

Music In Relation to Fashion:

2000's and 2010's Album Cycles That Impacted the Modern Fashion Industry

FMER 430: Capstone

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December 2021

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Abstract

Music and fashion are both industries that thrive with the success and growth of the other.

The fashion industry influences the music industry by acting as a medium for artists to use in the promotion of their albums, giving the artist and promotional cycle of the album an identity and something to distinguish the project from other similar albums. The music industry affects the fashion industry as well as designers by introducing new trends, shifts in the current zeitgeist and pop culture. Fashion can indirectly and directly influence an album cycle or promotion of an album to the same degree an album cycle can create and help fashion trends emerge. There are 8 notable album cycles and the fashion trends from the time span of the 2000s through the 2010s that emerged through direct and indirect influences showcasing the mutually symbiotic relationship of the music and fashion industry.

It is important to understand the mutualistically positive relationship between both industries as the understanding of one or the relationship they share, can and will be beneficial for both markets respectively. Research related to this topic includes the analysis of other symbiotic relationships fashion shares with media industries such as social platforms,

television, and film that mutually benefit from the success and growth of all involved industries indirectly and directly impacted.

Music In Relation to Fashion

“Please don’t stop the music…” is a quote made popular by pop star Rihanna on the importance of music in everyday lives of society. Music is often described as the portrayal of emotion and feeling through sound impacting the sensory of hearing (Davies, 2012).

Although fashion is impacted by many different medias from film, television, social media and video games, music is one of the more silent forces that contributes to trends and growth in fashion. Music makes people feel things, whether it be an emotion, an urge or sensation to move, an escape from the world, or the telling of a story. All these factors make music a vital part of the zeitgeist of a certain time (Paranjape, 2020).

Music can and often has contributed to political movements, nostalgia or even in some cases fashion whether it be indirect or direct (Dawson, 2017). An example of this would be how pop singer Lady Gaga wrote and produced an entire album centered around the support of the LGBTQ+ community titled *Born This Way (2011)*. When music is made in a certain time or decade, it indirectly can contribute to and from the zeitgeist from that era such as queen of pop, Madonna, significantly contributing to both pop culture and what is viewed now as 80s nostalgia. Rock band Nirvana contributed to punk culture and what is now considered to be a piece of 90s nostalgia. With both examples, fashion has served as a medium and form of identity for both artists to help solidify their contribution to the

zeitgeist of an era in addition to their musical contributions. The music industry helps contribute to the distinguishable factors that make an artist, album, year, and decade. The fashion industry helps create a distinguishable visual representation of an artist, year, or decade. An example of this would be how princess of pop, Britney Spears, wore a snake as an accessory for her performance at the 2001 VMA



Figure 1

Music Awards (Figure 1). Other examples include Madonna wearing a cone bra (Figure 2) and David Bowie with his outlandish and eye-catching outfits (Figure 3). These would go into become a factor that distinguished them from other artists at the time.

Fashion and music have an often overlooked and deep connection to each other. Just like music, fashion can cause people to feel things through their sense such as touching a garment or piece of fabric, seeing a visually appealing piece walk down a runway, or even inspire confidence when a shopper finds that one pair of jeans that fit just right around the hips. A common connection between music and fashion and an example of the symbiotic relationship shared between the music and fashion industry is how a garment can enhance the aesthetic of the album of an artist. If the artist releases a punk album for example and



Figure 3



Figure 2

the fashion is punk and grunge based, it helps create an aesthetic and an identity for the album and artist going through its album cycle.

Background

The main way music can influence fashion and the zeitgeist of a certain time is through the album cycles of recording artists or known more commonly as “eras” by fans and music critics. A musical era or album cycle can best be described as the allotted time in which an album or body of work by an artist is released and a tour is launched in that span of time (Gabler 2020). Notable features of a musical era or album cycle include the promotion of work, the action taken by the artists, music released, and any significant details within the time of the album’s launch. The relationship between fashion and music is a symbiotic one since each industry thrives with the success of the other, since fashion gives artists a chance to stand out and have an identity and music contributes to the overall zeitgeist the fashion industry capitalizes from (Friedl, 2020). While there are several notable albums in the history of modern music that have impacted fashion, this research identifies 8 notable albums and their cycles that have either indirectly or directly impacted fashion from the 2000s to the present day. It is important to understand how these album cycles in music established permanent and short-lived trends that went on to impact the fashion industry in the present day and likely in more years to come, as both fashion and music continue to thrive and grow. Music and fashion share a special symbiotic relationship that must be understood. These 8 notable albums also created ripple effects such as fashion trends from

music videos, red carpet events or zeitgeist contribution within the album cycle that impacted the modern fashion industry which is why it is important to answer the question: “How does a musical artist’s album cycle impact the fashion industry?”

