

MUSIC

TIKTOK AND FAME

by Smera Jain

TikTok, a social media app where people post short videos, has seen exceptional growth within the last two years. From August 2018, when Chinese company ByteDance bought and rebranded the popular lip-syncing app Musical.ly, the app has garnered over 1 billion users with 200 million downloads just from the United States.

TikTok has created many "stars" like Charli D'Amelio and Addison Rae out of normal people who led normal lives. But now, these TikTok stars earn millions of dollars. How did they reach this point of fame? They posted fifteen-second clips of them dancing to different soundtracks. "The Renegade," one of the most well-known dance trends to ever hit TikTok, went viral in 2019. The dance was choreographed by Jalaiah Harmon to "Lottery" by KCamp and started a large wave of TikTokers' rise to fame. The dances that they performed were part of trends that fluctuate every couple of weeks, with new dances to new songs being invented every so often.

A plethora of trends rise and fall on TikTok. Whether they are about food, fashion, point of views or memes, they all have some sort of background audio that carries them. While some artists like Salem Ilese, the singer of "Mad at Disney" and Claire Rosinkranz, creator/singer of "Backyard Boy", are just one-hit wonders, other artists have become extremely famous and have careers that are still going strong.

Olivia Rodrigo, Doja Cat and Megan Thee Stallion are prime examples of such successful artists.

Olivia Rodrigo, "Drivers License"
Olivia Rodrigo is a rising superstar. She entered the spotlight early in her life, earning her first big break on Disney's "Bizaardvark." She went on to act in the Disney+ series, "High School Musical: The Musical: The Series." Shortly after, she released her debut single "Drivers License." It debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 Singles Chart and broke numerous records across streaming platforms like Spotify, Apple Music and YouTube. Besides being a great song, Rodrigo's breakup ballad quickly gained views because of its massive popularity on TikTok. Many TikTok users posted covers of the song, including intentionally bad ones, transformation videos, POV's and theories about who the song is about. This song launched her successful music career in which she released two other charting singles and her album, "Sour," which debuted at number one on the Billboard 200 chart. At the young age of 18, she has become a Grammy-nominated artist and gone on to perform at Saturday Night Live, the Billboard Music Awards and the AMAs. Not only has she performed on many stages, but she has also been invited to the White House by President Biden to help encourage the youth of the nation to get vaccinated.

Doja Cat, "Say So"
Doja Cat signed with RCA Records imprint Kemosabe in 2014. She initially gained popularity from her single "Mooo!" on YouTube in 2018. Her fame reached new heights after the song, "Say So," went viral on TikTok in 2019. There is even a remix of the song, featuring rap icon Nicki Minaj, which became Doja Cat's first number one hit when it topped at the No. 1 position on Billboard's Hot 100 Songs Chart in 2020. Now Doja Cat is a Grammy-nominated artist who has won several awards including five American Music Awards and 10 MTV Video Music Awards.
Megan Thee Stallion, "Savage" and "WAP"
Even before receiving a lot of attention for "Savage" on TikTok in March 2020, Megan was already using social media to promote her music. She gained a following by posting videos of her freestyling on platforms like Instagram and YouTube, with a few going viral; like "Stalli Freestyle" and "Big Ole Freak." In August 2020, "WAP," her collaboration with fellow rapper Cardi B also went viral, earning her more fans. Despite gaining traction in the music industry before TikTok there is no doubt that one of the biggest reasons for Megan Thee Stallion's success is the fandom she gained due to the dance trend for which "Savage" was the soundtrack. She has now released collaborations with legends like BTS, Ariana Grande and Beyoncé. She has been nominated for and won numerous awards; some of the most significant are four Grammy nominations and three wins.

NINETEENTH CENTURY MUSIC

by Charles Chang

I am about to put the boom in boomer because we are about to boom straight to the past. This past being the '70s and '90s — a high point in music as most people would say, though for the point I speak of, we have to go farther back than most think. While all the worship to the '70s and '90s eras are well-deserved, perhaps we need to go further back, straight back to the 19th century for great music. The 19th century was a glorious time where tuberculosis was a fashion statement, a time before all this "lyrics business" and where music was purely the sounds of instruments. Simply put, it was magical. There are no lyrics in these old classics or substance in metaphorical lines. However, contrary to popular belief these are not flaws. Lyrics are overrated when addressing these classics. The lack of lyricism makes 19th century music inspire emotion based solely on sound. In its essence it is an impactful and auditory form of emotion used to invoke emotion. Old music and their lyric-lacking tunes clearly express and invoke a specific feeling in the audience. The sound of grandeur from the notes of Messiah gives off a "larger-than-life" feel. In the Hall of the Mountain King gives the general feeling of a never-ending cycle of screw ups and failures. It's sole emotional sounds void of words express their unique

