this story from the sonic notation of an antique instrument to the newer, electronic version of it. The melody of "Greensleeves" is then ever present in "Ex-Wives." The melody is used as the bass line through the opening of the song. It is segmented here, played in between each wife's solo lines in the opening. All of the wives come together on the line "used to be six wives." The melody sung here is a fragment of the "Greensleeves" melody. However, harmonically the melody does not fit with the chords being played underneath. This tension is

used to show the conflict between the ex-wives as they are getting ready to compete with one another. In the finale "Six," this melodic line returns. However, now when the melody returns it is sung with the matching chords playing with it. This represents the change that has happened throughout the show. The six wives realized that they do not need to compete with one another and should instead lift each other up through the mutual pain that Henry VIII caused them all. By relieving the tension between them, they were able to bond together and tell a story of empowerment.

* J. Benedict

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2017

Cardi B, "Bodak Yellow," and the God Complex

For my last Open the Door project, I chose to explore how women in rap can exhibit the God complex that is normally displayed in rap music men create, in a male-dominated genre. The God complex refers to someone that is arrogant and believes they are above others. Within the context of rap, this can mean lyrics and behaviors from artists that exude "superiority, arrogance, or overconfidence" (chatGPT). Male rappers that exude this traditionally are Kanye West and Eminem, among others. In comparison, women are stereotypically seen as timid. Even Cardi B said she used to be shy and had to practice being more assertive. When more women can reclaim or redefine what it's like to use the God complex in music and not in comparison to men but individually, more

pathways open up for women rappers everywhere. In this case, I chose Cardi B's song Bodak Yellow to explore the display of the God complex. In her case, she stirs the pot due to stereotypical views of women perpetuating within rap culture.

Cardi B, a Dominican and Trinidadian Black woman who was born and raised in the Bronx, has a persona that was crafted by her upbringings. She was making mixtapes, including Gangsta B***h Music Volumes 1 and 2, and was on Love and Hip Hop New York, before she hit her big break with Bodak Yellow, the chart-topping single of 2017 that would be on her album, Invasion of Privacy. Both lyrically and sonically we can examine how Bodak Yellow exemplifies the God complex.

Lyrically, Cardi B makes multiple references of viewing herself as superior. For example, lyrics like "they see pictures, they say 'goals;' b***h I'm who they tryna be," "I might just chill with your boo; I might just feel on your babe," and "I go to dinner and steak, only the real can relate." (Cardi B, 2017). She talks about going out to dinner and getting steak (a fancy menu item,) how she will do what she wants without regard, and how her persona is a goal for people that look up to her. Through these lyrics, Cardi B claims her power status as superior, dominant, and infallible, disrupting traditional norms and re-introducing roles of "womanhood that go beyond the male gaze" (Khong 87).

Sonically, Cardi B uses techniques that establish dominance and superiority as well. She starts the song with a consistent snare drum and tritonal sounding three-note motif that both repeat throughout the song. Later comes the addition of the bass drum. Her track "does not include a melodic hook or familiar musical structure" (Jamie 87). Using few aurally identifiable musical elements aside from the lyrics to present her works, Cardi B is showing her audience that she only needs a little bit of material to make a big statement, contributing to the idea of her superiority.

* C. Zanetti

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2017

The Real Slim Shady Stands Up: Eminem, Race, & Donald Trump

Marshall Bruce Mathers III, also known as Eminem or Slim Shady, is an American rapper, producer, and actor. Eminem has become one of the most controversial, as well as popular, hip-hop artists of the 21st century for various reasons (Britannica).

When considering Eminem and race, as a white man creating what many perceive as "Black" music, there are various perspectives on this subject that lead us to consider if there are boundaries with what kind of music can be created based on the color of one's skin. Rodman (2006) poses the question of "Is Eminem the Elvis of rap: a White man who makes Black music credibly, creatively, and compellingly? Or—alternatively—is Eminem... the Elvis of rap: a White man who's unfairly achieved fame and fortune by making Black music, while Black artists with equal (if not greater) talent languish in poverty and obscurity?" (p. 106). This question asks us to reflect on music from the perspective of race as it relates to musical genres and styles and whether the implications associated with a genre impact who can create or perform that music. Rodman (2006) states, regarding the question and assuming an answer from a highly problematic, essentialist perspective, "that the musical terrain can be neatly divided up into non overlapping territories that match up perfectly with the 'natural' racial and ethnic categories used to identify people. Black people make Black music. White people make White music—and one dare not cross these lines lightly," (p. 106-107). Rodman is essentially stating that if we create this divide between race and music by saying that only those of a specific race can perform a specific genre, the assumptions made from that perspective can be quite problematic. The point is also made within the reading that a genre such as rock-and-roll, which may typically be associated with White Americans, has influences from African-American blues music, R&B, and Black gospel music.

Another argument on this topic comes from Grealy (2008) who discusses the problematic discussions surrounding Eminem as a white man within the genre of hip-hop music. Grealy considers the history of hip-hop as complex in terms of class, gender, and race in relation to the musical genres and states that "It would be naive to crudely state that Eminem is simply 'stealing' black music," (p. 859). Grealy also points out ways in which Eminem has appropriated the culture of hip-hop music, highlighting his fashion, speech and accent, objectification of women, and his movements and actions. He states that "His obviously bleached blonde hair acts to exaggerate the conscious construction of his white racial identity" (p. 859). Eminem refers to himself as "white trash" in his music, utilizing class discourse within his lyrics. In Eminem's earlier 2003 song, "White America," he addresses the color of his skin stating "I'm like my skin, is it starting to work to my benefit now?" Grealy discusses this stating "Eminem constructs a performance of cultural hybridity utilizing mimicry, establishing a marginal identity based on his class position and his (white) skin colour. His rhetorical question, 'I'm like my skin, is it starting to work to my benefit now?', perhaps highlights the complicated reality of contemporary American racism, but more likely demonstrates Eminem's utilization of protest as a hip-hop tradition, in this case against racism, in his quest for cultural authenticity," (Grealy, 2008, p. 860-861). Overall, Eminem and the discussion of race as it pertains to hip-hop music is a tricky subject that is still debated greatly regarding his music and one that I myself have considered often as a fan of his music.