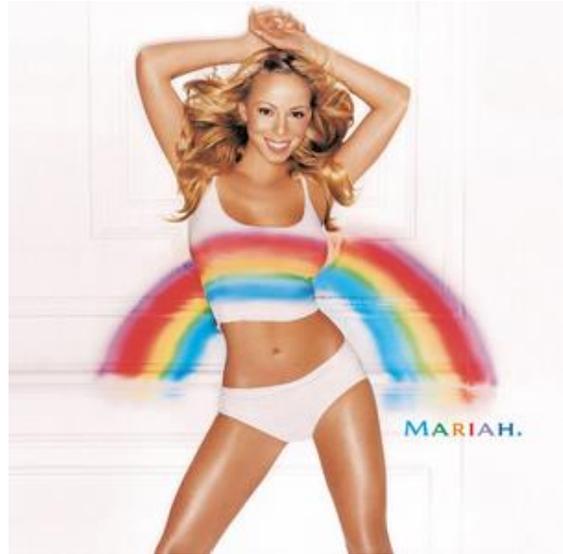
Methodology

To understand why the relationship between music and fashion is so important, and how album cycles directly and indirectly contribute to the birth or rebirth of trends and changes in the fashion industry, 8 albums were critically analyzed. When analyzing an album cycle, the outfits and looks worn in music videos, red carpet appearances, album covers are examples of how an album directly impacted the modern fashion industry. Music, cultural impact, contribution to zeitgeist and aesthetics in relation to the album cycle were analyzed to understand how album cycles indirectly contributed to the growth of trends fashion industry. There are many albums that have contributed and reaffirmed the strong symbiotic relationship fashion shares with the music industry. What separates these 8 albums is the variety of trends they indirectly and directly contributed to in the 2000s and 2010s.

2000’s and 2010’s Album Cycles That Impacted the Modern Fashion Industry

It is important to understand why and how this impacts fashion in the direct and indirect ways many albums have done in the past, since music is one of the main contributing factors to the zeitgeist of a year or even decade, it plays a factor in trends that occur within fashion and for trend forecasters to factor into their copious research (Friedl,

2020). An example of a direct way an album cycle can affect fashion is an artist wearing a certain kind of garment during the filming of a music video, tour date or album cover from an artist (Dawson, 2017). Fans will start to replicate this look, and it can sometimes become a trend in the fashion industry. An indirect way fashion can influence or



inspire a trend in relation to fashion is through the music being a supporting factor in the zeitgeist and overall direction of trends during that time (Lewis, 2019). For example, if an album cycle consists of 80s synth pop or disco music, it indirectly contributes to and reaffirms the nostalgia and renaissance of 80s fashion during that time (Friedl, 2020).

Rainbow by Mariah Carey (1999)

Mariah Carey is one of the best-selling female recording artists of all time (Satenstein, 2021). Although a notable figure in the music industry, the voice and music of Carey often overshadows her impact on fashion. *Rainbow (1999)* (Figure 4) is a prime example of how Carey directly influenced a certain trend within the denim market during the early 2000's (Fratti, 2017). Although released in November of 1999, music critics often refer to this as Carey's first album of the 2000's, additionally most of the components of the album cycle took place in the year 2000. Carey during the filming of her music video for the single "*Heartbreaker ft. Jay Z*" she had troubles with her wardrobe. Her jeans were not fitting her correctly and with a time crunch to get the video out in time

Figure 4

for the launch of the single, *“Heartbreaker”*, Carey took a pair of scissors on set according to an account and cut the waist of her jeans off so that they were a lower rise but fit better (Figure 5). This small and sporadic choice on the set of her music video filming made the project memorable and is now a look that is often associated with Carey, even years later (Fratti, 2017). This outfit with the DIY low-rise jeans became the go-to outfit for Carey while doing red carpet events and going on tour, quickly cementing this look as a popular early 2000s look for jeans. 2000s social media influencer Paris Hilton, credited Carey with the popularization of 2000s DIY projects and low-rise jeans saying in an interview with MTV stating “That (low rise jeans) was all Mariah, it is so hot how she cut them up it made me wanna try it at home...” (Fratti, 2017). This action by Carey went on to influence the popularization of both DIY and low-rise jeans. Although DIY being around decades before this, Carey was credited with contributing to the popularization of it, DIY grew exponentially in the next decade and in present day is still an extremely popular pastime for consumers of the denim market (Miller, 2012).

Another way Carey contributed to the growth in popularity of DIY is the album cover. Carey boasts a white crop top with a rainbow spray-painted over it. The rainbow spray painted on the crop top was done by Carey herself in an interview she went on to say she chose a rainbow in support of the LGBTQ+ community. Carey said that the rainbow can be worn by anyone of any gender and that women and men should dress however they want



Figure 5

regardless of their love life and gender. This statement became an integral part in Carey's support of the LGBTQ+, in addition to this she had male backup dancers wear this exact outfit for their stage outfit. She encouraged gender fluidity in fashion and although designers such as Alexander McQueen have launched collections around gender fluidity, celebrities such as David Bowie, Prince, Madonna have encouraged this in addition to Carey (Satenstein, 2021). This simple DIY of incorporating a rainbow onto her top and Carey's activism went on to become a supporting factor in tackling gender norms in the fashion industry. The importance of Carey contributing to the popularity of DIY is simple, celebrities doing "normal things" is something that easily causes trends since the reliability of the action is important, it brings a sense of humanity to a public figure that fans, and media idolize (Satenstein, 2021).

Low rise jeans went on to become an integral part of 2000s fashion and considered to be a piece of nostalgia that is being revisited in recent years. The creator of low-rise jeans is often credited to Alexander McQueen, however the popularization in mainstream media of low-rise jeans is often credited to Mariah Carey (Fratti, 2017). Although not her most memorable or critically acclaimed album, *Rainbow (1999)* went on to become one of Carey most influential culturally and in the fashion industry and is a prime example of how musician's album cycle can directly impact fashion and long-lasting trends that occur within the time of an album cycle.

