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Changing Listening Habits in Norway:

The Album Format, Vinyl Revival and

Transformations in the Music Industry

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is about the album format, listening habits and the vinyl. In order to properly discuss these themes I have had to include some recent history, as it is in the past 50 years that we have seen major changes in both how we consume, purchase and access music. Be it the introduction of technologies like the Sony Walkman, which made it possible to take your music on the move, or the CD and eventually the MP3: technology that brought music into cyberspace. All this eventually led to discussions about intellectual property and copyright infringement. Anja Hagen has written on listening habits in Norway, and found that many favoured the playlist to other, perhaps more traditional formats like the album. Similarly Anahid Kassabian also writes on listening habits, and a mode of listening she calls ‘ubiquitous listening’, where we pay less attention to what we are listening to than before. Where Hagen has used a qualitative approach to uncover listening habits, I have used a quantitative questionnaire in order to elicit a greater number of responses. My thesis stands out as it discusses both listening habits, but also how these have changed alongside the technological innovations. As I also discuss how these changes have impacted the recording industry, I have sought to provide a wide frame that includes many different aspects of music today. Finally I address the recent popularity of the vinyl record, and include an autoethnographical account about the production of vinyl, as I have released a vinyl with my band.

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I would like to thank all the people who answered the questionnaire, I would thank each and every one of you individually, but as I don't know who you are, this will have to suffice. My gratitude goes to both Jacob Krogvold and Jakob Kaas who offered their time to ask them questions about their professions.

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And to all of my family and friends who has either read, commented or asked me about this thesis, I thank you for being inquisitive and forcing me to think about this in more general terms without the academic jargon.

Lastly, I would like to thank Jørn Kaarstad and Bård Linga, my interest in this topic and vinyl in general has grown immensely through our experiences as a band. Making an album, and having it pressed on vinyl alongside you guys has been an absolute honour.

Honourable mention to all I have forgotten, and all the bands and artists I've met and listened to throughout the two years I've spent working on this thesis. Finally I have provided a list of five albums or pieces of music that have been on periodic constant rotation while being more or less a shut-in at a study hall at Dragvoll, NTNU in Trondheim:

Nonagon Infinity - King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard

Murder of the Universe - King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard

Born Like This - Doom

Hollow Knight (OST) - Christopher Larkin

Rap Album Two - Jonwayne

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

2016 revealed that vinyl for the first time in history had outsold digital downloads (O'Connor, 2016). The popularity of vinyl, a format that has been around for almost a hundred years, is puzzling when the alternative listening modes of today are akin to something out of a science fiction novel. As innovations in music technology have made music both more affordable and accessible, it seems as though it is becoming more like a commodity to be consumed by listeners, and less like a piece of art as many artists choose to view it as. If this is the case, more fragmented listening, where one picks out certain songs from albums and rearranges them in playlists might lead to this replacing the more album-oriented listening that has existed since the 1960s. This thesis was conceived as being about the album format, but as work with it progressed I realized that I could not talk about “modern listening habits” without acknowledging the drastic changes that have taken place both within the industry, and in how fans access, listen, and interact with their favourite artists today. Even during the process of writing this thesis there have been significant incidents in the music industry both on a local and global scale, be it news that Spotify went public in March of 2018, that YouTube is launching its own streaming service, or that there has opened a new record store that only sells vinyl in my little city of Trondheim. These things, amongst a heap of others, are evidence that the landscape of peoples listening modes is in constant change and that there is nothing that is set in stone in this ever-innovating technological climate.

The album format emerged with the popularity of the twelve-inch vinyl in the late 1950s. As artists moved away from just releasing seven-inch vinyl singles many saw the twelve-inch, with its two sides that each could hold up to 25 minutes, as a new exciting format ripe for experimentation. In an attempt to get a better understanding of how the traditional album format fares in this new environment I used a quantitative approach by composing a brief online survey about peoples listening habits. My choice to survey listeners in Norway is in part because it's where I live, but also because Norway is one of the leading nations when it comes to music streaming. As Spotify is a Swedish product, Norway was one of the first countries to have access to its musical library, and the software was used by a diverse public.

I was interested in finding out if the users of streaming services are conscious of formats like the album when it is becoming easier to create one's own playlists and thus disrupting the flow that the artists and producers who created the music had intentionally envisioned for the listener. As listeners of earlier times were bound to certain formats, like the long-playing record, technological innovations over the past 50 years have made it increasingly simpler to make adjustments and, in some ways, make the music you are listening to your own.

Throughout this thesis, I will use terms like consumer, product and piracy. All of these terms imply that music as a medium indeed is a product that can be consumed, and that we as people are the customers who evidently pay the shop-keepers thus financing the whole the record industry. Throughout this thesis, I will apply different names for people who buy, or don't buy, music and listen to it. Are they simply consumers? Can music be consumed? It is true that in most cases music is a product that is made by a capitalist industry in the effort to make more money, but this does not necessarily mean that this kind of music is not to be considered art. As I've discovered during the writing of this thesis, people have different tastes and assumptions. What one considers art might be viewed as just another money-grab by a record label by someone else. Another argument can be that music is something one experiences, it can change your mood or make you think, stir up emotions and memories related to what it is you are hearing. One could argue that by calling listeners consumers, that this does a discredit towards all music that is not intended to be played at malls, but again, some might find this kind of music objectively good. Because of these reasons, I choose to use a variety of different names for the audience, like consumers, listeners, users, the audience and even the public, because some of these terms fit better than others, when discussing the different parts of this thesis.

The first part of my thesis will revolve around how recent technological advancements like music streaming has affected how we listen to music. I ascertained this information by distributing a short questionnaire that I hoped many people would respond to. The second part revolves around the phenomena known as "the vinyl revival", where I bring into discussion two interviews with people who work in various record stores in Norway to get their take on the current trend that surrounds the vinyl record. I also included a chapter on methodology, as

I experienced a lot of unexpected advantages of utilizing a digital questionnaire that was distributed via the social media.

Historical background

As mentioned above, the concept of the album emerged through the development and popularity of the 12-inch vinyl record. Since its introduction in the late 1940s this format has been what artists of a vast array of musical genres have used to put out their latest music, although the term ‘album’ had been around for quite some time before that. Originally it was used to describe bound collections of 10-inch 78 rpm records, as the package resembled a photo album, and like a photo album you could flick through the pages like you would with one of those. These typically featured 4-5 disks which could contain around 8 to 10 songs on one album (Curtis 2017b). One of the earliest (if not the first) of these albums was released in 1909 by the German record label Odeon, which was a recording of Tchaikovsky’s Nutcracker Suite performed by the London Palace Orchestra. It was released on four double-sided 78-rpm records, most likely made out of shellac which was the most commonly used material for records at the time (Macauley, 2010).

As the 1950s drew to an end the 7-inch vinyl single overtook the popularity of the 78-inch vinyl and was considered the primary product for the record industry. This happened at roughly the same time as the advent of rock & roll, which in many ways was the first popular music that was for young people, who were neither adults nor children. Previous to this there had been records intended for children, and records for adults, but nothing for “that burgeoning bulge of the baby-boom population caught between childhood and adulthood.” (Palmer, 1990). Artists like Chuck Berry, Elvis Presley and Frank Sinatra were primarily driven by 7-inch single sales, and with its affordable price, young adults made up a large part of their markets. This trend can also be seen on these artists 12-inch releases, where you had hit songs here and there, and a lot of ‘fillers’ that would essentially fill out the remaining sides of the record. Thus, these early albums can be viewed more as a collection of songs, often recorded at different studios at different times, than a *piece of art* within itself (Curtis, 2017a).

The Beatles are often credited for reshaping what an album could be, especially through 1965 album *Rubber Soul* that many view as the start of how albums would become in the future. The album in itself looks no different than their previous efforts, but the differences are found within. One of the features that makes it unique is that it was their second album to only feature original songs, the first being *A Hard Day's Night* which served more as a soundtrack to the film with the same name. Another feature that was new for *Rubber Soul* was that it was the first time The Beatles had recorded an album without being interrupted by touring or other ventures. This gives the album a certain feel, and moreover, the songs seem to have a connection to one another, rather than previous albums that could have cover songs on it, or had songs recorded at different times over a larger period of time. Musically the songs themselves also marked a shift in the band's sound, as Paul McCartney explains:

“The direction was changing away from the Thank You Girl poppy stuff, the early stuff – From Me to You, She Loves You. All the early stuff was directly relating to your fans, kind of saying, please buy this record, Thank You Girl, PS I Love You, it was all very that. There came a point where we'd done enough of that and branched out, into sounds that are a bit more surreal, more entertaining. Other people were arriving on the scene who were a little bit influential. Dylan was starting to influence us quite heavily at that point” (“The Beatles Anthology : 5 & 6” 2003).

This new approach to making an album also came out of their growing contempt for touring. As musical equipment in the sixties were limited in a live setting, it became increasingly difficult for them to perform live when screaming girls would make more sound than their drums and amplifiers. Also, the band's increasing experimentation in the studio made it difficult to recreate their music live, thus, leading the band to stop performing live in 1966. With the two following albums to *Rubber Soul*; *Revolver* and *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, The Beatles continued to experiment, leading them to release what many call the first concept album with *Sgt. Pepper's*. The album has, however, criticised for not being a true concept album, as not all the songs have a connection with each other, John Lennon notes:

“It's called the first concept album, it doesn't go anywhere, Mr. Kite – all my contributions – had nothing to do with this idea of Sgt Pepper and his band. But it works because we said it worked and that's how it appeared.” (“The Beatles Anthology : 5 & 6” 2003).

With this, The Beatles had constructed something that would serve to replace them as touring musicians. Instead of having to go out into the world themselves, the album could do the touring for them. *Sgt. Pepper's* is however seen as a starting point for these kinds of albums,

that had a theme and is meant to be heard from start to finish. In some ways, this made it possible for later bands like Pink Floyd or Jethro Tull to release their concept albums; *The Dark Side of the Moon* and *Thick as a Brick*.

Cassettes, CDs, and the MP3 with its New Features

In 1963 Philips introduced the world's first musical cassette tape. In contrast to the vinyl which at the time was a static format, the cassette with its small size and durable casing made it superior in terms of portability (Volda, Grinter, & Ducheneaut, 2006, p. 60). This portability meant that you could take your music with you on the go, like the transistor radio of earlier times. It also allowed you to choose your own music in the car with the introduction of the in-car cassette player.

In the 1980s as CDs and CD-players arrived, listeners were given a whole new set of functions which allowed for pausing, fast forward and reverse, shuffle play and repeat functions, and the ability to skip to the next track. The CD-player's new functionalities would ultimately serve to foreshadow how digitalisation would impact how music was to be consumed in the future. Although it was possible to use functions like skip and repeat with the earlier formats like vinyl and tape, the CD-player made it much more convenient and thus people took to using these functions on a larger scale than before. This can also be accredited to the remote-control that was included in most of the CD-player packages (Reynolds, 2011, p. 71).

When Sony introduced the first "personal stereo" in 1979 with the Walkman, music became portable like never before. Of course you could take a portable record player and a handful of singles with you somewhere, but with the Walkman you could bring a vast array of tapes with you anywhere, due to both its tiny size and light weight. As cassette technology became increasingly affordable during the 1980s as a result of newer technologies like the compact disc, people began to create their own mixtapes (Volda et al., 2006, p. 60). This was done by inserting an audio source, either a turntable or a radio into a cassette player with a record-

function and recording your chosen piece of audio onto an empty cassette tape. This type of creation, where the listener is able to curate their own music, can be seen as a more time-consuming precursor to today's practice of creating playlists on a CD or in a streaming service like Spotify.

During the 1980s it looked as though vinyl was a thing of the past. Decreasing sales led to record labels favouring newer formats like the musical cassette and later the CD. As it is with almost every new piece of technology, price and affordability are impacted. However, practically a new format like the CD was, it was a lot more expensive in the 1980s than older formats like vinyl or cassette tapes. CD-players could cost as much as 1000 USD at the time, and CDs usually sold for around 17 USD (40 USD in 2015) (Rothman, 2015).

Using a function like skip on the analogue format of vinyl versus the new digital CD-player involve two quite different approaches. To skip to the next track on a CD-player you could just press a button on a remote, just as you would browse the channels on your television using your TV-remote. To do this using a record player and a vinyl there are several extra steps involved. If you wanted to listen to the previous track again, there are certain issues involved; one is the distance from where you were sitting to the turntable, the lack of precision in placing the needle on the desired groove of the record, and the potential of damaging your records by not being careful. With these factors in mind, many would tend to listen to an album as a whole, rather than skipping to the next track after just a couple of seconds. The ease of use that comes with the ability to skip to the next song doesn't only make it easier to disrupt the flow of the music, but it also makes it more tempting (Reynolds, 2011, p. 71).

In 1994, German research institute Fraunhofer introduced the world's first software for encoding MP3s. What followed shortly after was the introduction of the first MP3 player for computers. The digital format spread alongside the development and continuing growth of the Internet during the 1990s (Reynolds, 69). With the MP3, music underwent a transformation,

from being something physical you would buy at a store, to a digital file within a computer you couldn't even see. Writing in 2005, Mark Katz explains:

“As I have pointed out, the tangibility of traditional recordings has made sound partable in unprecedented ways. But their very physicality place an upper limit on how easily and quickly music can be moved, even as recording media have become sturdier and smaller. Digital music files, however, are dramatically more portable than their more tangible kin. Depending on the speed of one's Internet connection a three-minute pop song can be downloaded from or e-mailed to anywhere in the world in a matter of seconds” (2005, p. 164).

When Internet technology became better, some made it possible to share these digital MP3 music files from one computer to another, using something known as peer-to-peer sharing (P2P). The most prominent company providing such P2P sharing services was the American company Napster, who became immensely popular in the late 1990s and early 2000s. This popularity of sharing music lead to the discussion concerning copyright laws, and eventually, lawsuits were filed against Napster in 2000 by prominent figures in the record industry. One of these cases was spearheaded by the American thrash metal band Metallica (Kravets, 2007). Metallica became the poster-band for artists voicing their concerns about the increase of illegal downloading. This was in part due to the potential loss of revenue from album sales, but also because a demo of one of their songs had been leaked through Napster before its release (“Lars Ulrich Testimony for Senate Judiciary Committee,” 2000). The band had managed to get a hold of a list containing the names of 335,435 Napster usernames that all had downloaded or shared Metallica's music (Ludwig, 2017). Metallica's involvement in the piracy issue garnered a lot of backlash, from fans burning their records, to being ridiculed in the media. However in later years the band has embraced the streaming realm, and Ulrich has even become friends with Sean Parker, Napster's founder whom he had sued some eighteen years ago.

Internet Pirates Shake the Industry's Foundations

The feeling, or fear, at the time was that this new type of piracy - piracy had been around before, both with cassette tapes and unlicensed VHS video tapes - became more prominent due to ease of use, and that this new type of piracy would eventually lead to the death of all music. Most people who grew up in the 00s still remember the “Piracy Kills Music” ads that were being broadcast relentlessly on television and on the beginning of DVDs. These

compared downloading music to stealing a car or someone's purse. Professor of media sociology Hendrik Storstein Spilker provides different ways to view the campaign, amongst them are "The support-and-help-the-industry-frame" and "The dying-dinosaur frame". The first of these was spearheaded by Norwegian artists Karpe Diem and Madcon, who both claimed that smaller artists couldn't get anywhere without the support of a label behind them, and that this would be impossible when the labels weren't making money. The latter frame is the one that is backed by Internet activists and critics of the Industry, comparing it to a dying dinosaur that is ripe for extinction (Spilker, 2018, pp. 138–139). The dinosaur comparison was actually first used by GramArt which is a Norwegian organization for artists that provide counselling and legal help, but since then the term has been used by a wide array of people. An example of this is American punk-rock outfit NOFX, led by their singer known as Fat Mike who also is the founder of the well-known independent punk label Fat Wreck Chords, a label that to this day refuses to be a member of the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America), although they are often included in their list of members against their own will (FAQ., Fatwreck.com, n.d.). NOFX's song "Dinosaurs Will Die" features lyrics that both criticises the old ways of the industry, celebrates its demise, and welcomes a new era where music is written from a place of "devotion, not ambition, not for fame". The claim whether or not music piracy would kill music is debatable, but the concern felt by both the industry and artists during this time would prove to be legitimate. In all, the industry did take a massive hit during these years with a "31 per cent decline in recorded music sales between 2004 and 2010 and a potential retail loss of 240 billion euros from 2008 to 2015 in Europe" (Sinclair & Green, 2016, p. 3).

However, it should be mentioned that not all artists felt the same way as Metallica did. They had supporters like Dr. Dre, and several artists also came out in support of file-sharing, and Napster in particular. Radiohead leaked several of their songs from their upcoming 2000 album *Kid A* through Napster and they also did a similar thing later in 2007 with *In Rainbows*, where they allowed fans to pay what they wanted for the album (this amount could also be zero). Another supporter of Napster, who also testified before congress in 2003, was Chuck D of the hip hop group Public Enemy. He praised Napster, and the Internet's ability to promote lesser-known artists who perhaps did not have a machine like a major record label working

for them. Calling downloadable music “the radio of the new millennium” in his testimony, Chuck D also went on to say:

“So many artists don’t get a chance to be on the radio or MTV, or be on a major label “...” This is how they get heard. Why would you wanna deny them that?” (Margolis, 2000).

