

Spring 2022

Comfort Food for the Ears: Exploring Nostalgic Trends in Popular Music of the Twenty-First Century

April K. Balay

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/etd>



Part of the [Music Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Balay, A. K.(2022). *Comfort Food for the Ears: Exploring Nostalgic Trends in Popular Music of the Twenty-First Century*. (Master's thesis). Retrieved from <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/etd/6619>

This Open Access Thesis is brought to you by Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact digres@mailbox.sc.edu.

COMFORT FOOD FOR THE EARS: EXPLORING NOSTALGIC TRENDS IN POPULAR
MUSIC OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

by

April K. Balay

Bachelor of Arts
Campbell University, 2017

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Music in

Music History

School of Music

University of South Carolina

2022

Accepted by:

Sarah Williams, Director of Thesis

Bruno Alcalde, Director of Thesis

Birgitta Johnson, Reader

Tracey L. Weldon, Interim Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

© Copyright by April K. Balay, 2022
All Rights Reserved.

ABSTRACT

This thesis will examine trends in twenty-first-century American popular music characterized by a sonority sometimes labeled “retro” or “vintage,” the production of which, I contend, often corresponds to periods of cultural upheaval, and social, political, and economic change. Engaging specifically with music produced during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, the economic recession of 2008, and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, my work will strive to update the dialogue between music in this century with the styles of the past that it recalls. By examining music beginning in the year 2001 and analyzing airplay charts and recording techniques, I make the case for a popular music culture that regularly depends on nostalgia in times of crisis to bring about a sense of comfort, in both altruistic and commercially profitable ways. I build on the work of music theory and musicology scholars including Kevin Holm-Hudson, who investigated sonic historiography in music with references to songs of the past (2002), and cultural historians like Svetlana Boym whose writings on nostalgia can help contextualize this particular musical trend. Though nostalgia is subjective and changes over time, it can be expressed and defined in communal ways that have not yet been explored, such as through popular music. Traumatic events can inspire acts of comfort, connection, altruism, and nostalgia for a simpler time; however, this thesis will also question the music industry’s commercial motivations for “comfort” music and its role during times of uncertainty and upheaval.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	iii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Need for the Study and Existing Research	4
Methodology: Design and Procedures	7
Organization and Chapter Outline	9
Limitations	10
Chapter 2: Analysis of Case Studies	11
Alicia Keys, “Fallin’”: Nostalgic Sentimentality.....	12
Amy Winehouse, “Rehab”: Subversive Revivalism.....	22
Doja Cat, “Say So”: Nostalgic Trojan Horse.....	31
Chapter 3: Conclusion and Final Thoughts	43
Nostalgic Sentimentality: 2001-2002	44
Subversive Revivalism: 2006-2008	49
Nostalgic Trojan Horse: 2019-present.....	53
Conclusion	56
References.....	63

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Inhaling warm cinnamon, taking a bite of apple pie, and making snickerdoodle cookies in the kitchen are just some of the sounds and smells that instantly take me back to days at my grandmother's house, from the ages of five to ten. Baking is something held sacred in my family and connects me exclusively to the maternal side when I had little to none on my father's side. Raised by a single, widowed mother, her parents, were a present fixture in my young life. Weekday afternoons and Saturdays spent at their house are some of my deepest memories. I can instantly return to those days with just a little time spent in the kitchen, resulting in a sweet reward. In that same sense, the syrupy sweet instrumentals, the upbeat hits of the Forties and Fifties, and wonderous stylings of a symphonic orchestra from my grandparents' five-disc CD changer, the music I heard during that time does something similar for me

Trends come and go, often inspired by the cultural events of the day, and music is no exception. Every twenty years or so, you can find the youth or influencers of the day revisiting the past of their parents, often in their own musical pasts as a child, and by doing so, help recreate the fond and not so fond memories that can be remembered through music. Whether it be in recreating a popular fashion style in the bins of the thrift store, restoring a rusty car to its days of glory, or listening to vinyl records, there is always something about the past that makes it worth revisiting. Collective cultural and mental crises can especially help dredge up these memories, creating a "before" and

“after” within our timelines. By dividing our time into these separate periods of naivety and safety, the “before”, and uncertainty and potential danger, the “after”, this can result in a need for a coping mechanism through the form of something familiar as we try to slow down and simplify our lives in the midst of all that is going on around us.¹ When we feel attacked or uncomfortable mentally or physically, turning back to our past can help us fill a missing piece, act as a pillar to lean on, a blanket of comfort, or a warm embrace from someone we trust. Being able to soothe ourselves and return to a regular rhythm, much like when we were babies, is an act of self-sufficiency that we have developed from our earliest moments, whether we remember it or not. Our brains have no sense of time, so when we are triggered by certain sounds, environments, and images, almost unconsciously, we try to take ourselves back to a time when we were comforted, doing whatever it takes to “rock” ourselves back into a sense of normalcy, often through the use of “transitional objects,” such as fashion, clothes, movies, or music, nostalgia serving as an “emotional pacifier.”²

Nostalgia is a familiar feeling usually associated with positive emotions. Deriving from the Greek, “nostos” to return home, and “algia” longing, we can attribute feelings of nostalgia as points of return.³ Historically regarded as a type of disease that needed to be

¹ Campoamor, Danielle. “Why We Reach for Nostalgia in Times of Crisis.” *The New York Times*, July 28, 2020, sec. Smarter Living.

² Campoamor, D.

³ Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001). See also Routledge, Clay, Tim Wildschut, Constantine Sedikides, and Jacob Juhl. “Nostalgia as a Resource for Psychological Health and Well-Being: Nostalgia and Psychological Health.” *Social and personality psychology compass* 7, no. 11 (2013): 808–818.; FioRito, Taylor A., and Clay Routledge. “Is Nostalgia a Past or Future-Oriented Experience? Affective, Behavioral, Social Cognitive, and Neuroscientific Evidence.” *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (2020): 1133. ;“The Nostalgia Bone from Throughline.” *Invisibilia*. NPR, December 9, 2021.

eradicated in soldiers far from home, its primary cure was to send the person experiencing this dramatic change in mood, back to their homeland. By the nineteenth century, though not yet regarded in its most current definition, nostalgia evolved from an incurable illness to represent a reconnaissance of past trends presented in a new form, through art, fashion, literature, and especially music, giving way to the romantic period.⁴ As has been previously mentioned, these waves or cycles of nostalgia that appear in mainstream culture seem to occur most drastically after times of collective traumatic upheaval.

Whether it is an image, film, advertisement, video, style of clothing, colloquial phrase, or song, you can become a time traveler, going back to the time and place, at least in your mind, to this particular memory. Technology has made this easier than ever before. Without much effort, a nostalgic experience can occur through the magic of music streaming, a flick of the radio dial, and turning on the television or your internet-ready device. However, the act of indulging in nostalgia can be both reflective and restorative. Restorative nostalgia focuses on rebuilding the past and filling in the missing pieces.⁵ Reflective nostalgia lingers in the past, “longing and loss” and the “savoring” of certain details specific to one’s individual memory.⁶

Music meets at the crossroads of nostalgia, both in the act of rebuilding and striving to encapsulate certain details or feelings, making it especially useful in aiding in

⁴ Tanner, Grafton. *The Hours Have Lost Their Clock: The Politics of Nostalgia*. United States: Watkins Media, 2021.

⁵ Boym, 40.

⁶ Boym, 49.

self-comfort in moments of crisis or upheaval.⁷ Through images, production techniques, as well as direct marketing, nostalgia can directly funnel the sounds of yesterday into becoming the sounds of today. Music can especially evoke emotional reactions and nostalgia is a large part of this. Nostalgic music or lyrics can also act as an “esthetic surrogate” to social interaction, allowing those listening to feel connected to others without being in the same vicinity, as well as more optimistic in general.⁸ Using this methodological frame informed by the work of cultural historian Svetlana Boym and other scholarship on collective memory and nostalgia, I will investigate three moments of crisis in which musical nostalgia is used by the general audience of mainstream popular music as comfort food, a crutch, or a tool to soothe the worries and stresses that come in times of collective distress.

Need for Study and Existing Research

Due to the nature and timeliness of this study’s content, there is no substantial published scholarship about the popular music of 2020-2021. These studies, however, will perhaps emerge in the next five to ten years. Even with that consideration, there is

⁷ Davidson, Jane W. and Garrido, Sandra. *Music, Nostalgia and Memory: Historical and Psychological Perspectives*. Germany: Springer International Publishing, 2019. See also Barrett, Frederick S, Kevin J Grimm, Richard W Robins, Tim Wildschut, Constantine Sedikides, and Petr Janata. “Music-Evoked Nostalgia: Affect, Memory, and Personality.” *Emotion* (Washington, D.C.) 10, no. 3 (2010): 390–403. Hailemariam Kebede Gelgile. “Nostalgia Marketing: Examining Music Retromania.” *Consumer Behavior Review* 5, no. 2 (2021): 232–242.; *Resounding Pasts: Essays in Literature, Popular Music, and Cultural Memory*. United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020.

⁸ Sedikides, Constantine, Joost Leunissen, and Tim Wildschut. “The Psychological Benefits of Music-Evoked Nostalgia.” *Psychology of music* (2021)

much work that has been done examining the role nostalgia plays in all musical periods and styles. Studies that include a focus on popular music and nostalgic references seem to center around the rock of the Sixties, Seventies, and Eighties, notably in the work of Kevin Holm-Hudson, whose work will be used as a structure for the chapters that follow.⁹ Holm-Hudson's use of sonic historiography is not a technique typically applied to the area of popular music, thus there are not many discourses that bring the music of the twenty-first century into mind. Similarly, many studies that focus on music and trauma center around war veterans and victims of abuse that suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, as a means to disengage from battlefield memories and experiences that have forever marked them to be unconsciously triggered by everyday life activities.¹⁰

Nostalgia as a cultural concept is a limited field of study, focusing more on aspects of experiences with nostalgia in an overly broad sense and associated with the fields of social sciences and psychology. One must choose very carefully what should be included in a discussion on nostalgia, due to the subjectivity of individual experiences and memories, whether traumatic or reassuring. A landmark work in this field is cultural historian Svetlana Boym's *The Future of Nostalgia*, which takes the reader through the experiences and musings of a displaced immigrant longing for home at the turn of the twenty-first century and the nostalgic moments she encounters, as a way to explain

⁹ Holm-Hudson, Kevin. "The Future Is Now ... And Then: Sonic Historiography in Post-1960s Rock." *Genre* (Norman, Okla.) 34, no. 3-4 (2001): 243–264.

¹⁰ Winfrey, Oprah, and Bruce D. Perry, *What Happened to You?: Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing* (Flatiron Books: An Oprah Book. New York. 2021). See also *Music, Collective Memory, Trauma, and Nostalgia in European Cinema After the Second World War* (United States: Taylor & Francis, 2019).; Daughtry, J. Martin, *Listening to War: Sound, Music, Trauma, and Survival in Wartime Iraq* (Oxford University Press, New York. 2015).

nostalgia and connect it to the life of the average citizen in a very thoughtful and non-biased way.¹¹ Current music industry magazines such as *Rolling Stone* and *Billboard* also offer similar perspectives on chart-topping music as well as insight into the minds of the artists creating it. If we are to better understand the popular music of today that can take listeners back to the past, as well as create a future nostalgia for younger audiences, there is a need for interdisciplinary research that combines all of the aforementioned areas. Additionally, it will broaden the available literature in popular music and nostalgic trends that are present in times of collective cultural upheaval.

This analytical study will aim to show how artists and recording engineers consciously strive to recreate the sounds and instrumentation of the past, which associates certain recording techniques and musical effects that can evoke musical nostalgia in popular music, especially in times of cultural upheaval and crisis. I will focus on particularly critical periods from an American perspective: the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the economic recession beginning December 2007, and the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in 2020.

In moments of crisis, the tendency arises to turn to sentimental tokens that remind people of better days; with music, this becomes even more accessible than ever before. With curated, organized, and repurposed sonic references that are re-woven in artistic and expressive ways, music that can take the listener back in time may be considerably marketable and can appeal to all ages. With little to no knowledge of the references being made, someone listening to Amy Winehouse in 2007 or The Weeknd in 2020 can still

¹¹ Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: (Basic Books, 2008).

appreciate the processes that came before to influence the sounds of the present.¹² By incorporating these sounds into the music of the future, we can learn more about the music of our past and appreciate where we came from, thus continuing the cycle of nostalgia for audiences of the future. Therefore, music markets can be widened to include anyone who has a taste for music that is integrated with the sounds of the past. Several processes will be used to achieve and show evidence of past musical influences on the music of the present, especially in specific moments of cultural upheaval.

Methodology: Design and Procedures

Evidentiary support for this thesis will be gleaned from a catalog of instrumentation, studio techniques, vocal styles, and effects in listening to songs chosen from the *Billboard* Hot 100 based on their long-term presence on the chart six months before and after the events that occurred on September 11, 2001, in December 2007 and the months following, and March 2020. Case studies will include selections of three to four songs that call attention to specific production and musical techniques, as well as the technological evolution of how music was recorded and distributed over the last twenty years. Explored characteristics of these selections will include but are not limited to the use of reverb, live recordings versus studio-recorded and layering, samples of older songs or sound effects, expanding recording on two tracks up to sixty, the transition to computer editing audio programs, and the role of musician becoming producer and songwriter all in one. Listening will focus on the above-mentioned elements, but especially those that feature a sonic reference to the past, whether lyrically or instrumentally.

¹² *MEL Magazine*. "The Teens Who Listen to 'Mallwave' Are Nostalgic for an Experience They've Never Had," January 30, 2019.