While the discussion of race is an important one to have in terms of Eminem, his political stances regarding former president Donald Trump and the political climate after the 2016 election ended are interesting to consider. In 2017, Eminem performed a freestyle cypher entitled "The Storm" at the BET Hip Hop Awards. Within the nearly five minute long video performance, Eminem addresses issues associated with Donald Trump, specifically criticizing how Trump reacted to the 2017 hurricanes that greatly impacted Puerto Rico, as well as his reactions to the National Football League protests in which players kneeled during the performance of "The Star-Spangled Banner," (Dias, 2017). The performance features Eminem and a group of Black hip-hop musicians in a parking garage, there is no instrumentation, just Eminem's voice freestyling the piece. Way (2022) states "Although his voice is in the foreground, there is also atmospheric 'noise' evident. This was not recorded in a tightly controlled studio, but outside in a car park with a 'natural' echo noticeable between lines. Eminem's voice is recorded up close. However, he does not whisper to us like a lover, but is like an angry friend venting his rage. This perspective allows us to feel his real emotions up close. There are no interacting sounds, neither musical

accompaniment nor other voices. Eminem is the sole source of sound, expressing his dominance as a powerful voice of the people," (p. 394). The choice made to feature Eminem's voice in this manner and highlight the rage and anger of the words he is rapping accentuate the importance of the message presented.

Throughout the performance, many bold and overt statements are made regarding Trump's racist statements over time. Eminem comments on double standards within the country, briefly mentioning how a Black soldier of the United States can fight in Iraq and yet still return from war only to be told they should go back to Africa (BETNetworks, 2017). Interestingly, when rapping the lyrics "He's gonna get rid of all immigrants! He's gonna build that thing up taller than this!" Eminem speaks in a different accent, specifically with a Southern accent sound, indicating his assumptions of what a supporter of Donald Trump may sound like. When indicating how tall the wall will be, Eminem appears to make a Nazi salute, expressing his assumptions as well that supporters, as well as Donald himself, align with Nazi ideals. He urges his own fans that if they are a Donald Trump supporter, then he does not want them to stand beside him and they need to pick a side. He expresses that if they cannot pick a side, he will decide for them and gives the camera the middle finger saying "F**k you!" He ends the song stating "We love our military, and we love our country, but we f*****g hate Trump!" Eminem later recalled during a 2018 interview that after this performance, he actually received a visit from members of President Donald Trump's secret service while he was recording at his studio. This visit was to ensure that Eminem was simply expressing his beliefs rather than threatening the president (EminemMusic, 2018; Vibe, 2018). Eminem also mentioned in this same interview that he was primarily upset about how Trump continuously changed the narrative regarding NFL player Colin Kaepernick's protests during the national anthem at NFL games." As a result of the protests, "Kaepernick was blacklisted from the NFL for kneeling during the national anthem in protest of social injustice," (Vibe, 2018). In conclusion, it is difficult to consider race and genres as there are many historical components contributing to this discussion, as well as discussions of cultural appropriation and who can or cannot perform specific music depending on the unique and particular circumstances. Eminem is a controversial musician, however, is unafraid to speak out about injustices in politics, specifically regarding Donald Trump.

* H. Gotham

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2018-

Lofi Hip Hop, Nostalgia and Capitalism

Lofi hip hop is an interesting genre as it represents a section of “bedroom music” that rose to popularity not on traditional streaming platforms but on YouTube. This is an amateur music that goes to deliberate lengths to sound low fidelity or in other words belonging to a musical practice and style that many of its listeners never took part in firsthand. Despite this fact, the overall vibe intended by lofi hip hop is one of chill, and nostalgia for an era that many of its listeners never took part in. Stylistically, there are often sonic references to 80 synthesizer sounds, or samples from media either far older or perhaps within the lifetime of a young audience. Regardless of the actual time period referenced in a particular song, the feeling of nostalgia is evoked apart from distinct historical connection. This means then that the function of nostalgia in lofi hip hop is not necessarily to remember and yearn to go back to a specific time in one's life, or era long gone, but to simply enjoy the feeling of experiencing fragments of one's memories. There's a fictional element to the past being remembered in this context and many ways the fiction of that memory itself is somewhat paradoxically appreciated.

An example of this music is the livestream on Youtube by Lofi Girl called “lofi hip hop radio – beats to relax/study to.” The livestream draws on a multitude of artists and tracks all with a similar beat and instrumentation. One track on

this playlist is called “I wonder if we're dead,” by Netherlands producer Eevee. This track samples music from The Legend of Korra and uses filtering to give it a sound as if it was recorded on low fidelity equipment. The actual sample evokes nostalgia for those who have seen the show, or even those who remember hearing about the show. Nowhere is the sample actually identified, but audience members seem to recognize it and immediately begin hearkening back to childhood memories. Again, it's not necessarily that this music suggests a desire to go back to when that show was on TV but it creates a space where tapping into the emotion of memory is a shared activity.

Lofi hip hop represents a fascinating relationship between seemingly anti-capitalist ideals amongst a community that exists around a source material that very much represents the commodification of music in a capitalist state. The chat on the Lofi Girl main livestream is often filled with strangers supporting each other as they get their work done or share difficult information about their lives, short fictionalizations of the feelings created by this music, and even sometimes roleplays. It paints a picture of disenfranchisement with a capitalist state where everyone needs a shared musical experience as a sense of escapism while still completing the work necessary to function within a capitalist state. This channel didn't even used to be associated so fully with the icon of “Lofi Girl.” It used to be a channel called Chilled Cow that was rebranded with Lofi Girl as the icon. Interestingly though, once this identity was established, a merchandise page opened on the YouTube channel. Though the community may demonstrate a weariness of capitalism, what they rally around directly supports it.

* B. Poole

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2018-

Hyperpop: Electronic Music, Internet Subculture and Developing Trans Identity in the Online Age

Ever since Wendy Carlos helped popularize the Moog synthesizer through her seminal work, *Switched on Bach*, there has existed a certain kinship between electronic music and trans identity. This through line can be seen throughout the past half century, but one of the most recent and unignorable examples of this is in the genre of hyperpop. Hyperpop, as a genre, is a fairly new one, emerging in the last few years of the previous decade and hitting its stride during the COVID-19 pandemic and the years that followed. Because of this, it is a valid statement to make that as far as genres go, this is a particularly “online” one. The subculture that has evolved out of this genre thrives on websites such as SoundCloud and Bandcamp (Spencer).

