

SPINNING BACK ROUND

Music is always a part of our lives, and with technology today it's easier than ever to purchase. But there is a new fad sweeping the world, Vinyls. Brad White discovers why everyone is so fond of their old friend.

In a digital age, people are returning to the good old hard copies of music. But people aren't buying CD's anymore, they're buying records. Listeners are skipping back a generation and listening to the warming sounds of vinyl once again. But what is so appealing about something so intrusive? (para 1)

The Artwork

Album artwork was originally created to be appreciated and admired. With the introduction of CD's the real estate for artwork was drastically reduced and soon pushed off to the side and used more for identification purposes. The art was dead. But with the revival of records, artwork makes a comeback too. Artwork is one of the main attractions, as it is what the record consists of. You don't see people framing CD's and hanging them on a wall, because CD's are considered cheap throwaways. People use records and record sleeves as a piece of artwork, because bands actually hire prestigious artists to create a masterpiece to adorn their album. Bands also make the artwork into posters and T-shirts to sell as merchandise. (para 2)

The Sound

People are always searching for something better and when it comes to the sound of music, people will stop at nothing. So the reason people are returning to vinyl is because it simply sounds better. MP3's just synthetically mimic sound waves while records produce their own, smooth sound. Naturally, real sound feels better to our ears because it's warming to us. Even if you have records you still need something to make the sound listenable. So with an increase of record sales comes an increase in players. Companies have reported putting discontinued record player models back into production after the recent rise. People don't interact with CD's the same way they do vinyl. Listening to the warm sounds of vinyl is an experience in itself. Sitting down and enjoying music has been lost in our busy lifestyles of the future. The only time people get to listen to music is while making their daily commute to and from work. With records people don't have the same kind of accessibility, so they are forced to sit down and relax, making it a time to unwind. There is no experience like it, unless you're at a live concert. (para 3)

A new generation

Nostalgia plays a big part in the return. People like to return to the old days when the world was a lot simpler. But the latest influx is coming from people who weren't even around when records were first produced. A new, younger generation have started listening and buying vinyl records. Hipsters are mostly buying vinyl records, but that's because most of the new albums released on vinyl are from alternative artists. This is because they know their audience wants records. Bands like Arcade Fire, The Black Keys, Vampire Weekend and The National were among the top 10 record sales of last year. But that doesn't mean the classics have been pushed aside. Abbey Road dominated the top spot for the second year running, while Michael Jackson and Pink Floyd made an appearance in 2010's list. So to this day people are still buying their favourite Beatles album on vinyl, along with the latest from their favourite new band. Attempts to contact Real Groovy in Auckland to talk about the types of people buying records sadly fell through. (para 4)

The Statistics

2006 was the start, record sales took off. They increased by 14 percent while the CD market began its descent with sales plummeting 35 percent. 2006 saw the biggest year in record sales since 1991, with each year taking the title from the last. Vinyl was the fastest growing music format in 2010 selling 2.8 million. During this time however, MP3's were and still largely popular and growing in size drastically. (para 5)

Record Store Day

In 2007, Record Store Day was born. The event happens annually on the third Saturday of every April. It is an international celebration of vinyls and records alike. The event has been so big the

past few years that it has seen record labels and artists release exclusive versions of new and re-mastered albums, specifically for the day. It's one of the biggest days for independent record stores around the world. Last year Record Store day sales increased 41% from the previous year, proving that it's a growing phenomena. Record Store Day is celebrated fully in the USA, Canada, the UK, Ireland, France, Netherlands, Germany and has participating stores in Spain, Croatia, Japan, New Zealand and about 25 other countries. It is now widely thought of as the most popular music holiday around the world. (para 6)

Digital Downloads

iPod's are a big thing, everyone has one. So digital downloads are huge. iTunes had it's 10 billionth song downloaded last year. So records and artists have had to adapt when returning to the classic format, and not just stay the same. Artists and record labels are accompanying their vinyl records with a free or reduced price for the digital download of the album. This can end up being the same price or even cheaper than buying it online, and you get two copies! You just have to go online and redeem your little code inside the packet. This means you can listen to it out and about while being able to go home and listen on your record player. It's a win win situation. (para 7)

We all love music, it is a part of our everyday lives. Some people live and breath music, and it means everything to them. Listening to music is a time to relax and unwind from your busy life. It can also be a social thing to experience with friends and family. So next time you go to purchase or download the newest album, think about it, and see if you want to start your very own record collection. Once you start, you won't want to stop. (para 8)