Popular songs tend to chart on the *Billboard* Hot 100 as well as the genre chart that best represents the style of music that the song resembles or what the artist typically produces. For example, Drake shows up on the main chart as well as the rap and R&B, which could imply the importance of investigating various genre categories aside from pop. In this study, song choices will not reflect genre, but comparisons will briefly note and include information on where songs charted on their particular genre chart and the main chart. Another essential element that must be discussed is how streaming and recent technologies have affected a song's popularity. By comparing songs popular in the age of the CD versus those that debuted after the introduction of digital distribution, an imbalance can be found in the number of times streamed, units sold or played on the radio according to the Recording Industry Association of America's list of gold and platinum certifications. Other research questions include, but are not limited to:

- 1) What part of this song makes it feel nostalgic? (Lyrics, instrumentation, recording technique, visual representation, etc.)
- 2) Does this song fit in with other songs associated with its genre? (form, timbre, rhythm, textual themes, instrumentation, etc.)
- 3) What sounds have been added as a part of the story that is trying to be told?
 - a) Do these songs especially help create a sense of nostalgia? What inspired the use in the song?
- 4) Is there a direct reference or association to another song, artist, or period?
- 5) Is this song part of a larger concept or a standalone piece?
- 6) How did this song perform on the *Billboard* Top 100 and other similar airplay and sales charts?

Organization and Chapter Outline

This brief study will consist of song case studies derived from the music produced surrounding the events of September 11, 2001, the economic recession beginning in December 2007, and the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in March 2020, with three to four songs from each era, followed by a reflection of the effects that nostalgia has on the creation popular music, regardless of decade or crisis inspired motivation, as well as the commercial approach to marketing such music. Chapter two will contain these studies organized chronologically. An observation and a brief overview of each decade's technologies, marketing, followed by nostalgic or retro-inspired examples from each of the chosen songs in addition to similar works released within the same timeline. Examples from nine to twelve songs will be curated with attention to certain characteristics that bring about nostalgic, or "retro" sounds reminiscent of popular music's past, particularly from the Sixties, Seventies, and Eighties, such as in their instrumentation, recording techniques, overall style, or lyrics. Only songs that have charted or remained on the *Billboard* Hot 100 and similar charts for an extended period, i.e., six weeks or more, will be a part of consideration. Comparison of the chosen songs on varying levels of nostalgia and potential areas for comfort concerning their specific time period, presence on the charts, and means of listening will also be explored. The case studies will be done only with the songs that are chosen, creating a small-scale set of observations on music that inclines towards nostalgia in various eras of collective upheaval. Each case study in chapter two will be analyzed with attention to their respective recording techniques, inclusion and knowledge of past works, and chart success in comparison with its predecessor, with acknowledgment of the changes in the

digital and physical product distributed over the past sixty years of popular music, as well as different marketing strategies. Chapter three will compare and contrast the data presented in the three case studies examined in the previous chapter. Information presented in this chapter will suggest and hypothesize that there is a correlation between nostalgically inclined music, based on the noted characteristics in chapter two, and collective traumatic experiences. These observations will also provide insight into and recommend that further action be taken in each of the interdisciplinary areas, popular music, nostalgia, and trauma studies in order to expand potential study topics. There will be a brief conclusion chapter that reflects on possible marketing influences and motivations for creating music that purposely draws on the influences of the past, as well as posing more questions that can further extend this research.

Limitations

The limitations of doing a project that involves current and trending artists means that there may only be certain critical perspectives available as artists are still working and actively performing. The field of trauma studies, while being used as a reference to nostalgic musical responses, is also a limited area of research concerning the proposed topic since these studies are often not written with musical applications in mind. The project will only be focusing on three to four songs from each era, presenting only a small representative sample; however, this limitation opens up opportunities to expand in the future, perhaps allowing for a focus on more moments of crisis. This project will also be completed from an American perspective only and will not account for times of upheaval and nostalgic trends in other countries; once again, this is another area for expansion in the future.

CHAPTER 2

ANALYSIS OF CASE STUDIES

Life in the United States before the events of September 11, 2001 was a world much different than the life we know now, but just like in these pandemic times, many can remember a before and after. Musically speaking, the period before September 11, 2001, was a murky transition between the Nineties and the Aughts, especially for those that can remember a before: Hip-hop, R&B, and rap were flourishing and could finally start to stand on their own; boy-bands (and girl-groups) were at their peak and record companies strove to create the next best pop obsession; reality talent shows like American Idol were still in the works, soon to become a staple of mainstream television as ways of finding new talent. Even after the events that traumatized our nation on that fateful September day, music consumption and creation went on, like it always does. But the ways we would respond would become a point of contention that still affects how we perceive national crisis today and stay in the minds of those looking for consolation. And the music we would engage within the “before” would take hold in the “after,” for better or worse. This chapter will chart how three songs, Alicia Keys’ “Fallin,” Amy Winehouse’s “Rehab,” and Doja Cat’s “Say So” illustrate three different “nostalgic” responses to crisis and subsequent instability created by the events on September 11. Each song uses a different technique and kind of nostalgia to get their general message of the song across, “Fallin” through sentimental irony, “Rehab” a revival of the past

through controversial means, or “Say So” using nostalgia as a Trojan horse to appeal to new listeners.

Alicia Keys, “Fallin”’: Nostalgic Sentimentality

Did you ever get involved in a relationship, platonic or romantic, that you consistently think about how it affected or still affects you today? Do you still wallow in its possibilities if only certain things had gone the way you wanted them to? You might still be involved in this relationship, maybe not even by choice. Are there pictures or videos that instantly take you back to times in the relationship that seemed good at the time? Can you spend hours going through these artifacts of the past, reliving each documented moment? Were things really the way you remember them? Probably not. You most likely have taken the pieces that most affected you and stored them away with positive or negative connotations, so that when something reminds you of this time in your life, such as a song, smell, piece of clothing, you are instantly taken back to that time. Perhaps because of this relationship and the things you encountered because of it, you base future decisions on that experience. Has that past relationship ever stopped you from getting where you want to go? Are you more hesitant about certain opportunities because you are stuck in the past? Is there any part of living in the past that you can use restoratively or reflexively? How do you choose to use any part of your “past” to live in the present?

Released as a part of her debut album, *Songs in A Minor*, Alicia Keys’ “Fallin’” immediately gives the impression of pure, untainted soul, but sneaks in a classical feel with a solo piano playing Chopin-inspired arpeggios. The song appears quite simple at first, with little to no instrumentation, apart from solo voice, piano, backing vocals,

plucked string motifs, and drum set. There is not an obvious reference to nostalgia here, but the backing vocals that accompany Keys specifically call back to a gospel tradition. As the song progresses, more layers of instrumentation and texture are added, doubling many, if not all, of the instruments already included. The piano's slow repeated chords may also remind some of the piano and other instrumental lessons taken as children, and the composers and performers they once aspired to be like, providing a naïve sentimentality in listening to this song.

The song is in verse-chorus form, though very ambiguous with slight changes between each section. The only difference between the first verse and later verses is the call for attention from the first line, "I keep on fallin' in." This line is done in a virtuosic vocal style, in a way that only Keys herself could do, improvising a downwards melodic pattern on the word, "in," which leaves room for artistic freedom in live performances, something Keys would be later known for. The other element of simplicity in this song is the use of only two chords, E minor and B flat minor, which can be easily heard in the piano, easily allowing for the layering of textures later. "Fallin'" also takes inspiration from James Brown's 1966 classic, "It's A Man's Man's Man's World," particularly in rhythm and general groove. The two songs use similar piano, string, and drum kit backings.

This album was released on April 10, 2001 and stayed in the minds of the general public for the rest of the year and would be remembered as the number two song of the year as well. "Fallin'" was the lead single off the album, but not without struggle. Keys' style was, probably because of her classical background and training, and is very suited to the stage and was thought to not be very suited for the radio at the time of this song's

release. Keys was told at the time that her song “didn’t fit into any specific genres or any radio stations because it was too slow for some and too soulful for others. They also pointed out that the tempo was different, and that there was “no reason” why it would work because it didn’t follow any formulas.”¹³ It took an act of Oprah, with the influence of record producer and A&R executive Clive Davis, to get Alicia’s name and her music out there. Alicia began composing the songs that would become *Songs in A Minor* around the age of fourteen and was signed to Columbia Records at the age of fifteen. Columbia was not able to give Keys the freedom she wanted and needed to be able to create on her own. After an encounter with Davis, she made plans to negotiate her contract and move to Arista Records, and eventually moved to his own label, J Records. With these logistical changes, Alicia was able to make the debut album she had always wanted and was listed as a producer at the age of twenty.

Switching between two minor chords for the arpeggios used throughout “Fallin’” gives the listener the impression of falling, whether in and out of love, like the song says, or falling in and out of love with the idea that all the heartbreak was worth keeping a relationship alive. As we look to our own “past” while living in the present, we can relate the lyrics and music for “Fallin’” to the act of revisiting a scrapbook of memories, all frozen in time. The layering of musical textures as the song goes on adds to the guilt that asks why we should even be revisiting these memories or second-guessing them, but also to the complicated nature of traveling back to a past of your own construction while

¹³ Schiller, Rebecca. “Alicia Keys Says Everyone Originally Told Her ‘Fallin’ Would Never Work: Watch.” *Billboard* (blog), December 6, 2019. <https://www.billboard.com/music/pop/alicia-keys-shares-fallin-memories-video-8545153/>.

making decisions for the future. Hesitating between two chords for the entirety of the song, “Fallin’” can come to represent the constant internal battle we face when thinking about how to approach certain memories. We become sentimental but hold a sense of irony because we begin to second-guess whether these moments should be remembered in the same way they always have, or be forgotten because they were not always good moments. Returning to the past in our sentimental nostalgia, we hope to have the same kind of naivety that we did back then, before anything could change, even though we know now what we didn’t then and would have a unique perspective of everything that took place. By continuing to redefine what happened in our past, we participate in a nostalgia that doesn’t restore but forces us to reflect and decide about how we will use our past experiences to make different choices or continue to fall into the rose-colored or black and white past. These actions are made more clear in the music video for “Fallin’,” as we see that Alicia acts on both reflective and restorative nostalgia in order to make sense of her feelings for her estranged partner.

Similar to other songs released during this time, the use of light instrumentation and building of layers in “Fallin’” allows for its ironic sentimentality to shine through, giving space for listeners to create a narrative from what little structure is presented. “Thank You” by Dido, released in 2000, is also simplistic in style and features little instrumentation, with a consistent loop throughout the piece. The lyrics, like “Fallin’,” are also reflective of the past, thinking nothing can compare to when they were with their lover or object of affection. “Foolish” released in 2002 by Ashanti, additionally reflects on the past, thinking on an abusive relationship over a sample of a previously recorded

song, DeBarge’s “Stay with Me” (1983) as well as including elements from “One More Chance (Remix)” (1995) by The Notorious B.I.G. and “M.V.P.” (1995) by Big L.

The music video for this song flashes before your eyes, with its quick changes and vague imagery, not unlike when you are remembering particular memories. The beginning features a radio playing another song from the album, “Girlfriend,” connecting “Fallin’” to a larger story to be seen through the music videos and setting the stage for the story to be told in this video. A hand switches off the radio and we see Keys at a piano, doing the song’s signature vocal riff, just before she begins to play. We see her at the piano for the first part of the first verse, as the words, “Sometimes I feel good,” we see her walking down a street in New York, in contemporary attire and it switches back to the Alicia at the piano for the lyric “at times I feel used” (See table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Scene by scene analysis of “Fallin’” music video with adjacent lyrics

<p>Verse 1: I keep on fallin' in And outta love with you Sometimes I love ya, sometimes you make me blue</p>	
<p>Sometimes I feel good, at times I feel used Lovin' you, darlin', makes me so confused</p>	

<p>[Verse 2] Oh, oh, I never felt this way How do you give me so much pleasure And cause me so much pain? (Yeah, yeah)</p>	
<p>Just when I think I've taken more than would a fool I start fallin' back in love with you</p>	

She continues in this way until the next iteration of the chorus and the scene changes back and forth from her walk down the street, and we see her singing as she walks as well. The next part of the story begins as she starts the second verse and Alicia, that has been walking down the street, gets on a bus. The bus she gets on looks older and it travels through the countryside as Alicia leans against a window to sing, “How do you give you so much pleasure, and cause me so much pain?” We can see mostly women and children on this bus, but we have not been told where this bus is going yet. With the words “I've taken more than would a fool” we see Keys dressed in a different contemporary outfit, with a pile of Polaroids on the floor, as she throws a picture towards the camera. As the next chorus begins, the camera switches back and forth between the scene with pictures on the floor and a close-up of Alicia at the piano. As this last chorus ends, the camera focuses on the photo that Alicia threw earlier, showing a man with a smile on his face.

A bridge section begins, and we return to Alicia singing on the bus, briefly switching to Alicia at the piano, and we see a new scene, related to our story. The music drastically changes at this point, as more vocals are added and the volume increases. Women in orange prison jumpsuits are seen working in a field, watched over by a man with a shotgun, as Alicia vocally riffs. We see a corrections bus, and the women watch the bus from the city travel down the road and one sheds a single tear. The women in the field take the place of the invisible backup singers, acting as a warning, as the song returns to the chorus and the camera switches between the various versions of Alicia. The next scene shows Alicia getting off the bus at a prison-like structure. She enters the prison, going through the mandatory procedures to enter, standing with other women there to visit. The man from the Polaroid is seen with a phone receiver in hand, as Alicia appears on the other end. This relationship is still intact for the time being, but could change at any moment, as Alicia appears to still be supportive of the man behind bars.

The video itself is fairly representative of the early 2000s period, with quick transitions between story and singer, and no particular film style, except for a kind of glow around the edges of the frame. There are a few visually nostalgic references in “Fallin” which give subtle evidence to the musical style throughout the song. The grand piano Alicia is playing on throughout the video, resides in a room that contains a traditional fireplace, encased in a wood carving, similar to something you might see in an older New York apartment can feel nostalgic in the way you specifically remember your grandpa’s easy chair that you never got to sit in. The bus that Alicia takes is reminiscent of one seen anytime from the Forties through the Sixties, taking the viewer to the set of a movie in black and white, while representing a past that was established before this

relationship. She is traveling back to the past to see the one that she is thinking about and restore the time and good memories they had spent together. She is traveling in a vehicle that now represents the difference between the now and then, where she perhaps did not have to take such a sojourn in order to see the one she misses.

