

THE BATTALION Classified Ads

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Music

THE SOUNDTRACK OF OUR LIVES



STEVEN GYESZLY
COLUMNIST

In life, everything we say and do is mere camouflage for our true personality. Yet there is one aspect of our lives that describes us in just one glimpse: our CD collection.

The music we buy and listen to explains everything about us, all in a convenient carrying case. Glance through someone's collection and, judging by what lurks in there, one can tell if someone is really the ace they pretend to be or just a big loser with a penchant for Barry Manilow. Every CD is like a clue, adding to the complete pattern of the person.

The first thing to look for in a music collection is the method of organization. If CDs are strewn about in no particular order or being held in the wrong case, this is a clear sign that the owner's bedroom floor is lined with a thick layer of filthy socks and dirty clothes. What's worse is if the CDs are in strict alphabetical order, or subdivided by genre and year of release. This is the mating call of the truly anal retentive — just hope they have the decency to wait until you leave before they begin dusting.

Even more important than organization is content. In most parts of the country, a collection with more than two Garth Brooks albums is grounds for divorce. But around here, excessive country compilations are more prevalent. Though concessions must be granted for locale, much can be inferred by a music collection where one comes face to face with George Strait and Randy Travis on a habitual basis. Where one finds extensive country gold, three other things are sure to be scattered around as well — empty Pearl Light cans, Copenhagen-ring-around-the-Wranglers, and a nasty dog that constantly scratches itself.

If the focus of someone's collection relies heavily on the sound of the fiddle, you should be focused on something else, how to make a quick escape without slipping on the sawdust.

But what about the person whose collection is chock-full of MTV buzz bands and groups that have a stranglehold on the Weekly Top 40? Underneath that layer of Mossimo or Fear apparel reveals a soul as simple as a Hootie and the Blowfish concept album and an attitude as refreshingly juvenile as the average Bush fan. Those people in this category are the reason the Goo Goo Dolls are creatures; unless, of course, you stand between them and the best trend.

Also, look out for the music collection firmly grounded in the '60s and the '70s. These CD owners merely want to get back to the day when the "music mattered, man." Not especially aggressive, the '60s and '70s fan's main hobby is relaxing eyes closed, dreaming about refurbishing that VW Bug, or somehow incorporating more flow. But be warned. Spending too much time around the complete Doors and Pink Floyd collection can lead someone to obsessively search for that perfect black light poster and develop an appreciation for tie-dye.

Perhaps the category that says the most is the one that consists primarily of British downer music like The Smiths, Morrissey and Depeche Mode. Whoever possesses albums more than one of these bands is sure to be annoying in several categories. One category is the intense admiration of everything British, from accents to tweed jackets. To them, heaven consists of sipping tea and watching Hugh Grant films. Even more frightening is their obsession with the music, knowing inconsequential trivia facts about the artists, identifying with them on a personal basis, and worst of all, constantly singing along even when the accompanying music stops.

Personalities trail music collections and vice-versa. No one will fit into these rigid categories, but if music is the soundtrack of our lives, the key is making sure the score was composed by Barry Manilow.

Steven Gyeszly is a Class of '99 finance and sociology major.

WHAM! HOOKED ON THE '80s

I have become an obsession. I am officially addicted. I am standing up right now and admitting I need help. I wish there were a support group because I need to confer with others who share my affliction. I am hooked on the '80s.

I am not talking about Reaganomics, skateboards, slouch socks, side ponytails or even Reebok high-tops. It's the music. It has invaded my head and will not let me out of its grasp.

Infomercials try to sell weak mind and bodied souls — my roommates and myself included — CDs that remind us of roller rinks, riding our skateboards down the street, and playing dodgeball during recess in elementary school. They have definitely targeted the right audience and are making a killing. My roommate ordered one such compilation just last week, and I am not ashamed to admit that I have about 10 nostalgic albums at home and at least five cassettes in my car.

I don't know what the deal is. Were the '80s really such a great decade? Sure, most of us grew up during this time, but it was not that exciting of a decade compared to the '20s or the '60s. But the one thing the products of the '80s will always have is the music. Whenever a song from groups like REO Speedwagon (which is on tour this summer), the Thompson Twins, Toto, Hall & Oates or the Bangles come on the radio, everyone knows the words, sings along, and usually has a story to accompany it.

But perhaps the best band of the '80s (in my opinion of course) is Wham. Yes, the band that brought us big bleached hair, George Michael, and songs like

"Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go," deserve its own little space in music history. My addiction with Wham began in about 1985 while listening to Rick Dees In The Morning. My first musical purchase was *Make It Big* and I still own the album along with a tape, and my roommate has the CD. But what made my affection with Wham grow exponentially was a little spring break trip to California last year.

While driving through the dusty no-man's-land of New Mexico, my roommates and I were innocently bopping along with "Freedom" when we decided to switch the tape. Unfortunately for us, the Volvo — made tape deck decided it did not agree with our plans, and eight days and three states later, we had memorized every song forward and backward. But believe it or not, we were still somewhat jovial and singing along.

Even Pam (my buddy) was jamming to Wham on the way to New Orleans two weeks ago. Normally, when someone has been forced to listen to a CD over and over and over again, they either kill someone or themselves just to make the music stop. Wham had the opposite affect on us. We continue to listen to Wham, sometimes non-stop. I found my *Edge of Heaven* tape at home, and I am content listening to the "Wham Rap" constantly while my friends debate whether or not to medicate me because of my condition.

So you may see me jumping around in my car dancing on Texas Avenue and wonder why I am singing "You can have my credit card baby, but keep your red hands off of my heart, baby," but at least I'm enjoying myself. I have not found a Wham Anonymous — maybe I should start my own program. But there must be other's out there like me. I hope.

Kristina Buffin is a Class of '97 journalism major.

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