Love. Angel. Music. Baby. by Gwen Stefani
(2004)



Gwen Stefani of “Hollaback Girl” fame originated from the



Figure 6

band, No Doubt. The band was extremely popular and has sold millions of records worldwide. Stefani eventually

launched a solo career after her rapid growth in popularity as an artist. Stefani launched her 2004 debut album titled *Love. Angel. Music. Baby. (2004)* with massive success, spawning multiple hit singles such as “*Whatcha Waiting For*”, “*Bubble Pop Electric*”, “*Harajuku Girls*”

and more (Figure 6). It quickly became one of the most defining bodies of work from the 2000s decade and is often associated as the quintessential 2000s pop album with the signature electric-pop sound with an RnB twist. This album went on to impact fashion and multiple trends directly and indirectly in both positive and negative ways (Ledbetter, 2017).

Stefani wore a plethora of 2000's fashion in her music videos and red-carpet events. She wore low rise jeans, spaghetti strap tops, multiple layers, oversized reflective shades and barrettes as an outer layer or top as some of the most notable pieces Stefani contributed to the popularization of. Because of these looks in music videos and red-carpet events, this

Figure 7 album cycle is one of the most notable from the 2000's due to its significant contribution to 2000's fashion and culture from that decade. The current resurgence of 2000s fashion in 2021 is very reminiscent of multiple Gwen Stefani looks from her album cycle (Figure 7). Stefani along with other artists like Aaliyah, Missy Elliot, Paris Hilton, and Mariah Carey are often considered blueprints for 2000s fashion in multiple ways due to how they embodied every trend set, Stefani being the most notable (Ledbetter, 2017). This album cycle also had a distinct sound to it sonically and emanated the genre of pop the 2000s were centered around, which is often associated to the culture and therefore fashion of the 2000s, it serves as a perfect time capsule according to Rolling Stone of everything to do with the decade it was made in from the songs, the fashion and controversy (Ledbetter, 2017).

In addition to all the praise this album has received for its significant contribution to music, pop culture, and fashion, it also received a fair amount of controversy that also links the album negatively with the darker sides of the decade it was created in. Stefani had multiple hit singles on this album, a notable single titled *“Harajuku Girls”* (Figure 8) has been heavily criticized with cultural appropriation in the aesthetic and fashion of the music video (Henderson, 2021). The song and video featured lyrics that fetishize Japanese women and Japanese fashion. Stefani would wear kimonos, hair sticks and Japanese hair brooches during some red carpet events and was called out for cultural appropriation instead of appreciation (Henderson, 2021). In addition to this, Stefani also had 4 Asian Women follow her around in revealing forms of traditional Japanese clothing such as kimonos (Matlow, 2007). She would refer to them as Love, Angel, Music and Baby like the name of the album. They could not



Figure 8

talk unless given permission by Stefani and had to act overly stereotypical during red carpet events. This directly and negatively impact 2000s fashion and the fashion industry (Henderson, 2021). Being one of the more notable forms of

blatant cultural appropriation, Stefani became a catalyst for appropriation in Japanese and Asian fashion (Matlow, 2007). Notable celebrities and brands that have contributed to Japanese cultural appropriation include Katy Perry, Avril Lavigne, H&M, Topshop, and

Victoria's Secret. Considering the impact of *Love. Angel. Music. Baby. (2004)*, it is important to keep in consideration the positive and negative impacts the relationship album cycles and fashion share and how they affect each other (Thompson, 2018).

Fallen By Evanescence (2003)

Evanescence is a goth core punk-rock band formed in Arkansas in 1995. Evanescence has gone on to be a huge and culturally significant band to fans of goth core or punk-rock music and have gone on to inspire multiple bands such as Paramore, My Chemical Romance and Fall Out Boy (Allaire, 2021). Evanescence went on to win multiple Grammy's including "best new artist" and album of the year for their first debut project under their new label Wind-Up Records.

Their debut album *Fallen (2003)* is regarded as the quintessential goth core and punk rock album of the 2000s (Figure 9). This album directly and indirectly contributed to the growth of the revival of goth and punk fashion during the 2000s. The classic tropes and trends from the punk movement back in the 70s which included distressed clothing, abstract hairstyles, the use of leather, combat boots, androgynous makeup and fishnet stockings were all brought back in the 2000s by multiple



Figure 9



Figure 10

bands, most notably Evanescence (Allaire, 2021). During their album cycle for *Fallen* (2003), Evanescence wore all the classic trends from the 70s punk movement with a goth twist on it (Figure 10). This all tied in very well to the aesthetic of Evanescence and their music which included influences of grunge, metal, scream-o and with some elements of pop, made the album extremely popular and the mainstream face of punk rock for the 2000s (Clancy, 2021). Since their music was still considered punk but more digestible than other bands, the music, aesthetic, and style were enjoyed by listeners who were not previously fans of that genre. Their music became directly correlated with punk fashion and even contributed to the mainstream rebirth of emo and emo fashion (Allaire, 2021). Emo fashion and emo music is a subgenre of punk fashion and punk music but with a softer aesthetic than punk. Emo fashion became extremely mainstream in the 2000s due to the popularization made by Evanescence's unique style and music (Clancy, 2021).

