Vinyl Records Popularity Today

Vinyl records have been around for a long time and have come in and out of popularity since their invention. They had a decline once CDs gained popularity and the decline furthered whenever technology advanced and inventions such as portable MP3 players and iPods gained mainstream popularity. It seemed that vinyl had officially died out of the trends and was not going to be thought of how they once were. Records would just be stories parents would tell their children on how they went about listening to music when they were kids. However, as time has continued to progress, vinyl started to see a rise in popularity once again. More and more people began buying record players and records themselves and thus led to the resurgence of vinyl records. As to why this has happened and continues to, there are various reasons that could explain this. It could be due to the fact that nostalgia is very strong and for those who grew up when vinyl was still popular, it brings them back to a simpler time in their life. It could be because vinyl is thought of as vintage and this ties into their nostalgia of them, in a way it makes those who are younger feel connected to the past and to their relatives who lived in the time that vinyl was popular. There is a possibility that people lean toward vinyl because they believe they have better sound quality than digital music. It could be because vinyl gives people a physical connection to the music they love. It very well may be that for some, the interactive experience that vinyl provides is what they desire. It is possible that all of these are true and differ from person to person, whatever it may be it seems that vinyl is here to stay for now.

Nostalgia is a very strong tool that is used every day to bring people back to the past; what they deem to be a simpler time in their life, could be their childhood, their high school years, or their college years. This practice has become very common with television shows being set in decades like the 1980s or television shows from the 1980s or 1990s being brought back to tell more of their stories. Vinyl records are one form of nostalgia used to bring people back in time. This is usually true for people who were born before the 1990s. Those who grew up in times before the 1990s most likely grew up with a record player and would use vinyl records as a way to listen to their favorite music. Besides the radio, vinyl was the only way to listen to music especially one favorite music specifically. Lots of people agree with this “anyone who was around when records were first introduced would agree that nostalgia plays a part in their popularity, conjuring up fond memories of the ‘good old days” (Asprou). This way of connecting with a simpler time makes the popularity of vinyl rise. Not only that but also, vinyl today is considered vintage to younger people. Lots of younger people want to know what it was like to live in the times that their parents or grandparents grew up in. Vinyl records being considered a vintage item helps young people feel connected in a way to the past. Not to mention, this helps younger people connect and bond with older family members who enjoy vinyl as a way to listen to music. The idea of wanting to go back to the past or try to connect to what the past was like for others is strong and thus leads to items like vinyl regaining popularity. Nostalgia is only one of many reasons why vinyl has gained popularity again.

Another reason why vinyl has possibly regained popularity is because of the belief that vinyl gives better sound quality than digital music ever could. Some people have always gravitated toward vinyl for that reason, the frequencies given off from vinyl seem to be the best. For those who really want the sound quality of their music to be the best that it can be, people choose to only use vinyl for music. This is an important factor to people who have a genuine appreciation

for the sound quality that comes from an album, they would much rather have the best possible sound rather than anything else. There is some basis for this argument, “many experts feel that the old-school analog audio provided by vinyl sounds superior to digital audio — especially the lossy (compressed) digital formats used by streaming services” (Goslin). This idea leads to more and more people believing that buying vinyl is better rather than digital copies of the music. It is possible that this is part of the reason why vinyl records have come back into popularity, especially if a fair number of people believe that vinyl gives off better sound quality. If more people believe that then more buy the vinyl and leads to them gaining more and more popularity. This reason is just another of many as to why vinyl has possibly gained the popularity that it once used to have today.

One other explanation as to why vinyl has become as popular as it has again is the idea that some prefer having a physical copy of their music rather than a digital one. In a world that is very digital when it comes to outlets such as television, movies, and of course music it is understandable why one would want to have a tangible copy of their music. They can truly say that the music is theirs when they buy a physical copy of the music. The reasoning behind this is a valid one, “vinyl can be shared, traded, gifted, autographed and tacked to the bedroom wall” (Kane). One can have fun with having digital copies of their music, they can swap their vinyl with a friend and find some new music or listen to an album they have not heard in a while. Not to mention, vinyl makes for good decorations especially if one either is a musician or a big fan of music. Having a physical copy of the music provides for many different uses, more than digital ones can provide. Vinyl also gives a person something to hold on to, they can see their music right in front of them and take actual hold of it whereas that is not the case with digital copies. For some, this is what they prefer and enjoy because they would much rather have something physical to hold on to. This is just one of the many explanations as to why vinyl records have come back around and regained the popularity that they have.

Vinyl provides somewhat of an interactive experience rather than playing music on a device. The needle on the record player has to be moved and once the music on one side has played, the vinyl must be flipped over to hear the rest. It is not as simple as a push of a button like it is for a digital device. The listeners have to take time with the record player and take part in the experience rather than having the music on in the background as they go about doing other activities. When listeners do this, “instead of moving on to something else, fans find they take the time to look through the album art, read the lyrics, look for surprises in the band’s supporting musicians or liner notes” (Kane). For some music fans, taking part in looking at the art on the album and finding out more about the band by sitting and focusing on the music is what they enjoy. In a way, it is an experience that connects them to the music and the artists themselves, it really becomes more of an active experience for listeners rather than passive. This interactive music experience explains one of the many reasons why vinyl has become very popular today.

Though vinyl has been around for a long time and has gone in and out of style, it was thought at some point in the early 2000s that time for vinyl had passed. That this time they were most likely never going to come back around and if they did they would not be as popular as they once were. However, this thought has been disproven as vinyl has become extremely popular again. They have become so popular that the once very popular CD is now a forgotten way of listening to music. It seems that vinyl is just as popular today as they were when they were at their peak, now outselling CDs in their entirety. There are many reasons as to why this is the case and for some it is nostalgia, older people wanting to take a walk back to the past and relish in their

memories of when life seemed to be so simple for them. For others, usually, those who are younger and were not around when vinyl was very popular, it is this idea that vinyl is vintage and a way for them to connect with their older relatives and the past. Some have come to buying vinyl rather than digital music because they believe the sound quality given off by vinyl records is much better than digital music could ever produce. The popularity of vinyl resurging for some is because they want to have a tangible copy of their music. That way they can either swap music with friends, buy music for their loved ones, or use vinyl as a way to decorate their home. Some simply prefer having an actual copy of their music to hold on to and pass down to others at a later time rather than just have a digital copy of the music. Finally, for others, the interactive experience required with vinyl is how they prefer to listen to their music. They prefer to actively engage with their music and dedicate time to listening to the songs. There is no one reason as to why vinyl has come back around with the popularity that they have, all of these have some truth to playing part in this resurgence. It seems that with all of these reasons combined, vinyl will be staying around and remaining popular for now and most likely for a while.

Works Cited

1. Aspro, Helen. “Vinyl records to outsell CDs in 2019 for the first time in 40 years.” Classic FM, 22 October 2019, https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/millennials-are-going-nuts-for-vinyl-revival/. Accessed 4 November 2019.
2. Goslin, Ted. “Five Reasons Vinyl is Making a Comeback.” Yamaha Music USA, 24 August 2018, https://hub.yamaha.com/five-reasons-vinyl-is-making-a-comeback/. Accessed 4 November 2019.
3. Kane, Jessica. “6 Reasons Why Vinyl is Popular Again.” TuneCore, 19 April 2016, https://www.tunecore.com/blog/2016/04/why-vinyl-is-popular-again.html. Accessed 4 November 2019.