In another scene, Alicia is surrounded by what looks to be hundreds of iconic Polaroid photos, reliving her memories while focusing on her unseen beau. These past places and times seen in the photos could be represented as reminiscent of the kind of love they had, simple with many layers of understanding, much like the music that makes up this song. Does she love him, or does she hate him? Does she have any regrets for getting involved with a man that we will soon find out has been imprisoned? Only our singer knows, but maybe not, and that is the message of this song. Can we only reflect on the good times in our past and scrub clean all that has been done wrong? Or do we take it all in, regardless of any circumstance, mentally, physically, or emotionally? Nostalgia helps with this, for good or for worse. It is our choice in how we decide to use it, reflectively, returning to the past within a photograph or restoratively, by actively seeking out the source of our nostalgia or memories to see if it still holds up the same way it looks in the picture that has been glorified in our minds.

Think back to where you were on 9/11 if you can. Were you, like everyone around the television, watching the events unfold? Or did you see the aftereffects much later in the day, with continuous coverage of those burning and smoking towers, with huge clouds surrounding them? These video clips resurface every year that passes that day, with the children that were not yet born learning only of this event in school, alongside the physical reminders that exist for those who were not there to experience the

horrors of the day for themselves. For some, those videos and pictures of dust-covered first-responders are the only connection to that time and place. If you were someone that experienced this event firsthand, I cannot imagine what kind of reactions you would have had, and perhaps still live with to this day. Do you have certain songs that connect to that day? Or do you try to avoid that kind of nostalgia that takes you back to a time when everything seemed so fragile? So many decisions that affect us now were made in that time of disruption. A child living on that day to see that disaster, if only on television, only has that kind of footage to process, affecting their perception of what really happened. If we only idolize what we had before, are we able to move on and into the future? Or can we find something that helps us move past it? Just as in “Fallin’,” we can look back to this time and decide how to react. “Nostalgia increases the importance people assign to relationship goals, intentions to pursue the goal of connecting with friends, and the desire to resolve a relationship problem.”¹⁴ Her character’s choice to visit her boyfriend in prison was probably not derived of a choice of her own doing but could have been influenced by her complicated relationship status with her partner and nostalgia for their past memories together. We can also speculate with the knowledge of how the prison system works that this is not an uncommon scene or story to be told in a music video created in 2001, or today in 2022. But it only provides one side of the story, the one that Alicia wants you to see, perhaps hiding from herself the complicated nature of falling in and out of love with this man. Feeling sad, lonely, or meaningless could have

¹⁴ Abeyta, Andrew A., Clay Routledge, and Jacob Juhl. "Looking back to move forward: Nostalgia as a psychological resource for promoting relationship goals and overcoming relationship challenges." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 109, no. 6 (2015): 1029.

triggered Alicia's character's nostalgic trip down memory lane and to the prison.¹⁵ By deciding to engage with this nostalgia, she is trying to improve her mood and her overall well-being, helping her future self in the process.

Much like the way the average American's worldview changed that fateful day in September 2001, many of the ways we experience nostalgia are out of our control. In the moments that we choose to engage with specific memories, we are focused on the good things from those times. We don't think about the choices that were made to create those memories and associations, or why they have now become nostalgic. We long to keep those memories pure and untainted by any new information that can change the ways those memories can be defined. When we learn the backstory of a memory that we didn't know previously, or were not old enough to remember, our perspectives can change based on the way this backstory is presented. As we get older, move through relationships, experience the world changing around us, and make decisions for our own well-being, we tend to rely on the way we originally experienced something in order to preserve what we feel to be the best representation of the moment, even if we had no control over what was happening or were shaded from the whole "truth" of the moment. By taking a look at why we remember things a certain way can help us decide whether our most cherished or tarnished memories can be used restoratively or reflectively, or better yet, seen for what they actually represent to us in the here and now in order to make future decisions

¹⁵ Routledge, Clay, Tim Wildschut, Constantine Sedikides, and Jacob Juhl. "Nostalgia as a resource for psychological health and well-being." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 7, no. 11 (2013): 808-818.

Amy Winehouse, “Rehab”: Subversive Revivalism

Have you ever been to a place that exists simultaneously in the past and the present? When I was younger, one of my favorite places to visit at the mall was the fye store. There I could browse to my heart’s content a mass collection of CDs, DVDs, and collectibles that I would never get to buy since I did not have an allowance, physically sifting through the music and memories of the recent past. Once I was able to buy my own CDs, the stand-alone music store no longer existed the way I wanted it to. I was relegated to buying my music from places like Target, Walmart, or Barnes & Noble, big chains that did not specialize in anything, but everything. I have only been able to truly recreate this memory by visiting record stores, physically sifting through a different past that somehow feels more authentic. Why do you think that is?

One of the last years I was able to truly go CD hunting at the fye store, 2007, began like any other year. Calculated moves made beginning in 2005, in the hopes of improving mortgage loan rates, had already quietly set the ball in motion for a series of changes that would leave lasting effects on the global and local economy for years to come. But musically, it was a time of change and of refocusing on what the public was interested in. Respect for the past began to make its regularly scheduled creep into the present. Recreations of eras gone by through new appreciation for vinyl, older fashions made into new styles, and embodied by hipsters, defined by their clothes and taste in older, somehow more obscure music and films, could be seen just about everywhere.

Accompanied by the Dap-Kings, a group that helped revitalize mid-Sixties to mid-Seventies style funk and soul music, Amy Winehouse’s song “Rehab” follows the basic form and production of the past, with particular focus on a blues melody echoing

the sounds of Motown, Stax Records, the “Wall of Sound” production technique developed by producer Phil Spector, and contemporaries. The form is an altered ABABA, beginning with a chorus that we hear several times. "Rehab," is just one of the many examples of how the music of the 2000s would come to embody the music of a bygone era. From her stage persona, the way she dressed, and the overall mood that is established when the two are put together, there is no denying her musical influence. By recreating both the look and sound of a young Ronnie Spector as well as Shirley Bassey and Mari Wilson, while also incorporating the look of pin-up girls. Because she is performing in the year 2006, there are some luxuries afforded to her that a songstress of the Sixties never could have taken advantage of. Amy could sing about drugs while publicly considering going to rehabilitative therapy. She had a choice in how she presented herself, with hair piled on top of her head, covered in tattoos, and six-inch heels, if she so chooses. With a voice and style that reminds her audience of the past, she comes across as an old soul for the new millennium.

Produced and co-written by producer Mark Ronson and Winehouse, there is little to deny that this song, as well as the rest of the album that it is featured on, *Back to Black*, was curated with feelings of nostalgia for a past, one that was specific to Amy Winehouse’s own timeline. This song was originally released as the lead single from the album in the United Kingdom in 2006 and entered the UK Singles Chart at number nineteen, based on downloads alone. The song did not enter the *Billboard* Hot 100 until March 31, 2007, without an official single release. Following Winehouse's live performance of the song at the MTV Movie Awards on June 3, 2007, the song suddenly jumped thirty-eight spots to number ten on the chart ending the week of June 23rd

partially due to digital sales. A remix featuring Jay-Z also helped to move the song up several places. It peaked at number nine on the *Billboard* Hot 100 the following week, ending June 30, 2007.

The introduction of the song begins with the chorus and includes a Wurlitzer, piano, drum kit, handclaps, chimes, and background vocals. Each of these elements pays homage to the past. Wurlitzer keyboards and organs provide a very specific sound, think of Marvin Gaye's 1966 track, "I Heard It Through the Grapevine," Aretha Franklin's 1967 single, "I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Love You), and Supertramp's 1979 album, *Breakfast in America*, particularly "The Logical Song" and "Goodbye Stranger." As the song progresses, more instrumentation is added, including a brass section, saxophones, and additional emphasis on the vocals and drum kit as well. The drum kit maintains a rhythm and blues ostinato backbeat throughout, adding improvisatory riffs as needed. The song follows an altered 16-bar blues form, beginning in C major, specifically in the chorus. For the verses, a few common blues alterations are made, keeping with the style, and giving a sense of anticipation, not sounding like a separate section, but acting as a transition back to the chorus. The section beginning with "I didn't get a lot in class," and augmenting the basic blues style with a chord transition of V7/vi-vi-IV-iv6-V7-IV, could be determined as a bridge. This is because of the transition back to the main chords used in the chorus at the beginning, as well as a move to a sustained note from the main instruments, which move into a sort of fanfare when the return to the chorus begins.

The use of chimes or vibraphone is also a feature of the verses, giving the words used a type of sentimentality, at the end of each line, except for the last. Each time we hear the bells, they are lower in volume than the last, with more emphasis on the

instruments surrounding them, fading into the back. This can be interpreted as a signal that Amy, who is being forced to go to rehab, is saying goodbye to the past she once knew, and will eventually give into getting help. It could also be the opposite, and she will continue to give in to what makes her feel better, and will only ever listen to herself, letting the voices around her fade into black. “I’d rather be at home with Ray,” a reference to Ray Charles is one instance, after “I ain’t got seventy days,” as well as “Cause there’s nothing, there’s nothing you can teach me,” for the first verse. The last line of the first verse, “That I can’t learn from Mr. Hathaway,” is a reference to soul singer Donny Hathaway, but is not followed by the chimes as before. The pattern of the bells occurs in the second verse for the last time but with more emphasis on swelling strings than before, another sign of sentimentality, or an echo of the past, first after “The man said, “Why do you think you here?” and “I’m gonna, I’m gonna lose my baby.” The emphasis on a strings section gets louder and louder as the song continues and remains that way until the very end.

“Rehab’s” direct connection and recreation of the past, specifically the mid-Sixties R&B and pop is an example of subversive revivalism. The choices made to implicitly sound like this era, from the instrument choices, the recording environment, the simplicity of the blues style, to Winehouse’s delivery of vocals all work to create an a-near-perfect replica. What makes this different is the person creating this sonic representation of the past. Amy Winehouse was a woman that was not afraid to show all her weaknesses, but the ones that stood out the most were the ones related to addiction and substance abuse, the ones that were seen to be the most emphasized by her choice of romantic partners. Now, that isn’t drastically different from the blues and jazz singers of

the past, who were often riddled with these types of personal issues, thinking of Billie Holiday, or Etta James. This subversion continues, particularly in the depiction of tattoos on her small, frail frame, but also in her shyness and lack of interest in collaboration yet need to speak up when she felt the need to; all battle scars of the life she lived growing up in a rough part of London as a child of divorced parents. Her human problems were out on display, subject to criticism, but available as a way to connect with her and her music. The subversive revivalism continued to flourish in the pop music of the late 2000s, especially in their imagery and presentation. Katy Perry's 2008 single, "I Kissed a Girl," as well as her general image, was depicted as a retro-tinged fantasy, leaning towards new wave and disco musicality, but promoting an awareness of the LGBT community. Coldplay's 2008 single, "Viva la Vida," or "Long Live Life," is styled with a Baroque pop sonority¹⁶, itself a hybrid genre, accompanied by strings, synthesizers, and was inspired by a Frieda Kahlo painting of the same name. Kahlo struggled with health issues her entire life but chose to claim life as she suffered. Coldplay's musical version plays into this idea, but as a revolutionary story that goes along with the story being told on its respective album, *Viva La Vida (Or Death and All His Friends)*. Much of the culture surrounding the world's economic problems of the time was looking for a way to co-exist with its past, but as was originally experienced, even if just through crumbs. By choosing to fully engage with a present that only exists by recreation, you are choosing to ignore the problems of today or are forcing the two to coexist and mold themselves around the

¹⁶ Baroque pop, also known as chamber pop, is defined as blending rock with elements of classical music, using harpsichords, flutes, string quartets, Bach-inspired melodies, and Gregorian chants (Jackson, Andrew Grant. *1965: The Most Revolutionary Year in Music*. United States: St. Martin's Publishing Group, 2015.)

other, hybridizing into something that is new, but very specifically old. By engaging in subversive revivalism, performers and listeners simultaneously exist in both the past and present. While purposely trying to recreate an experience that helps themselves and their audience escape, they can be considered subversive in striving to relive an experience they can only imitate.

The addition of a music video to “Rehab” does not add much more context to the text and story being told in this song but contradicts the message of the song. Not filmed with any particular specifications, attention to fashion, or time period, the coloring of the video appears grayish. It opens on Winehouse’s face, singing the song, surrounded by members of the Dap-Kings, playing in an average apartment. The Dap-Kings are in varying styles of pajamas, blending into the background as they play their instruments.

One of the band members that is responsible for the handclaps, could remind one of Donny Hathaway, though probably unintentionally; this Dap King member wears a beret instead of Hathaway’s signature apple cap and accompanied by a blue bathrobe. The next time we hear the chorus, Amy and the band have moved to the steps outside the apartment, a classic brownstone. Amy has also changed outfits, anticipating the move to a rehab facility. Her traveling outfit is in the style of a coat dress, belonging to both the past and present.



Figure 2.1 Donny Hathaway (L) in his apple cap and his “Rehab” video lookalike(R) in a beret

Amy is next seen in an office, with a director of a rehabilitation facility, feet on the desk, wearing a different outfit than before, projecting more of a bad girl persona. She wears a leather jacket, with a bikini top, accompanied by red pumps. Her hair is also put up, more in the style of a Ronette, though not a beehive. It moves to one final scene, as Amy sits on a bed in the outfit from the beginning of the video, in a white-tiled room in a hospital setting, the very place that Amy has been rebelling against for the entirety of the song. This type of scene is familiar in popular culture, especially in hospital-based dramas and movies. This scene appears on the words, as a part of the last pre-chorus, "It's not just my pride. It's just until these tears have dried," a reference to another song on the *Back to Black* album, "Tears Dry On Their Own," which samples the Motown classic, "Ain't No Mountain High Enough." This last line before the chorus serves as an excuse for the addictive behavior she has been engaging in, outside of performing this song, but also sheds a light on the inexpressive face she presents throughout the video. It is as if she knows what her fate will be, regardless of what she wants for herself; she will end up going to rehab eventually.