Napster served as a sort of poster-child for how downloading content would eventually lead to legal repercussions, but as their executives entered the courtroom in 2000 similar file-sharing networks that offered the same services were popping up all over the Internet. Sites like Kazaa, Limewire and the Pirate Bay would fill the void left by Napster’s absence, making it increasingly difficult for both the industry and the legislative branches of different governments to stop the illegal sharing of their content (Hoier & Spilker, 2013, p. 8).

Interestingly, by taking Napster to court, the record industry had given other sites like Kazaa not only a large portion of Napster’s former clientele, but also a glimpse into how they could avoid being prosecuted themselves. During the trial in 2000, Napster’s executives could easily be found in the company’s Silicon Valley offices; with Kazaa it was a bit more complicated. Kazaa was owned by a company called Sharman Networks, which was based in the pacific island and known tax haven Vanuatu. Their servers were in Denmark and the kazaa.com Internet domain was registered by yet another company, LEF Interactive. Being this careful meant it would at least be more troublesome for the authorities to apprehend Kazaa’s executives (Knopper 2009, p. 191).

The record industry finally got its break in 2005 when a unanimous United States Supreme Court ruled in the record industry’s favour, leading Kazaa, Grokster and Morpheus to stop distributing their software in the following months. Even though it was a huge victory for the record industry, some were not as inclined to celebrate just yet, like former RIAA chairperson Hilary Rosen who said, “I’ve been cautioning people in the industry not to be too euphoric over this-because no matter what the courts ever say, the courts can’t keep up with technology” (Knopper, 2009, p. 195). Rosen turned out to be right of course. Following the 2005 verdict people were still pirating content at an alarming rate. Although paid services like the iTunes store were available, people still found ways to work around the fact that these

three giants in the piracy game had died. A term that had been used during these years within the industry was that trying to defeat these services was a lot like playing Wack-a-Mole, where as soon as you ‘wack’ one of these companies, three new ones pop up. Rio Caraeff who is the CEO of Vevo, which is a multinational video hosting service owned by the current “big three” major record labels, said this about the ongoing war on piracy in 2012: “Piracy is a bit like the war on drugs, it’s an unwinnable war in my opinion.” (Sawers, 2012).

This claim, however bleak it might be, informs us not only what little hope the recording industry had for the future, but also something about how there has been a shift in peoples’ perception of music. The industry’s perception of piracy seems to be that stealing physical music from a store, and downloading it online are the same thing. There are, however, scholars like Mark Katz who argue otherwise, that downloading is not stealing in the same way as one steals someone’s possessions. When you download a song, you do not take it from someone else’s computer, but you get a copy of it (Katz, 2005, p. 163).

The suit against Napster also led to questions regarding if a company like this is responsible for how users choose to use its software. With Napster working as it did, where the users share the music on their hard drive with other users, makes every user complicit in copyright infringement, and not necessarily just the people at the top of the company. This question of who should be held accountable was also relevant when the F.B.I. raided the home of Kim Dotcom, the founder of Megaupload, and shut down the company. Megaupload is not a P2P service in the same vein as Napster. It allowed you to upload files and then you got a link to the file that you could distribute to anyone you wanted to have access to the file. However, Megaupload and its founder got a lot of support from the artistic community (the extensive list includes artists from Kanye West and P Diddy, to Alicia Keys, Mary J Blige and Will.i.am.). The service had been immensely popular amongst music producers, as they could exchange songs and ideas effortlessly, and fast, using the service (Enigmax, 2011). For the consumer, downloading something from the Internet often does not really feel like you’re committing a crime. You are in some ways wearing blinders, not seeing the crime for what it is. As long as these tendencies/feelings exist within users of music, it will be hard, or impossible, to go back to the way things used to be.

Listening in the Age of Streaming

Rather than having to download content from services like LimeWire or Napster, or by torrenting through sites like the Pirate Bay, it seems most users today have chosen to use streaming services like the immensely popular Spotify. Like the iTunes Store, it features a simple interface that allows you to search for whatever music you would like to listen to, and within seconds you have access to that artist's whole discography. Spotify also allows the users to create their own playlists or subscribe to curated ones that could be managed by anything from celebrities, record companies, or film and television studios.

Launched in October 2008, Spotify at that time had a library of roughly 15 million tracks. With everything from chart toppers to lesser-known independent artists it allowed for its users to listen to their favourite songs and artists. Spotify also enabled for exploration, features like "Related Artists" provide a list of artists that were somewhat similar to what you were listening to at the time, and users could easily try to broaden their horizons by listening to artists that they previously weren't aware of. Customers can choose to either pay for a premium subscription or to use the freemium model. The freemium model is free, but you will have to endure advertisement that could pop up at the least convenient time, like at a party or in the middle of an album you were listening to, or even worse: while you were trying to sleep accompanied by some soothing music.

At the present time Spotify offers a premium subscription for the price of 99 NOK a month, which includes a 30-day free trial. They also have a range of discounted deals like a student discount for 49 NOK and a family package that includes five premium accounts for people living at the same address for 149 NOK a month. Considering that Spotify's catalogue in 2017 has over 30 million tracks, and that most current albums in the iTunes Store cost from 105-115 NOK, the current price for a premium subscription of Spotify would be seen as a bargain. What consumers get with these new streaming services is something new that makes its users "renters of access rather than owners of physical products" (Hagen, 2015, p. 119). Contrary to having to go to some location to rent it, which in itself is limited to what's available in the store, you get access to vast amounts of content that you can stream over the

Internet or a mobile broadband at any time. This makes streaming technology different from previous formats where you actually got to own what you purchased, be it a tape or a disk of some kind. In terms of revenue Spotify had an income of 804 million NOK in Norway alone in 2016, however, most of the company's money goes towards paying various copyright-holders, so after all these charges the company had some 400,000 NOK left.

The Vinyl Revival

The vinyl record has seen a growing popularity in the years since 2007, with sales growing every year. In the U.K. alone vinyl exceeded one million units sold in 2014, the first time this has happened since 1996, and since then it's been growing steadily (O'Connor, 2016). 2016 marked the first year ever that vinyl had out-performed digital sales, also, in the same year 3.2 million records were sold, showing an increase of 53% from the previous year (Savage, 2017).

Some like Harriet Gibsone (2016) or Bill Brewster (2015) writing for The Guardian, have criticised the boom in record sales as a fad that wouldn't last for long, however, the format's ever-increasing sales seem to contradict this fact. When it comes to explaining why vinyl is selling at this rate there are a couple of different explanations; one is the popularity of Record Store Day which is supposed to promote small independent stores but has since its inception in 2007 it has grown to a larger thing all together with international artists like Rush, Foo Fighters, Run the Jewels and Metallica putting out special Record Store Day releases. Another reason can be explained by the tangibility buying records has and that music streaming doesn't offer. In earlier times one of the first things you would look at when entering someone's home or office would be their record- or CD-collection, in ways this served to both show off a person's musical tastes and also in what capacity they would enjoy music, depending on the size of their collection. With streaming, there really is no collection of music to show off to other people. Everyone has access to all the same music, so the notion of a personal collection has in a way vanished.

In Norway vinyl sales have seen a similar rise as in the United Kingdom and the United States, with sales increasing at a similar rate with a turnover of nearly 18 million NOK in 2016. This was an increase of 22% from the previous year (IFPI Norge, 2017). In Trondheim two new stores dedicated to vinyl alone has opened since 2015, and it does not seem like anyone of them are going away any time soon. However, according to a recent newspaper article, it seems that even with the rising sales of vinyl, there seems that record stores all over Norway are closing down at a faster rate than new ones are opening (Husøy, 2018).

Whether or not the vinyl resurgence is a trend, or if the recent boom in sales is related to nostalgia is something I will be discussing more in part two of this thesis. These areas are also something both interviewees know a great deal about, and my findings from their interviews will serve as empirical evidence with regard to these kinds of questions.

Literature

Capturing sound: how technology has changed music by Mark Katz deals with the impact that certain music technology inventions have shaped our society. From this I draw much of my historical background as Katz deals with technologies from the phonograph to MP3s. Since the book is over 13 years old it is in certain ways dated when it comes to more modern innovations like streaming services, so for parts of this thesis I will rely on more contemporary sources. These contemporary sources span from articles in online magazines or newspaper articles and their comment sections, to interviews with certain people on platforms like podcasts or video interviews. However, rather than just go on about downloading music's effect on the industry, *Capturing Sound* also discusses the ramifications that newer formats like MP3 has had on the listening experience. On the issue of music piracy, Katz, explores several aspects of the downloading culture. Many of whom more or less contradict the story that the industry is printing, about how downloading itself is the problem that is causing declining sales. In my thesis I draw on Katz' book as it described some of the feelings people who downloaded music some time ago went about doing this, and how it impacted their taste in music. In particular it is the fact that a lot of these users who Katz talked to admitted that they felt freer to explore genres they previously didn't have a connection to. I believe that a

lot of streaming users have had a similar experience, as it is both easily available and doesn't cost any extra to listen to any kind of music on streaming services.

Steve Knopper's *Appetite for Self-Destruction: The Spectacular Crash of the Record Industry in the Digital Age* offers a history of modern formats like the MP3 file, and offers opinions by both record labels and relevant artists to the recent changes in the industry. It is in particular the story of the companies that filled the void that Napster left when they were indicted by the United States in 2001 that interests me. As this thesis focuses on streaming services, the introduction of the MP3 has a lot to do with this, and to have an account like Knopper's book is beneficial to both recount a coherent story, and as a base to further explore the listening practices of today.

Simon Reynolds adds to the discussion of piracy with his *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to its Own Past*. The main focus of the book is on retro aesthetics in popular culture, fashion and music. In terms of retromania in music, Reynolds discusses how a lot of bands of yesteryear are reuniting, records labels are reissuing old albums, and how modern artists in some ways are mimicking styles of older times. Reynolds also talks about how new technology has changed both how both collecting, and listening has been reshaped by technological innovation. Another point he makes is how music in our age, has become much more of an object in our lives, that we have disconnected from the earlier practices of collecting music by going to a certain store, to downloading hundreds of tracks through the Internet in mere minutes, Reynolds calls this the commodification of music.

Some chapters from *Digital Music Distribution: The Sociology of Online Music Streams* by Hendrik Storstein Spilker offers a detailed look at issues like music on demand, that would eventually turn into the streaming services we know today. Spilker also gives his readers an inside look into the anti-piracy campaigns and how it was perceived from different parts of the music industry, from labels and artists, to consumers and Internet activists. He also writes about DIY-culture but has fixed his view to a small part of the local punk-scene in

Trondheim, rather than the larger picture of DIY in the digital space, which has helped artists like Kendrick Lamar, Skepta and even Ed Sheeran to become world-renowned artists.

Anahid Kassabian presents the idea of ubiquitous listening in her 2013 book by the same name. Ubiquitous listening refers to the kind of listening that is symbolic of our time, where we listen to music while doing other activities, which ultimately leads to a more passive mode of listening. Kassabian also talks about the issue of music being an omnipresent part of our lives, that we are surrounded by music at more or less all times; at the shopping mall, at the train station, and the fact that we have a seeming endless library of music that is accessible through our phones whenever we want.

Anja Nylund Hagen writes about playlists and listening habits in her 2015 article *The Playlist Experience: Personal Playlists in Music Streaming Services* from *Popular Music and Society*. This is one of four research articles that are also featured within her doctoral dissertation *Using Music Streaming Services: Practices, Experiences and the Lifeworld of Musicking*. Through her use of focus group interviews, and having her interviewees use a program called Last.fm that tracks people's listening habits, she has acquired information from her participants that will serve as a secondary source to the data I have collected through my questionnaire.

Why Vinyl Matters by Jennifer Otter Bickerdike is a collection of talks with both worldwide known artists, authors and industry persons on the impact of vinyl in their lives and also what their view on how the recent resurgence of vinyl is. This book serves as mainly empirical evidence from informants I would never get the chance to speak to, and as an indication of how the eyes of the whole industry at the moment are fixated on vinyl sales. As Bickerdike's book includes interviews with a lot of different people, this serves as both evidence and contradictory statements about some of the popular theories that surround the vinyl revival. Some of these claims are argued against those I have collected myself as I interviewed two people who works in record stores in Norway who both have their own theories on the matter.

Questions

With this thesis, I wanted to get a better picture of certain trends in present day music consumption. There are a lot of interesting developments that have happened in the last fifteen years, from the development of streaming services that allows users to listen to whatever music, whenever, and the vinyl revival. What I find interesting about both these tendencies are that they are on opposite sides of technical innovation, where the vinyl can be seen as more organic than the digitalized music files that you stream. Later in part two of this thesis I discuss the relationship between these two formats in light of Simon Frith's article "Art Versus Technology: The Strange Case of Popular Music" (1986).

Some of the questions I wanted to find an answer to in this thesis address how technology has changed the way we listen to music, and question if this in turn has distanced the listeners of music from traditional formats like the album. Has the mobility that modern innovations like streaming allows pushed listeners towards a more fragmented mode of listening, where the playlist is preferred over listening to an entire album? Kassabian (2013) argues that we are moving towards an increasingly ubiquitous mode of listening. In my questionnaire I attempted to investigate this further by asking about how and when people listen to music.

With the vinyl revival there are many different theories as to why this is happening. Some claim it is simply for nostalgic reasons, some that it is something that is cool or hip for the being, while other claim that it has to do more with the listeners wanting to support and be close to the format that the artist desires his or her music to be listened to on. By interviewing two people who work in record stores I asked them to offer their perspective on why it is happening and presented them with the different theories to see what their reactions were.

PART TWO: METHODOLOGY

Concerning the data collection for this thesis I chose to use both a questionnaire and interviews, thus, the methodology was a mix between qualitative and quantitative approaches. Using more than one method for data collection is not uncommon in the social sciences: it is often referred to as triangulation (Denzin, 1970). The reason for choosing this kind of approach is not because one is necessarily better than the other, but by utilizing both of these commonly used methods, I ended up with accounts that had more substance to them. Another reason for utilizing both a qualitative and quantitative method, is that other research that has covered some of the issues I'm talking about, have conducted their research qualitatively.

In *Survey Research Methods* Floyd J. Fowler, Jr. says that there generally are three uses of survey techniques; “the measurement of public opinion for newspaper and magazine articles, the measurement of political perceptions and opinions to help political candidates in elections, and market research designed to understand consumer preferences and interests” (Fowler, 2009, 2). The third of these programs of survey research is what I will be using for this part of the thesis. When asking questions about how, when, and where people listen to music I will ascertain information that could be, to some extent, unconscious in many survey participants. The qualitative approach, by conducting interviews, seems to be the one that is generally favoured in musicological research, which makes for a somewhat scarce selection of theories that are tailored towards researching music qualitatively. There are a few mentions of questionnaire-based research in *Shadows in the Field* (2008), which discussed new methods in musicological research, but all these seem to have to do with utilizing a questionnaire while conducting interviews.

The questionnaire was digital and distributed through the Internet. In accordance with the terms of the Norwegian Centre of Data Collection (NSD), I used a service called Tjenester for Sensitive Data (TSD) which is developed and operated by the University of Oslo. When it comes to the distribution of the survey I utilized social media to spread my questionnaire to

ensure that I got as many responses as possible. Originally, I had set out to only have young people in Norway as my sample, but at a later time I chose to include anyone who responds. I was still able to distinguish the questionnaire's participants from one and each other. For example, in asking the participants' age, I could still see if there are some trends than might be different depending on age, therefore, I believed that excluding a certain number of participants would not be beneficial to my thesis.

I constructed the questionnaire to be deliberately short to ensure that the respondents would not use more than a maximum of five minutes when answering it. The decision to do this was in part based on my own level of interest in questionnaires that I deem to be too long, which can lead to me not responding at all, or responding with only partly paying attention to the questions. Fowler also touches upon this issue: "When survey requests come from less known or unknown sources... results are predictably variable. Sometimes virtually no one responds" (Fowler, 2009, 61). To get as many participants as possible I hoped to recruit a great number of people through utilizing what is known as snowball sampling. This happens when people share the link to the questionnaire with their friends on Facebook or via e-mail, and hopefully others will do the same, simulating a rolling snowball that grows in size as more and more snows attaches to it.

The large number of participants I was able to elicit responses from, might be explained by the fact that I submitted the questionnaire in three Facebook groups who all revolved around music. Members from these groups might be more drawn towards answering a questionnaire that asked about their listening habits, than members of a group not consisting of music teachers, musicians or music fans. I found myself regretting not making the questionnaire longer and going deeper with certain topics, like what kinds of headphones they used, or to expand upon what kinds of playlists they used most of the time.

Initially it was the album format that inspired me to research and write this thesis, especially questions about whether or not it was endangered, dead or alive due to the rise of music streaming. Along the way I have come to realise that there are myriad issues and innovations

in the past 50 years that also have to be taken into account when writing about this. Some of these are the technological innovations that have allowed for new recording, listening, distribution and discovery practices, the repercussions that hit the industry because of piracy in the late 1990s and 2000s, and the resurgence of older formats like the vinyl record. My questions at the end of the Introduction were centred around that most people didn't listen to music in the form of the album anymore, that ease of access, the ability to skip, and the rising popularity of the playlist had rendered listeners as too impatient to commit to listening to 40-50 consecutive minutes of music.