Evanescence had their fair share of controversy. They used a lot of religious imagery in their music videos and performances and often wore the crucifix as jewelry (Allaire, 2021). The use of the crucifix is nothing new in fashion however due to the bands mainstream popularity it got media coverage as crucifix and religious symbols on jewelry started to

become more mainstream in fashion. The band directly contributed to the conversation of what is appropriate in fine jewelry and how religion plays a role in fashion (Bartkowski, 2014). Although Madonna started this conversation in the earlier parts of her career, Evanescence contributed to the conversation of religious imagery used in fashion in the 2000s. The action of performing with religious symbols on jewelry by a mainstream group was considered taboo at the time since the use of religious symbols and imagery as a fashion accessory was becoming a mainstream conversation that is still currently being debated today (Bartkowski, 2014).

The Fame Monster by Lady Gaga (2009)

Stefani Germanotta, better known by her stage name Lady Gaga cemented her name in both the music and fashion industry in the late 2000s with her debut album *The Fame* (2008), which later was rereleased as *The Fame Monster* (2009) a year later (Figure 11). The album received critical acclaim as a beautiful blend of dance pop with an experimental element. The album also spawned multiple top hits including “*Just Dance*”, “*PokerFace*” and “*Bad Romance*”² of which have been certified diamond (Iddon, 2017). Gaga has been notoriously linked to fashion and is one of the reasons why the everyday person would agree that fashion and music share a symbiotic and close relationship.



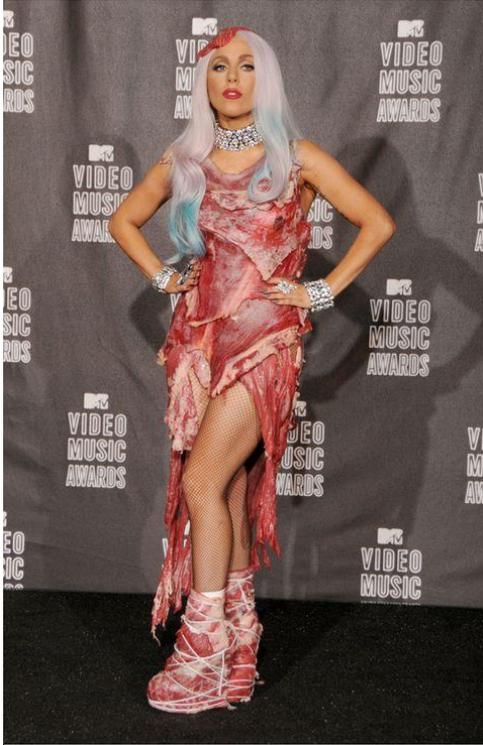


Figure 12

Gaga is one of the most recognized figures in pop music and in the entertainment industry. She is of the most notable artists that is sometimes recognized by her style and fashion more than her music and records. Her

Figure 11

performative exaggerated, and provocative fashion has gone on to influence other artists' album cycles more than the casual fashion market (Iddon, 2017). Gaga has done extremely performative and outlandish outfits in

relation to the album cycle of *The Fame Monster* (2009),

most notably she arrived to the VMAs in a dress made of meat, in a giant glass egg carried by her backup dancers for the Grammy's and even a dress made entirely of mirrors for the MNet awards in Tokyo (Newbold, 2021). These looks among a wide variety in Gaga's career have changed how media and fans of both fashion and music view the relationship between music and fashion. When a Lady Gaga album was released, the question that followed was "Did you see what Lady Gaga was wearing?" (Newbold, 2021). This allowed for designers and recording artists to capitalize off the success of Gaga and the publicity she received for her outlandish outfits and performances involving her fashion and style. Fashion became a vital tool for artists to use during their album cycles to generate public media attention and buzz for the upcoming project by the artist, in addition to showcasing a fashion designer's work.



Figure 13

Although mainly impacting pop culture and luxury fashion, Gaga has also greatly contributed to the normalization of androgynous and drag fashion (Iddon, 2017). At the 2010 MTV Music Awards, Gaga wore a black suit with dark under eyeshadow to emanate a man's complexion along with sideburns, a cigarette in hand with her hair tucked behind a short wig (Figure 13). She donned the alter ego "Jo Calderone" for the entire award show. This caused Gaga to be scrutinized and being called transgender and a cross dresser. This, in turn, contributed to the mainstream media's view on drag since it was a first time for a lot of viewers to see a straight cis-gender woman in drag (Newbold, 2021). This ensemble contributed to the normalization of drag and as a statement that drag was not an art form exclusive to the gay community or gay men specifically. In a 2021 interview with Paper Magazine, professional drag queen Ru Paul cited this as one of the most important and inspiring moments in which a celebrity has helped the drag community through fashion and expression. Lady Gaga is known as one of the most vocal celebrity supporters of the LGBTQ+ community and her fashion choices have supported and amplified this. *The Fame Monster (2009)* had so many notable moments that helped change the relationship between music and more specifically album cycles with fashion and how much of a cultural impact one simple outfit can do for the artist and the fashion industry.