In "Rehab," as well as many of the songs featured on *Back to Black*, Amy has presented a nostalgia of her own creation. When she wrote this album, she had recently lost her grandmother, a strong musical and personal influence on her life, which was believed to be the reason she began drinking and using drugs more heavily.¹⁷ Her ex-boyfriend at the time and future husband had also temporarily left her to pursue an ex-girlfriend. With these personal issues affecting her state of mind, she utilized the style

¹⁷ Sandall, Robert (27 July 2008). "Can Amy Winehouse be saved?". *The Sunday Times Magazine*.

and sound of her past to cushion this dizzying present. This song came about very naturally with producer and collaborator, Mark Ronson. They were spending time together one day and she said the opening line of the song, “They tried to make me go to rehab and I said no, no, no” causally. Ronson was inspired by this and wanted to make it into a song. Less than half an hour later, Winehouse had written the song. This song was released in 2006, an entire year before the Great Recession of 2008 began but did not creep into mainstream radio play until early 2007. This song could have stayed in the minds of those most affected by the Recession because they wanted to go back before everything changed, or in relation to the song, not wanting to admit there was a financial problem.¹⁸ “Rehab” being in the style it is, creates a new bubble of nostalgia, reshaping the past into the music we know and love today.

When we listen to music from the past, we are hardly ever experiencing it the way it was originally heard. With the magic of technology, we can instantly transport ourselves sonically back in time. But is it authentic? There are key differences. The audio quality has drastically changed over the last fifty years. The fashions have flip-flopped back and forth. The music, however, has remained timeless. Why is that and why have we consistently reinvented ourselves for the purpose of listening to the same (kind of) music over and over? How can we coexist with the past and present, while still allowing for new interpretations? The same way you put up with your grandmother’s ramblings about how things used to be better in the “old days” and your younger cousin’s obsession

¹⁸ After peaking on the *Billboard* Hot 100 in the summer of 2007, the “Rehab” did not appear on any US charts again until 2011, after the news of the singer’s death became public. However, the song remained a staple on the UK charts well into 2008 and was also awarded five Grammys, three of them specifically for “Rehab,”: Record of the Year, Song of the Year, and Best Female Pop Vocal Performance.

with recreating dances from TikTok. Subversive revivalism is one of the only ways we can “preserve” the timelessness of the past, which may or may not exist in our own memories. Whether or not it is your “past,” it can become your future. Does this diminish the work of past creators and performers? No, but some will see it that way because they are engaging in a different nostalgia, shaped by their own experiences. Honoring what they have done for us, even if there is some element of subversion, gives us another way to use nostalgia, for good or for bad. As long as we are aware of what kind of revivalism we are participating in, subversive or not, we can use music that echoes the past to help shape the future.

One of the building blocks of nostalgia, revivalism is consistent throughout time, and is the first thing the general public looks for upon exiting and entering new time periods, as a way to “look back and look forward” to decide how it affected the past in order to better recreate it for the future, or disregard it completely the next time around. Though we can never recreate something down to the last thread and vintage guitar string, we continue towards making the past better for the future. Does it make us feel better to return to something we once enjoyed the first time around? Perhaps by returning to something that brings us comfort, by putting ourselves in the roles of our heroes, we can escape for just a little while, and maybe in the meantime, bring comfort to others like us, who are also struggling? By engaging in our own acts of subversive realism, we help to “self-soothe” ourselves through restorative nostalgia.

Doja Cat, “Say So”: Nostalgic Trojan Horse

Do you remember where you were circa January 2020, sitting in your car, searching for a radio channel to settle on, when you heard a fuzzy low volume groove, reminiscent of something you couldn't quite put your finger on? This was before the world completely changed and heavy suspicion rose in the air. The United States as a nation had perhaps not endured the surprising tragedy of NBA star Kobe Bryant's death, the fires across Australia had not yet begun, and we had begun to wonder if we should be worried about those first Coronavirus pneumonia cases found in China. Blissfully ignorant of these events soon to come on this regular January day, you wonder if you are going through a place of bad radio connection, or have suddenly switched to the AM frequency, when suddenly you are inundated with a full volume version of what you have just heard, complete with funk guitar and thumping bass, and leading to breathy vocals, also a reminder of someone familiar. Is this the music of today, tomorrow, or yesterday? And were you deceived, even if for just a moment?

Both for the single and respective music video, Doja Cat's “Say So” begins with the sonic sequence that has just been described, using a curated filter to give listeners a taste of what is to come. The filter, a simple setting on any digital audio workspace, samples the loop that will feature prominently throughout the song, but makes it sound as though it were coming over the radio with a bad signal. The filter focuses on and pulls out the timbre of the funk guitar and snare hits, at least until the filter fades into the full volume of the song's main loop. The song's form, distinctly recalling any song from the

Fifties onwards¹⁹, is different than the usual verse-chorus style. “Say So” begins with a chorus that repeats twice, goes into a verse, back to the chorus that repeats, goes to a second verse, repeats the chorus twice more, and finishes with a dance chorus-like section that uses the same effects as the beginning, compressing the sound out as we finish out the song as it began. By using a funk guitar, with accompanying bass following a simple pattern, syncopated handclaps as an ostinato throughout the song, “Say So” has a feel reminiscent of CHIC and Nile Rodgers’ “Good Times” from their 1979 record, *Risque*. Whether you are familiar with the Seventies disco and funk scene, or not, there is something that draws you into this song, produced and released in 2019.

This song was produced and co-written by Dr. Luke, of Kesha notoriety²⁰, as well as Doja Cat, also known as Amala Dlamini, and her manager Lydia Asrat. The tempo remains at 111 BPM, great for dancing, listening, expertly deceiving your perception of the song, except for one crucial part, to be discussed later. A remix with Nicki Minaj contributing a rap verse was one of the driving forces behind making this song the top of the charts. On its own the solo version did very well, debuting at the ninety-fifth position January 2020 then moving up to number thirty-three after the release of its music video by March, and with the influence of the Minaj remix, made it to number one by mid-June, where it spent six weeks.

¹⁹ Other songs with a chorus lead-in: Big Momma Thornton, “Hound Dog” (1953), Chubby Checkers, “The Twist” (1960), CHIC, “Le Freak” (1978), Paul McCartney & Stevie Wonder, “Ebony and Ivory” (1982), Brandy & Monica, “The Boy is Mine” (1998), and Ashanti, “Foolish” (2002)

²⁰ Grow, Kory. “Kesha Sues Dr. Luke for Sexual Assault and Battery.” *Rolling Stone* (blog), October 14, 2014.

“Say So” is introduced through a filter that compresses the sounds we will hear throughout, giving it that AM radio feel, mainly guitar-focused, and has an echo effect as well, until it transitions to full volume and the rest of the instruments can be heard. This section of the song acts as an introduction before Doja Cat begins singing what will become the chorus in breathy vocals that evoke Donna Summers, think “Love To Love You Baby,” from 1975 or Anita Ward, “Ring My Bell” from 1979. The second iteration of the chorus features some ad-libbing in a very ethereal, soulful way, floating behind the main vocals. The chorus gives the overall message of the song: “I saw you looking at me from over there, why didn’t you say anything? I’m down for whatever you are, just make a move.” This chorus was also the focus of a viral TikTok dance trend, another aspect of the song’s popularity, which was also featured in the song’s music video. The funk and disco-inspired instrumental occurs throughout, but the emphasis on the guitar fades into the background, with the synths taking their place once Doja Cat begins her vocal, still in the pop vocal style, vocally very sweet and innocent, with lyrics that follow the general theme of the chorus, up until the end of the verse. The emphasis on guitar returns for the chorus and it plays as before.

If we listen to the beginning of this song, one could easily place this song within the disco trend of the early Seventies, which infiltrated every part of popular culture of the time; It could be particularly seen in the fashion styles that emerged, music technologies that grew to accommodate the length and new sounds of a disco single, as well as the focus of many films made during the decade. The simplicity of the instrumentation and the style of vocals transport the listener, most likely born well after 1979, unknowingly back to a time that they probably didn’t experience but could feel a

sort of nostalgia for a different, seemingly better time. By specifically designing the first half of this song to represent a specific era sonically, we have been introduced to the technique that I will call the “nostalgic Trojan Horse.”

Just as the Greek army prepared to invade the city of Troy by hiding inside a gift wooden horse at the end of the Trojan War, Doja Cat, like many artists creating music for the pop arena in late 2019 and early 2020, began crafting works that sonically reference specific musical moments from the past but packaged as brand new. The Weeknd did this with nearly an entire album, *After Hours*, released in 2020, and continues the narrative focus with even his latest release, *Dawn FM*, released 2022. *After Hours* centers around a storyline based on excess, bad decisions, and blind love which would go on to produce the current, as the current all-time Hot 100 chart shows²¹, top-selling song of all time, “Blinding Lights,” a close homage to A-ha’s 1985 release “Take On Me.” As the music is heard under the guise of the sonic landscape of the Eighties, with synthesizers, drum machines, and heavy bass lines, in the accompanying music video and subsequent live performances, The Weeknd appears in a red suit, reminiscent of Michael Jackson’s 1982 hit, “Thriller” and shot music videos echoing the horror movies of the same era. Here is where the nostalgic Trojan horse appears. With the use of this technique, we can be led to believe that, at first listen, the music created by artists such as Doja Cat, The Weeknd, Dua Lipa (*Future Nostalgia*, “Don’t Start Now”)²², Harry Styles, (*Fine Line*, “Adore

²¹ *Billboard*. “Greatest of All Time Hot 100 Songs,” November 12, 2015.

²² Dua Lipa’s *Future Nostalgia* came out at the height of initial lockdown in early 2020 and is centered around nostalgia for the club life of the Seventies and Eighties. “Don’t Start Now,” specifically uses instrumentation that sounds like it could have been played in the discos during that time, such as funk bass, fade-in and out, handclaps, cowbell, synth bursts, accented Kontakt Session Strings, sub-bass, laser weapon sound effects.

You,")²³ hold a sonic imprint of the past. Even with the knowledge that these songs are recent releases, there is no denying that these songs were crafted to sound and conjure specific cultural memories of the past, whether through style, instrumentation, lyrics, or delivery of the work. By acting as nostalgic Trojan Horses, designed elements of these songs take hold in connecting and grabbing your attention until they reach a certain point in the song, revealing themselves for what they truly are, and come back to the future. Before you realize it, you've got music you can connect to that isn't from your immediate past, yet it feels like it does somehow, and there's no way to deny that there is something in the song that you gravitate towards unless you are unable to ignore its most relevant elements.

Since this musical experience has been presented in a cozy, familiar way, a la Trojan Horse, younger listeners that never experienced the decades being honored musically are being fooled into a nostalgia that was never theirs. Through the exposure of songs that harness the sonic power of a "past," these types of songs have a root in their life's soundtrack, providing the foundation for future nostalgia that is inclusive of all past music regardless of when the song was created. Because these songs both incorporate the past and present, how can we deny that there isn't something calculated about the promotion of such music? Is the interpolation of the greatest hits of our past a means to return to a better era, one with different struggles, "simpler" ones, before any of the

²³ Much like Doja Cat's funk inspired "Say So," Styles invokes the use of a live band sound creating an intimate feeling, including backup singers with ethereal "float" in "Adore You," funk guitar and bass that also features on many of the other songs on *Fine Line*.

hardships of this millennium were experienced? Is that applicable when marketing to listeners that have no recollection? Or can they live vicariously without this knowledge?

This depiction of the Seventies, an era beloved by so many,²⁴ is further exaggerated by its depiction through music video. Within these first few seconds of the “Say So” video, we see the artist in Seventies’ appropriate clothing and hairstyles. She first appears in a halter-back dress in woven material, with platform heels, pigtails, a feather in her hair, and hoop earrings. When she begins to sing the chorus, she appears in a shimmery, almost translucent, body-conforming dress, reminiscent of Marilyn Monroe’s dress worn during her 1962 performance of “Happy Birthday Mr. President,” with a smooth, flipped out “Farrah Fawcett” blowout, matching hairband, and blue eyeshadow to match. This opening scene also includes important time setting props and characters, as we can see extras featured in the video also dressed in period-appropriate wear, knee-high go-go boots, bright colors, as well as records on the floor, and a stereo repairman, complete with an afro and red jumpsuit. When we move to Doja Cat’s place by the pool, as she moves her arms, we see an animation of colors, very psychedelic with a specific nod to the era we are now visiting. All of the above concurs with the introduction of the song and the sound of the radio tuning in. The sound becomes full volume when we see Doja Cat by the pool, singing the chorus. At the beginning of the

²⁴ Neither Doja Cat nor her main audience would not have experienced this era, herself only being born in 1995.

See also: “Americans Say the 1970s and 1980s Were the Best Music Decades | YouGov.” Accessed March 30, 2022. <https://today.yougov.com/topics/entertainment/articles-reports/2021/06/16/best-decade-for-music-americans-poll-data.>; Larkin, Bob “25 Reasons We’re Glad We Grew Up in the ’70s.” Best Life, September 10, 2020. <https://bestlifeonline.com/we-love-70s/>.

chorus, our visual narrative continues and switches back and forth between Doja Cat the character, and Doja Cat the singer. As we make our way through the chorus, we begin to see the story unfold. Doja Cat's character begins to take an interest in the stereo repairman and begins flirting with him in various physical ways, through dancing in front of him and acting coy from her place on the floor with her friends as they look through records and magazines. With this depiction of Doja Cat as a typical girl in the Seventies, all seems the same as in the past, but because we are making this video in 2020, there is a different stance taken. Doja Cat becomes more than just a girl trying to get a man's attention and takes control of what might be considered the man's stance in instigating a new relationship. The Seventies were an era that still held some of the same values as the decade before, and women were not a central part of the public scene. But the women of this era wanted to change all that, and by creating the women's liberation movement and making the same kinds of life choices that their male contemporaries made. Disco culture placed women in a role of desire and lust, often hitting the dance floor in outfits only designed for two things dancing and showing off their assets, while still allowing them to be independent and powerful. Doja Cat plays into these expectations, but only because she is in control of the narrative and will eventually show an even stronger stance with the introduction of her next verse.