When writing about topics like playlists and how the interface of streaming services are laid out, I come into some issues of what to call certain aspects of them. As these are fairly recent developments, and the interface of a streaming service can change with each update they roll out, their looks and names for internal functions can change quite rapidly. Even in the three years from Hagen's screenshots of Spotify's interface, there have been changes. Although not a lot has changed in these years, she has also provided a screenshot from 2013 that details how the interface looked back then. One thing neither Spotify nor Hagen provides is the name of the collections of playlists on the "Browse", or start page, of what the interface are called. In an attempt to see what Spotify itself calls them, I sent them a direct message on Twitter. They responded fairly quickly and said that they did indeed not have a name for them, per now they call them "Genres and Moods". In a follow up question I asked them if it would be okay of me to use some of the screenshots of their interface in this thesis, which they did. This direct contact between a costumer of the product like myself and a giant company like Spotify is somewhat symbolic of the changes that has taken place in the record industry in the past ten to fifteen years, where artists and fans can communicate with each other in ways that previously were more complicated. I go into this phenomenon at a later time in this thesis.

The data collection for the second part of my thesis was in a larger way reliant on a more qualitative method. By conducting interviews with record store proprietors or workers, I got access to information they have acquired over the years from working in that particular environment. The vinyl revival is a fairly recent, and ongoing, development, and it was interesting to see how the two different interviewees have experienced the changes. They both

had similar but different experiences as one of these shops has existed for over 20 years, and the other opened less than three years ago. They also differ in location, where one is located in Trondheim and the other in Oslo. Both of the record stores have their own record labels, where one mainly reissues Norwegian albums that are deemed as ‘classics’, and the other serves to promote local musical acts. Both of these interviewees agreed to be a part of this project, and have signed a document detailing what this thesis was about, and have allowed me to use their names throughout the text.

During my interviews with Jakob Kaas and Jacob Krogvold, I asked them questions about how it is to run a record shop that deals mainly in vinyl, how they perceive their “average” customer. I also presented them with different themes and thoughts from both scholars and journalists who have written on the phenomena. As my interviewees both work with vinyl, and are fans of the format themselves, their experience are both as consumers and merchants, thus, allowing for nuanced opinions and points of view. As the interviews unfolded I tried to not be too formal (like asking a question, then another and then another) but rather engaging the interviewees in a more conversational way. I did this because I wanted my subjects to think aloud about some of the questions and perhaps answer some of them in a more stream of consciousness way, where they would reflect on the questions while answering, rather than just giving me a short and basic answer. This part of the thesis will also be the one that fits in with the history of ethnomusicological research, whereas part one, with its questionnaire, is more akin to something you would find in product research or the social sciences.

The last part of the thesis outlines how a vinyl gets from being an idea in the musicians mind to a physical thing you can hold in your hands. I have first-hand experience with this, due to my band recording and self-releasing a vinyl record in the first quarter of 2017. I have attempted to provide an autoethnographic account of the events that surrounded the release of this record, and some of the details that surrounded its conception. As for autoethnographic theory, I have based this section of the text on Michele Kisliuk’s chapter “(Un)Doing Fieldwork: Sharing Songs, Sharing Lives” from Barz & Cooley’s *Shadows in the Field*. Kisliuk writes amongst other things about the importance of a writer’s ability to separate self-indulgence and ethnography (1997, p. 39). In light of this, I have tried to remain as non-

indulgent as possible when discussing how the album has gone over, what reviews it has got and how it has impacted the band's overall career.

However, thinking that an account like this is free from subjective and emotional points of view is somewhat redundant. Autoethnography also enables the researcher to write about his or her experiences, or 'epiphanies' as Ellis, Adams and Bocher discuss in their text *Autoethnography: An Overview* (2011): "When researchers do *autoethnography*, they retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity." (Ibid, 3). As I have been a part of the Norwegian underground music scene for a number of years, my experiences, thoughts and theories I have accumulated will form a base for my autoethnography in this section.

Detailing the Questionnaire

The reason for choosing to survey listening habits in Norway comes from a place of curiosity. I wanted to see if people's modes of listening were similar to the way me and my friends tend to listen, or if it was drastically different. In comparison to others who have written on this subject, like Hagen (2015), my research stands out as I have applied a quantitative methodology by using a questionnaire to elicit my data. Listening habits is something that can be as personal as one's taste in music, and no two people will have the exact same modes of listening. This is not necessarily a sensitive topic, yet, I do think that it is something one does not discuss with one's friends or family too often. That is why I wanted to do this survey, to see if I could get some sense of listening modes within the Norwegian population, and to see if there were any similarities that stood out. One drawback is of course that with a short questionnaire I would not be able to get to know as much as a qualitative interview-based study would provide. However, considering the rather large amount of people who responded, my findings provide a glimpse into how people of different age groups listen, what formats they use, and whether or not they are listening to albums.

Initially I hadn't planned to survey as many people as I ended up doing. My plan was to distribute a printed-out questionnaire to a handful of well-attended lectures at my University. After discussing the project with a number of friends, or confidants in this matter, some of them suggested that I might get better numbers by choosing a digital questionnaire instead. Having thought it over and considered both how spreading it to a wider public, and how the collection and analysis of the data would be somewhat smoother with a digital survey rather than a printed-out one, my decision eventually fell on doing a digital one. Upon reaching my conclusion to do this, I began looking into ways of surveying a large number of people in the most efficient way. Thinking that I should get the formalities out of the way sooner rather than later, I registered my project with the Norwegian Centre of Data Collection in October of 2017, hoping that they would approve of it fairly quickly, so I could, at the latest, start to collect data by the beginning of January 2018. I got my approval to start gathering data roughly a month later, but there seemed that there had been some confusion as to what type of software I would be using to distribute, collect and analyse the findings, for my questionnaire. My initial decision was to use Google Forms to administer my questionnaire, I had mentioned this in my application to NSD, but they demanded that my University and Google should reach an agreement with regard to the privacy of the subjects that took part in the questionnaire. As these could take some time to get signed, the IT-department at NTNU suggested that I use the University of Oslo's service for questionnaires called Nettskjema. In order to use this however, I had to apply to a service called Tjenester for Sensitive Data, and this took another 3-4 weeks to get approved. I was finally granted access on the seventh of March 2018, some three months after my initial schedule.

It might seem impertinent to include this whole ordeal in my thesis, but I do feel that it needed to be included as it left me in somewhat of a scientific limbo for over two months. In the time that it took to gain access to Nettskjema, I had thought more and more about the questionnaire and how I would distribute it. Originally, I had envisioned that I should mainly try to get replies from students in Trondheim. My plan was to get someone in Styret at the Student Society in Trondheim to send the link around to the different "gangs" that work there. But as I was left waiting for the approval to come I had a change of mind and thought more about using social media to distribute the questionnaire. My hope was that as I had gotten the thing going, there would develop a form of snowball-sampling, where some of the

participants would send the link to their friends and that this would be repeated. I felt that since the questionnaire was about streaming services, digital music, and how people used them in their daily lives, that it made sense to utilize social media in this way. After all, according to [statista.com](https://www.statista.com/statistics/262116/norway-facebook-users-2015-2021/), over 57 percent of the Norwegian public were on Facebook in 2015 (Norway: number of Facebook users 2015-2021 | Forecast,” Statista.com). Facebook was also the obvious choice as it has been adopted by people of all ages in Norwegian society, and that there are a lot of different groups on it that have a considerable number of members. It was via some of these groups that I ended up distributing the questionnaire.

Before posting the link to the questionnaire in a certain selection of groups on Facebook, I decided to send it out to a couple of friends and get their comments on the questions and to tell me if I had been somewhat vague at times. It should be noted that I had gone over the questions with my supervisor, but it never hurts to get more eyes on a thing like this. After all, if it doesn’t look right, some participants might be turned away by it. To get a sort of “dress-rehearsal” for the questionnaire served to be beneficial, as some of the feedback regarded questions that could confuse some people. Nettskjema turned out to be a quite a good software/service, as it gave you a whole lot of information, like how long each participant took to finish the questionnaire, and the ability to go and edit the questions and response alternatives even as the survey was open to the public. When I deemed the questionnaire to be ready, I started posting it to a handful of different groups on Facebook.

The Distribution and the Unexpected Advantages of the Digital Survey

On the twelfth of March 2018, the link to the questionnaire was posted by myself to two groups; one called Musikk lærere, and another called Norsk Punk. Musikk lærere is a group for music teachers; the group was created for these teachers to share different approaches to teaching, discussing the curriculum, and to have discussion about everything related to teaching music. Norsk Punk is a group created by and for Norwegian fans of punk music, in this group both fans and musicians alike can discuss everything and nothing that has to do with this particular genre. The first of the two groups has in total in the 25th of March 2018 a

total of 2744 members, and the latter has 449 members. When I posted to these two groups I included a short text detailing what the link led to, and ended it by encouraging the participants to pass it on to their friends or relatives. Here is a screenshot of what the post to these two groups looked like:



Figure 1 Screenshot from my post to Musikk lærere on Facebook. Captured 4 April 2018.

My post to the Musikk lærere group garnered a total of fourteen likes and six comments. I have not included the names of the people who liked and commented in the screenshot. My reason for bringing these numbers up is that they are all-important when it comes to the staying power if you will of what posts that show up in people's "wall" on Facebook. The more likes and comments a post gets, along with shares, the more likely it is that more people will see it. My post to Norsk Punk, that was identical to this, got a total of four comments and seven likes. What was special with this particular post was that a few of the participants commented on it asking me to clarify certain questions. The fact that I could help people understand better in real time was lost on me before these people started to comment. In the same way that my "dress-rehearsal" questionnaire which I sent to a few friends helped me to clarify some of the questions, using such a widely-used platform like Facebook enabled me to assist any and all who had questions. With Facebook's notification system, I was notified at the second someone commented, and thus, I could assist them with support quicker than any customer-support I have ever encountered in my life. Both the high number of participants and the ability to assist anyone who had inquiries during the time that the questionnaire was up, corresponds with the findings of Kayam and Hirsch (2012). They found that they could reach far more people by using the Internet and social media, and by using a free service like

Google Forms (which I had initially decided on using) their research could be done with little to no costs.

On the following day, the thirteenth of March 2018, I posted the link to the questionnaire to another group called Musikere, this translates to musicians, and serves as an online community for musicians of all ranks in Norway. This group's total number of members is a lot larger than the two aforementioned groups, Musikere has a total of 17,322 members on the 25th of March. As expected, in terms of likes, comments and shares this post got a lot more than the two previous ones; 51 likes, 35 comments and two shares. After having done minor edits to some of the questions that had confused some participants in the two previous groups, none of the comments on the post in Musikere was in relation to the phrasing or composition of the questions. One commenter asked if my thesis was going to be released with an open access license, as he would not answer the questionnaire if it did not. In his words, "if it is not open access, your government-financed research would not be beneficial to the tax-payers". After looking into it, because this had never crossed my mind, it seemed that if I chose to have open access it would have it, so I replied to this person that it would indeed be open to the public.

In addition to be able to provide quick support to anyone who had questions about the questionnaire, the comment section on my posts served to help the longevity of my posts, particularly in groups like Musikere where people post new things every day. This longevity came to be when people started to comment on my post that they had submitted their answer, this was not something I asked anyone to do, and became somewhat irritating when my phone started notifying me every time someone wrote something like "done!" or "finished". After a while I realised that this unexpected thing was indeed helping my post to stay in people's Facebook feed. In the same way that a comment that only says "BUMP" which is a common thing in Internet-forums, it stands for "bring up my post", and is usually something the person who creates the post does. For me, by having other people unconsciously bumping my post, I didn't have to pester people by bumping it myself, which saved me the humiliation of shamelessly self-promoting my research and helped my post to stay in people's feeds.

Two weeks after posting the link to the questionnaire to the first Facebook group, I published the link on my personal page. At this point 427 people had already responded, but out of curiosity I wanted to see how many more responses I could get. I had planned to shut the questionnaire down by the end of March, as more than 400 respondents was more than adequate to me, and that I knew it would take some time to analyse and put these numbers into the text in a meaningful way. On Tuesday, the 2nd of April the questionnaire had elicited a total of 522 responses and I chose to close the questionnaire on this day, as it was just after Easter-break here in Norway, and that I would need a closed questionnaire in order to start analysing my findings.

In-Depth Description of the Questionnaire and Related Theory

In the first 24-hours after posting to the two first groups I had already exceeded 100 replies, before posting it I had decided that if I could get as much as 100 replies in total, that would be sufficient for my thesis. The idea that I was going to uncover some representative answers with my questionnaire was never something I thought of as possible. Therefore, I had low expectations as to how representative my respondents would be of the Norwegian population, but when the numbers in the first week exceed these by four-fold I thought that I might actually uncover something that was actually interesting here. The main objective of the questionnaire was to find out if people listened to, or cared about albums anymore, I clarified what I meant by writing “From the first song to the last” in the question text. But asking just one question, although time-saving, would be somewhat short and not necessarily beneficial to my research, so I included a handful of other questions, mostly about how and when during the day people listened to music.

The first four questions of the questionnaire were by far the ones that asked the participants to give up the most sensitive information in the questionnaire, their age, sex, nationality and what they worked as or were studying. Part of my frustration during the period where I was waiting for my application to be accepted was due to these questions, and really the whole questionnaire, because if these four questions were the ones that asked for the most personal information, why would I have to go through the same process as someone researching

something more sensitive that would have actually required someone to keep their participants anonymous. I chose to include age because, as I have mentioned earlier, that since my sample would have such a broad scope due to it being available on Facebook, I would get responses from people of all ages. The youngest respondent to the questionnaire was 14 and the oldest 76 years old, by having information about the participants' age I can create different age groups and see if there were differences between the age groups in their responses to the questions. The next of these early questions is pretty standard in questionnaires: it is not necessarily pertinent information to me to know what kind of jobs the participants have, but when I can see all these jobs stacked next to each other, it gives me a sense that my sample comes from a wide range of different backgrounds.

Asking people about their listening habits this could be information that might not be at the forefront of their memory, and that they may have to take a few seconds to recall what habits they have when listening to music. As this is the case, the information I am ascertaining will be more akin to what Fowler calls "subjective states". He writes "In theory, you can divide what surveys try to measure into two categories: objective facts and subjective states." (Fowler, 2009, p. 15). Examples of objective facts could be like the first couple of questions, (age, gender etc.), but subjective states would be more about how you have felt in the last week, or what your views are on the current political climate. There is a range of problems connected with questions asking both of these categories of questions. With objective facts there is the problem that the answers might be affected by bias, however, one could argue that bias will always come into question when answering questionnaires. Fowler (Ibid, p. 16) mentions that there has traditionally been underreporting when asking people to report how much they smoke or drink. I do not necessarily think that people would be underreporting how they listen to music, but there is a chance there that they might. One way I could validate or discredit what the participants had said in the questionnaire would be if I could get every respondent to agree to let a program like Last.fm to track their listening habits over a certain period of time. But, as I've received over 500 replies, this would be immensely time-consuming, and too much work for one person to go through. Fowler writes "since we cannot directly measure the true value of subjective states, we also cannot measure bias – the degree to which answers systematically differ from a true score in one direction" (Ibid, p. 16). With

this in mind, I decided to take some of the answers with a grain of salt, and to keep carrying on with the research.

Considering the pros and cons of doing survey based research over the Internet Fowler writes: “The problem is to induce people to respond without the intervention of an interviewer.” (Fowler, 2009, p. 60). Fowler is right to a certain degree, but when using social media in this way, where I can reply to comments, and help people to understand the questions, opens for new possibilities that would not have been available had I administered a written questionnaire. It should also be noted that Fowler’s book from 2009 is already somewhat outdated in terms of the rapid changes and innovations of technology, and that in his book he mentions e-mail as the main way to distribute questionnaires on the Internet. I agree with him on the topic of nonresponse when distributing a questionnaire by e-mail, I have had a similar experience before when studying at another faculty. As part of a group project on pedagogy, we sent out our questionnaire to the 80 to 100-something teachers at school where we were doing our teaching practice. We sent out the questionnaire on the faculty e-mail and recieved 20 replies. This is not me criticising these teachers for not replying; a teacher at a ‘Videregående school’ in Norway has a stressful day, and it is easy to just overlook the e-mail, or even think to complete it later and forgetting to do so. What I took away from this experience was to not expect many replies at all when doing survey-based research. My low expectations would seem to be totally wrong when the replies to my questionnaire started coming in shortly after I posted it. Some of the reasons for a low response rate on a questionnaire distributed by e-mail could be the way it is explained in the text, or that it is a topic someone might not be interested in. There is also the possibility that people might not want to answer a questionnaire that will take up a lot of their time. I do suspect that this is the case, thus leading me to design a questionnaire that would take very few minutes to complete, the shortest time spent on my questionnaire was one minute and sixteen seconds, and the longest was actually over twelve hours. This excessive amount of time is more than likely caused by someone starting to answer the questionnaire, and then opening another tab on their internet-browser, and maybe forgetting about it for 12 hours, and then finding it again and completing it. Another explanation for the unexpected high numbers of participants to my questionnaire could be that I posted the link to three groups that were connected to music, and that the members of these groups would find the subject matter of my questionnaire more

interesting than if I had posted a questionnaire about exercise habits. One of the people who commented on my post in the group Musikere actually said in his comment: “It was fun to answer this”.