charm. Of course, to bring something up one must put another down; to explain another of the merits of olden notes one must drag modern beats through the mud. The classical songs of yesteryear's yesteryear have a distinct lack of lyrics which many call out as negative. Olden notes do not have any serious metaphors to demonstrate leaving their existence simple: to call upon the listeners' emotions. The sense of a battlefield from Overture 1812 and feelings of majestic mystery from Toreador March. The pure emotions in these notes heavily contrast the metaphorical beats of the common age in a good way. Their notes convey an emotion through music, be it the tension of battle or the simple focus of these emotions. The lack of lyrics, metaphors and modern techniques does not detract from the greatness of the old music but emphasizes its strengths. The lack of complicated traits leaves nothing but the soul of a song. These oldies portray emotions in ways these young songs cannot. Passing certain feelings instead of ideas is a fantastic concept, proving they are top tier songs compared to many other newer sounds.

ARTIST SPOTLIGHTS

by Caitlin Chan and Katie Lee

TAYLOR SWIFT

With iconic songs such as "I Knew You Were Trouble" and "Shake it Off," you have most likely heard of Taylor Swift's songs from a young age. An American pop and country singer and songwriter, Swift is one of the most popular singers of her generation. Her songs are often inspired by her personal life. Swift is no stranger to record-breaking accomplishments, winning 13 Grammys. Her most recent album, Red (Taylor's Version), broke the record (again) for the most albums sold.

PLAYBOI CARTI

One of today's hottest rappers, Playboi Carti is a rapper that resonates with the young adults and teens of Generation Z. From his first hit of his debut mixtape in 2017, titled "Playboi Carti," his album debuted at top 12 of the Billboard 200. He soon reached fame as he collaborated with other rappers such as Gucci Mane, ASAP Rocky and Tyler the Creator. His music can be described as experimental and gothic. For example, his hottest hit "Magnolia" has rhythmic motifs and catchy lyrics that went viral, gaining attention for his whole debut album.

DOJA CAT

Known for her electronic R&B and hip hop tracks, Doja Cat, is an American rapper, dancer and songwriter. She sings about personal power, sexuality and friendship. Her 2019 track "Hot Pink," as well as collaborations with SZA and Saweetie are some of her most famous songs. She additionally gained popularity quite rapidly through TikTok and Youtube. Her single "Say So," hit Top 10 on the Billboard 200 in January 2020 and then proceeded to hit the number one slot in May.

HARRY STYLES

Starting his career on the X-Factor UK in 2010 and becoming one of the five members in One Direction, Harry Styles is a singer commonly found on the "Top Hits" list. With a sweet voice to accompany his musical discography, he is an icon of the modern pop era. As he debuted as a soloist once his band took a hiatus, all of his songs were well received by both old and new fans. Harry Styles's inspiration for his music has been described as a mix of soft rock and pop as heard in 2020's hottest hit of "Watermelon Sugar."

YE WEST

Originating as a producer, Ye West is now a singer, rapper, songwriter and fashion designer. One of the world's best-selling music artists, West is also one of the most awarded singers/artists in the world. He even broke the record for winning the most Grammys since 2000. His rap often resonates with crowds of all ages as his music focuses on his own experiences as a black artist of America. West's music is wide and diverse but has an overarching theme of lyrical rap verses. Some of his most popular songs are "Runaway" and "Flashing Lights." His 2004 debut, *College Dropout*, established his place upon the top charts, followed by his other albums like *Late Registration* (2005), *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* (2010), *Yeezus* (2013) and *Ye* (2018).

EXPLORING K-POP

by Raagni Devaki and Sophie Wang

Over the past few years, K-pop has gradually found its place in the western music industry. K-pop has gained popularity not gradually but via numerous large waves. The most recent wave was during the 2020 quarantine, after BTS released their single "Dynamite." It became the first K-pop song to be nominated for a Grammy, an awards ceremony usually dominated by western artists.

This rise of K-pop in western media has influenced how East Asians in America are viewed, for better or for worse. In the predominantly white western industry, Asians in the media are incredibly under-represented and confined to stereotypical roles. Asian characters are subjected to many stereotypical traits, whether it be as the kung-fu master, the accented immigrant or the genius hacker that fail to accurately represent Asian people. The latest wave of K-pop popularity has helped significantly in breaking down barriers and deconstructing the typical negative representation of Asians in western media.