When we enter the second verse, singer Doja Cat has become rapper Doja Cat, incorporating an explicit take on the whole encounter and adding an element that does not go with the nostalgic feel of the track but fits with Doja Cat's style overall. Only slipping back into the pop star persona for a few lines, Doja Cat maintains the rap for the entire verse, sounding very similar to Minaj in her flow style. Just as in the previous verse, an

emphasis is placed on the guitar and synths in its place. The chorus returns as before, with the full instrumentation and vocal style that characterizes this song. After the second chorus repeats, the song continues using the same instrumentation as in the chorus as Doja Cat vocalizes a few “mms” “ahs” and “uhhs” to further suggest the possible explicit nature of the song. Our high pass compressed filter returns to conclude the song as it began. Comparing this song alongside its music video gives even more context to the musical image that is being presented by Doja Cat and fully places this song in the past, despite the many versions that the artist presented in live performances of the song, including science-fiction, Broadway, metal, and horror concepts. Within the first ten seconds of this video, which is filmed with a 4x3 crop, we are presented with a video quality or filter that is very grainy, almost rose-colored that gives a location for this video, showing the viewers archival footage of the intersection of Hollywood Boulevard and Vine, immediately placing this song anywhere from 1962-1980, before major changes were made to the city’s street signs. ²⁵

As the music becomes clearer, we are taken back to the present, with the camera’s view also refocusing, showing us the house that is featured throughout the video. The featured house, indicative of the organic style of architecture in the Sixties and Seventies, is the Sheats-Goldstein Residence. This house was designed and built between 1961 and 1963 by American architect John Lautner in the Beverly Crest neighborhood of Los

²⁵ The Fader. “Super 8 Film Has Taken over Music Videos.” Accessed March 30, 2022. <https://www.thefader.com/2018/09/14/music-video-super-8-drake-in-my-feelings-beyonce>. Also: Rhodes, Phil. “This Super-8 Music Video Made a Big Hit with 5 Million Views in 5 Days.” Accessed March 30, 2022. <https://www.redsharknews.com/this-super-8-music-video-made-a-big-hit-with-5-million-views-in-5-days>.

Angeles, California, its cave-like structure overlooking the Hollywood Hills.²⁶ We can see this view throughout the video when Doja Cat stands by the pool and patio that extends this view. There are flickers of tape when the film transitions from the street scene to Doja Cat and others featured in the house, moving back and forth between the grainy film and rose-colored sheen.

The last renditions of the chorus visually add to the story being told earlier, with our main character, now dressed in a pink and sequined jumpsuit, with a blond afro wig, and sunglasses, escorted by a tiger, into a discotheque, where repairman Tony has gathered with his friends. Some of the camerawork, perhaps post-editing magic, lets the dancing appear in stop-motion, another throwback. As our story continues, through the addition of a third chorus repeat, not originally in the recorded version, Tony makes a move, by starting a dance battle as a means to impress, leading the whole group in dancing, the dance we saw before, with some vintage moves, a la Saturday Night Fever from 1977 incorporated, including an emphasized group handclap fitting into the disco dance style.

This expression of nostalgia gives another aspect of Doja Cat's already very open personality, another side of the very odd and quirky public persona she presents. Always

²⁶ *Rap-Up*. "Doja Cat Goes Disco in 'Say So' Video." Accessed March 30, 2022. <https://www.rap-up.com/2020/02/27/doja-cat-say-so-video/>. Also: "James F. Goldstein › The Goldstein Residence." Accessed March 30, 2022. http://jamesfgoldstein.com/?page_id=881.; Stamberg, Susan. "This House Is A Work Of Art, So The Owner Is Donating It To A Museum." *NPR*, February 18, 2016, sec. Architecture. <https://www.npr.org/2016/02/18/464696418/this-house-is-a-work-of-art-so-the-owner-is-donating-it-to-a-museum>.

very candid when speaking about her work, she mentioned many times that this song from *Hot Pink* was her “favorite” and came about very naturally when she was “messing around” with some settings in a program at home. Speaking to MTV, after the video and song had shot up through the charts, Doja explained what it took to write “Say So”:

“When I got that beat, I went home and I locked myself in my room, and I was like: ‘Let me just open this up on Logic.’ I opened it up, I thought, I mumbled it, that’s how I began, and it just fell together really nicely, lyrically I feel like...I naturally write 70's kind of more vintage-y, funk-y music. I feel like that's kind of my bag, and I love it so much. It's really fun to make.”²⁷

She also went on to say that the production itself felt very “disco-y”²⁸ and the “uhuh uhuh uhuh” that are featured near the end of the song remind her specifically of the Seventies, and I can see why. The pieces of Seventies culture that filtered through the Nineties and 2000s, while kids like Doja Cat were growing up were full of such “sonic” references. Many of the films made for kids during that time were full of Seventies disco and pop classics on their soundtracks. One that specifically comes to mind is *An Extremely Goofy Movie*, released only on videocassette in 2000, that includes a full disco sequence to Peaches & Herb’s “Shake Your Groove Thing,” originally released in 1978, and a scene with a cover of Leo Sayer’s 1976 hit, “You Make Me Feel Like Dancing” as well as other Seventies cult classics. So, while the creation of this song may have been a direct result of restorative nostalgia on Doja Cat’s part, she had no idea that people would embrace it so readily.

²⁷ Doja Cat, “Doja Cat Reveals Her Songwriting Process for “Say So” - MTV PUSH” MTV video, 2.29. April 1, 2020. <https://www.mtv.com/video-clips/t9qqma/mtv-push-doja-cat-reveals-her-songwriting-process-for-say-so>

²⁸ “Boogie Oogie Oogie” by Taste of Honey (1978), “More More More” by Andrea True Connection (1976), “You Should Be Dancing” by Bee Gees (1976)

Think back to that January day in 2020 in the car with the radio on. You were probably going about your everyday life, perhaps going to work, running to the store, taking your kids to school. In less than two months, these daily routines would change. We would have to transition to working from home with online meetings and internet outages, wearing a mask to the grocery store, only to find empty shelves, and having to home school your children or have them teach themselves. Travel plans were put on hold, weddings and family gatherings were canceled and downscaled, and we could no longer visit our grandparents, especially at a time when they perhaps needed the comfort of their family the most. By March of 2020, the world was shut down, and the only glimmer of hope was that these drastic life changes that we now know as normal would end in time for Easter.

Because “Say So,” as well as others that use the “nostalgic Trojan Horse,” came out before the world would change, we can associate it as a song from the “before.” It can represent a time where things were different, perhaps better, though it sonically represents a different “before.” By being able to return to a different time, by listening to music that both reflectively and restoratively helps to distract, we can gain some sense of comfort, and make sense of this new normal that doesn’t seem to be going anywhere yet. The use of the “nostalgic Trojan Horse” has taken hold in the popular music of today and continues to flourish as the world stays the way that it is, but what does that mean for the future? Will there be a new sense of nostalgia, as today’s children and young people come of age? What will become of the older generations’ taste in music, and will they have new sources of musical nostalgia?

Being able to recognize a nostalgic Trojan horse within a popular song shows the familiarity and comfort one can have in returning to a musical past that can both be in their immediate past and the “past” of others. The sooner one can recognize a familiar sound and be able to connect it to a memory, good or bad, the sooner they can decide what purpose this song will best serve them, particularly if as a coping mechanism. In a time of crisis, the mind is not concerned with the time it takes to recover from such; it is focused protecting you and getting you to “safety,” whatever that means to you. A nostalgic Trojan horse can trick you into that “safety” as if you are listening to something familiar. Whether it can be used restoratively or reflexively is up to you, but also in the way that the artist has reshaped something from the past into something new.

No matter how or when it appears, whether it is done blatantly or subtly, all creative works will have an element of nostalgia involved in their creation. Nostalgia for the past of their parents and grandparents, nostalgia for the work of artistic heroes, or nostalgia for a future that hasn’t happened yet. The end result of these processes is evidence of how an artist decided to use this nostalgia for restorative or reflective means. The subtle homage to the past, with simple instrumentation or visually through a music video, as in “Fallin’,” can be just as effective as an (almost) complete recreation in “Rehab.” The outright deception of using a style that has already been successful, but combines the sound of the present, as in “Say So,” makes it very easy to connect to a past. By engaging in a state of mind that can either creep up behind us or be an intentional decision, musical nostalgia will always keep us trapped in its easy comforts. Each of these songs does that in one way or another. A different kind of nostalgia results from each of these, while firmly rooted in the popular culture of its origin.

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSION AND FINAL THOUGHTS

So, what is nostalgia? It's an emotion of intense longing for things lost. It's a yearning for a place you can't get back to because we are prisoners of the present. It's a longing for stability and autonomy after losing control. It's also a quiet reflection, a slight ache for the old days. Or it's an ironic pose dressed up in a graphic tee with the 1990s-era Chicago Bulls logo printed on it.²⁹

-Grafton Tanner, *The Hours Have Lost Their Clock*

In the previous chapter, I provided three case studies of three songs from the realm of popular music within three decades spanning the last twenty years of the twenty-first century, with the intent to highlight nostalgic landmarks and techniques that exist in the various visual and sonic aspects of specific popular songs and their respective artists. Nostalgia is complicated and hard to explain but can be more easily understood through music and the historical and cultural events that surround the origin of sensation. We can start to define it by associating any kind of nostalgia with our own experiences and what we associate with certain memories, but that only fits a small area of what we as humans experience nostalgically. Like trends that repeat and reinvent themselves through the decades, the definition of nostalgia is also forever in flux. An average listener can say that nostalgia exists in every aspect of creating, producing, and performing music in the

²⁹ Tanner, Grafton. *The Hours Have Lost Their Clock: The Politics of Nostalgia*. United States: Watkins Media, 2021. (44)

twenty-first century, but upon further examination, as I have done with these case studies, we can see that there is always an agenda behind every song with even the smallest reference to a past.

We can attempt to restore or revive what is lost in our minds and memories, but it will never truly regain the past. “Nostalgia is an ache of temporal distance and displacement...A modern nostalgic can be homesick and sick of home, at once.”³⁰ Through restorative nostalgia we can refresh and start anew as a collective, clearing the slate if only for the memories of the past that represent the best picture of what life was like. Musically this allows for revivalism to take hold and invoke the styles of the past in order to create a better future. In reflective nostalgia, we take more time to long for what has been long gone, focusing more inwards on the ironic and humorous bits and pieces of what makes up the smallest part of a memory. Musically, this can mean an oversimplification of elements that build up on top of each other, creating a disjointed, yet complete aural picture. Nostalgia can present itself within music as a number of things, not unlike the expressive feelings stirred in the romantic period or the sounds of folk music from the Sixties and Seventies, and there is the possibility of more ways of looking at nostalgia than have been discussed in the previous analyses.

Nostalgic Sentimentality: 2001-2002

When *Songs in A Minor* by Alicia Keys was released in April 2001, no one had any idea what would transpire with the next five months. The memories made within this period would come to represent a different kind of normalcy for Americans than in the

³⁰ Boym, 44,49.

latter half of the year, marking songs like “Fallin’” as ones from the “before” times. Before September 11, “Fallin’,” had already reached the height of its popularity, peaking at the number one position in the chart ending August 18, where it would stay for the next two weeks, only ever being overtaken by the Murder Remix of “I’m Real” by Jennifer Lopez featuring Ja Rule. It would move back up the chart to number one the week ending September 29, again staying for the following two weeks, and was overtaken by Jennifer Lopez again. This almost identical reflux in popularity can hint towards some collective connection to the grief that hung over the nation in the nostalgia of the recent past in Keys’ “Fallin’,” perhaps a desire to return to the past also crept into their minds. The people of the United States longed to return to a time when they felt safe, when they didn’t have to worry about a matter of national security. The ironic sentimentality of that particular moment can be heard in, though with a title that was close to home, “Fallin’”.

Close inspection of Alicia Keys’ “Fallin’” specifically points to key elements with which listeners in 2001 could engage nostalgically such as the use of simple instrumentation that continuously builds with gospel-style vocals in the background. Another way to listen to “Fallin’” is to hear it as representing the act of engaging with nostalgia. Some memories cause us pain, some can help ease the pain of the present. As we fall more and more in love with the past, we start to repeat ourselves, over and over, stuck in a loop, that gets louder and louder, until we figure out how to get out of this cycle. In this song, Alicia begins simply and gets more and more exasperated with the state of her feelings for this person she is addressing. By the end of the song, she is almost yelling, repeatedly and passionately trying to make sense of the memories and

feelings she has inside. Balancing between the two minor chords throughout the song can be likened to hovering between the past and the present: is one good, the other not?

Like flipping through a scrapbook, or filming a video, you can create your own narrative, to a certain point. If you give captions to your photos or provide narration, you can frame your story in such a way. If there are no captions or organization to your scrapbook, or sound in your video, you can only guess at what is happening or has occurred. When you look back at these documented moments, unless you have a specific memory connected to the making of the photo or video, it can be hard to remember what happened to let that moment occur. We are drawn to “Fallin’” in this way. There is something childlike about the way it is presented, especially in the simple piano, that allows our imagination to make up a story to go with these lyrics. “Fallin’” does not provide much of a narrative to its story, which is the beauty of this, why it feels timeless. We are drawn in by the virtuosic riff at the very beginning and can feel a sense of connection in the singer’s plaintive announcement as well as the feeling expressed in its melodic direction. The music video for “Fallin’” adds to this sense of wonder and gives us more of a narrative to go with it, with other nostalgic symbols placed throughout; the older apartment, the bus from the post-war era, Polaroids on the floor, prisoners working in the field, still just crumbs for us to build a narrative around. The only other clue that we must establish a narrative in the style of singing that holds throughout the song. Alicia is soulful, yet still regretful, which an audience could connect to in their own way.

Another song from the Post-9/11 2001-2002 era follows a similar framework to “Fallin’”: Dido’s 1999 release, “Thank You.” Originally featured on the soundtrack for the 1998 romantic comedy, *Sliding Doors* and released on the artist’s 1999 debut album,

No Angel, the song did not make its way to the *Billboard* Hot 100 until January 2001, debuting at number 80. It would peak at number 3 the week of April 28 and would remain in the charts until the second week of October, paralleling Keys' rise and stay at number one. In contrast to Keys,' particularly in the weeks following 9/11, the song fell more steadily, but remained in the top 50, perhaps as a means to forget? Was too much nostalgia connected to the before times in this song? Or just enough to process and move on, just as in the song?