Moving past the four introductory questions, I ask how often in the week they listen to music, and when during the day people listen to music. The first question had five response alternatives where the participants could choose one of five; the first question was multiple choice where more than one answer was admitted. The response alternatives the participants could choose on the first of these questions was: daily, 5-6 days a week, 3-5 days a week, 1-3 days a week and hardly ever. When asking when during the day, the respondents listened to music I included more response alternatives (a total of eight); here more than one answer was permitted. The questionnaire can be found in the appendix, but some of the alternatives were: early in the morning; whilst driving or commuting; when exercising; in the evening; more or less throughout the whole day. My reasoning for asking when people listen and providing with some alternatives that many will find accurate, is to a certain extent, to see if people who stream music use it as a commodity that simply exists in the background of some other activity. To get a better picture of this exact quandary, my next question was phrased as follows: do you have a habit of listening to music uninterrupted? (that you do not do other things/activities whilst you are listening). The text contained within the parenthesis was added after a member of the Facebook group Norsk Punk, was confused as to what I meant by this question and had commented on my post. I resolved this by telling him in more detail what I meant, and after he signalled to me that he understood by liking by comment, I added the parenthesis and text to the questionnaire. I believe that the possibility to edit the questions to make them more understandable, and at the same time not take away any of its essence, was integral to make the questionnaire as easily understandable as possible.

My next question was concerning how the questionnaire’s respondents accessed music, like the question that asked when during the day people listened to music, the respondents could tick more than one of the response alternatives. I included the names of four major music streaming services - Spotify, Tidal, Apple Music and Google Play, although these days it seems that Apple Music is closing in on Spotify in the United States, whereas in Norway

Spotify and Tidal have been the two leading services. Part of Tidal's popularity in Norway seemed to stem from it being a Norwegian company to begin with, under the name Wimp, but it changed its name to Tidal upon its U.S. release in 2014. In 2015 the company was bought by Jay Z.

I had an interest in looking into Tidal specifically, as last year Norwegian newspaper Dagens Næringsliv uncovered that they had been manipulating their own subscription numbers. Journalists Kjetil Sæter and Markus Tobiassen had through investigative journalism found that the company had in secret re-activated a number of dormant accounts (most had been used by people during a trial period, and then users had cancelled their subscription when the trial period run out) in order to make it look like more people were using Tidal than was actually true (Tobiassen & Sæter, 2017). On the 9th of May 2018, Sæter and Tobiassen followed up their initial story, now eliciting Tidal's streaming numbers for individual users. It seemed that Tidal again had lied, this time about how many times certain songs from certain albums had been streamed. Two of these were *The Life of Pablo* by Kanye West and *Lemonade* by Beyoncé, both of which were exclusively released on Tidal. Tidal boasted that West's album had been streamed 250 million times in ten days, and Beyoncé's 306 million in fifteen days. It would seem, according to Sæter and Tobiassen's findings, that this was far from the case. As they had aquired their hands on a hard drive from a former Tidal employee, which showed what times certain users had listened to certain artists and songs. The journalists were able to get in contact with some of the users, who could tell them that these numbers were not right at all, and that it seemed they had been manipulated. Dagens Næringsliv hired a group from NTNU's Centre for Cyber and Information Security (CCIS) to go through the data, and in their rapport from April of 2018, they concluded that Tidal has had over 320 million fake plays, and that more than 1,7 million accounts are affected (Tobiassen & Sæter, 2018).

I also included YouTube and a handful of different physical formats as response alternatives to this question. Following this question was one about streaming services and whether the respondents had a paid subscription to it, the question was phrased like this: "If you use a streaming service like for example Spotify, do you (or someone else) pay for a Premium

subscription?”. With this I was most interested in seeing if there was anyone who did not pay, this was not meant to be loaded question where I would pass judgement on someone who didn’t pay for it. With the prices being as cheap as they are, as both Spotify and Apple Music cost 99 NOK for a month, and they both advertise a Family Plan with up to six accounts for 149 NOK, so roughly 25 NOK per family member. I chose to include this question to see if there still were people who could muster through the commercials when using a free version of a streaming service.

My next question was concerning paid digital downloads, and in researching different subjects for this thesis I have more than once come across articles or papers on this format. Some news concerning the iTunes Store came from an interview the BBC did with Jimmy Iovine from Apple Music in 2018. Iovine had proclaimed that Apple might be going towards closing down the service, as most of its consumers had shifted towards streaming instead. Another indicator that the digital download was on its way out was the fact that the sale of vinyl had surpassed the digital download for the first time ever in 2016, although this is also seen as a sign that vinyl is on its way back, it seems that more and more people are using streaming services, or other alternatives to the digital download. The question was as follows: “Have you purchased music digitally in the last year (like for example from the iTunes Store)?”. The response alternatives were simply: Yes or No. The question that came after was: “Do you buy music on any physical formats? If not you can skip this question, if yes please write down which formats underneath”. This was another free-text question, like the one asking about age, nationality and jobs had been.

With the next question, I wanted to ask the participants about what kinds of equipment they utilize when listening to music. This was a multiple-choice question where they could tick more than one of the response alternatives. Some of these were: Headphones/earbuds, HiFi-Stereo System, Bluetooth Speakers and TV (smart TV, Chromecast, Apple TV). Although not entirely vital for my research, I was interested to see if there was a general consensus for using high-quality equipment while listening to music or not. The following question consisted of two parts and concerned people’s use, or not use, of the playlist. The first was simply phrased: Do you listen to music in playlists?, with Yes or No as the response

alternatives. In the follow-up question I wanted to see if the ones that had answered yes to the previous made their own playlists, subscribed to their friends' playlists or subscribed to a curated one from the streaming service they used or other places. For this question it was possible to tick more than one of the three boxes. Shuffle-play was the topic of the next question; Do you use shuffle (a function that randomises the order of the songs) when listening to music? After someone mentioned that some of the participants of the questionnaire might not know what shuffle was, I added the explanation that is found within the parenthesis. I was curious of the widespread use of shuffle after having read Simon Reynolds' experience with it, when he got into the iPod for the first time. For Reynolds, it served to disrupt the flow of music, and made him impatient while listening to something with shuffle: "I became fascinated by the mechanism itself, and soon was always wanting to know what was coming up next. It was irresistible to click onto the next random selection" (Reynolds, 2011, p. 120). Being impatient when listening to a playlist on shuffle-play was something an interviewee of Anja Hagen also had experienced: "I listen better, and I'm less impatient, when I listen to a whole album and not playlists at random" (2016, p. 9). The use of shuffle also disrupts the flow of the album, something that the artist might have spent a lot of time arranging, and thus the listener ends up experiencing the music in an unintended way.

The final two questions of the questionnaire concern what I am most interested in finding out, namely how people's perception of the album format fares in the current climate of everybody having access to the same library consisting of millions of songs. The first of the two goes as follows: Do you listen to albums when using a streaming service (from the first to the last song)? I chose to include an explanation of what I meant by album, as I've found out through this process that when conducting a questionnaire with such a broad scope, that you really can't explain anything too thoroughly. The final question was about asking the participants if they gave any thought towards the album format: Do you ever think about how the artist you are listening to has envisioned what the listening experience would be like, for example how an album is put together? Looking back at this now, when the questionnaire is closed down, it seems that this is a bit too much of a leading question. Some could read it as me thinking less of someone answering no, and answer yes because that is the answer they think I want to hear. My reasoning for including this question is pretty self-explanatory from how the

question text is written, but like the previous question this concerned people's outlook/view of the album format.

All in all I am pleased that I chose to use a questionnaire to get information about people's listening habits, and by what means they accessed music. Even if the abundance of replies turns out to be because of the groups I posted all had something to do with music, I feel that my findings should not necessarily be dismissed as not being representative of the Norwegian listening base.

PART THREE:

Listeners in the Stream

During the 60 or so years I covered in the historical background of the introduction of this thesis, music and how we get access to it has gone through a radical change. This change can be traced firstly by how the formats of music have changed; from shellac to vinyl, from 7-inch singles to 12-inch albums, from cassettes to CDs and from MP3s to streaming, and then surprisingly; back again to vinyl. Secondly the change has to do with accessibility, and thirdly by the changes in how the listener's perception of the connection between music and money. Why listeners' perceptions of the value of music has changed is not an easy question to answer, as it is with most things, there are several factors at play, and an obvious one would be the advent of illegal downloading. This certainly helped to demonetize music in people's minds, to be something you necessarily didn't have to pay for. But, to give this phenomenon alone credit for music's devaluation in today's society would be rash. There are myriad other actors here, including music streaming. Streaming, which we today associate with apps like Spotify, Tidal and Apple Music had, as it turns out, been around for quite some time before these services. The Oxford Learner's Dictionary describes the word streaming as "playing video or sound on a computer by receiving it as a continuous stream". In that regard: any song played on YouTube or on other MP3 sites that were popular before Spotify, would also count as streaming (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, accessed on February 2 2018).

Music streaming would never have existed if it weren't for the engineers at Fraunhofer who gave the world the MP3 in 1994. The format is alone responsible for taking music into the Information Age, and has continued to outperform, or be as good, as the sound quality on CDs. And even if the sound quality was not sufficient for audiophile ears, who praise the vinyl for its superior sound quality, these people were not the ones the MP3 was designed for. As Sterne writes, the MP3 was constructed "for casual users, to be heard in earphones on trains or on the tiny speakers of a computer desktop... but it speaks to the condition of music in contemporary urban life in many places around the globe" (2012, p. 182). The MP3 had

also ushered in a new age of music mobility. Of course one could take their music on the go before, but this involved carrying around countless tapes, or a number of CD-folders, which not only took up lots of space but could also be heavy. Another point here is the durability of tapes or CDs that have been on the move, and how well they would play and reproduce the sounds contained within them. The MP3 changed all this; taking up no physical space at all, you could have as many files as you wanted on you at all times, the only limitations here would be your computer's hard drive or the size of your MP3-player. With this new era of music collecting, many saw it as a challenge to fill up their devices to the brim with music. After all, why wouldn't you use all the space you paid for? Many began to acquire large MP3 libraries, in most cases much larger than anything they had had before, which lead people to have such largelibraries of MP3-files that they would never get around to listening to all of them.

The surreal number of available songs on a streaming service fits in with the idea that music has become an omnipresent commodity in our daily lives. Both Hagen (2015) and Spilker (2018) have put forth the idea that the more accessible and available music is, the more important it would become in our lives. However, Anahid Kassabian argues that music is omnipresent in today's society, where in a modern industrial society you are surrounded by music every day, at almost all times. She argues that this leads us to towards a more passive way of listening where we mainly listen to music while doing other activities, which she labels "ubiquitous listening" (2013, p. 9). The idea of ubiquitous listening corresponds with Jonathan Sterne's claim that the MP3 was designed for casual listening, and that it would sound adequate when coming through cheap audio equipment.

Music Blogs, Issues of Abundance and the Paradox of Choice

Simon Reynolds touches upon the issue of abundance in his *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to Its Own Past*, where he, after being an avid record collector in the days of vinyl, became an obsessive downloader of music through the Internet. Having been somewhat sceptical of P2P services like Napster, and disliking torrenting through The Pirate Bay, Reynolds found his preferred means of downloading through music blogs that provided links

to whole albums. These music blogs supplied links to sites like Megaupload where you could download music in a zipped folder through your Internet Browser, blogs dedicated to music had a different feel to them than downloading through Napster. Some of these blogs could be about certain musical genres, others about certain bands, some dedicated to underground and unheard music. In most cases the person who provided the link with the music would also write a short summary of what it was the link included, providing the digital equivalent of an album's liner notes. In that way, the music blogs provided a more social aspect to file-sharing than the other alternatives, allowing music fans to connect over similar likes and dislikes. This also allowed for communication between users through comment-sections and forums.

All these features made the music-oriented blogs the obvious choice for someone like Reynolds, who had come from a background of collecting records, where everything around the record could be as important as the music itself. However, it didn't matter how promising these music blogs were in terms of musical interest and information, many users who were former record collectors like Simon Reynolds, found themselves overindulging and succumbing to what Johan Kugelberg called "Falstaffian gluttony". Reynolds writes:

"I'd always had this ravenous appetite for new stuff, combined with a neurotic anxiety about missing out on anything. Absolute access corrupts absolutely, and I went about it like a pig at a trough. I think my record was to have thirty simultaneous downloads streaming into my computer at once: over a day's listening, acquired in a little over an hour. "...". Like the proverbial kid in the candy shop, or Augustus Gloop, that fat German boy in *Willy Wonka* who downs in the chocolate river, I got lost." (2011, p. 110)

This predicament, with having more music than you can or would ever listen to, is very similar to the experience many have with using a streaming service like Spotify or Tidal. What separates this with Reynolds is that he actually had to go out and hunt for what it was he wanted, and then download them one by one. In that way one could argue that Reynolds would have a stronger bond to the music he downloaded. Even though the music was acquired illegally, he will still have a memory attached to the process of getting the music from the web and to his computer. With over 30 million songs to choose from, some users can often get overwhelmed by the excess of choice and still fall back to the 10-15 songs, artists or playlists that are familiar, rather than exploring the vast library of songs available at their fingertips.

Navigating through the deep open waters of Spotify or Tidal's libraries can be difficult for anyone, especially if you don't know what you're looking for. Most will be familiar with the same problem as you decide what to watch on a video streaming site like Netflix while eating, where you sit down with your meal and by the time you've found something to watch, your dinner has got cold. The observation that we have so many choices that we become confused by them is the main theme in Barry Schwartz' book *The Paradox of Choice*. Here, he presents the argument against the concept that more choice leads to more well thought-out and beneficial decisions. He demonstrates this by going to his local supermarket and later an electronics store where he finds that while shopping for a new stereo system there is a staggering amount of choices:

“74 different stereo tuners, 55 CD players, 32 tape players, and 50 sets of speakers. (Given that these components could be mixed and matched in every possible way, that provided the opportunity to create 6,512,000 different stereo systems.) And if you didn't have the budget or the stomach for configuring your own stereo system, there were 63 small, integrated systems to choose from” (Schwartz, 2004).

If you are able to choose one from these 6.5 million stereo-system combinations, will you not be left wondering if you should have sprung for a more expensive tuner, or perhaps less expensive cables, and thus instead of enjoying what you chose, you are considering all the other options you did not choose. In my view this is also applicable to music streaming. When listening to a certain song or band, you are aware of all the other music you could be listening to instead, and thus you might feel a need to stop and find something else. The feeling that something better is just around the corner is omnipresent while streaming music, and features like “Related Artists” help to push you onwards to the next, and possibly better, music. This constant, to use a modern term, “Fear of Missing Out” is also there when one listens to music through a playlist, especially when you have made it yourself. Typically, you would not care too much about the sequencing of the songs on this playlist, but more than likely there are going to be some songs that you like better than others, so therefore when something slightly not to your liking comes on, you skip to the next track.

Playlists

Spotify knew that its vast library of tracks would be somewhat overwhelming for a lot of its customers, therefore, in 2015 it announced the new playlist: “Discover Weekly”. This is a playlist that is algorithm-based, and it uses machine learning to tailor each playlist to every individual user of Spotify. The process is much too complicated for a student of musicology to both fully understand and to reproduce for this thesis, but in short, the software looks at what it is you have listened to, and finds 30 songs to present to you in a playlist on every Monday. There have been myriad different reactions to this, some love it, like Sophia Ciocca writing for the IT-oriented website Hackernoon:

“I’m a huge fan of Spotify, and particularly Discover Weekly. Why? It makes me feel *seen*. It knows my musical tastes better than any person in my life ever has, and I am consistently delighted by how it satisfies me *just right* every week, with tracks I myself would never have found or known I would like.” (Ciocca, 2017).

Some have a slightly more complicated relationship with it, as the Norwegian journalist Steinar Solås Suvatne shares in his humorous article in the Norwegian newspaper Dagbladet entitled “Spotify can catch you with your pants down”. This article tells about his encounter with Discover Weekly, and how it exposed his taste in music for what it was, and not necessarily what he wanted it to be. With this he points to being a person who identified as being a guy who preferred “music with guitars, made by British men on drugs”, but when Discover Weekly began to include songs by pop artist Ariana Grande, he realized that he also liked this kind of music, and listened to it a lot: it was just buried somewhere in his unconscious. By this he is saying that even though he liked to identify as the guitar-loving man he was, Discover Weekly had made him realise that he enjoyed listening to this music like Ariana Grande a lot more than he was comfortable with saying out loud. Suvatne was listening to Grande more often than he was aware of: “When I’m working out, when I’m showering, and in general when I’m not the person I want to be. Dr. Jekyll listens to The Libertines – Mr. Hyde to Ariana Grande, and with Spotify’s algorithm-based playlists I’m not getting away. The Beast is exposed, and all my friends can catch me with my trousers down, far inside Ariana Grande-land.” Suvatne concludes his article by saying: “Spotify has whacked the biggest lie of them all: our taste in music. And I hate them for it.” (2016). Whether or not one likes or dislikes the algorithm-based playlist, like Discover Weekly, it seems to be one of the main ways by which people today discover new music in the stream. In

2016 Spotify could boast that over forty million of its users had used the playlist, in 2016 this would have been roughly forty percent of its users (Popper, 2016).

Even sceptics like myself, who initially disliked playlists, had to acknowledge how sophisticated and unpredictable the Discover Weekly playlist is. Too often when I'm just sitting down to play some music in the background of either schoolwork or leisurely activities I get unsure of what music to put on, and to just have a playlist, which is tailored to my tastes, available can be a godsend. It saves me from endlessly going through all the albums and artists I have saved and gives me more time to listen than to decide what to put on. I do use playlists however, but there seems to be a common theme of usefulness in the creation of mine, and not necessarily for the pleasure of listening to certain songs. One of these lists is a collection of piano sonatas by Beethoven, Spotify in particular has a horrific way of sorting out its classical music. When the titles of the tracks are longer than the space they are given on the screen, and the movement number is found at the very end of the title, it can be both difficult and frustrating to find the right recording with the performer of your choosing using Spotify's interface.