The genre itself is defined by a maximalist perspective on pop music, particularly Y2K aesthetics. Along with this subversion of pop music, key aspects of the genre include an emphasis on distorted sounds and heavy use of auto tune as an effect on vocals. It is also not uncommon to hear sections of harsh noise in songs. Because of the many different aspects of this style of music, some argue that it is actually an umbrella term for many distinct, but similar, genres that share key characteristics (Jóhannsdóttir).

Regardless of the exact taxonomy of hyperpop and the genres that inspired it or emerged from it, the musical style has a disproportionately large number of trans and gender non-conforming performers (particularly trans women), including some of its most popular. Artists such as Laura Les (half of the duo 100 Gecs), Dorian Electra and SOPHIE are all prominent trans voices in this space and seen by many as cultural representatives of the style to outsiders. They do not act alone, however. It is also important to note the dozens of other trans artists who exist in this space who may be fairly popular in the subculture who have not yet found the same level of “mainstream” fame outside of it. Several of these artists have spoken about how the aesthetics of genre as being a comfort. Particularly in the process of transitioning from male to female, it is a common experience for trans individuals to express that their voice is a source of dysphoria for them. In a genre where it is exceedingly common to hear aggressively pitch shifted and distorted vocals, performers are afforded the opportunity to present a product that is closer to their ideal vocal production (Swoboda). In some cases, artists choose to perform with a timbre that is so far removed from sounding traditionally “human” that it could also help sidestep these feelings of dysphoria. It is entirely possible that this particular dimension of the genre, combined with a welcoming community, could explain why so many trans and gender

non-conforming individuals flock to this style of music making. It would make sense that trans individuals, given the nationwide discourse surrounding the politicization of their existence would seek spaces where they are encouraged to come as they are.

The lyrical content in hyperpop is far reaching, ranging from borderline nonsensical, internet memes and inside jokes among those in the subculture (Les is particularly guilty of this.) to substantive critiques of society and lived trans experience. Electra is an excellent example of a performer where most of their work can be seen through the lens of genre or societal critique, but I’d like to focus on SOPHIE, who is seen by many to be a pioneer and visionary of the style. One song in particular that is worth focusing on is Faceshopping, from her album *OIL OF EVERY PEARL’S UN-INSIDES*. In this track, SOPHIE and her collaborator Cecile Believe advocate for a seemingly transhumanist perspective to trans experience (Williams). The song’s primary question is “What even is real?” This is a particularly interesting conversation to be had when a common retort to trans existence is “You’ll never be a real woman.” By framing this conversation on the word “real” as opposed to “woman,” some interesting perspectives emerge. The refrain to this track is “My face is the front of shop, My face is the real shop front, My shop is the face I front, I’m real when I shop my face.” In saying this, SOPHIE argues that in order to be “real,” it’s sometimes necessary to change ourselves to match our perceived truth. This is a common theme in SOPHIE’s music, and particularly the rest of her album.

* R. MacCarthy

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2019

Surviving R. Kelly: Using Power to Escape Accountability

*****Content warning: this investigation addresses topics of sexual abuse of children and young girls; please use your own discretion when engaging with this sensitive content.*****

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, R. Kelly had established himself as not just one of the most influential R&B singers of his time, but also a figure of black empowerment in the music industry. However, at the same time, allegations of sexual abuse involving underage girls were circulating his persona. How did R. Kelly's fame, power, and influence, combined with the US culture's indifference to violence against black girls, enable him to avoid accountability for his sexual crimes? Does the recent publicity and activism starting in 2017 that exposed him foreshadow a culture shift?

Following a troubled, sexually abusive childhood, R. Kelly soared into fame in the 90s on the wings of singles like "Bump N' Grind" and "I Believe I Can Fly," which sent his music to gold and platinum status and earned him Grammy nominations and an award. However, as early as 1990, witnesses have reported seeing him engage in sexual misconduct and abuse. As early as 1990s, witnesses have seen him engaging in sexual acts with young girls in the studio and picking up girls outside of middle and high schools. However, the public didn't care to intervene; writer Mikki Kendall writes: "No one cared 'cause we were black girls." The pattern of abuse continued with Kelly's 1994 forged marriage certificate to 15-year-old singer Aaliyah, eyewitness testimony of Kelly assaulting Aaliyah on a tour bus, and the infamous 2002 sex tape leak showing Kelly assaulting a 13-year-old girl. He was charged with multiple counts of child pornography, but was acquitted of all charges in 2008 as the prosecution failed to prove the man in the video was him. Perhaps the most shocking aspect of this phenomenon was the public indifference to these controversies, which could be attributed to a number of cultural norms in the US. One harmful stereotype is the notion of the rockstar

marrying a teenage girl; after all, Elvis met his wife when he was 24 and she was 14. Another complication was Kelly's presence and influence in the Black community; writer Jamilah Lemieux reflects that "When someone like R. Kelly gets in trouble, there's this knee-jerk instinct to protect him from the system, from the hands of the law, from all these forces that are at play to make sure that black people, black men, in particular, don't succeed." Harmful stereotypes about the promiscuity and "fastness" of Black women and girls are also used to discount victim accusations. His fame and popularity also made the recording industry unwilling to let him go; Sparkle, a backup singer whose niece was in the sex tape, reports that a young executive stated "I don't care if that's him on that tape because we can't afford to lose him." These cultural oppressive structures allowed for violence against black girls to be ignored and a recorded video of sexual assault of a minor to be minimized into a culture-wide dirty inside joke.

That was true until some events in the late 2010s exposed his abuse. A 2017 BuzzFeed article featured parents of an alleged victim talking about Kelly's "sex cult." As more victims spoke out, the movement #MuteRKelly was born, advocating for Kelly's removal from music streaming services, RCA dropping him from their label, and convicting him of sexual abuse. Their protests and petitions resulted in canceled shows and the muting of his content on streaming and social media. The 2019 documentary *Surviving R. Kelly*, which is widely available to watch on Netflix, uses firsthand accounts to put a revealing spotlight on his crimes and evasions of accountability. A CBS interview with R. Kelly and Gayle King in 2019 sought to discuss the allegations and controversies with him; appearing frantic and unhinged, Kelly vehemently denied the allegations and argued that the victims are lying to make money and villainize him because of his race and success. Later that year, Kelly was arrested in 2019 and then convicted in 2021 and 2022 for racketeering, child pornography, and enticing a minor. He is currently serving a 31-year sentence in federal prison. However, harmful cultural norms and his power in both the Black community and the music industry allowed R. Kelly to walk free and continue his pattern of behavior for decades after his first crimes were committed. His recent "cancellation" and conviction may be the beginnings of a cultural shift in the US, involving the way Black women and girls are viewed, survivor empowerment, the rejection of the "rockstar" persona, and holding music celebrities accountable for their actions rather than blind idolization; or perhaps maybe #MuteRKelly was just loud enough that it forced law enforcement to listen.