“Thank You” opens with a rhythm on hand drums, building on the layers of textures, with piano, ethereal background vocals, guitar, a flute, and some indeterminable sound effects in the background that resemble bird calls. Dido's voice is also very soulful, yet with some sadness about her past, because she can't experience it again. She does not provide much narrative, so once again, as in “Fallin’,” we feel we are listening to a reconstructed past with little information to create our own assumptions. This creates a hazy sense of comfort because we want to be able to connect with these feelings, but can only use what little information we have to try and make sense of the story being told. The music video feels similarly vague: in it, Dido's house is about to be torn down, and it seems that she doesn't care about it. The “falling” of the song in the charts could be connected to the music video, as it features the house about to be torn down to put up a new skyscraper, something that would be too close of a reminder in the days to come. The underlying “thank you” is perhaps to a house that served her well and her supposed apathy seems to be in the fact that she can't do anything to change the fact that it will be torn down. Just as in “Fallin’,” the future is uncertain for the narrator of “Thank You.” By nostalgically appreciating the past for what it was, with specific memories that

solidify what the future will mean, each narrator has the choice to move on if she wishes, and use the nostalgia to make a choice. However, at the end of each song, the narrators, as well as the music for “Fallin’” and “Thank You,” remain indecisive about the future, only focusing on the past.

In providing a simplistic intro that is reminiscent of Eighties R&B, Ashanti offers the listener another form of sentimental nostalgia with her 2002 release, “Foolish.” Beginning with a smooth synth piano ostinato that carries throughout, with the addition of a bell tree that “sparkles” periodically, a bass guitar that accompanies the electric piano’s groove, as well as the addition of a drumkit that fits neatly into the background, the listener is given a framework in which to decipher the song’s narrative. The story in “Foolish” is clearer than the first two, but there is still an element of uncertainty and romancing of the past. Like our other songstresses, she sings of a hurt, but with love for the past, that existed with the one doing the hurting. The music video calls back to the past with a *Goodfellas* (1990) storyline, which is a film wrought with ironic sentimentality, particularly in its use of a compilation soundtrack.³¹ With each of these songs, there is a narrative being shared that contradicts what is being done musically. We can flip through the pictures and hear the story being told but through rose-colored sentimentality. Each song feels sentimental for a time where life went on like it always

³¹ Ashby, Arved. *Popular Music and the New Auteur : Visionary Filmmakers After MTV*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e025xna&AN=1069228&site=ehost-live>. also: *Goodfellas (1990) - IMDb*. Accessed March 30, 2022. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0099685/plotsummary>.

did, “normalcy” with its ups and downs; the audience can connect with this, especially in the times that these songs were released, and feel nostalgic for a past they can no longer have, or what they remember of it. The moments represented in each of these songs are sentimental but hold a sense of irony because each narrator is second-guessing whether these moments should be remembered in the same way they always have, or be forgotten because they were not always good moments.

Subversive Revivalism: 2006-2008

When discussing and listening to Amy Winehouse’s “Rehab,” we are hearing a prime example of what can be defined as revivalism³², something that was very common in the days following the beginning of the Great Recession, that particularly affected the housing market in both local and global economies. Those that turned to revivalism were looking to recreate the past fully and authentically, perhaps trying to ignore the problems of the present and travel back to a time when they had no knowledge of such things, or even existed for that matter. The birth of hipsters began, searching for the most accurate relics of the past, dressing like early twentieth-century gentleman and ladies, with full and manicured beards and curls set with rollers, pins, or rags, or extravagant updos such as beehives. Musically, they strove to create listening environments that best replicated the ones their parents or even grandparents had experienced, with record players, high-

³² Revivalism can also refer to the religious movement as well as styles in architecture. See also, “Revival architecture.” In *Dictionary of Architecture and Construction*, edited by Cyril Harris. 4th ed. McGraw-Hill, 2006. https://login.pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/mhbuilding/revival_architecture/0?institutionId=6481; “Revival.” In *Macmillan Dictionary of the Bible*, by Martin J. Selman, Martin H. Manser, and Stephen Travis. Collins, 2002. <https://login.pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/macdbib/revival/0?institutionId=6481>

fidelity stereos, or original radio cabinets. Essentially, if it had been created past 1980, it had no place in this alternative present.

As a person and in her public persona, Amy Winehouse visually presented herself in her own version of “vintage,” often with a bouffant on top of her head, thick cat-eye eyeliner, and dressed in rockabilly style clothing with short skirts and fitted silhouettes, echoing Ronnie Spector of the Sixties girl group The Ronettes, with some subversive elements. Winehouse had multiple tattoos and piercings and was very public about her addictions and relationship troubles, something that never would have been discussed in the eras she otherwise represented, the Fifties and Sixties. Her 2006 release, *Back to Black* echoes many of the issues she dealt with, but through the sound of the past, nearly identical to ones created in the Sixties. “Rehab” serves as a reference to the past for the era of girl groups, but also for those who wished to return to the time before economic troubles.

The revivalism of the past is strong on *Back to Black* but is most obvious with “Rehab.” Other songs on the album, particularly, “You Know I’m No Good,” “Me & Mr. Jones,” “Back to Black,” “Love is a Losing Game,” and “Tears Dry On Their Own,” to name a few, have strong revivalist leanings. In “Rehab,” this can be heard particularly in its instrumentation alone, which when played without vocals feels like a cover or re-working of some forgotten Wall of Sound era classic. But the subversion of this creation is the image and sonic impression of Winehouse that accompanied this. Do you recall any Ronettes songs that specifically discuss their need for an alcoholic beverage? Are there any Ella Fitzgerald songs that specifically point out a need for rehabilitation from an addiction? Men performing in this style of music included these kinds of subjects all the

time, and are often even more explicitly suggestive. One of Winehouse's favorite songs, "Stagger Lee," by Lloyd Price, released in 1959, specifically discusses a man with a gambling problem, though certainly with plenty of balladeer storytelling, to not make it seem so bad, that he is heroic in his struggles. The revivalism of "Rehab" lets us ignore the fact that this song is not an authentic recreation or artifact of the past and we don't pay attention to the fact that Winehouse is not the lead singer in some smoky bar telling us about her troubles. Once again, we are romanticizing the past in the nostalgia that comes about when we hear this song. It is a direct tap to the fount of the past to give us the same kind of feeling that collecting records and dressing like our grandparents can do. We don't have to have the actual thing to "be" of the past and songs like "Rehab" can tap more authentically into the need to construct a past that never happened to us, to forget the problems of today.

Other songs that would follow in this 'revivalist' trend include, though appearing much later in the days of the Recession era, Coldplay's "Viva La Vida" and Katy Perry's "I Kissed a Girl" as 2008 releases. Both songs take cues from the past, though not complete authentic recreations, making them more subversive than revivalist. The accompanying music videos do a little more to establish a nostalgia for the past. Perry's shows women within a dream sequence in various lingerie and revealing clothing, and herself in a vintage style dress. Coldplay's takes place behind a cracked painting filter as the band plays the song on their instruments, with band frontman Chris Martin dressed in a French Revolution-style jacket. "I Kissed a Girl" could easily have been orchestrated to match a style closer to "Rehab," for it has a similar form and groove that has been

covered by other retro fanatics,³³ once you slow it down and take away the electricity of the synthesizers and guitars that accompany the original. Its subversion is represented in all of its elements, except for the image presented alongside it. At the time of its release, Katy Perry used vintage fashion to create a retro-as-kitsch image, sporting Fifties and Sixties bathing suits, and dresses, as well as styling her hair to match. If you saw her, you would not necessarily expect a song like “I Kissed a Girl” to be associated with someone styled like a clean version of Amy Winehouse.

Coldplay’s “Viva La Viva” embraced revivalism just as Katy Perry did but in an opposite sense. “Viva La Vida’s” sonic characteristics more closely resemble the Baroque pop and symphonic rock of the Sixties and Seventies, respectively.³⁴ The song features strings, synthesizers, and various orchestral percussion instruments, such as a bell that you could find in a cathedral belfry. Echoing vocals near the end of the piece also allows for audience participation, perhaps in a stadium concert, something that Coldplay would become known for later in their career. The band, however, does not necessarily present a revivalist image, and the music isn’t a direct replication of something in the past either. They have chosen to take pieces from their past and present a new take on what they romanticize about their heroes. “Viva La Vida” would not have been considered subversive had it been played in the Sixties and Seventies, mostly because of its Baroque pop sensibilities, orchestral leanings, and use of new technologies (synthesizers). It is considered subversive today because of those same things, recreating

³³ See Postmodern Jukebox’s take: “I Kissed A Girl- Vintage ‘50s Doo Wop Katy Perry Cover ft. Robyn Adele Anderson,” YouTube video, 3:18, posted by “PostmodernJukebox,” 2016, <https://youtu.be/GW0zsiNUrZ8>

³⁴ Think of The Beatles,’ “Eleanor Rigby” (1966), *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967), and Queen’s “Bohemian Rhapsody” (1975) as landmark examples

the “new” of the past unauthentically, and doing things that no one else was doing at the time. Therefore, the song does not serve as a reflection of the past, but an interpretation of restoration. “Viva La Vida” went on to become one of Coldplay’s only songs to chart and reach number one on the *Billboard* Hot 100.

Nostalgic Trojan Horse: 2019-present

The myth of the Greek Trojan Horse has long been used as a method of deception and often with much success. Because memories are malleable and can be subject to change, nostalgia can often act as a Trojan horse or as a point of interest within a creative work to garner attention for the work as a whole. Doja Cat’s “Say So” is one of the first sonic uses of this in the decade beginning in 2019. This technique is certainly not new and has been used in indie or alternative music throughout the last twenty years, but we have specifically paid attention to this technique and the emergence of its use in the songs that have transcended genre and made their way through the pop music charts, particularly in the era before and during the beginnings of the COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2020.

With specific sonic Seventies references that could be heard, even without the imagery presented alongside it in the consequential music video, Doja Cat’s “Say So” felt nostalgic from its beginning. By using an effect of AM radio in the opening moments of the song downplays the funk-inspired guitar instrumental that is the timbral focus of the track. The track without a vocal layer could easily be played at a discotheque in the Seventies and would fit in seamlessly alongside classics like “Disco Inferno,” by The Trammps or “Dancing Queen,” by ABBA, with its strong similarity to “Good Times,” by

CHIC. The breathy vocals evoke the disco women of the past at first but soon change into rap style that fits especially well in the twenty-first century, by also giving a representation to women who can rap and sing. You could easily be fooled by this song, lured into listening through a Trojan horse that, with the visual help of the retro music video, sounds like a song from any time in the Seventies. There is a reason that this song became as popular as it did. Premiering in a time right before the world went into lockdown, much like Alicia Keys' "Fallin'," the world had plenty of time to absorb this song without specific imagery, so this song can also as a time "before."

The Weeknd is known for his use of the nostalgic Trojan horse as well. With a vocal style evocative of Michael Jackson that can be heard throughout his discography, regardless of where you start listening as well as a sweet spot for the Eighties, The Weeknd is a master at using this technique. His most popular work is the all-time best-selling hit, "Blinding Lights," on the Eighties-styled album *After Hours*. This song makes especial use of the synthesizer and 808 bass line and uses them to evoke certain songs of the past, such as "Take On Me" by A-ha, but The Weeknd furthers this sonic imagery in the accompanying music video and performances by wearing a red suit that looks very similar to the one worn by Michael Jackson in the 1982 "Thriller" music video. The nostalgic Trojan horse in this song, as well as many of the songs featured on *After Hours* is the instrumentation and framing of the story told seamlessly through the cycle of songs on the B-side of the album. This is another example of the nostalgic Trojan horse that specifically grabs your attention with the first thirty seconds of a song, almost identically in each example.

Dua Lipa's first single for the album that would become the aptly titled *Future Nostalgia* was "Don't Start Now" released in the fall of 2019 around the time of "Blinding Lights" and *Hot Pink*. The first 10 seconds of this song use a fade-in, or distancing effect similar to the one used in "Say So," but adds an echo that makes the singer's voice sound as if it is far away, ringing through empty space. This effect quickly fades, and a thumping bass beat accompanies Dua's voice at full volume, with emphasis on a funk guitar, lower and more prominent than the one used in "Say So." "Don't Start Now," specifically uses instrumentation that sounds like it could have been played in the discos during the Seventies, such as funk bass, fade-in and out, handclaps, cowbell, synth bursts, accented Kontakt Session Strings, sub-bass, laser weapon sound effects. Another single from the *Future Nostalgia* album, "Break My Heart," uses the same bass riff from CHIC and Nile Rodgers' "Good Times," though more recognizable as the one from INXS's 1987 hit "Need You Tonight" in timbre. It's so easy to add a nostalgic Trojan horse, that you would not be surprised that you start noticing this in more of today's popular songs. By including that element of deception and looking within certain entrances of songs, in their first minute, we could almost certainly track this throughout the whole of 2020 and 2021, with a specific look at the top ten in the *Billboard* Hot 100. The songs with the inclusion of the nostalgic Trojan horse in the first moments of the song are possibly the ones that have had the most commercial success. The use of the nostalgic Trojan horse, the art of curating a sound from a specific cultural moment from the past to create something 'new' and successfully deceiving the listener that what they're hearing isn't a sample, is important to take note of because of its ever-growing prominence. It has begun to appear increasingly often in the charts of today, turning this

act of deception into commonplace, and somewhat expected to create a Top 10 Hit. Being able to recognize a nostalgic Trojan horse does not require a keen ear for the classics, but can help one to identify how we use all types of nostalgia in their own lives, restoratively or reflectively.

Conclusion

As has already been mentioned, it is both incredibly popular, as well as profitable, to create something with an aspect of the past that gives specific nods to an element of pop culture that brings about some sense of nostalgia for someone. This style of production appears so often that more and more artists find themselves in battles of originality, claiming sole responsibility for a creative idea, that could have come from anywhere. All that to say that crafting nostalgia has become a business, with songwriting camps that have been engineered to create songs based on past catalogs, particularly with the recent trends of established artists selling their entire works to publishing firms, run by record companies, for large sums, disowning the art that they created.³⁵ With this kind of power and information, can we ever truly create something that is uniquely inspired by the songs of our past? It doesn't look like this will change anytime soon and the creation of these interpolated songs coming from the hands of young songwriters that may not have had any luck on their own, but can throw their hat into the ring with the possibility that some top artist will use their song.

³⁵ “The Big Business of Interpolating Old Melodies for New Hits” *Rolling Stone*. Accessed September 14, 2021.

