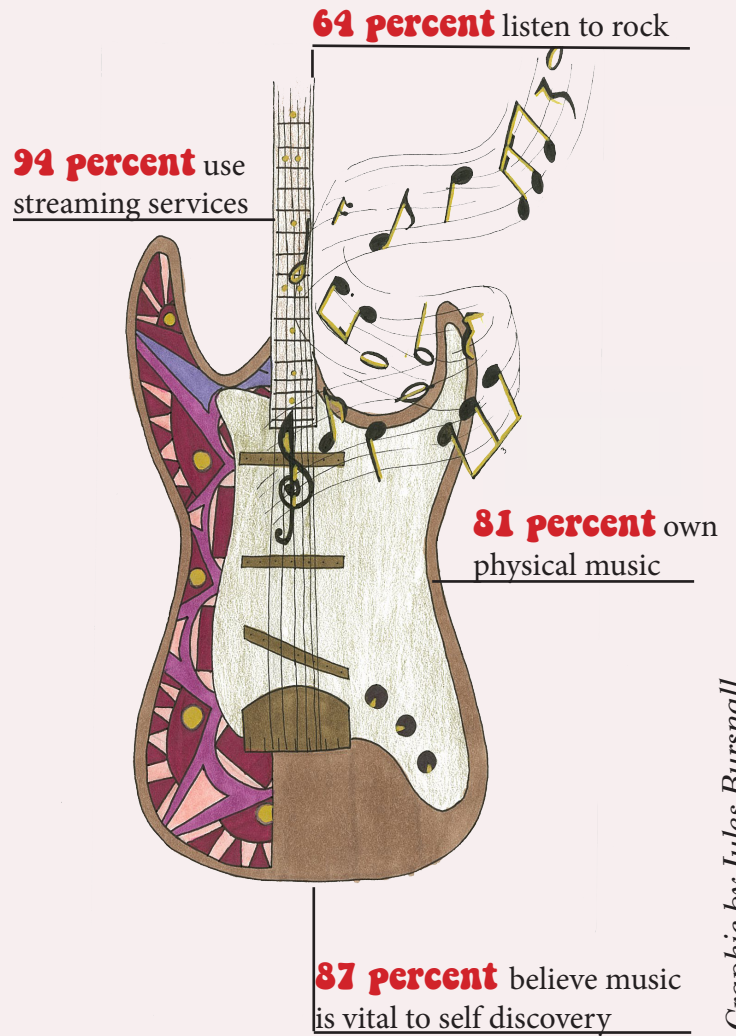


Riffs By the Numbers

YOU said...



Graphic by Jules Bursnall

Junior student rock and roll enthusiast, Spencer Falzarano, claims that owning cassettes furthers his listening experience. Growing up with his parents in a band, the concert experience has held a special place in his heart, cassettes, vinyl, and CD's are the closest representation of the raw, live experience.

“The common misconception about cassettes is that they are poor quality, when really the sound system and production quality is what matters more. If you take the steps to actually hear the music, cassettes and vinyl provide a better experience.”

It is clear that taste and gravitation towards certain genres is not completely determined by politics or culture. Rather, it is cultivated by a mixture of influences and associations we build with genres and songs individually, especially influenced by environment.

The changing relationship with music is not all detrimental. The availability has allowed more creators to escape the talons of music industry monopolizers and publish their work on public platforms.

Although musicians may not get paid as much as they used to, the appeal to create and perform will always be present in musicians. Some consumers will always crave a live experience when their favorite acts come to town and will buy merchandise to support them. Events as prolific as Woodstock are few and far between, but festivals such as Coachella, Lollapalooza, and Bonnaroo strive to create the same experience.

Although the relationship with music has changed immensely since Woodstock, music still maintains a special and crucial role in society and the development of the human spirit.

50 years of music

The Beatles' "Abbey Road" was released in September.

🎵 Led Zeppelin's eponymous debut album was released in early January.

Chicago's debut album, "The Chicago Transit Authority" was released in January

🎵 Neil Diamond's famous hit, "Sweet Caroline" hit the top of the charts.

The Who's "Pinball Wizard" reached No.19 on Billboard.

🎵 David Bowie's "Space Oddity" became his first No. 1 single.

"Honky Tonk Women" by the Rolling Stones topped Billboard 100 for four weeks straight.

🎵 Bob Dylan's "Lay Lady Lay" was released in July, marking one of Dylan's most famous songs.