* S. Taylor

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2019

Bad Bunny and the Songs of Protest During the Puerto Rican #rickyrenuncia Movement

In September of 2017 Puerto Rico was hit with one of the most devastating hurricanes in recent history, killing approximately 4,645 individuals and destroying the island. It took anywhere from 7 months to a year in some rural sectors to rebuild energy services, drinking water and roads causing even more death. This, as well as a money-laundering scandal by Puerto Rico’s education and health leaders along with fighting against unelected fiscal control boards became the perfect storm for civil unrest with the public. Then, In July of 2019 an 889 page private telegram chat between governor Ricky Rossellos and members of his cabinet were leaked receiving the name #telegramgate. This telegram was “profanity-laced homophobic, transphobic and misogynistic comments, some outright violent, about female politicians, celebrities and protestors as well as shocking quips about the victims of Hurricane María”. This leak infuriated the worn down citizens of Puerto Rico and led to a massive protest under the name #Rickrenuncia or in english “Ricky Resign”.

People of all parties and walks of life joined together and on July 17th 2019 musical artists Residente, Bad Bunny and Ricky Martin called for a mass march where 700,000 people participated in San Juan. On this same date Bad Bunny along with other artists Residente, and iLe released a song titled “Afilando Los Cuchillos” which translates to “Sharpen the Knives”. In this song the artists lyrically rip Goc. Rossello to shreds, calling him a dictator, an assassin, a thief, a homophobe and encouraging the streets to fight for his resignation over a hip-hop beat. This song amassed over 3 million views and became the song that marked the #rickyrenuncia movement.

Some direct lyrics within Bad Bunny's Verse when translated say:

“Let all the continents know that Ricardo Rossello is an incompetent, homophobic liar
A delinquent, no one wants you
not even your own people.”

Bad Bunny would also utilize his social media following to draw attention to this movement, posting on his instagram that he would be canceling the rest of his tour to focus on the protests as his heart was not on his music at the time. This would bring mass media attention to the issues within Puerto Rico from the general public. On July 24th 2019, governor Ricky Rossello would announce his resignation from office at the completion of his term. This would not be the only example of Bad Bunny's involvement within Puerto Rican politics as he had become known for bringing issues to the media such as “The Tonight Show With Jimmy Fallon”.

* N. Nicotri

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Bad Bunny, “Afilando Los Cuchillos”

2019

Taylor Swift, Feminism, and Lover

Taylor Swift has become one of the most well-known women artists to date, with about 200 million records sold, which is the same amount Whitney Houston, Celine Dion,

Brittney Spears, and Beyonce each have. Despite her successful career, there have many times she has been discredited due to her gender.

Her album *Lover* was released in 2019 with the tracks “You Need to Calm Down” and “The Man” being the center of conversation. In YNTCD, Swift is clearly supporting the LGBTQ+ community. Her song “The Man” caused controversy by discussing gender inequality. One study by two English teachers noticed that there were text parallels between The Man and Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* with text such as “sick of running; put in the work, raking in dollars, like Leo, in Saint-Tropez; a boss; a baller;” and “an alpha type” (Macaluso). This connection caused a realization among parents and educators once they realized the “dangerous and implicit gender narratives that *The Great Gatsby* subtly reinforces: that unchecked, masculine power and privilege is lauded, expected, and even rewarded.” After further research, the authors of the article come to the conclusion that “gender and genre bias have clouded perception of Swift’s particular skills and techniques.” In addition, the song came out during the peak of the #MeToo movement and only a few short years after Swift had won a sexual assault case against former DJ David Mueller, where she only sought a symbolic \$1 in damages (Théberge).

Considering the controversy around these two songs came during a time of open advocacy, it made me interested to look for trends of implicit sexism within her career. For example, when she began to switch her paradigm from country to pop around the release of her album *Red* and more significantly during the release of her album *1989*, she herself noted the gender bias that began to pop up in terms of her songwriting ability (Sloan). Sloan quotes an interview where Swift says:

“I wanted to say to people, You realize writing songs is an art and a craft and not, like, an easy thing to do? Or to do well? People would act like it was a weapon I was using. Like a cheap dirty trick. Be careful, bro, she’ll write a song about you. Don’t stand near her. First of all, that’s not how it works. Second of all, find me a time when they say that about a male artist: Be careful, girl, he’ll use his experience with you to get—God forbid—inspiration to make art” (Sloan).

In spite of the criticism, it is important to note that her lyrical choices in YNTCD and The Man “provoked public discussion that impacts on wider political formations and contentions extending beyond popular culture, showing the power of the star figure, and of the music industry, to focus issues and propel social change” (Fogarty).

* E. Mavraj

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Controversial Allyship in “You Need to Calm Down” by Taylor Swift

Taylor Swift has become a cultural icon since she entered the music scene in the early 2000’s. Taylor is an example like many artists who have become less dependent on restrictive parties that influence her ability to speak out on social and political issues. Her popularity grew alongside her confidence in addressing social issues without fear of backlash. This was most notably seen through her infamous Instagram post against then Tennessee Senate Candidate Marsha Blackburn in 2018. This came at a time when Swift felt she could no longer remain subtle or passive in the sociopolitical landscape at that time. This marked a turning point in Swift’s musical approach as well which included more songs that spoke out against issues she was passionate about. “You Need to Calm Down” is an example of a song in which Swift speaks out in her own defense and in support of the LGBTQ+ community. “You Need to Calm Down” was released during Pride Month, June, of 2019. As Swift describes, “The first verse is about trolls and cancel culture [...] The second verse is about homophobes and the people picketing outside our concerts. The third verse [i.e. bridge with verse accompaniment] is about successful women being pitted against each other”. The song was intended to promote allyship and serve as an anthem in support of pro-gay rights activism. The music video itself clearly represents this goal through on screen collaboration with prominent

LGBTQ+ activists, influencers, and personalities. The song sparked controversy as questions arose related to the authenticity and effectiveness of Taylor Swift's messaging through her music and video. Critics accused Swift and her song of queerbaiting, rainbow capitalism, and of being late related to speaking out on the issues she mentions. Many of those in support of Swift called out critics saying that it is unfair to criticize Swift for speaking about this topic after she was scrutinized for so long for not using her position for advocacy.