On the home screen of Spotify's interface, which is called "Browse", you are greeted with some playlists that seem to be tailored to the time of day, or day of the week. In this screenshot that I took at 08:56 on a Thursday morning, I'm greeted by a message from Spotify that tells me "Good luck today!", and three playlists entitled: "Morning coffee", "Kos" (which is a Norwegian term that roughly translates to down-time or cosy-time) and "Smile!". All of these seem tailored to affect your mood in a positive way by providing pop-music such as Coldplay, Ed Sheeran and Adele.

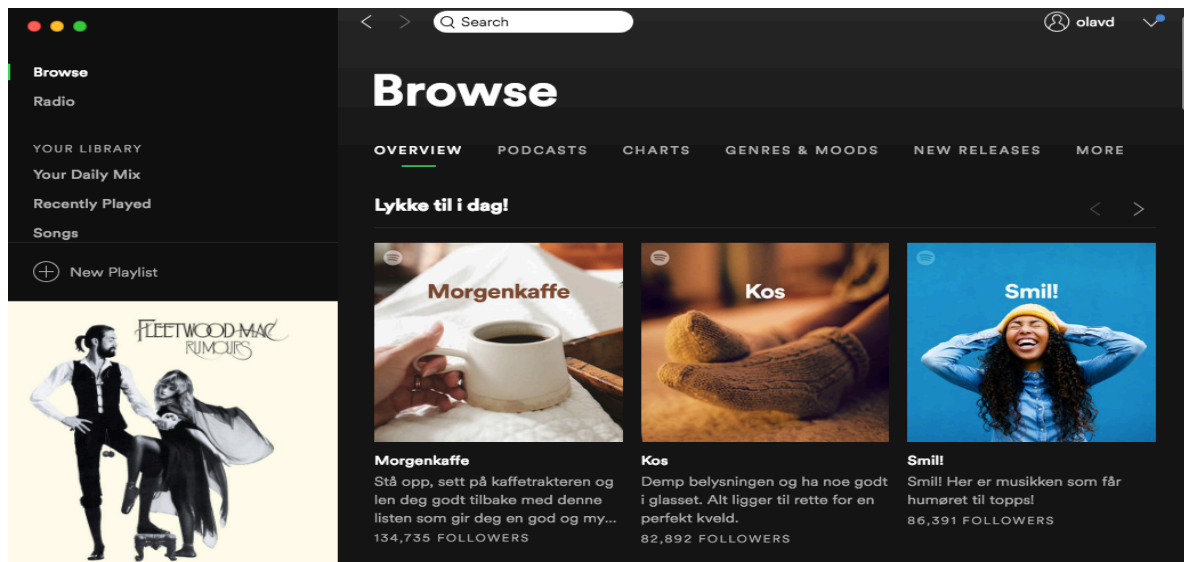


Figure 2 Screenshot from Spotify Home Screen. Captured 12 April 2018.

If you go to the “Genres and Moods” page that is visible in the first screenshot, you are taken to a page of some 30 different playlist-collections with titles like “Pop”, “Rock”, “Metal” and “Indie”. These are all dedicated pages for genres, but Spotify also provides lists for moods, and also with specific activities in mind, like “Party”, “Workout”, “Chill” and “Focus”.

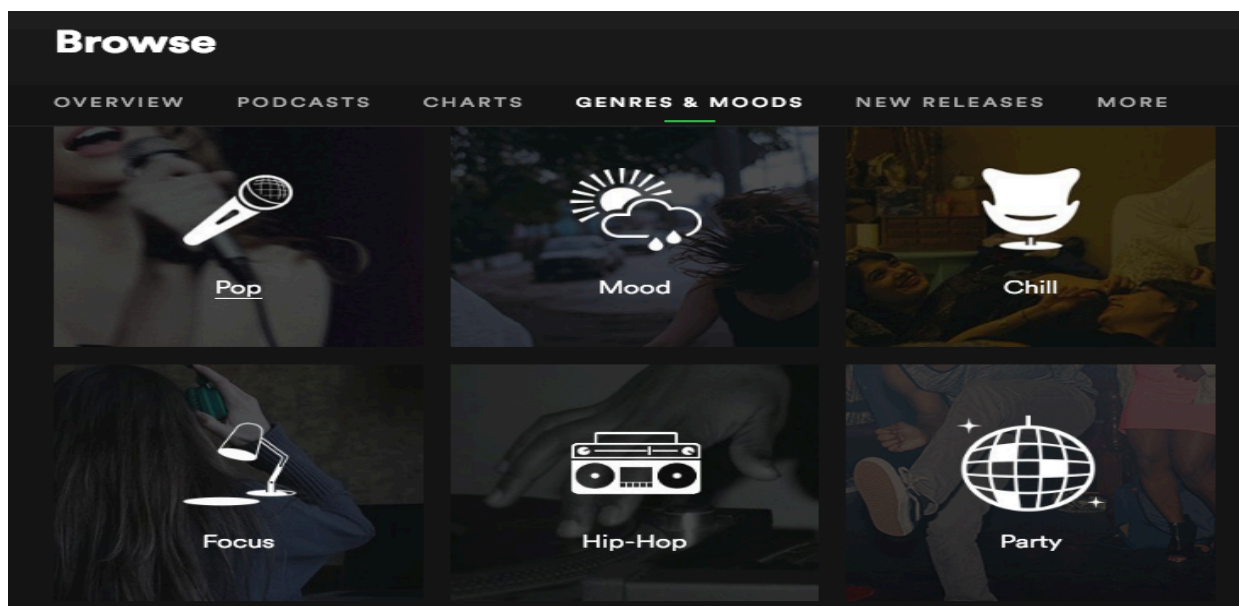


Figure 3 Screenshot from Browse Page on Spotify. Captured 12 April 2018.

If you click on one of these playlist-collections, you are taken to yet another page that features a variety of playlists that are dedicated to the genre, mood or activity you have chosen. Take “Focus” for example. This is with focused activities in mind, like studying or working. In this

playlist-collection you are greeted with three playlists: “Music for the workday”, “Deep Focus” and “Peaceful Piano”. The first is created by the Norwegian branch of Spotify and the two latter by Spotify HQ, as is visible by the number of subscribers, or followers as they are called in Spotify’s client, to each of them. The reason for subscribing to these playlists is that they get updated every now and then. Take “Peaceful Piano” for instance. This features 153 songs and lasts for 7 hours and 34 minutes, and was updated less than 7 days ago.

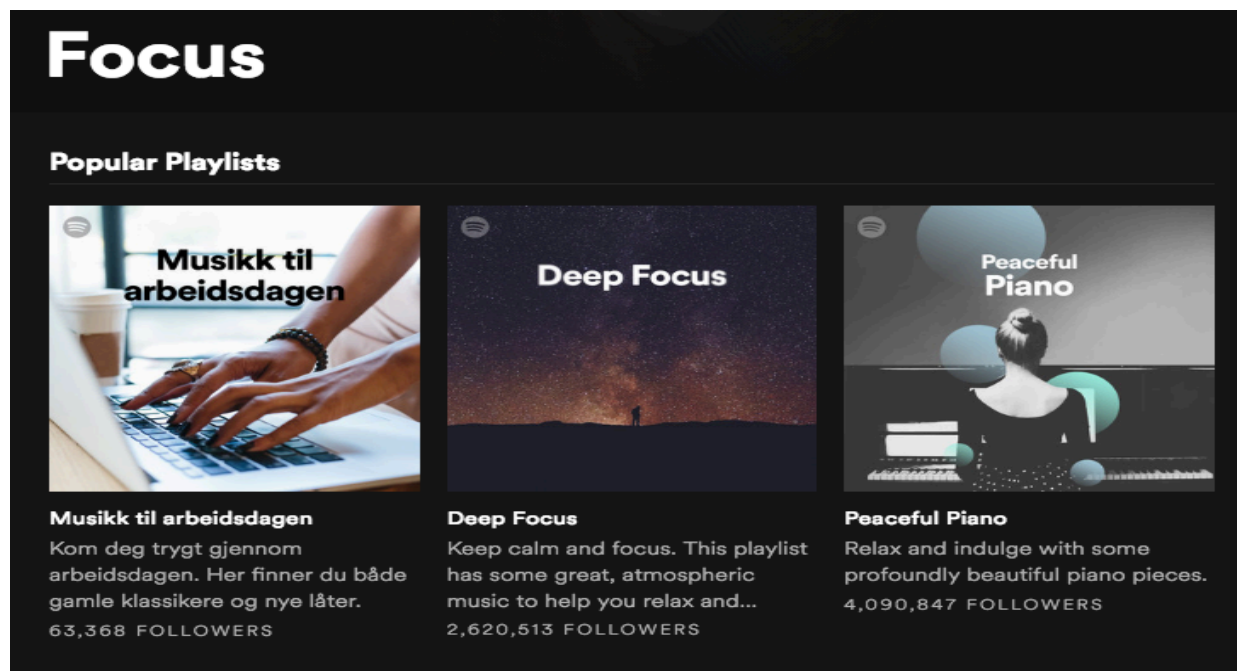


Figure 4 Screenshot from Playlist Collection on Spotify. Captured 12 April 2018.

With playlists specifically tailored for certain activities in mind Spotify is in a way creating Muzak, but with actual songs and artists, instead of anonymous strings and vibraphone covers of known songs. Especially with a playlist-collection like “Focus”, consisting primarily music that is not to take your attention away from the task at hand, but at the same time drown out the silence with something. Kassabian writes that “We are so used to music as an accompaniment to other activities that we forget we are listening” (2013, p. 8). Referring to a student of hers that was writing an essay about listening to radio while listening to the radio, who found himself in the kitchen doing the dishes ten minutes into writing the essay, with no recollection of deciding to do the dishes.

Anja Hagen argues that the listeners today, with the easy access to music, and the ease involved with creating and editing playlists, enables them to be “content curators of their music consumption” (Hagen, 2015, p. 192). She cites Will Straw’s chapter “Music and Material Culture” from *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*. Straw argues that older recording formats, like the Long Playing vinyl record that “carried with it a distinctive protocol of listening, one in which a sense of performer personality and generic coherence were elaborated across multiple tracks” (2012, p. 234). With this, Straw is referring to the product the artist might have had in mind, that the songs on an album be organized in a certain way, and that it is a product to be consumed in one setting, with each song preceding and following the others. When listeners become curators of their own consumption, by choosing just some songs from an album and putting them into a playlist, they can ultimately disrupt the coherence the artists has envisioned when he, she or they created and released the album. One could argue that this is not something recent that came to be with streaming services; in a way this practice has been around since cassette tapes were popular. Mixtapes could be considered the playlist of yesteryear. Although a lot more time-consuming to create, they had the same application and qualities as the modern playlists. You would make a mixtape for a certain someone, or one intended for the car, or for a party. The similarities between these and playlists are many, and they both serve to disrupt the artists presentation of the album.

It should be noted that not all artists give as much attention to the album format as others. This might also be in some ways have something to do with what genre the music belongs to. Artists of earlier times all made music that was going to be listened to in the same way, either on two sides of a vinyl disc, or on the radio. Today an artist can choose to release his or her music exclusively on digital formats, which does come with a certain degree of sequencing of songs, but when they are just a list on a screen it becomes easier to skip ahead if a song doesn’t instantly win you over. Kendrick Lamar actually played around with this on his latest album *Damn*, where the songs on the initial release and collector’s edition (which came out some eight months later) were reversed. Not only does this affect the feel of the album, but it seems as though Lamar and his producers have intentionally made the album to be played either from the first to last, or last to first. Some artists also experiment with new formats as well, like Frank Ocean who put out *Endless* in august of 2016, a video album that was

released exclusively through Apple Music. There is also the degree of people listening to music while they are commuting, driving or out and about, and depending on the length of your drive you might not have the time to listen to an album from start to finish, which in itself disrupts the flow of the album.

The Tangibility of Modern Music Formats, or Lack Thereof, and Commodification

So where does the album format fit into all of this? Well, as it came to be with the advent of the MP3, which eventually led to music streaming being people's main access to music, there hasn't only been a change in format, but also one in the tangibility of music. As I mentioned in the Introduction, the album came to be in the 1960s with The Beatles as one of the format's main influencers. Back when there were only three formats on which to release one's music, there really wasn't anything to wonder about; almost every artist would release albums on the 12-inch vinyl. These would in most cases be preceded, and/or succeeded by some seven-inch vinyl singles, depending on the albums popularity and the industry's faith in the product. Today an artist can release any number of songs, singles or albums, on any format he or she should desire, from cassettes to 8-track, to vinyl and CDs. When large parts of the industry were turned on their heads during the 2000s, partly due to illegal downloading, they didn't only lose money, but also their power and monopoly in the business side of the music business. A lot of people saw the Internet not as a threat to music, but rather as a tool that could be used by everyone from unknown garage bands to stadium packers. By using the Internet artists could contact everyone from PR firms, to places that print t-shirts, and vinyl pressing-plants, thus, being able to access parts of the industry that had previously only been available to the record labels.

As music today is less tangible than earlier, back when CDs or even more vinyl, were people's main access to music, there was another degree of tangibility, not only with the disc containing the music, but also the album art, liner notes, and other collectable or promotional material that could be contained within the package; like post cards, stickers or other collectables. With streaming, or even paying for digital downloads through iTunes, you get

none of this, the cover art is shrunk to about 75% of the original image, and in most cases, there are no liner notes or lyrics to be read. You can, of course, find lyrics or information on the Internet, but my point here is that these are seldom included when you buy, or stream digital music. On the topic of tangibility, it seems that the whole industry is embracing the streamed song. This was confirmed by renowned producer and Apple Music executive Jimmy Iovine, who in a recent interview with the BBC more or less confirmed the rumours that had circulated for years, that the iTunes store would eventually stop offering downloads (Savage, 2018). It is not really shocking that this is happening. Apple Music is itself a streaming service that has proved to be Spotify's main rival in the streaming game, in part due to their exclusivity deals with popular artists like Drake, and the fact that a lot of people who already have an established relationship with Apple-products, seem to drift towards that particular streaming service. Despite all this, albums still seem to play a large part in the modern music scene, bands and artists of all statures from stadium packers to unknown are still releasing albums, and there seems to be a legitimate interest in them still.

Even though it might seem that a lot of people choose the playlist over the album, the amount of time and attention that still surrounds this format cannot be ignored. At the Grammy Awards in the United States 41 of the total of 84 award-categories are awarded to albums, and it still seems that the world holds its breath when gigantic artists like Kendrick Lamar or Beyoncé release new albums. A result of the industry losing a lot of its revenue was that they had to rethink how to go about in this business of music. One result was that a lot of labels stopped outsourcing jobs, and rather do it themselves, a lot of record companies started to do booking and managing of their own artists, which lead to the 360-deal. This deal is something of newer times, where the record company takes a percentage of every form of income that comes towards the artist, from merchandise sales, to tour and live performance income, whereas in the past the record companies were, mainly, only involved with financing, releasing the records and promoting them. When this was the norm the label would have to make back its investments in studio-time, the pressing of records, music video costs and alike, before the artist would see a dime (Busch, 2012). The trade-off with the 360-deal is that the labels would offer artists on these types of contracts more advertisement and exposure, the rationale behind the deal is that since they have their finger in every aspect of the artists' career, it gains both parties to be profitable in more ways than to only sell records. So, for an

example, let's hypothetically say that Norwegian contemporary artist Astrid S is on one of these 360-deals, and her record company gets 30 percent of her income. This would involve everything from her physical and digital sales, and concert revenue, but also if a clothing brand like H&M wanted to use her in ads, the record company would also get 30 percent of her earnings from doing this. As you could imagine, these kinds of deals have elicited a lot of criticism from both artists and people outside the industry alike.

Mark Katz notes in his *Capturing Sound*, that a lot of attention has been paid to the industry when discussing the impact of illegal downloading. There has been a certain consensus that since these people are "stealing" the music, they have little to no appreciation of what they are listening to. It's a bit like saying that they steal this music because they want to harm both the artist and the Industry behind the product. Katz found however, that this seldom was the case. He points to a survey from 2002 which found that 29 percent of the respondents admitted that their favourite genre of music had changed since they had started to download music. A lot of people from the same survey said that they "felt freer to explore unfamiliar genres without the risk of wasting their money or time; if the music is not to their liking, they can simply delete it" (2005, p. 167). A lot of downloaders also find that listening to music they would normally never purchase, could peak their interest which allowed them to use different search engines on the Internet to learn more about the music they were listening to. By doing this, they could learn much more about the music that they would do if they had ascertained the music via legal methods. Again, going back to the 2002 study that Katz refers to, 84 percent of downloaders had used the Internet to find out more about the music, or to look at lyrics or to connect with other people who liked what you liked. A great deal of the people surveyed also admitted that it was more than likely for them to go and see the artist they had downloaded in concert, as MP3 can never really be a substitute for a live show (Ibid, p. 174).

Although a lot of Anja Hagen's participants admitted to listening to more music due to the easy access modern technology provided, there were still some who were intimidated by the vast amount of available music, which served as a hindrance for further musical exploration. The problem was "getting lost in" the all the music that was available, but this participant named Sofia, found a solution to the problem by sorting all her new music in a playlist that

served that purpose alone (2015, p. 154). It seems that some of Hagen's participants had problems similar to Sofia, like the ability to keep track of what music one has listened to. In the time since Hagen's interviews, that were conducted in 2013, Spotify has come out with a lot more features that make musical exploration easier, like the Discover Weekly playlist, a listening history, and a lot more curated playlists, tailored for a wide range of moods, genres and alike.