Yeezus by Kanye West (2013)

Kanye West is one of the most celebrated rappers ever (Hughes, 2021). With multiple Grammy Awards and a massively successful high-end streetwear brand known as Yeezy he has been a large influence in hip hop culture, the music industry and in fashion (Hughes, 2021). With his 2013 project titled

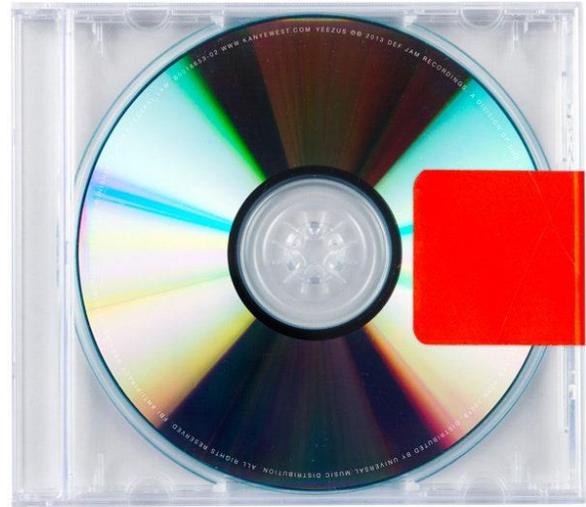


Figure 14

Yeezus (2013) (Figure 14), West directly affected the streetwear industry and created a sort of ripple effect that is still being felt in the present day (Byrd, 2017). West wore a multitude of outfits that all consisted of the same style and essentials that greatly impacted the market for athleisure and streetwear (Ferrier, 2018). West wore ripped shirts, chunky sneakers, simple baseball caps (now referred to as dad hats), baggy oversized jackets and trousers and mixed casual articles of clothing such as a hoodie with more formal articles of clothing such as a blazer (Figure 15-16). He is one of the main influences behind the drastic evolution of streetwear with a lot of the clothing being worn during this album cycle are all trends still mostly relevant in today's streetwear market (Byrd, 2017). West also started to wear streetwear items that were previously thought to be casual and not very high end, such as sweaters, hoodies, dad hats and ripped shirts. West contributed greatly to the shift of the market toward more athleisure and streetwear because of the growing popularity for casual basics (Ferrier, 2018). Champion, a brand previously associated with affordable athleisure,

being sold by large retailers such as Walmart and Sears, has since grown in cost from \$15 a sweater to upwards of \$70 for a basic sweater (Ferrier, 2018). Champion is one of many casual brands for basics that is also now sold in higher end retailers such as Bloomingdales, Neiman Marcus, and Nordstrom. Luxury brands such as Gucci and Louis Vuitton have also greatly expanded on their athleisure basics in response to the rise in popularity of streetwear, attributed to West, among others.

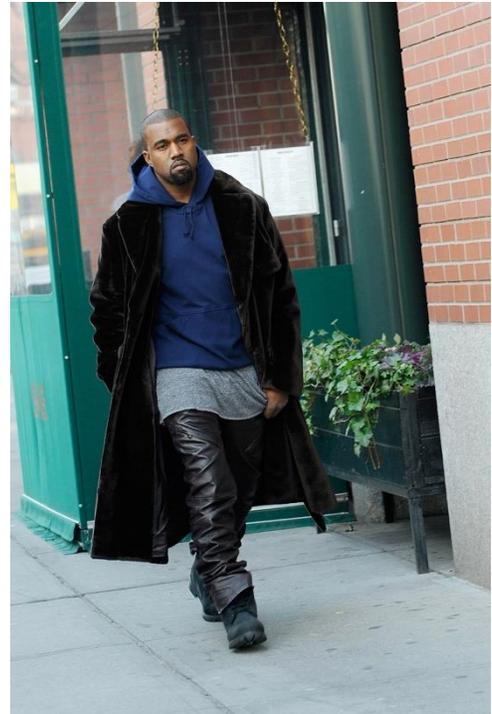


Figure 15

In the later part of his album cycle for *Yeezus* (2013), West unveiled his most notable and successful fashion venture to date: The Adidas Yeezy Boost, which changed the market for the footwear industry due to a change in production that has since been popularized (Hughes, 2021). This method of selling and production is called drop culture. This culture centers around the idea



Figure 16

of limited-edition items, mainly apparent in streetwear, more specifically, the footwear industry. Drop culture essentially gives consumers a date and time in which an online or physical store will be open for them to buy the product with a limited quantity, once sold out the product would rarely be restocked or in most cases would never be restocked. This

also affected the resell market greatly and changed how a lot of brand collaborations function, a great deal of which use the drop culture system. West did not invent drop culture; however, it is important to note that he did popularize it after the massive success of the launch of his Adidas Yeezy Boost sneakers which he did in the later parts of his album cycle to go along with the concept of his album which was inspired by architecture (Hughes, 2021). The Yeezy sneaker was also inspired by architecture, and often related to the album of *Yeezus (2013)* as a byproduct of his inspiration (Hughes, 2021).