While "You Need to Calm Down" initially faced criticism on many levels from different audiences, the controversy and social dialogue created promoted more awareness of its content related to LGBTQ+ advocacy. While allyship has good intentions, the artist's position makes it more challenging to be perceived successful, as even the best intentions can be highly scrutinized and questioned in authenticity. Swift, like other artists have shared how they have learned through this experience which has informed their approach to be even more effective in the future.

* W. Hope

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Swiftie Politics and "Miss Americana and the Heartbreak Prince"

My topic this week focuses on Taylor Swift's political activism, specifically through the lens of her song "Miss Americana and the Heartbreak Prince." As most people know, Taylor Swift is one of the most influential pop stars of our generation. Beginning her career in 2006 at the age of sixteen, Taylor Swift has grown up with her audience members, writing songs about love, family, friendship, and more. For the majority of her career, Taylor Swift kept her political views private. Despite her not saying anything about this, her views were assumed by many considering she was a country artist born and raised in Pennsylvania, and resonates with the Christian faith. This all changed

with a post made by Swift on October 7th, 2018 regarding the Tennessee midterm elections when she broke her political silence for the first time. In short, Swift shared that she always has and always will vote for candidates that protect and fight for human rights. She goes on to explain various aspects of the views she holds near and dear to her heart, such as the protection of LGBTQ rights, women's rights, BIPOC rights, and more. In the post, Swift says, "I believe in the fight for LGBTQ rights, and that any form of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender is WRONG. I believe that the systemic racism we still see in this country toward people of color is terrifying, sickening and prevalent. I cannot vote for someone who will not be willing to fight for dignity for ALL Americans, no matter their skin color, gender or who they love." (Swift, 2018). In addition, she shared who she will be voting for in the 2018 Tennessee midterm elections, and encouraged voters to do their research on each candidate and vote for the person who aligns with their personal values. This post marked her first political endorsement, and it has not stopped since. Post 2018, Taylor Swift has publicly written letters to senators, called out the White House during award shows, and frequently incorporates messages into her lyrics and music videos. One of her more popular songs that discusses these topics is "Miss Americana and the Heartbreak Prince" released on her seventh studio album, *Lover*, in 2019.

"Miss Americana and the Heartbreak Prince" uses metaphors and imagery to convey various political undertones. These are intended to depict the political climate of the United States during the time it was written by discussing a high school setting. "Miss Americana" refers to the United States while the "Heartbreak Prince" represents disillusioned significant figures. The lyrics of the song touch on themes such as political apathy, the struggle for justice, and the desire for change. An example of this is in the lyrics "American glory faded before me" and "American stories burning before me." These lyrics suggest a disillusionment with the various agendas of politicians. In addition, the song reflects a desire for a more peaceful and hopeful America where we can heal pain and heartbreak. The song conveys feelings of frustration and a longing for more compassionate national leadership. In the end, the song provides hopeful lyrics that someday change will be made for the benefit of all humans. As for the public impact of this song, it received lots of positive feedback and was praised for its powerful message. It also inspired listeners to become more politically active and engage with their local and widespread elections. Overall, Swift's activism and politically charged songs benefit the public in numerous ways.

* M. Kilker

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2019

FOALS, "Like Lightning" and Neil Young, "Shut It Down": Protest for Climate

Climate change has become a very controversial topic and has shifted toward a political issue. The debate over climate change has created a division in how people see the world. There are political differences, misinformation, beliefs, and other factors that contribute to this division which is affecting any progress that could be made on this issue. We have examples of wildfires that are consistently becoming the new norm, extreme weather events, such as heat waves, droughts, and hurricanes, rising sea levels because of melting ice caps and glaciers, ocean

acidification, loss of biodiversity, and disruptions of ecosystems.

Luckily in recent years, millions of people are taking to the streets advocating for action on climate breakdown and environmental emergencies, specifically the youth.

Climate activist, who were mainly young individuals, are deeply concerned about the current and future impacts of climate change on the planet. They recognize that climate change is a significant threat to their generation and the generations to come. They are passionate about raising awareness and demanding urgent action from governments corporations and society at large.

Fortunately, global youth climate movements have gained significant momentum. One significant movement was made by Greta Thunberg, a Swedish environmental activist, that was called School Strike For Climate. She would continue her school strike every friday, sitting outside the Parliament building with her signed to demand stronger action on climate change. her commitment and determination inspired other young people to join her cause, leading to the formation of the "Fridays for Future" movement, where students around the world started holding climate strikes on Fridays urging their governments to take urgent measures to combat climate change.

Examples like Greta Thuberg's action has provided new ways of advocating and spreading awareness through issue. Social media has been the most useful in raising awareness, Sharing information, and mobilizing supporters. Educational initiatives, such as workshops and seminars, have helped inform communities about climate change and its consequences. Songs have also advocated for action on climate change.

One song in particular called, "Like Lightning" by FOALS features an animated video of a dystopian future with no action taken for climate change, but you'll see a Sasquatch Figure leading a worldwide charge to curb climate change through green initiatives eco- socialism. The song incorporates a bluesy rock feel in its style. The vocalist named, Yannis Philippakis", told Apple Music that he wanted an "earthquake stomp" like sound and to have a sense of paranoia. This song overall demonstrates the need for action and if no action is taken, the world will suffer through its visual and musical connections.

Another song that expresses concerns of climate change is, "Shut It Down", by Neil Young. In the song, you can hear a lot of distortion in the guitar to represent the strong need for change. Vocally, Neil Young is crying and singing out loud and questioning if people cared about the future. The song overall depicts suspension and somewhat uplifting sounds to represent the cause and how serious this is. As it concerns people around the world, Musicians like these two have expressed to the public the need for action and calling everyone to join the cause.

* J. Garcia

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2020

One World: Together at Home Virtual Concert

In conjunction with Global Citizen, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations, Lady Gaga helped to organize the "One World: Together at Home" concert. This concert was aimed at recognizing the frontline workers who were risking their lives while others stayed home. The concert also encouraged donations in order to raise funds for PPE such as masks, gloves, hospital gowns, goggles, etc. and money for test kits in over 120 countries.