When streaming services became more widely used by a large part of the earth's population, record labels, which had initially tried to halt the growth of them, started to take a different approach to the situation. In November of 2017 Billy Corgan, famous for being the creator and main songwriter of The Smashing Pumpkins, gave the listeners of the Joe Rogan Experience podcast an insight into how record labels were dealing with the popularity of streaming services:

“They're not worried that you'll go independent, and in fact, if you look at a lot of the machinations of the music business over the last twenty years, especially with the rise of the Internet, it's to keep people in the system. They don't want true independence. Look no further than the deals that the record labels cut with the streaming services: they got into ownership, equity deals with the streaming services, in arrangement for them to have an equity position, they agreed to very low rates for the artists' music. So, when you listen to Bob Dylan's song on Spotify, Bob Dylan isn't getting a lot of money for that, but as Spotify and the other streaming services rise up in their equity position, the labels benefit. So, the labels pimped out their own artists, to take a greater equity position in a rising business, you see what I'm saying? They weaken the artist's position to take a better seat at the table themselves.” (Rogan, 2017)

It seems, according to this, that the labels are still looking out for number one: themselves. Willing to “pimp out”, as Corgan puts it, their own artists to benefit themselves is not necessarily something new in this business. By using a sexualized term like pimp, Corgan is comparing a record label to a pimp, that simply traffics their artists as if they were sex workers who are owned and employed by the pimp, and who are to do his bidding at all times. The way record labels have treated artists has garnered criticism from artists and others for ages. Pink Floyd did this on *Wish You Were Here* their follow-up album to *Dark Side of The Moon*, which had both made them international superstars, and also fuelled their resentment of the music business. Two songs on *Wish You Were Here* are about the industry, “Welcome to the Machine”, and “Have a Cigar”. The latter is sung from the perspective of a record label executive, and the lyrics feature phrases like “Come in here, dear boy, have a

cigar, you're gonna go far, you're gonna fly high. You're never gonna die, you're gonna make it if you try, they're gonna love you". Such phrases are ones a label executive might say in order to fill an artist's head with hope and joy. Later in the same verse we learn that the executive doesn't really care or know about the artist's music or vision at all, with the line: "The band is just fantastic, that is really what I think, oh by the way, which one's Pink?" alluding to the fact that he thinks one of the band members is named Pink, which of course, is not the case. Another person who has voiced his criticism of the industry, and who's also used a sexual metaphors when doing so, is writer Hunter S. Thompson. He writes that, "The music business is a cruel and shallow money-trench, a long plastic hallway where thieves and pimps run free, and good men die like dogs. There's also a negative side" ("Hunter S Thompson: in his own words | Books | The Guardian," 2005). I do believe that a lot of people had hoped that the industry would come out of the disastrous 2000s with some new insight of how to treat artists and their intellectual property, but it seems that's not the case. This, along with the rising popularity of the 360-deal, is evidence that the industry cares far more about making money, than actually promoting new and exciting artists. Thus, many of the industry's critics during the 2000s have not seen the need to change their views and opinions about major record labels.

While streaming services like Spotify, Tidal or Apple Music have certainly helped to reduce the impact that illegal downloading has had on the industry, there still exists a large number of people who pirate music. The most common way for consumers to pirate today is via YouTube, as mentioned earlier; this is still streaming, but different from the previously mentioned streaming services. The copyright-holders will in most cases when their property is on YouTube not get financially reimbursed. According to a report by IFPI more than 82 percent of their sample of 12,600 internet users in 13 countries admitted to using YouTube for listening to music (Dunn, 2017).

A Shift of Power: from Dinosaurs to Top Dawgs

It is a fact that downloading, and in large the Internet, reshaped the music business, it wasn't just the labels who realised that a lot had changed, but also fans and artists alike. Before this,

it seemed that the ability to be a good networker in social situations was critical for your band to move up in the music business. In a way, the realisation that social media made it possible to get in touch with anyone anywhere, hurt the industry just as much as the declining sales of past years. Another loss to the industry was that with the Internet, their whole social capital had more or less disappeared. What started happening was that a lot of artists created their own record labels in order to both get all the revenue, and to keep the master tapes and rights to their own music themselves. When you own your own music, you can also be in charge of where people can listen to it, if you wanted you could release it solely on vinyl so that people had to pay for a physical product to listen to your music. If you choose to have it on the streaming services, you can pay a company to release it there, most of these companies releases your music to all the different streaming services, and also sites like the iTunes Store where people can pay to download your music.

Many artists realised that the record companies didn't necessarily know their audience better than themselves, and with a little elbow grease they could both manage their concerts and sales through their own label. This attitude towards the industry is found in across a myriad of different genres and artists, from unknown punk bands (punk is a genre that has always been affiliated with a certain DIY-culture) to worldwide known artists like the 2016 Mercury Prize recipient, grime artist Skepta. In his acceptance speech, he chose to highlight the fact that his album *Konnichiwa* was released independently through his own label Boy Better Know (which he created with his brother JME, who is also a prominent name in the grime-scene), and that even though no major label has been involved, he has still been able to tour the world, sell loads of records, top charts in the U.K. and he has made a name for himself in the music industry (Milton, 2016). Vincent Miller writes on the topic of social media and the potential it holds for artists who wish to promote themselves. Talking about MySpace, a social network that few to no one uses anymore, made it possible for artists to both promote and distribute their music directly to their fans (Miller, 2011, p. 92).

Another, and perhaps more successful, story like Boy Better Know, is the label Top Dawg Entertainment. Often shortened to TDE, the label hails from Los Angeles. Established in 2004 by Anthony "Top Dawg" Tiffith, a major player in the criminal environment surrounding the

neighbourhood of Watts, who sought a way off the streets by building a studio in his backyard. With the studio named House of Pain up and operational, Tiffith started to enlist talent from local disenfranchised Los Angeles neighbourhoods, and soon found himself with a handful of rappers. Among these were Jay Rock, ScHoolboy Q and a sixteen-year-old Kendrick Lamar. With House of Pain, Tiffith provided not only a studio for these young adults to make music, but also a space for them to be that was in ways removed from the streets of South Central Los Angeles. Having elicited a deal from Warner Bros./Asylum in 2007 for Jay Rock's debut album, it seemed as though success had finally hit the small label from Carson, California. But when the deal fell through in 2008, Top Dawg learned that none of the majors were focussing on the Internet, and decided that they would go it themselves with a hardcore DIY mentality. Releasing their first mixtapes as physical give-aways that were handed out by the actual artists, and later releasing them for free online. This helped TDE in developing a buzz for the label and their artists. They also learned by paying attention to what the established industry was doing, as Tiffith told Matt Diehl for Billboard:

““I had a little trick to make sure we hit No. 1 on iTunes,” says Tiffith. “All records come out on Tuesday then peak after the first few days. When they were on the way down on Friday, that’s when I’d drop TDE’s shit – and we’d zoom right to the top. Even if we got to the top of the charts by selling 200 copies, we still had the perception of being No. 1, and people paid attention” (2014).

Fast forward to today, TDE has a total of five platinum awarded releases, six if you count Kendrick Lamar's *Damn* going double platinum. Lamar who is TDE's biggest name has been awarded eleven Grammy awards, and was also recently the recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for Music, the first non-classical and non-jazz artist to do so in the 75 years of its existence. TDE continue to operate with a DIY state of mind, still, they have elicited help from bigger labels, like Dr. Dre's Aftermath Entertainment, in order to increase their artists' popularity internationally (Diehl, 2014). These kinds of deals are a one-off's for certain releases, so at its core TDE is still operating as an independent label, despite having the world's biggest rapper in its stable. Success stories like Top Dawg Entertainment, or London's Boy Better Know has proven that with talent and creative marketing, the major labels can be circumvented. Thus, we have seen Kendrick Lamar go from being an impoverished sixteen-year-old from the streets of Compton to becoming what could be the biggest name in hip hop history.

In terms of music production and distribution, the Internet and innovations in music technology, have also turned this on its head. Since music these days doesn't necessarily have to exist outside the confines of a computer, a hit track can in theory be created, mixed, mastered, distributed and listened to with as few as one or two people involved during this whole process. These days it seems that getting your music heard by the right people at the right time is much more important than being on a prestigious record label. To confirm this claim you need not look further than to Norwegian EDM artists like Kygo and Matoma. Both of them have in a very short period of time have gone from making songs in their bedrooms to playing some of the world's biggest festivals, getting their songs streamed millions of times, collaborating with some of the biggest artists in the world, and making heaps of money in an industry where everyone is saying it is damn near impossible to make a living. These types of artists have made a career without any form of establishment behind them, no years of touring to make a name for themselves, or grassroots movement building slowly over time. All they needed was a song that resonated with people, and from there they could build their own, company, on their own terms. It should be noted however, that unlike Skepta and Anthony "Top Dawg" Tiffith, Kygo and Matoma did not create their own labels, but since they both became overnight sensations, they could have their pick of labels, as everyone wanted a part of their business.

A direct result of music both becoming cheaper and more accessible is that we in a way no longer accord the same value to music as before. Perhaps this does not necessarily pertain to everyone or every type of music, but comparing today's practise of finding a song and hearing it in seconds, to having to acquire a physical disk, paying money for it, and perhaps not getting to hear it for days or hours, there is obviously something that has changed in our perception of music. The fact that, in at least the digital realm, paying for music is a thing of the past, which means that the majority of the younger generations most likely will never have to pay for music. In *Retromania* Simon Reynolds compares the shift from analogue to digital formats to something becoming liquefied: "[music was] turned into data that could be streamed, carried everywhere, transferred between devices." (2011, p. 122). The devaluation, both in money and our attentiveness, eventually led to the phenomena he calls "The commodification of music" where music has become so available, surrounding us at all times, and (almost) free, leading us to eventually perceive music as a commodity like electricity or

water, and that it's our right as human beings to be granted access to it at all times. When this happens, we move away from the previous perception that music was like Reynolds puts it. "an artistic experience whose temporality you subjected yourself to." (Ibid, 122). Rather than conjuring up emotions and feelings in listeners, music has, in ways, become something always on in the background of other activities. Like listening while commuting to work, or at the gym, or while you are working or studying, it seems that a lot of listeners today seldom sit down and listen to music uninterrupted. In Jonathan Sterne's article *Sounds Like the Mall of America* he argues that programmed music, is built upon the viewpoint that music is already commodified (1997, p. 45). Although, Sterne is talking about programmed music that is played in malls and shopping centres, this idea of commodification is reaffirmed by Kassabian who writes, "the development of recording technologies in the twentieth century disarticulated performance space and listening space. You can listen to opera in your bathtub and arena rock while riding the bus. And it is precisely this disarticulation that has made ubiquitous listening possible" (2013, p. 10). This type of disinterested listening is something a lot of different people have noticed, like Colleen Murphy who started hosting something called Classic Album Sundays. She did so as a result of the ongoing commodification of music:

"I felt that music had become a free or cheap commodity. "... When I was growing up, I would listen to records in my room. When my parents were out, I had the living room turntable at my disposal. I would just sit around and listen to records, and dance and sing. That was it. I wasn't doing anything else. "... It was something you could share or do alone. You could completely focus on it. You would give it 100 per cent of your attention" (Bickerdike, 2017).

Murphy started Classic Album Sundays to highlight the format of the album and to make people aware of the thoughts and intention of the artist to have their music be listened to in a certain way. For Murphy, this monthly gathering is a "strike against 'download culture', the sense that music has just become an endless compilation of random songs used as background noise" (Sillito, 2011). It seems that it's tendencies like these that have driven a lot of people towards older formats like vinyl, where some of the comforts of the digital musical experience are stripped away, and you are supposedly left listening to music like people did before the computer revolution.

Findings From the Questionnaire

Upon starting to analyse the data from my questionnaire I realised that there was something I hadn't considered. Nettskjema had a helpful algorithm that could turn the answers into graphs. However, this only worked for the questions that had fixed response alternatives. In other words, all my questions that had free text answers I would have to compile into workable graphs myself, which turned out to be an issue on the first question of the questionnaire which asked the participants' age. What I should have done was to create some age groups and have the participants answer the one they fit in to, instead I got 522 lines of numbers that I had to manually put into age groups. Underneath is a picture of my fourth and final attempt at doing this. Thankfully this was successful. Following this picture is this data put into a more comprehensible graph.

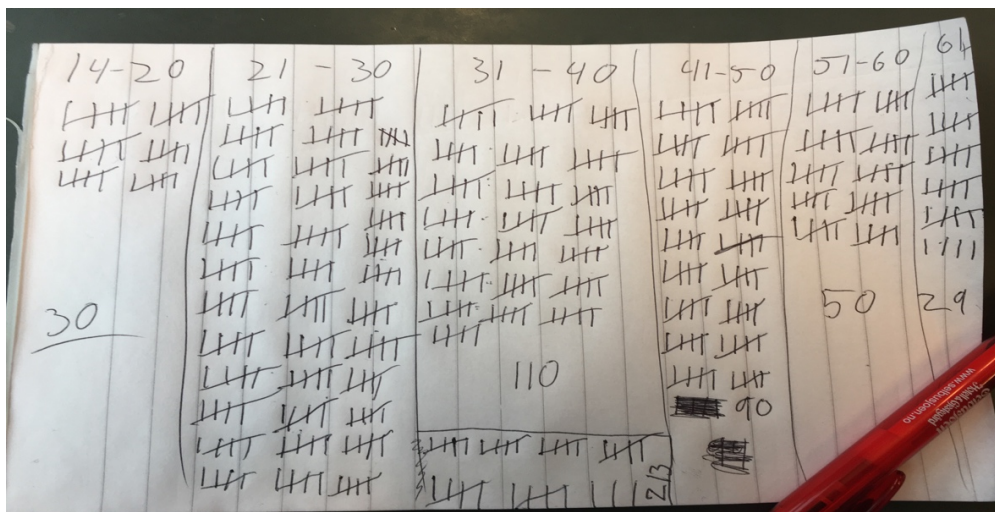


Figure 5 Picture of my tallying up of the participants in age groups. Taken on 25 April 2018.

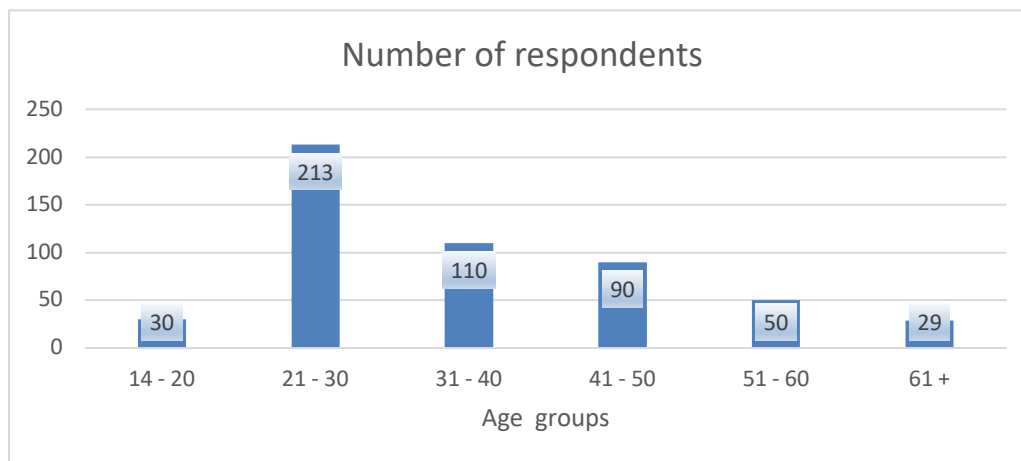


Figure 6 Age groups of participants put into graph.

The youngest age group was nearly half men and women. Out of the 30 of this group there were fourteen women and sixteen men. Twenty-five of the participants in this age group admitted that they listened to music on a daily basis, one wrote five to six days a week, and the remaining four wrote that they listened to music three to five days a week. In comparing this to the oldest age group of the questionnaire, we find very similar responses: in the age group consisting of people from 61 years and up, there were 24 of the 29 who listened to music on a daily basis, four who listened three to five days, and one who listened five to six days a week. Comparing the genders of these two groups, we find that there are not as many female respondents in the oldest group, here, women only made up around twenty percent.

When asked when during the day the questionnaire's participants listened to music, most people checked more than one box, and that was as expected. The reason for me choosing to have this question as multiple choice, with the option to answer more than one of the response alternatives. The high frequency of respondents who answered that they listened to music while driving or commuting tells us something about the place music has in peoples' lives. This corresponds with Kassabian's (2013) ideas of ubiquitous listening: that music is something that exists in the background of other activities. Anyone who has taken a bus, train, tram, subway or plane in Norway will be familiar with the number of people who either have music or another form of entertainment in their ears. In my experience it is more common to be listening to something on the bus, than not to, and I'm positive this is also true of most other countries in the western world.

Når i løpet av dagen lytter du vanligvis til musikk? (Flere svar er mulig) *









Svar	Antall	Prosent
Tidlig på morgenen	176	33,7 % 
Når du kjører eller pendler	348	66,7 % 
Når du jobber eller studerer/leser	228	43,7 % 
Under trening	178	34,1 % 
Om ettermiddagen	217	41,6 % 
På kvelden	240	46 % 
Før, eller samtidig som du legger deg	66	12,6 % 
Stort sett gjennom hele dagen	185	35,4 % 

Figure 7 Screenshot of the data collected from the questionnaire. Captured 25 April 2018.