Ultraviolence- Lana Del Rey (2014)

Lizzie Grant, also known by her stage name Lana Del Rey is an indie pop singer songwriter that is extremely celebrated in the music industry. Her work is described best by a 2014 Pitchfork Review as “Something out of old Hollywood that makes you want to slow dance forever in a feeling of nostalgia and reverence”. Her music is often described as an aesthetic and how she can transport the listener back to a more retro period of music with her soft vocals combined with orchestral instrumentals. Rey is often described as an artist that glamorized old Hollywood in her music with lyrics that make the listener feel like they are back in the 1940s and 1950s (Davis, 2017). Her music became extremely popular on social media sites such as Tumblr, Instagram, and Twitter due to her debut album

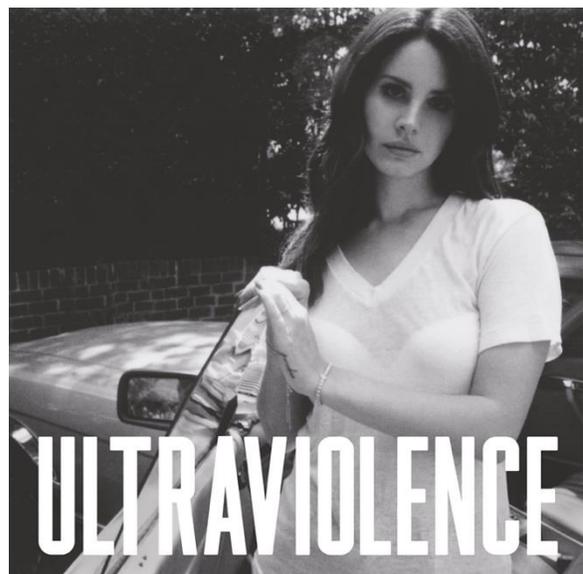


Figure 17

Born to Die (2010) released just a few years later. *Ultraviolence* (2014), her sophomore album (Figure 17) continued this trend of old Hollywood nostalgia by making music videos shot on an old analog film cameras featuring old cars, vintage fashion, and references to that period (Powers, 2019). Her music has since changed in storytelling but *Ultraviolence* (2014) heavily impacted social media fashion and the recreation of nostalgia in fashion. It has become one of the first albums to impact social media through its album cycle (Powers, 2019).

Rey's music from *Ultraviolence* (2014) was one of the first to cause trends online, most notably on Tumblr and Instagram, both video and music sharing apps centered around aesthetics and cohesive profile pages known as feeds. Users would replicate vintage fashion looks from the 1940s-1950s, most notably the old Hollywood look for women consisting of slim full body dresses, pearls, a mink coat, and a small coin purse. Male users would replicate the 1950s greaser aesthetic complete with black leather jackets, white cotton shirts, slim jeans, and biker boots and controversially cigarettes. Since Rey's music inspired an aesthetic online and users were quick to replicate the glamorized old Hollywood look, a cigarette was



Figure 18

a common accessory (Verduzco, 2020).

Rey's music caused users to want to embody that fashion aesthetic and teenage users would purchase cigarettes to replicate this since it was trending (Figure 18). Rey was criticized by parents for glamorizing things that should not be and promoting cigarettes as a fashion

accessory rather than drug (Davis, 2017). Rey was also criticized by animal rights activists known as PETA for her excessive use of fur and leather accessories in her videos and the negative impacts it could cause if the market for those items were to increase (Davis, 2017). Rey was also notably opposed to designer, early in her career, and made it known in her album cycles and red-carpet events with wearing affordable clothes and sharing her love of fast fashion. Being a rarity in the celebrity world by admitting this, Rey became known as a down to earth celebrity that promoted fast fashion over designer. Everything mentioned on creating an aesthetic through the fashion of Rey's videos was done on a smaller budget since Rey was a small indie artist at the time (Verduzco, 2020). Social media users would look up exactly where Rey purchased each item and managed to sell out a few items she used in the video multiple times after restocks (Powers, 2019). Most notably a white dress from Dillards, and a Leather Jacket from Topshop were sold out after multiple restocks. This is an example of how an album cycle can affect the popularity of a select number of pieces used during an album cycle for a recording artist.

Rey also continued Madonna's legacy with her use of an American white wedding dress in her music video for the title track "*Ultraviolence*". In the video, she received similar criticism to Madonna for her inappropriate use of the wedding dress



Figure 19

(Figure 19) (Davis, 2017). In the video, Rey is seen rolling on the ground, stripping, and tearing up the dress. Because of this and other artists such as Madonna and Britney Spears, she contributed to the image of the American wedding dress and how it is perceived in the media. Rey's second album *Ultraviolence* (2014) was one of the first albums to make old Hollywood feel nostalgic in music and she did so use fashion as one of her main tools. Rey capitalized on the aesthetic feel to *Ultraviolence* (2014) and fashion trends emerged to fit a certain theme or aesthetic. This was one of the first albums to provide and inspire a fashion aesthetic that social media relentlessly replicated with both positive and negative cultural impacts (Powers, 2019).

Emotion by Carly Rae Jepsen (2015)

Following her massively successful diamond certified single “*Call Me Maybe*”, Canadian singer songwriter Carly Rae Jepsen released her second studio album titled *Emotion*, better known as *Emotion* (2015). The album (Figure 20) was overlooked by many as just another generic pop album; however, this album was credited with indirectly starting a ripple effect in music that is also seen in fashion today (Murphy, 2018).