The concert was ultimately a success, recruiting dozens of notable musicians, actors and comedians to perform and host the event. The special was aired on many major TV networks such as ABC, NBC, BBC, as well as Youtube, and many other global networks in order to reach the largest audience possible.

This event was not free from political lens as many global citizens were actively criticizing celebrities for their actions during the pandemic. Working class citizens did not want to see celebrity X complaining about the pandemic while relaxing in their pool house. This concert did allow for viewers to see the celebrities in their home environments. For example, Elton John set up his piano and recording equipment in the center of his private basketball court. Also politically notable was the avoidance of mentioning president Donald Trump and his decision to cease cooperation with the WHO. The decision to halt WHO funding came just days before the event, and it is very

interesting that not a single artist mentioned the event. Also notable were some of the song choices and editing of music to make the event seem "less-political". One example was Eddie Vedder's performance of River Cross. One of the later verses was edited, and removed anti-government lines. The original lyrics read:
While the government thrives on discontent
And there's no such thing as clear
Proselytizing and profitizing
As our will all but just disappears
Folded over, forced in a choke hold
Outnumbered and held down
And all these talk of rapture
Look around at the promise now
This move suggests that the artist could have been encouraging cooperation with the government and larger world organizations such as the WHO.

* M. Hogan

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2020

Year of the Protest

2020 was dubbed "year of the protest." At the beginning of 2020 our country was pummeled with head spinning issues. Families were separated upon crossing our country's borders, inadequate health care, "fake news," political corruption, proud displays of racism and sexism to name a few. On top of that COVID-19 hit the world and disproportionately hit Black and Brown communities. Artists, restaurateurs, performers had to make pivotal career shifts. In May Ahmaud Arbery was murdered, twenty days later George Floyd was murdered, then protests erupted around the country the next day. These

murders, along with Briana Taylor's (March 13, 2020 was her death date) murder, were memorialized in protests with chants of: Black Lives Matter, Say Her Name, Protect Black Womxn, No Justice No Peace (persecute the police). "Black women and girls as young as 7 and as old as 93 have been killed by the police, though we rarely hear their names. Knowing their names is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for lifting up their stories which in turn provides a much clearer view of the wide-ranging circumstances that make Black women's bodies disproportionately subject to police violence. To lift up their stories, and illuminate police violence against Black women, we need to know who they are, how they lived, and why they suffered at the hands of police."

IVES Park experience at a BLM gathering: Say their name. As names were read it was reverent. Then chanting began, no justice no peace. And the tone became somewhat aggressive I thought aggression might erupt BUT I sincerely wonder if it felt cathartic to others and I just was unaccustomed to how it feels to be in a reverse situation...I represented the "minority" it was a different and uncomfortable position for me and that's thought provoking. I wanted to wear a colorful dress, my hubs was concerned it might look like cultural appropriation...so I changed into something more conservative. It raised my awareness of fashion and the message it sends."

(Boucicaut, 2021).

* K. Francom

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NPR

Year of the Protest

The It Girl

Why would you wanna be like anybody else? You're better off just bein' yourself

Why don't you look into the mirror and say, I wouldn't want you any other way

I could tell I was living in a world

That wasn't made for brown skin girls

Just you wait it'll be your turn

In the mirror I would say to her

I could be the it girl can't you see?

I could be the face on the magazine

Paint me like a debutant

Your prom queen

Pretty little it girl, yeah that's me

Do you ever feel like everywhere you go

You're just an act in the sideshow?

Just the friend, a second thought

It's time you give them everything you got

I could be the it girl can't you see?

I could be the face on the magazine

Paint me like a debutant

Your prom queen

Pretty little it girl, yeah that's me

Why would you want to be like anybody else?

You're better off just being yourself

Why don't you look into the mirror and say

I wouldn't want you any other way

I could be the it girl can't you see?

I could be the face on the magazine

Paint me like a debutant

Your prom queen

Pretty little it girl, yeah that's me

I could be the it girl can't you see?

I could be the face on the magazine

Paint me like a debutant

Your prom queen

Pretty little it girl, yeah that's me

Pretty little it girl, yeah that's me

Pretty little it girl, yeah that's me

But I don't give a shit girl yeah that's me

2021

Lil Wayne - "Ain't Got No Time"

I would like to open the door to the song "Ain't Got No Time" by Lil Wayne, and the controversy behind his political beliefs. For some historical background, Donald Trump's name has been used in the hip-hop genre for many years. Before Donald Trump was ever involved in politics, rappers used to idolize him. One of the first times we see his name mentioned is when Kool Rock-Ski of Fat Boy said, "I got money like Donald Trump!" Big Sean said "I'm tryna stuff em until I can't fit no more. I'm talking Donald Trump level." Rappers idolized him because of his ego, his bank account, and his misogyny. It was clear that many rappers' feelings changed once Donald Trump began his political career. Many songs were dedicated entirely to roasting Donald Trump like "Mr Tangerine Man"

by Rocky Mountain Mike, and “Fuck Donald Trump” by YG & Nipsey Hussle. It became pretty clear post 2016 that most performers (including rappers) were unsupportive of Donald Trump.

Although the majority of rappers had displayed their displeasure with Donald Trump as a political figure, there are some rappers who had outwardly supported Donald Trump. One rapper who is particularly supportive of Trump is Lil Wayne. Lil Wayne made his political standing pretty clear in an interview in 2016 where he claimed that he didn’t “understand” the Black Lives Matter movement. He says that he doesn’t see racism in America and he says, “If there really is racism in America, how can a black man like me be so rich and successful?” Lil Wayne met Donald Trump for the first time in 2020, and made an official statement on Twitter where he supports Trump. Shortly after this meeting, Lil Wayne created the mixtape “No Ceilings 3” where he includes lyrics about Donald Trump: “Haven’t done my taxes, fuckin’ with Trump.”