Moving to the question that asked the participants about how they accessed music, you can see below what the numbers are. Spotify reigns supreme as the most used streaming service amongst the questionnaire's participants, with almost ten times as many users as Tidal. Apple Music is the second largest music streaming service, but it is still some 380 replies behind Spotify. This tells us that Spotify's early efforts to market to the Norwegian population has paid off, and while other agents have come along, it seems as most have stayed with their first streaming service.

As is evident in the screenshot below, of all physical formats that the participants have purchased, the CD is still the most popular. Vinyl is following closely behind, something that suggests that it could overtake the CD in popularity in the future. The fact that almost half of all the participants purchase or own vinyl, seems to correspond with the popularity vinyl has seen in recent years. These findings seem to suggest that the vinyl revival is actually happening in Norway too, and that most do not simply have them as a decorative furniture in their homes. The reason for me bringing up that notion is that a lot of the criticism of vinyl in the digital age, has to do with it being fashionable and redundant compared to streaming. So to see that almost 50% of the participants are users of vinyl is interesting.

Hvordan får du tilgang til musikk? (Flere svar er mulig.) *		
Svar	Antall	Prosent
Spotify	439	84,1 % 
Tidal	46	8,8 % 
Apple Music	55	10,5 % 
Google Play	17	3,3 % 
YouTube	371	71,1 % 
Vinyl	202	38,7 % 
CDer	245	46,9 % 
Kassetter	27	5,2 % 
Radio	311	59,6 % 
Andre	92	17,6 % 

Figure 8 Screenshot of the data collected from the questionnaire. Captured 25 April 2018.

Jumping back to the question that came between these two, one regarding whether the participants listened to music uninterrupted or not, the overall percentage for answering “No” was 24,7 percent. I do believe that most people however do not listen to music as a sole means of entertainment, even if they answered yes to this question. This in part because I didn’t specify what I meant by it, and because I think this is one of those aspects of listening that might lie somewhere in the listener’s unconscious, or if not that, conflicts with their view of themselves as music listeners. In the same way as Suvatne (2016), who lived in denial of his love for chart-topping pop, I believe that many see themselves as “better” listeners of music than most, a somewhat elitist viewpoint that I’ve been guilty of having myself. Even if you are listening on the bus, you are most likely using your smartphone to play music, which again means that you have access to the Internet and everything that comes with it. That experience in itself is considered ubiquitous listening by Kassabian (2013), but if you at the same time check your Facebook or other social media while listening to music, while on the bus, this creates a somewhat new dimension to the ubiquitous listening argument.

When asked whether the questionnaire’s participants had purchased music digitally in the last year, 149 replied that they had indeed purchased music digitally, and 372 replied that they had not. This question had a response rate of 99,8 percent, which means that in total one person omitted from answering it. Again I found myself surprised when I saw the number of people who still purchased music digitally. Especially in the light of the recent news that Apple was considering closing down the iTunes Store, in lieu of their streaming service Apple Music

growing in popularity, and going after the most popular one: Spotify. Why some participants still are purchasing digital music is something I would have asked the participants about, had I conducted interviews with each of them following the questionnaire. It would be interesting to know their reasoning for doing this, do they feel that purchasing something, although just a digital file, provides a more tangible feeling than the streaming services do, or are there other factors that affect this? One could make the claim that consumers feel a greater deal of ownership of the music when purchased on a tangible format like a CD or a vinyl.

The next question I asked to see what kind of equipment the participants were using while listening to music. Like I said in the detailing of the questionnaire, this post interested me in large because when it all comes down it, what equipment you use will affect how good what you're listening to sounds. I am not making the same point as the audiophile vinyl-enthusiasts who are convinced that vinyl sounds better than digital files, but there is objectively a difference in headphones you get for free on an airplane, and ones that cost over 1000,- NOK. It is also a fact that a lot of headphone companies are offering noise-cancelling headphones that completely isolates the listener from everything that is going on around him or her. In ways, this creates a more in-depth listening experience that isolates the listener and can make him or her more observant on what is happening within the music.



Figure 9 Screenshot of the data collected from the questionnaire. Captured 25 April 2018.

There is a quite large number of participants who admitted to using headphones while listening to music. This might have a correlation with the participants who said that they listened to music while driving or commuting. Although, some people probably use

headphones while listening to music at home, I would think that most of them use this kind of equipment when they are outside of their homes.

The next two questions asked whether the participants listened to music in playlists. The first simply asked if the participants used playlists at all, and the second inquired if they made their own playlists, subscribed to their friends' playlist or subscribed to premade ones by either streaming services or other creators. The first question garnered a total of 517 replied, meaning that there were five participants who opted out of answering the question. Again in retrospect, I could have made this question mandatory, as that is a feature that Nettskjema provides. But, with a nonresponse of 0,5 percent, I do not consider this to be an issue. 422 of the participants answered "Yes" to the first question, and 95 answered "No", respectively 81,6 and 18,4 percent. These numbers were not too surprising either, as playlists are a common practise for music lovers of every shade, and with a service like Spotify's easy to use playlist-creation tools, you can make a list consisting of hours of music in mere minutes. The question about what kinds of playlists the participants subscribed to was exclusively for those who had answered "Yes" to the first question, also here the participants could check multiple response alternatives. A total of 411 people replied that they made their own playlists, 147 answered that they subscribed to playlists made by friends and 176 that they subscribed to curated playlists by the streaming service or other creators. I was somewhat surprised by how few of the 411 that subscribed to curated playlists. Considering the popularity of Discover Weekly and other playlists with subscribers in the millions, I would have thought that a more people subscribed to these. With the streaming services' devotion to incorporating social media, like Spotify's Facebook integration, I thought that more people would share their playlists with friends, and also the other way around. However, my data shows that the participants are more interested in curating their own playlists, than to listen to playlists that they have not had a finger in composing, editing and arranging. There is a chance that some might not have known what I meant by "Curated playlists", perhaps not knowing that Discover Weekly, or the other playlists with a service like Spotify's "playlist collections" is what I was referring to with the question. This could be an explanation to what I've called surprisingly low numbers to these response alternatives.

The theme for the last three questions concerned the participants' relationship with the album format. The first asked whether the participants used the "Shuffle" function while listening to music, which can affect the general flow of an album, thus interfering with the artist vision for its audience to listen to his or her music. I provided three response alternatives for the question about "Shuffle", where the first was "Yes", the second "No" and third "Both yes and no". In all 518 participants answered this question, they were only allowed to answer one of the response alternatives. 118 people responded that they did use "Shuffle", 136 responded that they did not and 264 that they both did and did not use it. This might suggest that most people vary their use of this function.

When answering the question entitled "Do you listen to albums when using streaming services (from the first to the last song)?" 363 replied "Yes" and 149 "No", which is roughly 70 and 30 percent of the total of 512 participants. I specified that I was inquiring whether they listened to albums while streaming music because when listening to vinyl or cassettes, you are in a larger way "locked" into the format. This means that ten participants opted out of answering this question. Again like I mentioned above, this question should also have been set as mandatory to elicit the most replies. This is another finding that surprised me to say the least; I had not thought that so many of the questionnaire's participants would answer "Yes" to this question. Taking this data into account, it would seem that the album format is still alive and well in the digital space. As I have mentioned multiple times earlier, the sample frame might not be representative of the whole Norwegian population. As the groups I distributed the questionnaires to were all connected to music, and that those groups' members might be conscious of things like the album format and the flow of an album in a larger way than the general Norwegian public.

The final question of the questionnaire asked if the participants lent any thought as to how the creators of the music they were listening to had envisioned how it should be listened to, I also specified what I meant by saying "Like for instance the formation of an album". 520 replied to this question, meaning that a total of two did not answer. In all 389 answered that they did think about this, and 131 answered that they did not, resulting in 74,8 percent for "Yes" and 25,2 for "No".

Summary

The major transformations in the music industry in the last 50 years have in a way been due to technological advancements. From vinyl, through cassettes, CDs, MP3s, and eventually streaming, these new media and formats have changed both how we listen to, and in ways how we view music. One of the things I wanted to find out was if the album format had in a way lost its importance. Whether or not people appreciated or cared about things like song sequencing, liner notes, and how an album overall feels. My hypothesis that this was the case, was in many ways disproven, as a great number of the questionnaire's participants answered that they indeed still did listened to albums.

By utilizing a questionnaire I was able to get answers to some of the questions I had going into this project. As stated many times in this thesis, the sheer number of participants was both overwhelming and humbling. In many ways this made me realize the potential that social media can have when using it in academic ventures. Although, it should be noted that in the weeks when my questionnaire was open, Facebook found itself in the middle of what could be one of the biggest privacy scandal in recent history. With a scope of over 50 million individual profiles involved, this could lead to the social media network to lose a number of its users, making a study like this more difficult to do in the future.

In light of other literature on this topic my thesis stands out in terms of relevance and research methods I've utilized. By relevance I am talking about the rapid speed of technological innovation, that renders academic texts about certain technologies out of date within few years (as will be the case with this thesis in just a matter of years). Take Mark Katz, whose *Capturing Sound* (2005) still tells us a great deal about technology and user's views towards issues like piracy.

My findings show that the listening habits of the participants vary, that some still listen to albums from start to finish, while others prefer the playlist. Most, however, seem to do both. As far as playlists are concerned, it seems as though the majority of participants make their

own playlists, rather than utilizing a streaming service's many available premade and curated playlists. With all this in mind, the next part of the thesis focuses on the recent popularity of vinyl. Being a proponent of the format myself, both as a listener and a practitioner as I play in a band that sells vinyl, it has been a both exiting and interesting experience to follow what that has been happening with the vinyl format. In an attempt to understand it better I have interviewed to people who work in record stores, one works in my city of Trondheim and the other in Oslo.

PART FOUR:

The Vinyl in the Current Musical Environment

With music being as cheap and easily accessible as ever, it is puzzling to see a format as old as the vinyl record going as far as outselling digital downloads. Although vinyl will probably never be the majority of people's listening mode of choice, the recent surge in sales has had ramifications that stretch from creating more jobs, to highlighting how we as consumers can listen to music in the way that is closer to the way some artists intended us to.

One of the more surprising findings from my questionnaire is the number of people who choose vinyl as one of their main ways of listening to music. Even though vinyl has seen a similar boom in Norway as it has in the U.K. and the United States, it's reaffirming to see that the numbers match up with a wide selection of the public. Although, the number of participants to my questionnaire is nowhere close to the whole of the population of Norway, it still garnered responses from a wide range of people of different occupations and ages.

By talking to two record store workers in both Trondheim and Oslo, I wanted to hear their perspective on the current situation. Both of them work in stores that are not part of any chain, so vinyl is their main source of income, in contrast to Platekompaniet which is in ways Norway's HMV and sells everything from books to CDs, video games, DVDs and BluRays alongside vinyl. The final part of this chapter is an autoethnographical account of my experiences with having a vinyl pressed and released with my band. I chose to include this, to offer insights into all the work and planning that goes into the production of a vinyl record, even if it is done by a small band few have heard of.

Sources and Informants for this Chapter

In Jennifer Bickerdike's *Why Vinyl Matters* she interviews a lot of different personalities from all aspects of the music business. Her interviewees range from musicians like Lars Ulrich and

Steve Hackett, to people working with pressing records, record label people, and Michael Kurtz who co-founded Record Store Day. Bickerdike asks each of these similar questions about their relationship with the format, and what they think could be the reason for the resurgence of later years. Having a background in the music business as an intern at Sony, MCA Records and Universal, and later becoming West Coast Marketing Director for Interscope Geffen A&M Records at the age of 25, she both provides an insiders perspective and through this has gained access to her interviewees. Bickerdike eventually left the music industry to pursue a career in academia. She currently resides in the U.K. and has a PhD in Cultural Studies, and teaches at the British and Irish Modern Music Institute (Bickerdike, 2016).

Even with a background as a PhD in Cultural Studies Bickerdike's book, *Why Vinyl Matters*, isn't really an academic piece of text. The reason for this is most likely a conscious one on her part, as she neglects to detail any methodology for her interviews, or any views from other scholars on the subject of the recent surge in the popularity of vinyl. However, in light of this thesis, I do not see the fact that this book is, in a certain way, non-academic, as both the theme of vinyl in today's market and music streaming are current themes, and a lot of big developments are happening as I am writing this thesis. *Why Vinyl Matters* does however provide me with primary source material that I would never have been able to ascertain on my own, and when reading the interviews conducted by Mrs. Bickerdike, I am truly glad that a manifesto, as she calls it herself, like this exists, so that I am able to see that the recent love for the format spans across a vast array of different people and personalities.

As for my own data collection, I chose to conduct my interviews with two different people, who both worked in, or owned, record stores. The reason that I chose to survey these two was in part because I already had developed a rapport with them through some of the ventures of my own band. Jakob Kaas, who owns and manages a record store called All Good Clean Records in Trondheim, helped release my band's debut album through his independent record label by the same name of his record store. Jacob Krogvold who works at Big Dipper in Oslo, is also the lead singer in the Norwegian rock outfit Thulsa Doom. I met Jacob when my band was supporting Thulsa Doom in November of 2017 at a venue in Oslo.

The first person I met during my collection of data was Jacob Krogvold. The interview happened as my band was playing at the By:Larm festival in Oslo. About a week before this I reached out to him on Facebook to see if he would be interested in participating in an interview. After working out some details about when and where, I met him at the Big Dipper store in Oslo on the first of March 2018. The interview took place during his lunch-break at a café not far from Big Dipper. I brought along some papers for him to look over and sign, a dictation machine and my laptop where I had some questions and talking points for us to discuss. From this interview alone, which lasted for about twenty minutes, I got around 2800 words to transcribe, and needless to say, a lot of vital information from someone who has been involved in vinyl for a number of years as both a consumer, salesperson and musician.

My second interview with Jakob Kaas took place in a more familiar environment, at his record store All Good Clean Records. Our conversation lasted for about half of the time that I spent interviewing Krogvold but I still got a lot of good insight from this interview as well. The topics we talked about were very much similar to the ones I had with Jacob Krogvold, but as the interview at All Good Clean Records was done at a later time, I could get Kaas' views on some of the things Krogvold had said, as well as getting the perspective from someone who owns a much smaller store in what seems to be a more difficult town to run a record store in.

The Record Store and the War Between Analogue and Digital

In Norway, as I have pointed out earlier in this thesis, the sales numbers for vinyl keep going up, but even as this is the case there seems to be a trend of closing down record stores at an increasing rate. Eirik Husøy, who wrote an article on record stores in Norway for *Aftenposten*, found that the number of record stores had gone from its peak year 2001, with a total of 300 stores, to 130 in 2008 and to between seventy and eighty in 2011. Today there are a total of 47, according to *Aftenposten*'s numbers. The article, that was published on the 26th of March 2018, also featured an interactive map that showed you every record store in the country and divided them into five categories; Café/bar, niche-stores specializing in certain

genres, Platekompaniet (Norway's only chain music store), record stores, and second hand stores. The map shows that outside of the major four biggest cities in Norway; Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim and Stavanger, the number of record stores is rather scarce (Husøy, 2018).

The fact that stores are closing down is something I have noticed myself. In 2015, Big Dipper closed down its record store in Trondheim, after being open for about four years. This marked the end of the only store that was solely dedicated to the vinyl format in town. The reason for its closure was declining sales and the challenge of establishing a milieu around the store for its customers. However, Big Dipper's primary store, or flagship if you will, is located in Oslo and has seen sales increasing with as much as twenty percent annually since 2009 (Enlid, 2015). Trondheim saw a new record store opening up not long after the Big Dipper closed its doors. All Good Clean Records was the name of the new store that doubled as both an independent record store and a café.

This phenomenon is, however, not exclusive to Norway. All around the world record stores seem to be closing down, even as the vinyl is at its most popular in twenty years. With stores like Tower Records going bankrupt in 2006, or a vast amount of record stores closing in New York City, like the prestigious Other Music that closed its doors in 2016. The reason for stores closing can be many, but some that seem to be common denominators are the raising of rent, difficulty to pay taxes and the accessibility that the Internet provides. The latter opens up for private actors to sell directly to customers, thus cutting out the store that traditionally has served as the link between the record industry and the customer. In an article in the Vinyl Factory, Jonathan Sklute of Good Records in Manhattan elaborates on the different factors that have enabled him to be able to be in the business for over ten years: "location, a reliable team of people working for him, the ability of Good Records to stay up on industry trends, a social media presence, plus a few strokes of luck here and there" (Spice, 2016). All these factors seem to be relevant to anyone running a record store in these times, and the ability to stay relevant and to utilize social media in a beneficial way seem to be that which separates the best from the rest.

The record store has always been about more than selling records, as every musician develops a certain rapport with the people who sell gear at the music store. Anyone remotely interested in music can have a similar relationship with the person behind the desk at a record store. Whether it be advice on which bands to check out, or just discussing anything from music to what have you, a record store provides a space in a neighbourhood or town for both musicians, listeners of music and other to meet, argue and bond over similar tastes. Lars Ulrich, drummer for Metallica and the person who took on Napster in 2000, notes the significance of the record store in his interview with Bickerdike:

“The record store at the time, for me, was not just a place where you bought records. It was the place where you browsed through records; it was the place where you first encountered records; it was a place of social significance. “...” That was the pre-Internet days. Living in a place like Copenhagen, Denmark, we didn’t get a lot of English or American periodicals, so the record store clerks were a key source information” (2017, p. 20).