Critics praised the album for its original 80s synth pop sound with a disco twist, the album is an example of an album cycle that affected the fashion and music industry purely indirectly and nothing done during the album cycle by Jepsen



Figure 20

herself directly. The album and music videos were dedicated to its theme and consistent with keeping its 80s and 70s nostalgia as a key point to the aesthetic *Emotion (2015)* created during its release. The sophomore album of Jepsen unknowingly was a catalyst for a zeitgeist centered around 70s and 80s nostalgia in fashion and in music that dominated both industries toward the end of the 2010s and into the 2020s (Murphy, 2018). This album began the media's development toward a love of 70s and 80s nostalgia as an aesthetic. It was considered a blueprint by many and inspired countless collections from fast fashion brands such as Topshop, Urban Outfitters, Nike, and Old Navy, all of which have used songs from this album cycle in their advertising and commercials years later (Murphy, 2018). *Emotion (2015)*'s distinct retro pop sound was replicated by the likes of Dua Lipa with *Future Nostalgia* and Miley Cyrus with *Plastic Hearts* to massive success at the peak of the trend for 70s and 80s nostalgia.

In this same album cycle for *Emotion (2015)*, Jepsen later released a spin off single called "Cut to The Feeling" which was extremely impactful to the wig industry. In 2016, Jepsen launched this single for Pride Month and on its release, it created a massive social media trend. The trend consisted of a user lip syncing to the song while pulling off their wig



Figure 21

and dancing (Figure 21). According to a 2021 article by Arizton Advisory & Intelligence, it was extremely popular during Pride Month of that year and impacted the production and sales of wigs that year with sales being up by 1.8%

that year and 30% alone in June of 2016. In 2018 wigs were on the rise and made a massive comeback in casual fashion by influencers such as the Kardashian sisters. As they capitalized on the trend, Jepsen among other influences were recognized for being an early adopter to this resurgence in wigs and trends in relation to the wig industry. This is one of many examples of a social media challenge going viral and affecting another industry.



Like Lana Del Rey, Jepsen committed to a retro aesthetic by featuring all individuals in her music videos to wear vintage clothing that emanated the world she was trying to recreate from the 70s and 80s (Figure 22). Many saw this as Jepsen's minor attempt to recreate a retro or nostalgic feel with her music and music

Figure 22

videos. However, innovators and early adopters saw this as an early and slowly growing trend within both music, fashion, and lifestyle. Rolling Stone dubbed *Emotion (2015)* as one of the most important albums from the 2010's from its delayed impact culturally in elements such as music, fashion and makeup. *Emotion (2015)* has since been labeled as a subversive and innovative masterpiece culturally by critics and Jepsen's impact is still being felt in present day even in at the peak and at the laggard stages of this trend (Torres, 2019).

Wings By BTS (2016)

The Bangtan boys (translated from Korean) also known as BTS is a Korean boy band with a massive international fanbase called the BTS Army. Consisting of 7 members, this



Figure 23

Korean boy band broke onto the scene initially with their debut album *Skool Luv Affair* (2014), but it wasn't until their 2016 album release *Wings* (2016) (Figure 23) that they started to impact pop culture, music, and fashion greatly (Nittle, 2018). Their impact was direct since it revolved around the evolution of the streetwear industry like how Kanye West did with

Yeezus (2013). Although BTS debuted earlier, their 2016 album is what catapulted them into mainstream popularity internationally. *Wings* (2016) introduced BTS's signature music and fashion style to the Americas, parts of Europe and Australia. During this album cycle, BTS wore Korean streetwear which was a style not yet introduced outside of Korea, Japan, and parts of China (Baig, 2020). This style was like American streetwear however it featured men wearing makeup, abstract designs, more androgynous pieces such as skirts as well as crop tops and heavy amounts of jewelry (Figure 24-25).

The reason this was integrated into the American and European streetwear markets is for the massive popularity of BTS. All these qualities of Korean streetwear and more broadly Asian streetwear have been blended and integrated with the image and aesthetic of American streetwear that Kanye West helped form (Baig, 2020). Because of this it helped



Figure 24



Figure 25

usher in the normalization of foreign trends impacting American or local trends in the fashion industry in addition to promoting femininity in men's fashion (Nittle, 2018).

The BTS Army is often compared to "Beatlemania" which was the peak in popularity in the 1960s for British boy band The Beatles and resulted in airports being flooded upon their arrival to a country, albums being sold out and most notably the dedicated loyalty of their fanbase (Nittle, 2018).

The reason why this relates to BTS is that any items worn by BTS in their music videos *Wings (2016)* and other album cycles would sell out almost entirely regardless of the price (Kim, 2020). From designer Rick Owens shoes to Puma tracksuits BTS's fanbase has changed how celebrities get endorsements and sponsorships from fashion brands since the success of BTS. Brands often seek artists instead of simply being featured when it is a trending artist or one with an extremely loyal and large fan base like BTS. It reiterates the symbiotic relationship between the fashion and the music industry and how they contribute to the success to each other. This is one example since BTS can increase sales for certain pieces for fashion brands in a music video or YouTube vlog, BTS gains a portion of the identity for their album cycle to be distinguished from competing groups or albums (Baig, 2020).