Sounds Like Teen Spirit



ALEXANDRA HALL

My band teacher often preached to the classroom, “Teenage girls always know what’s good before anybody else does,” one hand in the pocket of his trousers that spilled over his yellow Crocs.

At the time, this seemed like just another nonsensical line from a man who wore the same shirt every day. Whether it’s the classic sound of female screeches over iconic Beatles songs or the head bobs to the heavy bassline of Nirvana’s classic teenage hit, “Smells Like Teen Spirit,” youth’s gravitation and obsessive devotion towards music is vital to character and identity evolution.

From Gregorian chants to mumble rap, music has stood as an encapsulation of the culture and standards of the time it was created. Even if not directly shown in the lyrics, the tonality, structure, and instruments –or lack thereof– display the times in the most pure and artistic way, full of themes and ideas that were important at the time. Just like Nirvana’s hit, the importance of music is not seen exclusively in one lyric. Rather, it is built throughout the song’s progression and the themes it strives to explain.

The evolution of music is not limited to the sound itself, but also the technologies that surround it. The advancements of technology and the wider access granted to the general public have painted a different picture for music’s role in society.

The music industry targets youth, the most impressionable of the ages. Songs of the

Rock n’ Roll age called for action, both political and spiritual. It is only natural that the angsty, hormonal teens of society from the 50’s to today have gravitated towards a sound that matches their fuel. This phenomenon is timeless, as shown in prolific events that signify the true spirit that goes beyond the music itself.

2019 marks the 50th anniversary of Woodstock, a pinnacle of musical and social revolution amidst an age of chaos and experimentation. The music industry no longer relies exclusively on a handful of record labels, but rather has opened itself up to a more open approach to creation.

Woodstock’s lineup hosted legendary musical acts like Janis Joplin, The Who, Santana, and Grateful Dead who performed over the course of three days in August of 1969. Some included politically relevant songs like The Who’s “We’re Not Gonna Take It,” that rejects fascism and the current hecticcy of the political climate.

Nothing was quite as groundbreaking as Jimi Hendrix’s vibrant rendition of the national anthem. He infused the electric guitar with the sounds of sirens, children crying, taps, and utter chaos. It also seized the meaning of the national anthem and resurfaced a proud patriotism without loving every government policy and action. It inspired discussion. Jimi Hendrix’s version of the national anthem proved that the power of music transcends three minutes of head-bobbing. It proved that music is a root of our culture and holds power in our foundation.

Classic teen anthems like Nirvana's hit have become vehicles for teen self-exploration. Just as the grunge and rock movements have shaped teen identity, so has technology.




Woodstock could not have come at a more intense time in American history and stood for more than just a fun music festival. It was a handful of stages, current acts, and a massive, muddy field.

The grotesque conditions like scarcity of clean water, poor weather, and rabid drug use created an environment similar to the camps during the Vietnam war. It was human interaction at its most basic form: connection and survival. Devotion to the sound was not clicks on a screen or the occasional hour wait before the concert starts. It was camping in terrible, wet, unsanitary conditions with strangers to hear the sounds that could only be heard on vinyl or radio broadcasts before.

Fifty years later, politics has evolved and war anthems are scarce and unnoticed. The general fascination with music has shifted from rock music with a stance to over-saturated pop music with sexual overtones.

What was once a sacred experience only felt through heavyweight vinyl and muddy fields with no water has now become available to everyone. Streaming services such as Spotify and Apple Music have dominated the music industry, seizing the power from record labels. Applications like SoundCloud provide a platform for anyone with a microphone to upload and share music to the world, replacing power back into the hands of creators. With records taking only days to record and upload to anyone with an electronic device, it is natural that the appreciation of music might fall short.

From Gregorian chants to mumble rap, music has stood as an encapsulation of the culture and standards of the time it was created. 

Former Gazette writer and fellow music snob, Sean Paige argues that one's relationship with music is not ruined by the advancements in technology.

"Music has become much more democratic and record labels no longer hold the power that they used to. Easy access to intellectual content does not devalue the music itself, but rather the performer," he said.

Paige said that he still feels like he has to purchase the music, even if he streams it first, to fully feel like he owns the song and can rightfully share it with others.

It is a reward to the performer and artist behind the work. Growing up in what is said to be the "Golden Age of Rock," Paige's hesitation towards absentmindedly streaming is a reflection of the changing attitude of today's youth towards consumption. This relationship has gone from something worth time, money, and effort to a quick fix that is quickly forgotten in old playlists.