At least in the most current charts and commercials, you may have noticed that it seems more nostalgic a song appears, the more likely it can be chosen for the possibilities it presents for creating money through advertisements, movies, television shows, and radio play, because it can sit perfectly next to the hit songs of yesterday, and in the ever-expanding world of social media, the more likely it can be used as the next dance craze on TikTok. Advertising has gotten more creative in the last decade, often choosing songs from the past directly³⁶ or having newer artists cover an older classic; new songs have always been connected to promoting a new product; soundtracks continue to represent modern mixtapes³⁷. The current and trending songs that are ever-changing on TikTok consist of new and old music alike also play a part in the commercialization of the past. The Seventies were reborn on the app with the reemergence of Fleetwood Mac's "Dreams"(1977) in the summer of 2020, that later turned into a TikTok commercial while also raising the sales of Ocean Spray Cranberry Juice nationwide.³⁸ ABBA B-sides (like 1977's "Chiquita") were being used in comedy videos, alongside the cult classic heard everywhere that summer, The Shang-ri-la's "(Remember)Walking in the Sand-The Oh

²⁸ XC60: The Parents", Youtube video, 1:08, posted by "Volvo (2020) Volvo Cars." September 14,2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2Uv18yOoN4>.includes Pete Seeger's "Hard Times in the Mill (1956); "Dua Lipa-I'm Free," YouTube video, 1:53, April 15, 2020, posted by "Marcus Zavala" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fo4iyb1dadk>, includes a cover of The Rolling Stones "Free" by Dua Lipa.; "Dua Lipa - Truly (Commercial 2021)," YouTube video, 00:30, posted by "Dua Lipa Nation," August 12, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pO1aaB3gzHM>. Includes Dua Lipa, "Physical" (2020)

³⁷ The soundtrack to *Marvel's Eternals* include both orchestral and popular tunes, from Lizzo, BTS, and Merle Haggard: *Marvel's Eternals* (2021) <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYcmhvNI2oimoanwtdhu3Pf-WaAQLsqj>.

³⁸ "TikTok. It Starts on TikTok | Good Vibes, 2020". <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0ig5UeXczA>.

No Song”. One of the most current trends, that could disappear tomorrow, uses Edison Lighthouse’s 1970 cult classic, “Love Grows (Where My Rosemary Goes).” A major reason that Doja Cat’s “Say So” was even given the music video treatment was because of a dance trend created on the app. The addition of a “Throwback Moments” playlist launched on Spotify as a part of their 2020 and 2021 Unwrapped Campaigns, also tracked the different songs that “came back” for various cultural moments.³⁹

The timing of the release of a song with nostalgic properties is important as well. In times of crisis that we have experienced over the last twenty years, in this post 9/11 world, music has been one constant thing we return to. A song’s popularity can only be seen in a small-scale view from the time it is released, but the future implication of a song that has nostalgic elements are yet to be seen on a larger scale. The sonic aspects of the pre-9/11 past have always found a way to creep back into the narrative. Why were we listening to the sounds of country Americana and creating folk and rock songs in the style of protest songs of the Sixties after the towers fell? Because of what it reminded us of and made us feel. Why did we revert to the music of the pre-and post-World War II era, the sounds of civil rights, and the Seventies rock when all of our money was lost in the Recession? Because we crept back into the comfort of what we used to know and used that music as a reassuring element of comfort? And when we were forced into our homes as millions of people around the world died from an illness we could not seem to control, why did we come back to pop music that reminded us of all the times in the past, though through carefully crafted narratives creating a future nostalgia? Because we wanted to

³⁹“Top Throwbacks of 2020” Spotify playlist, posted December 2, 2020, <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/37i9dQZF1DX9fJh2i1vC0m?si=274cc45895ae4e80>

escape without really leaving and enter a state of mind that was truly our own. Or were all of these experiences curated for us to believe that was the case? As Grafton Tanner writes in *The Circle of the Snake Nostalgia and Utopia in the Age of Big Tech*:

“What we are nostalgic for today is the history told by media corporations. When we think life in the past was as simplistic as *Leave It To Beaver* or *The Goonies*, we risk pining for a suffocating social reality that whitewashed, normative, and patriarchal, as many of the mainstream narratives of the twentieth century were. But those most desperate for a return to the misremembered golden days of yesteryear might do whatever it takes to get us back there.” (8)⁴⁰

We have to be careful that our lust for the past isn't overtaken by the greed of the world and that we can still enjoy things for what they are, and not necessarily their links to the past. While nostalgia can help create connections with each other as we reminisce over shared memories, artificial or real, it can take a hold of our minds if we don't allow some breathing room in enjoying these. Nostalgia has been around long enough to withstand whatever the multimedia world throws at it, but too much past can also be a problem.

The reemergence of a song from the past, or the inspiration of such songs on the current, changes the “future nostalgia” for the ones coming of age in this time. Nostalgia always makes its way back, as people continue to live longer and partake in life experiences that require a change of pace from what things used to be. As long as people leave home for the first time, get married, have children, or live their lives in the way they want, nostalgia will always be there to remind them of how far they've come since. We can only ever ask of artists, and ourselves, that we are participating in music-making and listening in a way that is a means to create refuge or express ourselves in the best

⁴⁰ Tanner, Grafton. *The Circle of the Snake Nostalgia and Utopia in the Age of Big Tech*. United States: Zero Books, John Hunt Publishing, 2019

way possible. Creating our own moments of refuge can help when crisis comes calling. By using musical nostalgia to reflect and restore ourselves, and not just leaning to one or the other, we can support ourselves more mindfully and healthily.

A musical connection to nostalgia in times of crisis is a wide-spanning topic that deserves more attention. The current focus on nostalgia and music is centered around how it happens and how it derives from our emotions, being a mixed-up, vague feeling of just “knowing” that what you feel is because of previously learned experiences that you may or may not remember. Crisis and music is still largely focused on victims of PTSD or wartime and the necessities made to make those experiences “livable” and the artistic outputs that can come from those memories. Further studies could take a deeper look at how some of the songs mentioned in this analysis have affected the people it strives to reach, as well as considering the potential trauma that they have encountered. A wider expanse of songs that contain the whole of the last twenty years would provide more data and more specific insight to other details that point towards music-evoked nostalgia in a time of crisis or trauma. In addition to these avenues of research, a critical look at how gender plays a role in creating nostalgic-based musical content would also be worth pursuing, considering the role that women played in these analyses. Lastly, a more historical framework of how the Hot 100 chart worked in the timelines of these chosen dates could be interesting in comparison with ones that were generated in the twentieth century.

Associations with the word nostalgia bring about preconceived ideas of what it actually looks like. Crisis on its own also has many meanings. Popular music is too broad of a term to describe the music that exists on rotation inside and outside our personal

bubbles. When we put all three together, we can begin to see a bigger, more focused look at how the music around us affects us and is shaped by the world around us. Each type of nostalgia can serve a particular purpose. Sentimental nostalgia can be used as a type of reflection. By returning to a time before now, we can determine if certain memories still belong in our permanent collection, regardless of what others say. In our subversive revivalism, we can recreate our “glory days.” Perhaps more subversively than back then, we can return to a time, acting like a “kid” when you are an “adult,” even if for just a moment, to retreat in a world just our own and restore our headspace. When we interact with the nostalgic Trojan horse, we can either disregard the effect the artist was going for the first time we heard it or chose to accept that there is something in the music that gives us the choice, or tiny slivers, of reflecting or restoring.

Aside from any nostalgic musical experiences, there will always be a sense of naivete. A “before” you that existed that acted differently, maybe dressed differently, hung around a different crowd, was married or unattached, or still lived at home with mom and dad because you had to. Before you ever discovered your new favorite band or artist, would you have ever considered them before making the choices you have since? Do you still listen to the songs of your past and have those songs played a part in the choices you have made today? By believing and indulging in nostalgia, we create a space for the inner child to retreat from the chaos of the world. We allow nostalgia to permeate our lives because of the feelings it brings through rediscovery, mindfulness, and connections to the people and the world around us. Nostalgia also helps us understand and appreciate culture to its fullest; there is no escaping the endless repetition and recreation of the past that binds and fills the world we live in, as we constantly strive to

make the world more livable and better than the day before. In nostalgia, particularly through music, we can retain the innocence of our past, as we seek refuge from the present, and create new old traditions that just might involve dancing in the living room while we bake snickerdoodles like we did when we were five.

REFERENCES

Digital Sources (databases and archives)

Billboard. "The Hot 100," January 2, 2013. <https://www.billboard.com/charts/hot-100/>.

RIAA. "Recording Industry Association of America," <https://www.riaa.com/>.

Rolling Stone. "Rolling Stone." <https://www.rollingstone.com/>.

Songs

Alicia Keys, "Fallin'," track 4 on *Songs In A Minor*, Sony Music Entertainment, 2001, Spotify streaming audio.

Amy Winehouse, "Rehab," track 1 on *Back to Black*, Universal Island Records Limited/Universal Music Company, 2006, Spotify streaming audio.

Ashanti, "Foolish," track 2 on *Ashanti*, Murder Inc. Records LLC, 2002, Spotify streaming audio.

Coldplay, "Viva La Vida," track 7 on *Viva La Vida or Death and All His Friends*, Parlophone Records Limited/Warner Music Group, 2008. CD.

Dido, "Thank You," track 6 on *No Angel*, Arista Records, Inc., 1999, Spotify streaming audio.

Doja Cat, "Say So," track 5 on *Hot Pink*, Kemosabe Records/RCA Records, 2019, Spotify streaming audio.

Doja Cat, "Say So," featuring Nicki Minaj, track 1 on *Say So (featuring Nicki Minaj)*, Kemosabe Records/RCA Records, 2020, Spotify streaming audio.

Dua Lipa, "Break My Heart," track 1 on *Break My Heart*, Dua Lipa Limited/Warner Records UK, 2019, Spotify streaming audio.

Dua Lipa, "Break My Heart," track 9 on Dua Lipa, "Don't Start Now," track 2 on *Future Nostalgia*, Dua Lipa Limited/Warner Records UK, 2020, CD.

Dua Lipa, “Don’t Start Now,” track 1 on *Don’t Start Now*, Dua Lipa Limited/Warner Records UK, 2019, Spotify streaming audio.

Dua Lipa, “Don’t Start Now,” track 2 on *Future Nostalgia*, Dua Lipa Limited/Warner Records UK, 2020, CD.

Harry Styles, “Adore You,” track 3 on *Fine Line*, Erskine Records Limited/Columbia Records/Sony Music Entertainment, 2019. CD.

Katy Perry, “I Kissed A Girl,” track 2 on *One Of The Boys*, Capitol Records, 2008, Spotify streaming audio.

The Weeknd, “Blinding Lights,” track 1 on *Blinding Lights*, The Weeknd XO, Inc. /Republic Records/UMG Recordings, Inc., 2019, Spotify streaming audio

The Weeknd, “Blinding Lights,” track 9 on *After Hours*, The Weeknd XO, Inc. /Republic Records/UMG Recordings, Inc., 2020, Spotify streaming audio

Secondary Literature

Abeyta, Andrew A., Clay Routledge, and Jacob Juhl. "Looking back to move forward: Nostalgia as a psychological resource for promoting relationship goals and overcoming relationship challenges." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 109, no. 6 (2015): 1029.

“Americans Say the 1970s and 1980s Were the Best Music Decades | YouGov.” Accessed March 30, 2022.
<https://today.yougov.com/topics/entertainment/articles-reports/2021/06/16/best-decade-for-music-americans-poll-data>.

Ashby, Arved. *Popular Music and the New Auteur : Visionary Filmmakers After MTV*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. <https://search-ebshost-com.pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e025xna&AN=1069228&site=ehost-live>.

Ashley, Richard, and Renee Timmers. *The Routledge Companion to Music Cognition* New York, NY: Routledge, 2017.

Ballam-Cross, Paul; “Reconstructed Nostalgia: Aesthetic Commonalities and Self-Soothing in Chillwave, Synthwave, and Vaporwave.” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 1 March 2021; 33 (1): 70–93.
DOI:<https://doi.org/10.1525/jpms.2021.33.1.70>

Batcho, Krystine Irene. “Nostalgia: Retreat or Support in Difficult Times?” *The American Journal of Psychology* 126, no. 3 (October 1, 2013): 355–67.
<https://doi.org/10.5406/amerjpsyc.126.3.0355>.

- Barrett, F. S., Grimm, K. J., Robins, R. W., Wildschut, T., Sedikides, C., & Janata, P. (2010). "Music-Evoked Nostalgia: Affect, Memory, and Personality." *Emotion* (Washington, D.C.), 10(3), 390–403. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019006>
- Barrett, F. S., & Janata, P. (2016). "Neural responses to nostalgia-evoking music modeled by elements of dynamic musical structure and individual differences in affective traits." *Neuropsychologia*, 91, 234–246. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2016.08.012>
- Brackett, David. *Categorizing Sound: Genre and Twentieth-Century Popular Music*. 1st ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016.
- Brovig-Hanssen, Ragnhild, and Anne Danielsen. *Digital Signatures: The Impact of Digitization on Popular Music Sound*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2016.
- Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).
- Boym, Svetlana. "Nostalgia and Its Discontents." *The Hedgehog Review* 9, no. 2 (2007): 7–.
- Campoamor, Danielle. "Why We Reach for Nostalgia in Times of Crisis." *The New York Times*, July 28, 2020, sec. Smarter Living. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/28/smarter-living/coronavirus-nostalgia.html>.
- Carter, James; "Campus Rock: Rock Music Culture on the College Campus during the Counterculture Sixties, 1967-1968." *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 27 August 2020; 32 (3): 51–72. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jpms.2020.32.3.51>
- Carr, David. "Music, Meaning, and Emotion." *Journal of Aesthetics & Art Criticism* 62, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 225–34. doi:10.1111/j.0021-8529.2004.00155.x.
- Cartwright, Phillip A., Ekaterina Besson, and Laurent Maubisson. "Nostalgia and Technology Innovation Driving Retro Music Consumption." *European journal of innovation management* 16, no. 4 (2013): 459–494.
- Clarke, David. "Defining Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Music." *Twentieth-century music* 14, no. 3 (2017): 411–462.
- Currie, James; "Music After All." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 1 April 2009; 62 (1): 145–203. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jams.2009.62.1.145>
- Daughtry, J. Martin, *Listening to War: Sound, Music, Trauma, and Survival in Wartime Iraq* (Oxford University Press, New York. 2015).