Lil Wayne has been arrested multiple times for possession of drugs and firearms between 2007-2009. He pleads guilty to illegal possession of a firearm and serves in 2009 and serves 8 months in prison in 2010. 10 years later, he pleads guilty again in 2020 for transporting a loaded handgun on his private jet. Since Lil Wayne is a convicted felon, he was sentenced to more time in prison, but Donald Trump pardoned him. Lil Wayne creates a single called “Ain’t Got No Time” shortly after he is pardoned by Trump, where he boasts about being pardoned and that nobody can stop him. “Living like I can’t die, fumble with me FBI arrest me, why?” “Enjoyin’ my good times more than sometimes, and I just hope.” “Full of vanilla, flyin’ over chocolate mountains. I stare at the Pacific while I’m smokin’ on a kilometer. The feds, they hot on us, one hundred on the thermometer”. “They raided my private plane, I went got one that’s more privater.” It’s clear that Lil Wayne is a Trump supporter, but does he see the irony? Donald Trump has actively taken away the rights of black Americans and incited violence upon them as a politician. It’s just interesting to see how some artists don’t have a full understanding of the political world around them.

* T. Hayes

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2021

Bo Burnham—Problematic Politically

For my final open the door I wanted to look at the Netflix special “Inside,” by Bo Burnham. Burnham is a stand up comedian who makes very sarcastic, tongue in cheek, extremely offensive comedy. I was curious to look into this matter more as my students find him hilarious. This comedy special is an interesting combination of stand up comedy, catchy musical songs with biting sarcastic humor, monologues, clips of Burnham recording himself making and editing the piece which is all loosely strung together in a rather disjointed fashion. It is uniquely situated during the time of lockdown due to COVID 19, and is very relatable to watch, as the content revolves around the making of a comedy show from his apartment. It starts with a feeling of purpose and direction that unravels as the show continues. I think many of us struggled during this time, and felt increasingly anxious, and unraveled as time, and uncertainty continued. Burnham had a successful career as a stand up comedian musician, but had to step away from the main stage due to crippling anxiety. As he was getting ready to perform again, he was not able to, as the lockdown happened and he was confined to his apartment. One of the articles I read likened the style to a Brechtian technique called the V-factor (Verfremdung) where the estrangement from the audience is intentional. During this collection of works, Burnham turns 30, and as his music definitely is aimed at a younger audience, it seems to beg the question of when he is going to grow up. This milestone seems to take a toll on his mental health as well, which is another thing many people struggled with during the pandemic. It is such an interesting intersection of issues all piled on top of each other- very real relatable effects from the pandemic, very already problematic topics of anxiety and mental health, and very offensive comedy that is only somewhat tongue in cheek and meant to prompt a reaction.

One song called “Comedy,” Burnham situates himself as a hero (a white male hero), who is going to heal the world through comedy. Simple, paired back piano chords, ballad style, with Burnham singing sets you up for what at first appears to be a serious song,

“The world is changing, the planet’s healing up, What the f — is going on?

Rearranging, everything happened all at once, What the f — is going on?”

While dropping the f bomb feels rude, the lyrics really hit on what we felt like in those moments. The obviously

recorded laugh tracks, highlight the fact that there is no live audience. As the song continues, we hear Burnham reflecting on whether or not the middle of the pandemic is the time for comedy, (in callous, insensitive ways). Intense, cheesy low strings, and auto harmonized singing, while he makes crying sound over the top just feels really over the top. He admits that “American white guys [have] had the floor for at least 400 years, so maybe I should just shut the f--- up. (long pause) I’m bored.” He manages to trivialize the issue, and call himself out at the same time as he is obviously not “shutting up” and making money on the situation through a Netflix documentary. Another quote from the song “Should I give away my money? No!” The repeated lyric in his song is “Isn’t anybody gonna hold me accountable?” and I would like to know why we aren’t doing just that.

Another one of Bo Burnham’s song that I feel is particularly problematic is his song “Problematic.” He talks about being a kid, and a comic and saying really offensive things when he was younger. He is pictured in a very unkempt state, long untrimmed hair, and beard, placing him further in the pandemic journey- no haircuts were available, and then he dancing provocatively which is really odd based on the lyrics and what he is singing about. It is hard to know whether this is real self expression, or if he is being tongue in cheek and wanting to prompt a reaction. Or perhaps calling attention to these things himself, so that others can’t in an original way, thereby taking the power out of accusations against himself? We all do stupid things as teenagers, but I am fairly sure that this apology, if you can call it that, is insincere, or not nearly enough. He is saying the right words, but the funky bassline beat, the upbeat tune, the snare on 2 and 4, and the dancing undermines the message and it just doesn’t feel very sorry. Toward the end of the song, he is pictured in the shadow of a cross, which just feels inappropriate. In a time where we seem to be very aware of these issues, and celebrities get “canceled” for much less it is interesting that there is also an appetite for such blatant racism, homophobia, misogyny, people with developmental challenges, religions, pretty much any group there is to offend, can be included. Why is he so popular, why do all the middle school and highschool kids know every word of all of the problematic material? Do they know enough to get the sarcasm, or to understand that just saying the right words in the wrong way isn’t enough? I think that we often get away with more if we say that we are “just joking,” but I think that someone, and by someone I mean collectively everyone should “hold him accountable.”

* L. Baldwin

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2022-2023

The Downfall of A Modern Diva

Russian soprano Anna Netrebko, often regarded as the janitress turned international opera star was born in 1971. She attended St. Petersburg Conservatory and the famed conductor of the Mariinsky Theatre, Valery Gergiev, gave her a chance at performing. In 2002 Netrebko’s career really began to take flight with performances in A-list opera houses all across the United States and Europe. Her quick rise to fame is arguably not because of vocal technicality but rather based on beauty and propaganda from Russia. In 2004 Netrebko received the state prize of the Russian Federation from Vladimir Putin due to her fame. During the 2012 Russian elections, Netrebko heavily endorsed Putin and rumors circulated that they were romantically involved. She was often invited to Russian government functions to perform and entertain to help fundraise the Russian government’s military expansion. As tensions with Ukraine and Russia began to unfold, her silence on the tensions began to cripple her. The Metropolitan Operas General Manager, Peter Gelb was under pressure to make a decision on having Netrebko perform the title role in upcoming performances of *Turandot*. Gelb wrote via the Metropolitan Opera’s Instagram on March 3, 2022 “Anna is one of the greatest singers in Met history, but with Putin killing innocent victims in Ukraine, there was no way forward.” The Met had a clear political motive when her replacement was Ukrainian soprano Liudmyla Monastyrskaya. Anna also took her position onto social media claiming that the force for her to make a political statement on the matter was unethical and called those arguing with her on social media “human sh*** who are as evil as blind aggressors.” Netrebko holds dual citizenship in Russia and Vienna and as the war progressed she fled to Vienna and weeks later released a statement that she would be distancing herself from the prime minister after multiple other companies dropped her contracts. In 2023 she was sanctioned by the government of Ukraine for her participation in supporting the war. Summer of 2022, there was a significant uproar directed at Anna and the Arena di Verona Festival due to their decision to perform in blackface during a production of *Aida*, this was displayed in promotional photos that