The latest wave of popularity for K-pop has had its pros and cons. Although the Korean wave has somewhat been successful in taking down old stereotypes about East Asians, the popularity of K-pop idols has fed into the fetishization of Asians and contributed to the toxicity of K-pop fandoms. East Asian culture, specifically Korean culture, has been under the spotlight lately, being recognized and enjoyed by people of

other cultures. However, many individuals take it too far to the point where it does not feel like appreciation anymore. "Koreaboo" is a term used to negatively describe fans who are obsessed with Korean culture even though they have no real connection to the culture. The romanticization of Korean culture feeds into fetishization and idealization of east Asians, an example being many K-pop fans specifically wanting to find a Korean partner.

While there are many now who hold an over-appreciation or even fetishization of Korean culture, it certainly does nothing to counteract the ever-present racism that many westerners hold. Xenophobia, more specifically sinophobia, is extremely common when K-pop bands such as BTS receive hate-filled comments. Rather than receiving hate comments about their music or performances, most of the negativity directed towards them is about their race and ethnicity. Comments such as "China Man" are extremely prevalent. This ties into larger social issues such as Asian hate which

has increased greatly since the start of the pandemic. After the 2021 Grammy Awards, Garbage Pail Kids released a product called the "Shammy Awards" which was intended to "poke fun" at the performances, served a very different purpose when it came to BTS. While other images of artists were based on their performances, BTS was drawn in a Whack-a-mole game, bruised and battered, amidst a surge in Asian hate crimes.

Another facet of their identities that is a target for hate is their appearance, such as fashion choices or make-up. As many male K-pop idols tend to reject stereotypical masculine forms of dressing, they are labeled as "sissys" or assumed to be gay. Kai, a member of a k-pop band EXO, has been called degrading names for regularly sporting outfits which include crop tops, a conventionally more feminine article of clothing. Internationally popular male K-pop idols have constantly been criticized for their use of make-up to enhance beauty. Questions such as "Are they wearing make-up?" or "Is he gay?" revolve constantly around male K-pop groups. This is largely due to the fact that makeup usage in males is generally looked down upon in western society.

While K-pop has increased East Asian representation in media, it has many unexpected downsides. The hate K-pop artists receive negatively affects the artists themselves as well as East Asians overall.

MUSIC AND MENTAL HEALTH

by Abby Callahan

Music is something that connects us all. Regardless of language, genre or time period, music conveys a variety of emotions. These emotions can be very beneficial to one's mental health.

When someone listens to their favorite songs they feel happy. But little do they know this also changes their brain. According to Hopkins Medicine, it has been found that music can not only

help reduce depression and anxiety but it can also help lower blood pressure, improve sleep and help one's memory. The stereotypes given to teenagers nowadays are that they are glued to their phones and are very outspoken. It is well known that Generation Z, people born between 1996-2012, commonly struggle with depression and anxiety. So, music has become a very helpful resource to them. Due to social media and insane amounts of homework, teenagers can also have terrible sleep schedules, which ends up affecting their ability to stay focused. According to Palladium-private, music has been proven to help.

There are people who devote

themselves to helping others through music therapy. Music therapy is where people use types of music to help with physical and emotional needs. Some ways that music therapy is used include playing music, singing, writing songs, dancing and just listening to music. According to NAMI, music therapy is found to be especially helpful for people living with dementia, autism and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Some teachers play music during tests to help students relax and concentrate. According to Health-

line, the music genre that has been found the most effective is classical. One of the reasons that classical music is beneficial to listen to while taking tests is that it triggers sections of your brain such as the neocortex that can help one focus and improve their ability to reason based on the information that they have learned. It also does not have any words, so students do not get as easily distracted by the music while taking the test.

The brain's neocortex is triggered by the rhythmic and repetitive aspects of classical music causing people to be less impulsive and calmer. So, the next time someone listens to music they should take a moment to consider its numerous positive mental and physical impacts.

SPOTIFY'S TOP ARTISTS

- #1 Bad Bunny
- #2 Taylor Swift
- #3 BTS
- #4 Drake
- #5 Justin Bieber

SPOTIFY'S TOP ARTISTS

- The Weeknd #6
- J Balvin #7
- Ariana Grande #8
- Olivia Rodrigo #9
- Juice WRLD #10