- “Dua Lipa-I’m Free,” YouTube video, 1:53, April 15, 2020, posted by “Marcus Zavala” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fo4iyb1dadk>, includes a cover of The Rolling Stones “Free” by Dua Lipa.
- “Dua Lipa - Truly (Commercial 2021),” YouTube video, 00:30, posted by “Dua Lipa Nation,” August 12, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pO1aaB3gzHM>. Includes Dua Lipa, “Physical” (2020)
- Doja Cat, “Doja Cat Reveals Her Songwriting Process for “Say So” - MTV PUSH” MTV video, 2.29. April 1, 2020. <https://www.mtv.com/video-clips/t9qqma/mtv-push-doja-cat-reveals-her-songwriting-process-for-say-so>
- Eriksson, M., Fleischer, R., Johansson, A., Snickars, P., & Vonderau, P. (2019). *Spotify teardown : inside the black box of streaming music* . MIT Press.
- The Fader*. “Super 8 Film Has Taken over Music Videos.” Accessed March 30, 2022. <https://www.thefader.com/2018/09/14/music-video-super-8-drake-in-my-feelings-beyonce>
- Fairchild, Charles. “The Emergence and Historical Decay of the Mash-Up.” *Journal of popular music studies* 29, no. 4 (2017): e12246–n/a.
- Fales, Cornelia. “The Paradox of Timbre.” *Ethnomusicology* 46, no. 1 (2002): 56–95.
- Farrugia, Rebekah, Thomas Swiss; “Tracking the DJs: Vinyl Records, Work, and the Debate over New Technologies.” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 1 March 2019; 31 (1): 41–52. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jpms.2019.311005>
- Fink, Robert; “Goal-Directed Soul? Analyzing Rhythmic Teleology in African American Popular Music.” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 1 April 2011; 64 (1): 179–238. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jams.2011.64.1.179>
- FioRito, Taylor A., and Clay Routledge. “Is Nostalgia a Past or Future-Oriented Experience? Affective, Behavioral, Social Cognitive, and Neuroscientific Evidence.” *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (2020): 1133. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01133>.
- Frow, John. *Genre* Second edition. New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Garrett, Charles Hiroshi, Carol J. Oja, George E. Lewis, Gayle Sherwood Magee, Alejandro L. Madrid, Sherrie Tucker, Robert Fink; “Studying U.S. Music in the Twenty-First Century.” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 1 December 2011; 64 (3): 689719. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jams.2011.64.3.689>
- Garrido, Sandra, and Jane Davidson. *Music, Nostalgia, and Memory: Historical and Psychological Perspectives*, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-02556-4>.

- Gitelman, Lisa. "Bottled Bands: Automatic Music and American Media Publics." *Sounding Modernism*, 55–. Edinburgh University Press, 2017.
- "Goodfellas" (1990) - IMDb. Accessed March 30, 2022.
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0099685/plotsummary>.
- Hailemariam Kebede Gelgile. "Nostalgia Marketing: Examining Music Retromania." *Consumer Behavior Review* 5, no. 2 (2021): 232–242.
- Harris, Anna. "Eliciting Sound Memories." *The Public historian* 37, no. 4 (2015): 14–31.
- "Haven't I Heard This Song Before? (pop Music Interpolation)". *All Things Considered. National Public Radio, Inc. (NPR)*, 2013.
- Hollenbach, Katie Beisel; "Teenage Agency and Popular Music Reception in World War II-Era Frank Sinatra Fan Clubs." *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 1 December 2019; 31 (4): 142–160. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jpms.2019.31.4.142>
- Holm-Hudson, Kevin. (2001). "The Future Is Now ... And Then: Sonic Historiography in Post-1960s Rock". *Genre* (Norman, Okla.), 34(3-4), 243–264.
<https://doi.org/10.1215/00166928-34-3-4-243>
- "I Kissed A Girl- Vintage '50s Doo Wop Katy Perry Cover ft. Robyn Adele Anderson," YouTube video, 3:18, posted by "PostmodernJukebox," 2016,
<https://youtu.be/GW0zsiNUrZ8>
- Ingram, David. *The Jukebox in the Garden: Ecocriticism and American Popular Music Since 1960*. Amsterdam: BRILL, 2010.
- Jackson, Andrew Grant. *1965: The Most Revolutionary Year in Music*. United States: St. Martin's Publishing Group, 2015.
- Jakubowski, Kelly, Amy M. Belfi, Tuomas Eerola; "Phenomenological Differences in Music- and Television-Evoked Autobiographical Memories." *Music Perception* 1 June 2021; 38 (5): 435–455. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/mp.2021.38.5.435>
- "James F. Goldstein › The Goldstein Residence." Accessed March 30, 2022.
http://jamesfgoldstein.com/?page_id=881.
- Janata, Petr Joshua Peterson, Clinton Ngan, Bokyoung Keum, Hannah Whiteside, Sonia Ran; "Psychological and Musical Factors Underlying Engagement with Unfamiliar Music." *Music Perception* 1 December 2018; 36 (2): 175–200. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/mp.2018.36.2.175>

- Kauanui, J. Kēhaulani (aka DJ Pineapple Krush); “Post-Punk Polyrhythms: A Conversation with Rachel Aggs.” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 27 August 2020; 32 (3): 11–25. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jpms.2020.32.3.11>
- Killingly, Callula, Philippe Lacherez, Renata Meuter; “Singing in the Brain: Investigating the Cognitive Basis of Earworms.” *Music Perception* 1 June 2021; 38 (5): 456–472. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/mp.2021.38.5.456>
- Labbé, Carolina Didier Grandjean; “Musical Emotions Predicted by Feelings of Entrainment.” *Music Perception* 1 December 2014; 32 (2): 170–185. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/mp.2014.32.2.170>
- Larkin, Bob “25 Reasons We’re Glad We Grew Up in the ’70s.” *Best Life*, September 10, 2020. <https://bestlifeonline.com/we-love-70s/>.
- Lavengood, Megan; What Makes It Sound ’80s?: The Yamaha DX7 Electric Piano Sound. *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 3 September 2019; 31 (3): 73–94. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jpms.2019.313009>
- Lena, Jennifer C. *Banding Together : How Communities Create Genres in Popular Music Course Book*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.
- Lindau, Elizabeth Ann; “ ‘We Can Bring It Back’: Revisiting Cateforis in 2018”. *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 4 December 2018; 30 (4): 113–120. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jpms.2018.300407>
- MacKinnon, Dolly. “Hearing Early Modern Battles: Soundscape Audio as a Way of Recreating the Past.” *Parergon* 36, no. 2 (2019): 115–140.
- May, Anthony. “Phil Spector and the New Movie Soundtrack.” *Media International Australia incorporating Culture & policy* 148, no. 148 (2013): 127–134.
- McDonald, Claire, Lauren Stewart; “Uses And Functions Of Music In Congenital Amusia”. *Music Perception* 1 April 2008; 25 (4): 345–355. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/mp.2008.25.4.345>
- MEL Magazine*. “The Teens Who Listen to ‘Mallwave’ Are Nostalgic for an Experience They’ve Never Had,” January 30, 2019. <https://melmagazine.com/en-us/story/the-teens-who-listen-to-mallwave-are-nostalgic-for-an-experience-theyve-never-had>.
- Music, Collective Memory, Trauma, and Nostalgia in European Cinema After the Second World War* (United States: Taylor & Francis, 2019).
- Moore, Allan F. *Song Means : Analysing and Interpreting Recorded Popular Song* London ; Routledge, 2016.

- Napier, Kathleen, Lior Shamir; "Quantitative Sentiment Analysis of Lyrics in Popular Music." *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 4 December 2018; 30 (4): 161–176. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jpms.2018.300411>
- Negus, Keith. *Music Genres and Corporate Cultures*. London: Taylor & Francis Group, 1999.
- Okigbo, Austin C. "South African Music in the History of Epidemics 1." *Journal of folklore research* 54, no. 1/2 (2017): 87–.
- Peraino, Judith, Suzanne G. Cusick, Mitchell Morris, Lloyd Whitesell, William Cheng, Maureen Mahon, Sindhumathi Revuluri, Nadine Hubbs, Stephan Pennington; "Music and Sexuality." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 1 December 2013; 66 (3): 825–872. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jams.2013.66.3.825>
- Plasketes, George. *B-Sides, Undercurrents, and Overtones: Peripheries to Popular in Music, 1960 to the Present*. Taylor and Francis, 2016.
- Platz, Friedrich, Reinhard Kopiez, Johannes Hasselhorn, and Anna Wolf. "The Impact of Song-Specific Age and Affective Qualities of Popular Songs on Music-Evoked Autobiographical Memories (MEAMs)." *Musicae scientiae* 19, no. 4 (2015): 327–349.
- Rap-Up*. "Doja Cat Goes Disco in 'Say So' Video." Accessed March 30, 2022. <https://www.rap-up.com/2020/02/27/doja-cat-say-so-video/>.
- Resounding Pasts: Essays in Literature, Popular Music, and Cultural Memory*. United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020.
- Reynolds, Simon. "(No) Future Music?" *New perspectives* (Prague, Czech Republic) 28, no. 3 (2020): 305–313.
- Reynolds, Simon. *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to Its Own Past* (New York: Faber and Faber, Inc., 2011).
- Rhodes, Phil. "This Super-8 Music Video Made a Big Hit with 5 Million Views in 5 Days." Accessed March 30, 2022. <https://www.redsharknews.com/this-super-8-music-video-made-a-big-hit-with-5-million-views-in-5-days>.
- "Revival." In *Macmillan Dictionary of the Bible*, by Martin J. Selman, Martin H. Manser, and Stephen Travis. Collins, 2002. <https://login.pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/macdbib/revival/0?institutionId=6481>

- “Revival architecture.” In *Dictionary of Architecture and Construction*, edited by Cyril Harris. 4th ed. McGraw-Hill, 2006.
https://login.pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/mhbuilding/revival_architecture/0?institutionId=6481
- Routledge, C., Wildschut, T., Sedikides, C. and Juhl, J. (2013), “Nostalgia as a Resource for Psychological Health and Well-Being. Social and Personality” *Psychology Compass*, 7: 808-818. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12070>
- Sandall, Robert (27 July 2008). "Can Amy Winehouse be saved?". *The Sunday Times Magazine*
- Schiller, Rebecca. “Alicia Keys Says Everyone Originally Told Her ‘Fallin’ Would Never Work: Watch.” *Billboard* (blog), December 6, 2019.
<https://www.billboard.com/music/pop/alicia-keys-shares-fallin-memories-video-8545153/>.
- Sedikides, Constantine, Joost Leunissen, and Tim Wildschut. “The Psychological Benefits of Music-Evoked Nostalgia.” *Psychology of music* (2021): 30573562110646–.
- Shelemay, Kay Kaufman; “Musical Communities: Rethinking the Collective in Music”. *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 1 August 2011; 64 (2): 349–390. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jams.2011.64.2.349>
- Stadler, Gustavus; “Taylor Mac’s 24-Decade History of Popular Music: Merriam Theater, Philadelphia, June 2 & 9, 2018.” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 4 December 2018; 30 (4): 71–74. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jpms.2018.300404>
- Stamberg, Susan. “This House Is A Work Of Art, So The Owner Is Donating It To A Museum.” NPR, February 18, 2016, sec. Architecture.
<https://www.npr.org/2016/02/18/464696418/this-house-is-a-work-of-art-so-the-owner-is-donating-it-to-a-museum>.
- Stampfel, Peter; “The American 20th Century in 100 Songs.” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 2 June 2019; 31 (2): 3–14. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jpms.2019.312002>
- Starr, Larry, and Christopher Alan Waterman. *American Popular Music : From Minstrelsy to MP3* Fifth edition. New York ; Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Stratton, Jon; “Disco Before Disco: Dancing and popular music in the 1960s and 1970s in England.” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 1 March 2021; 33 (1): 50–69. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jpms.2021.33.1.50>

- Tanner, Grafton. *The Hours Have Lost Their Clock: The Politics of Nostalgia*. United States: Watkins Media, 2021.
- Tanner, Grafton. *The Circle of the Snake Nostalgia and Utopia in the Age of Big Tech*. United States: Zero Books, John Hunt Publishing, 2019
- “The Nostalgia Bone from Throughline.” Invisibilia. NPR, December 9, 2021. <https://www.npr.org/2021/12/08/1062469657/the-nostalgia-bone-from-throughline>.
- “TikTok. It Starts on TikTok | Good Vibes, 2020”. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0ig5UeXczA>.
- “Top Throwbacks of 2020” Spotify playlist, posted December 2, 2020, <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/37i9dQZF1DX9fJh2i1vC0m?si=274cc45895ae4e80>
- Tough, David. “An Analysis of Common Songwriting and Production Practices in 2014-2015 *Billboard* Hot 100 Songs.” *MEIEA* 17, no. 1 (2017): 79–120.
- Turrell, Amelia S., Andrea R. Halpern, Amir-Homayoun Javadi; “Wait For It: An EEG Exploration Of Excitement In Dance Music”. *Music Perception* 1 April 2021; 38 (4): 345–359. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/mp.2021.38.4.345>
- Watkins, Holly; “Musical Ecologies of Place and Placelessness”. *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 1 August 2011; 64 (2): 404–408. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jams.2011.64.2.404>
- Winfrey, Oprah, and Bruce D. Perry, *What Happened to You?: Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing* (Flatiron Books: An Oprah Book. New York. 2021).
- Woods, Faye. “Nostalgia, Music and the Television Past Revisited in American Dreams.” *Music, sound and the moving image* 2, no. 1 (2008): 27–50.
- XC60: The Parents”, Youtube video, 1:08, posted by “Volvo (2020) Volvo Cars.” September 14, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2Uv18yOoN4>. includes Pete Seeger’s “Hard Times in the Mill (1956)
- Young, Mark Thomas. “Sonic Retro-Futures: Musical Nostalgia as Revolution in Post-1960s American Literature, Film and Technoculture”. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2015.
- Zagorski-Thomas, Simon. *The Musicology of Record Production* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2014