were released. As a reflection of this controversy, American soprano Angel Blue chose to cancel her scheduled performances of *La Traviata* at the Festival. Her decision was based on the Festival's insistence on continuing the controversial practice and she claimed she felt uncomfortable performing in the space. Netrebko's husband called the decision disgusting and she stated that the original staging from 2002 used blackface and it would be artistically wrong to change that. Currently, Anna Netrebko is still being contracted at most major opera houses in the world. The reception of her not being invited back to perform in New York was deemed by many Americans as long overdue. However, many argue that Netrebko had no choice but to align herself with the Russian government for fear she could have undergone retaliation from her own government. Also, many argue that the Met forcing Netrebko to release a political stance on the Ukraine matter was unprofessional. Another take is the question of whether or not the Met violated anti-discrimination laws by banning an artist because they are Russian. Ultimately, she filed a labor grievance lawsuit and The Metropolitan Opera was forced to pay her \$200,000 for severing her contracts. As someone who saw Netrebko perform Russian art songs in 2016 in a sold-out recital at the Met, I feel vexed by the subject matter. However, my own takeaway is that the world has some amazing sopranos- Lisette Oropessa, Lise Davidsen, and Sonya Yoncheva to name a few. In this day in age, we don't need to subject ourselves to arrogance. It's my hope that the societal view of what an operatic diva is could eventually be considered humble, less controversial, and more culturally aware.

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2022-2023

Taylor Swift and Ticketmaster

This past year, Taylor Swift announced the dates for her Eras Tour, which would be her sixth ongoing concert series. As stated by Crosby, "Desire, anticipation, frustration and disappointment – any time tickets for a Taylor Swift tour go on sale there is Bad Blood" (Crosby, 2023). From presale chaos to the outrage of Taylor Swift's fans, which she lovingly calls "Swifties," the process of obtaining highly coveted tickets to the Eras tour has been no easy feat for anyone. The uniqueness of the concert-ticketing industry, combined with the immense cultural impact of Taylor Swift, contributes to this phenomenon. This highlights Ticketmaster's shortcomings over the decades (Orozco, 2021).

Ticketmaster faced major controversy in early 2009, when Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band announced their "Working on a Dream" tour in New Jersey. Right after the tour announcement, fans started encountering "technical malfunctions" on the website. They were redirected to Ticketmaster's secondary site, TicketsNow, even though there were still available seats on the main Ticketmaster site. This error resulted in some fans being forced to pay "prices four times greater than their actual face value" (Holstrom, 2021). Nevertheless, when the New Jersey Attorney General launched an investigation into the issue, Ticketmaster responded with an apology. They clarified that the decision to direct some buyers to their secondary-ticketing platform, TicketsNow, was made in an effort to ensure more Bruce Springsteen fans could get tickets. Eventually, Ticketmaster reimbursed fans for the discrepancy between the face value of the tickets and the price of the secondary tickets.

This mirrors the controversy surrounding Swift's Eras Tours ticket sales on Ticketmaster in 2022. The saga began when Swift first announced she was going on tour following the release of her 10th studio album, *Midnights*, which broke records for streaming, physical, and vinyl album sales across the globe. Taylor Swift's Eras Tour has encountered a bumpy beginning. Despite assurances from Ticketmaster, the online ticket seller under Live Nation Entertainment, they were unable to cope with the overwhelming demand for concert tickets. The resulting chaos has left disappointed ticket

buyers and poses a risk for tour venues to suffer financial losses if fans become frustrated and give up on purchasing tickets. Despite the anticipated extraordinary demand for Swift's tour, Ticketmaster failed to prepare adequately to handle it. In a competitive market, such mishandling of ticket sales could have harmed their brand and led to potential loss of future business. However, due to limited alternatives for both venues and ticket buyers, Ticketmaster had fewer incentives to ensure a smooth process.

In response to this saga, Swift said the following to People Magazine:

"Well. It goes without saying that I'm extremely protective of my fans. We've been doing this for decades together and over the years, I've brought so many elements of my career in house. I've done this SPECIFICALLY to improve the quality of my fans' experience by doing it myself with my team who care as much about my fans as I do," she wrote. "It's really difficult for me to trust an outside entity with these relationships and loyalties, and excruciating for me to just watch mistakes happen with no recourse. . . I'm not going to make excuses for anyone because we asked them, multiple times, if they could handle this kind of demand and we were assured they could. It's truly amazing that 2.4 million people got tickets, but it really pisses me off that a lot of them felt like they had to go through several bear attacks to get them" (Bendlin, 2023). On the day when the general ticket sale was scheduled to take place but was canceled, Ticketmaster issued an apology to Taylor Swift fans. Along with the apology, they provided a detailed explanation of the issues that occurred during the presale. According to The New York Times, the Justice Department is investigating whether Live Nation Entertainment, the parent company of Ticketmaster, has misused its influence in the music industry. Although the inquiry is believed to have started before the Eras tour incident, the situation has intensified the grievances from fans, musicians, and politicians alike (Bendlin, 2023). Following this, Senators Amy Klobuchar and Mike Lee shared that the Senate will be holding a hearing "to examine the lack of competition in the ticketing industry" (Bendlin, 2023). In addition, during this time, Swifties teamed up and filed a lawsuit against Live Nation Entertainment, which has merged with ticketmaster in recent years. During a ticketmaster hearing, some members of the judiciary committee quoted some of Swift's lyrics in their arguments, with Klobuchar opening up her statement with an "All Too Well" reference and Joe Berchtold stating in his statement "I'm the problem, it's me."

On March 27th, 2023, Swifties finally got to bring their cases to court, with 10 of the 340 plaintiffs in the Live Nation lawsuit showing up for the hearing in L.A. (Bendlin, 2023). While no immediate action was taken, Swifties

hope that this case prevents anything similar happening to artists and fans in the future.

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