Discussion

Album cycles and their importance in fashion, media and culture cannot be stressed enough. These 8 notable albums have all indirectly and directly birthed trends, significantly contributed to the Zeitgeist of their time, and overall contributed to the modern fashion industry in the present year and for years to come. Mariah Carey's 1999 album "*Rainbow*" cleverly popularized low-rise jeans and the art of DIY, which would go on to become a rapidly growing industry in art and fashion via social media. Gwen Stefani with her debut solo album "*Love. Angel. Music. Baby.*" had both positive and negative impacts on fashion. By popularizing many 2000s fashion trends and directly contributing to the normalization of cultural appropriation in music, fashion and many other aspects of pop culture, Stefani's debut solo album both significantly and negatively impacted fashion in various ways. Evanescence, Kanye West and BTS with their albums "*Fallen*", "*Yeezus*" and "*Wings*" all helped multiple genres of fashion grow and evolve. "*Fallen*" by Evanescence helped popularize goth and punk trends into mainstream fashion and contributed to the conversation about religious imagery in fashion such as a crucifix or pentagram for jewelry. "*Yeezus*" by Kanye West and "*Wings*" by BTS both changed the streetwear market for both men and women significantly. West's release of his album "*Yeezus*" integrated casual streetwear and athleisure wear into luxury streetwear. This changed the market for luxury clothing to include more casual streetwear and athleisure wear elements such as hoodies, chunky dad sneakers and sweatpants. Korean boyband BTS with their album "*Wings*" incorporated Korean fashion into American and other international fashion houses. BTS with this album cycle also helped set a trend for men's fashion and beauty with hints of

androgyny and makeup with their looks they wore on red carpet events, music videos and performances. Lady Gaga with her 2nd studio album *“The Fame Monster”* directly impacted celebrity and influencer fashion. Instead of creating a trend in casual fashion like other artists mentioned, Lady Gaga revolutionized how fashion and music can benefit off each other via fashion in album cycles. Lady Gaga proved how fashion gives an artist’s album cycle an identity and how other music artists would utilize fashion as a tool to make an album cycle more prominent and more distinguishable. This strengthened fashion’s already close relationship with the music industry. Carly Rae Jepsen and Lana Del Rey created an aesthetic which indirectly impacted the fashion industry with their albums *“Emotion”* and *“Ultraviolence”* which brought back fashion trends from the past and caused a resurgence in popularity. *“Emotion”* by Carly Rae Jepsen brought back 80s synthpop which indirectly caused a small and later massive resurgence in 80s trends in retail and social media. Both albums also impacted a separate industry outside of fashion. Jepsen’s commitment to this aesthetic contributed to the resurgence of 80s inspired attire for her live performances, music videos and red-carpet appearances. Jepsen’s album also impacted another industry, that being the wig industry through a social media challenge. Sales for wigs in that year had increased notably during the month of June during pride month. Lana del Rey’s sophomore album *“Ultraviolence”* created a 1950s old Hollywood greaser aesthetic that caused leather jackets, excessive use of denim and cigarettes to trend in popularity. Social media users and fans of Lana Del Rey yearned to recreate the style and aesthetic worn by Lana Del Rey in her music videos, red-carpet events and live performances, the resurgence of this style made a notable

comeback in retail and social media. The tobacco industry was also affected due to cigarettes rising in popularity as a fashion accessory. The relationship between music and fashion is shown in these various album cycles, as perfect examples of how fashion is impacted by music but more specifically by album cycles and musical eras.

Conclusion

Given these 8 album cycles as examples of the mutually symbiotic relationship between fashion and the music industry. Album cycles can directly and indirectly influence trends and contribute to the zeitgeist of a certain period. From Mariah Carey's direct impact by abruptly and spontaneously deciding to DIY cut her jeans into low rise jeans to Carly Rae Jepsen indirectly impacting the fashion industry and zeitgeist of the 2010s by releasing an 80s inspired album that helped start a trend in fashion for nostalgia. Fashion is impacted by a multitude of media that includes music. The music industry shares the rare and symbiotic relationship with fashion that allows for both industries to benefit off the other when the counterpart succeeds. The success of an album cycle has a cultural impact that is felt for years to come, not only for the music industry, but also for the modern fashion industry. This is seen by the Yeezys album cycle by Kanye West, an album that revolutionized streetwear and athleisure wear for both men and women. Since fashion and trends are born from changes in pop culture, when an album cycle succeeds it creates trends or contributes to a genre of clothing through impacting the zeitgeist of a period or year, that brands and designers capitalize from. This is how the music industry can benefit fashion. When fashion is implemented into an album cycle for example The Fame Monster by Lady Gaga, it gives the

album, the cycle and era an identity. This identity can contribute to an artists or albums success in the industry. This is how fashion can benefit music. With this clear and important symbiotic relationship supported by evidence, it is important for both the music industry and fashion industry to understand said relationship for both industries to continue to thrive and grow from each other. With the importance of the relationship between fashion and music, other media are also important to study. This includes fashion's relationship to film, television, social media, blogs, and YouTube vlogs. Media, more specifically music, in relation to fashion is a direct and indirect contributor to a multitude of trends from culture impact, the revolutionization of a genre or style of fashion, zeitgeist contribution in both positive and negative ways. In the words of recording artist Rihanna, for the benefit of both the fashion industry and music industry, “please, don’t stop the music”.