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Just a few gripes about the state of modern music

To start off the year right, and to fulfill my responsibility as an entertainment "critic" (wow), I feel a need to voice a few thoughts. Well, 10 thoughts to be exact. Just a few complaints, bothers, and downright hates from a disgruntled critic. Here they are, in descending order:



John Righter
Reviewer

10. Why do people buy Rolling Stone over Spin? Spin is a more well-rounded magazine that doesn't waste its time criticizing every political event that happens. Rolling Stone lost all respect when it employed Abbie Hoffman as a political extremist — oops, I mean *analyst*. Give me a break. What is it, the Guccione name.

9. Sampling in songs. Enough is enough. Its time for some real lyrics, guys. I'll write you some if you just knock off the sampling. The novelty is gone.

8. The phasing out of LPs by the music companies. I bet that once they introduce DAT players they'll begin to phase out CDs. How many of you have already transferred your record collection to CD? Let's wake up people; we're being ripped off.

7. Richard Marx. He had a chance after "It Don't Mean Nothing," but has since slipped into the dreaded "I am musically retarded" category (also known as the Phil Collins syndrome). Is it just me or do "Hold On to the Nights" and "I'll Be Waiting" sound exactly alike?

6. New Kids on the Block. How many of us feel tough enough to go beat these annoying, hormone-deficient brats until their hair gel falls out?

These kids prove that puberty should be a prerequisite for a record contract. They think they're cool because a couple of company execs can pull their strings and tell them what to sing and how to perform. Hey, tough guys, go ask Bobby Brown what he now thinks of New Edition.

5. Miller Lite. Why with all the great new bands out there did you go and waste your money on The Who? For \$25 I want to see more than a band that's been creatively dead for almost 20 years.

And the Fabulous Thunderbirds (wow). Those guys would play at a grocery store opening. Thumbs up, though, for Stevie Ray Vaughn.

4. The celebration of the anniversary of Woodstock. People are actually proud of a three-day fiasco that promoted massive drugs, open sex, socialistic (otherwise known as "I'm too damn lazy to work") ideas, and that spit at and derided our government and our soldiers in Vietnam. I'm disgusted, embarrassed and ashamed that it ever took place. Let's blame it on the Communists.

3. Glam Rockers. You know, Bon Jovi, Winger, Poison, Warrant, Ratt, etc., etc. It just makes me nauseous. They all look alike, sound alike, dance and move around alike,

and sing only about partying and love (and lost love, and lustful love, and tragic love, and forgotten love, and renewed love, and, and, and . . .). Just one of you, cut your hair, wear a Polo, and sing about bread lines.

2. Bono and Sting. A couple of monosyllabic, egomaniacal geeks. Yes, geeks. Who else would willingly name themselves Bono or Sting? Come on. And, yes, they are so profound and so in tune with society's problems.

Thank God that they and their cameraman, public relations people, and video producers are there to catch every heart-wrenching, soul-grabbing, tear-jerking moment. I was more impressed with Ozzy Osbourne pissing off of the Alamo than by anything these guys have ever done.

1. The big one — dinosaur shows, otherwise known as reunion concerts. About five years ago Deep Purple, Yes, and The Moody Blues set this big wheel in motion. It is out of control. Wasn't it in 1982 that The Who had their farewell tour? Hmm.

They are not releasing an album, no this is not a permanent thing, and they can never work together in the studio again. But a tour, hmm. Just enough to embarrass themselves some more, disillusion you sad and hopeless chumps, and pad their pockets.

And how about those Stones? Boy, weren't they great about 20 or 25 years ago. And isn't it miraculous how Mick and Keith made up. God, I was really worried there. It seemed like no amount of money would ever bring them back together again.

And now we have The Allman Brothers, Little Feat, Jefferson Airplane, Three Dog Night, The Doobie Brothers, Anderson, Bruford, Wakeman, and Howe, and the list goes on and on and on.

REM, The Cure, Metallica and The Replacements, please, be truer, more noble than your pathetic forefathers. And Led Zeppelin, dammit, stay dead. I couldn't stand to watch Jimmy Page make a fool out of himself again, like he did at Live Aid.

Gee, boy do I feel better. Nothing like waging a one-man crusade to save the whole music industry from itself. But hey, someone's got to do it!

MTV network introduces new all-comedy channel

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The 1980s burned through a lot of fads, but MTV: Music Television has refused to join the trendsetter trash heap.

Growing stagnant, MTV and its music-video format have been revamped from top to bottom, and have emerged on its eighth anniversary as one of television's more robust and diverse enterprises.

In the wake of a two-year overhaul spread across MTV and its two affiliated channels — VH-1 and Nickelodeon-Nick at Nite — MTV Networks now features a mix of game shows, children's programs, newscasts, dance shows, sitcom reruns and rap music.

MTV's archly irreverent "Remote Control" quiz show has become so popular that it's now a hit in the TV syndication market. Nickelodeon, jammed with offbeat children's shows, will deliver 2,343 episodes this year, an increase of more than 300 percent since 1986.

After losing about \$50 million in its first two years, MTV Networks now has a combined subscriber base of 125 million viewers, MTV says, and a growing following overseas. Earnings for the three channels through the second quarter of this year were up 21 percent from last year, to \$17.9 million.

All the same, MTV's evolution has been clumsy at times, and the future is dotted with challenges. Even after a redesign, soft-rock VH-1 still attracts meager audiences. And Nick at Nite has yet to become more than a rest home for old sitcoms.

In the coming months both MTV and Home Box Office will introduce all-comedy cable channels.

"We think a comedy channel is a real logical next step for us," said Tom Freston, MTV Network's president and chief executive officer. "But I think that you probably will see only one (comedy channel) surviving."

With HA!, as MTV's comedy channel will be called, MTV will be chasing the competition.

"I think that what we're doing is unique and innovative and what they're doing is already available on other cable channels," said Dick Beahrs, president of HBO's Comedy Channel.

The Comedy Channel, which debuts in November, will be composed of brief comedy sketches culled from movies and nightclub performances, complemented by occasional feature-length films and sitcoms. HA!, using longer-form program packages, premieres April 1.

MTV's other channels continue to be reworked. VH-1, now 4 years old, faces perhaps the most difficult battle.

Freston labels VH-1 "a work in progress." A few cable operators have called it something else: unnecessary.

When the Consumer News and Business Channel began in April, several cable systems bumped VH-1 to make room at a cost of nearly a million subscribers, according to CNBC. MTV, however, says it's closer to 250,000.

"It (VH-1) was a repository for everything MTV didn't want to play," Freston said. "And it still has a way to go."

VH-1 these days offers a blend of artists such as Enya, Fine Young Cannibals, 10,000 Maniacs and Edie Brickell & The New Bohemians. Gone for good, VH-1 promises, are Julio Iglesias and Neil Diamond.

The channel also has added life-style reports, entertainment news, nostalgia programming such as "My Generation" and the Sunday jazz show "New Visions." A new comedy program will join the VH-1 lineup this fall.

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