As I will discuss more later, one of the things I suspect people like about the record store is its limitations to what that’s actually available in the store. When a large percentage of the world’s recorded music is mere seconds away at any time, going to a record store and browsing through its inventory doesn’t only feel good because you’re exploring its contents, but it can also serve as a somewhat meditative experience that can be full of surprises. The record store, like the vinyl record itself, represents a somewhat simpler time, when you didn’t have 30 million songs available at all times, and when you listened to music, you actually listened. The record store also provides a personal feel, contrary to the streaming services that suggest new music based on algorithms and your listening history, the record store experience provides a human touch where you can get first hand advice from a living person behind the desk. Michael Kurtz, creator of Record Store Day, argues that the human touch that the record store provides, is unmatched by anyone else who sells vinyl, like Tesco in the U.K. or Walmart in the U.S., thus they can never really compete with the independent record store (Bickerdike, 2017, p. 139). In a way this can be viewed as a discussion of authenticity (or art) versus technology. The vinyl, and its human touch with the record store represents the most authentic recording format, in contrast to streaming which represents technological innovation and accessibility. Vinyl is the recording format closest to what Will Straw argues carries with it “a sense of performer personality and generic coherence “...” elaborated across multiple tracks” (2012, p. 234). Simon Frith discusses the strife between art and technology in his

article “Art Versus Technology: The Strange Case of Popular Music” in *Media Culture & Society*, giving examples of ‘art’ that had undergone certain technological changes. One is the backlash Bob Dylan experienced when touring the U.K. in 1966, when brought with him a band, in fact THE Band, and ‘went electric’. This was perceived as a cardinal sin by the folk-community, and many voiced their opinions by heckling him while on stage, one of which is audible on a bootleg-recording of one of the concerts. Another one of these rifts Frith mentions is the soundtrack to the 1971 film *A Clockwork Orange*, directed by Stanley Kubrick. The film features a soundtrack that mainly features classical music, such as Beethoven and Rossini, but a lot of the music is performed by Wendy Carlos using a Moog synthesizer, which is even more of a crash of technology and art than Dylan going electric (Frith, 1986, p. 264). Instead of viewing this as one format being art and the other technology, the general discussion of today is on whether analogue, represented by vinyl (and to some extent cassette tapes) or digital formats like the CD and MP3/FLAC/Lossless audio sounds better, or at least as good.

This discussion seems to be one that will never ever be settled. Vinyl fanatics claim that their format sounds better, while proponents of digital sound swear to their option. Even though it is possible to prove that some sonic qualities are lost in the encoding of MP3s, the proponents of digital formats will suggest that you use FLAC (which is lossless and has in theory the same audio-qualities as a vinyl disk). It is not only the consumption of music that is the subject of this discussion between analogue and digital, but also the production of music, like the great interest musicians and producers have in utilising old guitars, drums and equipment, which is usually backed up by the same arguments as vinyl, that they sound better. However, determining whether or not vinyl actually sounds better is difficult; there are myriad factors that all play into the listening experience. An obvious one would be the record player, and with this there are a number of things to consider; one is the pickup that “reads” the grooves of the record, what condition this is in, and the price range and model, will have a significant impact on how the record sounds. Another is the tonearm of the record player, which can also impact the sound, and then there is the issue of the record itself, how clean it is, if it has been treated for static electricity, what weight does the record is? More factors come into question, and this is before I have begun to go into amplifiers, pre-amplifiers, cables, speakers, vibrations from the floor, factors which elicit a whole lot more questions. The point I’m trying

to make is that it is difficult to say that one thing sounds better, when all of these factors affect the listening experience. Moreover, ‘good sound’ is subjective. This also affects digital music. Tidal has for the longest time advertised that they provide ‘HiFi streaming’ by offering lossless high-quality tracks. One issue is, that if the data from my questionnaire tells us anything, it is that the majority of people listen to music while they are on the go, and your smartphone with a couple of earbuds might not be able to reproduce the sonic characters of the ‘HiFi’ stream you are listening to. This could be because the internal audio DAC and amp of your smartphone might not be able to reproduce the sound properly, or that the earbuds you are using are not of a high enough quality.

In my conversation with Jakob Kaas he touched upon the issue of sound quality when discussing if the vinyl revival was a trend or not. He said that many of the people who came by his shop would say that the sound quality of vinyl was far superior to anything else, something Kaas initially agreed with, but when asked about what kind of record player these customers had, it turned out to be one from the store called Clas Ohlson (a hardware chain that sells everything from tools to shampoo). “Think about that before you talk about sound quality,” he told me (Kaas, 2018).

Jacob Krogvold also gave his opinions on the sound quality argument in our conversation:

“there is no doubt that there is a difference in how it sounds [between analogue vinyl and streaming], and then many people can argue about what sounds better, which in itself becomes redundant, when it’s a provable fact that it sounds so different, so it comes down to preference, what you prefer in terms of sound” (Krogvold, 2018).

It should however be noted that modern technological advancements are not the enemy of the analogue vinyl format, in some ways it is quite the contrary. The Internet has opened the vinyl community up to anyone who wants to be a part of it, whether they are fortunate enough to live in a town that has a record store or not. One of the main differences with buying your records online is that you do not get the social interaction that is involved in going to a store, browsing through its contents and maybe having a chat with the store proprietor. But, as we saw with Simon Reynolds and his affection for the online music blogs, the Internet does provide a, to an extent, a virtual record store, where fans can discuss, inquire and trade

records with each other. In Norway, there is a Facebook group, similar to the ones I posted the link to my questionnaire in, that focuses on the discussion of vinyl records. Platepraten, which roughly translates to record-talks, has over 11000 members, who engage in daily talks about all things vinyl. This group is strictly reserved for the discussion of vinyl, bands and bragging about your collection. Another group called “vinyl: salg, kjøp og bytte av lp/maxi/singler” is for the sale, trading and purchasing of vinyl in Norway. The Internet also provides the possibility of purchasing vinyl through bigger outlets like Amazon and Ebay, and from smaller bands who might use a service called Bandcamp, which is an online store that bands manage themselves, that also allows for direct contact between the band and their fans.

Some Risks Involved with Purchasing Vinyl

When purchasing vinyl, be it online or from a physical store, there is a lot of the time a certain degree of risk involved. If you have not listened to what you are buying prior to purchasing it, you might end up with something you may or may not like. I believe that this risk of buying something you might not like, is partly why a lot of Mark Katz’s informants who admitted to pirating music, said that they felt freer to explore unknown genres and artists (2005, p. 167). In my conversation with Jacob Krogvold he touched upon the issue of risk involved with buying something on vinyl that you do not know if you’ll like or hate:

Jacob: “I personally think it’s really fun when a new artist comes along, and has released a record, I have become very fascinated by a guy called Bisse, Danish guy who releases records, he’s playing at By:Larm and at Big Dipper, I like the idea of buying that record he’s made, take it home and see “what is this thing?”, maybe get disappointed, maybe be surprised by how good it is, and when you have already bought this guy’s package..”

Olav: “Yeah, you are already in a certain degree invested in his thing”

Jacob: “Yes! It’s like he’s made me think: “has Bisse fooled me [into buying his record]?”, and that’s a cool feeling.

Olav: “And it might be fun even though you don’t end up liking it”

Jacob: “Of course, you get your own..., you commit to it and involve yourself in it in a certain way (Krogvold, 2017).

Personally, I have got to know some of my favourite artists this way. I would never have heard of the band Baroness (before they became huge) if it was not for the guy behind the

desk at Tiger in Oslo who told me that I more or less had to buy their 2007 release *Red Album* when he saw that I was about to purchase an album by Mastodon. Or later, during my first year in Trondheim, when I went to a Vinylmesse, a kind of swap meet for record collectors and lovers, where one guy suggested that I should buy *Live at Roadburn* by Earthless when he didn't have a certain record I wanted by the band Sleep. Before this I had neither heard of the band nor the festival they were playing at, but upon bringing the record home, and listening to it with my roommate, we were both ecstatic when the one and a half hour long instrumental live-album ended. Getting to know an album like *Live at Roadburn* on the vinyl format is without a doubt the optimal way for me, to not have the ability to skip to the next track, or search within the track like you would on a streaming service, you just sit there and listen to it, in its full length, unaware of how long the four songs on the two disks would last.

The streaming equivalent of having someone suggest music for you would be Spotify's Discover Weekly playlist that I wrote about in Part One, or the related artists feature that most streaming services offer. In terms of these features success of getting listeners to broaden their horizons and listen to unknown music to them I do not know, but I do know that the risk and personal involvement of listening to these suggestions is no longer one that strains on your wallet, but simply how much time you choose to invest in it. What happens when you have invested money in something and don't like it? Most times you'll give it a second, third and maybe a fourth chance, and it might not be before the fourth time that you realise that you indeed do like the record after all. Then again you might not like it. One of the advantages of vinyl is that you can take it to a store and trade it in for another, that is if it's still in good condition. My point here is, that if you already have invested money in something, you are more than likely willing to invest time in it as well. Many of us know how hard it is to get a friend to check out some music you have suggested for them; even when the suggestion comes from someone with an excellent taste like yourself, it can be hard to make your friends realise how good your recommendation is. It has become increasingly easy to just give something a few seconds of your time and then judging the whole album from those mere seconds you were bothered to listen to it.

Possible Reasons for the Resurgence of Vinyl

One thing I wanted to get to the bottom of by interviewing both Kaas and Krogvold was their takes on why vinyl had grown in popularity in the last twelve or so years. I never thought that they would have any definitive answers, like I've mentioned earlier in this thesis, there are a number of different theories to why this is happening. As it is with most ongoing processes, it is difficult to point out one reason that has made the vinyl revival what it is today as nobody really knows the definitive reason. One reason that comes up again and again, is that the resurgence is simply a product of vinyl fanatics of older times, who sold their collection with the introduction of the CD, and who now want to get back in the game. Some who have corroborated this view are Harriet Gibsone and Bill Brewster, who have both written vinyl-related articles for The Guardian. Gibsone cites a recent YouGov survey which found that people aged between 45 and 54 were the most likely to purchase vinyl, and that the least likely were in the 18-24 age group (2016). Similarly Brewster notes that "The demographic of the average vinyl buyer is very clear. It's a middle-aged, possibly bearded (OK, definitely bearded); kids have probably left home, no longer on speaking terms with wife, spare bedroom has become a shrine to his teenage love: the Floyd "...". Essentially it's me." (2015). It is interesting that both of these have given older listeners the credit for the resurgence, and although it might be true in some capacities, nostalgic reasons alone seem like an unlikely explanation for the whole resurgence. If, however, this is the case this corresponds with Simon Reynolds' ideas about retromania, a phenomenon he discusses in great detail in his book by the same name. Reynolds notes that during the 2000s we saw a wave of nostalgia encompassing a lot of different aspects of pop culture and different genres in music, from Amy Winehouse's channelling of soul from a previous era, to the White Stripes doing the same with simplistic traditional blues, with a more modern rock sound (2011, xix). When asked about whether my interviewees thought that nostalgia was responsible for the resurgence of vinyl, none of them seemed to agree with the claims made by the aforementioned articles in The Guardian. Kaas was especially vocal about his thoughts on the issue:

Olav: "From some articles I've read, some seem to think that nostalgia is to blame, that older people are..."

Jakob: "I do not agree with that, not at all, because music has always interested people who like music, and I believe that a lot of people drift toward a certain format to listen to the music they enjoy. It might be that it is, in a sense, a fashion-element

with buying vinyl or physical formats, rather than listening to it digitally, but in large I think it has to do with those people who are genuinely interested, that they seek out the best product. “...” that’s why I believe that a lot of people who are interested in music, that they kind of want to upgrade the digital stream, or the too small CD, to a product where they get the feeling that they are in a larger way getting their money’s worth.” (Kaas, 2018).

Kaas’ view is that the consumers who drifted towards the analogue vinyl format, did this because of a desire to be closer to the format which the artist has intended that the music be consumed through. This ties in with Straw’s theories, that vinyl in a greater way holds with it a coherence than what you get with music on the digital alternatives. If this is the case, it supports the idea that the analogue vinyl format also enables for a more album-oriented listening practice. When asking my interviewees about nostalgic qualities of the resurgence, I presented them with an article from Billboard, detailing the ten most sold vinyl records in the U.S. in 2017. The list included The Beatles, Michael Jackson, Amy Winehouse, Ed Sheeran and the soundtracks from the films *Guardians of the Galaxy* and *La La Land* (Caulfield, 2018). I presented them with these charts to see whether or not this represented what their customers were buying, and if this kind of nostalgia was evident in their respectable stores. Most of these titles are in ways related to nostalgia, considering the fact that (aside from Sheeran) these artists are either dead or not active anymore, and that one of the soundtracks features predominantly 1980s music. This list fits nicely in with Simon Reynold’s notions of retromania, the fact that old bands are reuniting, and reissues of classic albums, like we see with this list (2011, p. ix). A lot of Kaas’ viewpoints were also shared by Jacob Krogvold, who noted that “all kinds of customers existed” (2018), as he had observed while working at Big Dipper in Oslo. When asked about the nostalgic reasons for the resurgence we provided a similar but yet different perspective:

“we sell a lot of Beatles, a lot of Pink Floyd, a lot of Bowie, not enough Stones, we have observed that we sell a lot of these to our younger customers “...” and I think a lot of those who come by the shop, that it’s not necessarily nostalgia playing a part, but if you are really fond of the Beatles or Pink Floyd, and you see that record and recognise it. The historical element attached tells you something about that it [the vinyl] is like it was back in the 60s and it is still the same now, I guess you could call that nostalgia. But again those are the formats that they [Floyd and the Beatles] made, and it’s easy to imagine that they were sitting in Abbey Road “...” and envisioned that they were making something that looked exactly like that [a 12-inch LP], and that I do agree with, that is nostalgia.” (Krogvold, 2018)

Besides nostalgia, the other explanation you see again and again for the resurgence, is that it is in large associated with hipster culture. This theory also holds with it that the resurgence is a trend, something that is happening right now, but not something that will necessarily last. Considering that vinyl sales have been rising for over twelve years, the theory that this is a trend has in some ways already been debunked. As Jacob Krogvold put it:

“yeah, a trend as in something fashion-related, that vinyl is hip is something people talk about still, and it’s in ways moronic. It’s possible that it was hip for a while, but if suddenly the vinyl is the only, the only thing in the world except Prince that has been hip for more than ten years, I do not believe that at all. It hasn’t been hip for ten years, so that is very exaggerated,” (Krogvold, 2018)

Norman Cook, better known under his pseudonym Fatboy Slim, has a contrary belief to Krogvold, in his interview with Jennifer Bickerdike in *Why Vinyl Matters* he says that he sees a connection between the resurgence of vinyl records and the introduction of the hipster beard. He also remarks upon the fact that the interaction with fans has changed dramatically in the 21st century:

“People used to come up and ask me for an autograph in the street – rather than a selfie. “...” they would say, ‘I have all your records’. i.e. ‘I haven’t just recognised you in the street, and I don’t just know your big hits; I *really am* a fan.’ You can’t even say that these days. Because everyone can say, ‘I have access to all of your records’. Nobody can buy into that anymore; the only thing you can really say to people you are a true fan of is, ‘I follow your every Tweet!’” (2018, 29).

This is interesting in many ways. Cook also goes into the case of buying to vinyl rather than digital: “You don’t have to make any sacrifice or invest anything into the music to listen to it” (Ibid: 24). As I mentioned earlier with the risks of buying vinyl, that it might lead you to listen to it more attentively, this corresponds with Cook’s view of the more non-interested listening that ensues with streaming services, where it leads to us just consuming music, and not experiencing it.

When I asked about some of the usual clientele Big Dipper in Oslo had, and whether or not the resurgence had to do with hipsters embracing the vinyl, Jacob Krogvold had this to say:

“after having worked in a record store, and been a customer for many years, let us say that there has always been people you would classify as hipsters, and whole lot of record collectors, and then some people who see this as a different way to experience

music. "... the hipster, if he still exists, and it's always a he, he buys a couple of cheap records and mostly complains and such. But what we do have, who should not to be confused with the hipster, because he is not hip, it's the guy, and it's always a he, who wants the collector's items, coloured vinyls and such. Limited editions, really elitist things really, "... I must admit that I think this is a bit dull, it seems that it's about getting your hands on something that others can't. But it is whether we like it or not, a big part of the vinyl-market, those collector's things, they are there and I don't think they're going anywhere" (Krogvold, 2018).

It seems, by Jacob Krogvold's account, that it is the vinyl collector, and not the hipster, who has been the most frequent customer in the resurgence, and not only the resurgence. These figures seem to have been a part of the scene for as long as the vinyl has existed. Simon Reynolds gives us a view inside the head of the average vinyl collector. Having been an avid collector himself, he has first-hand experience with the mentality of the collector. This is a person who ideally needs "to remain in a state of constant craving", and not buying your entire collection in one transaction. The collection must also be *earned* by spending countless hours in record stores browsing through what they have in stock (2011, 90). Citing Jean Baudrillard, he argues that a collector's collection is really never intended to be completed, and that "the most important piece of the collection is the missing one" (Ibid, 91). There is also the mentality in record collecting that they want "something no one else has." (Ibid, 106), something that corresponds with Krogvold's observations about the elitist tendencies he has encountered with some of Big Dipper's regular customers. Even in the years when the CD dominated the music listening market, vinyl was still being sold, although in a much smaller scale. One could draw the conclusion that these collectors, were in part those responsible for keeping the vinyl alive in those dormant years. However, if the avid collectors are the ones to blame for the resurgence, this does not resonate with the ten most bought vinyls in the U.S. in 2017 list that I presented both of my interviewees with. One would think that record collectors would already have the discography of the Beatles, Pink Floyd and Bowie, and would not necessarily go for the latest re-pressing. Especially when most of these spend a lot of time reading Record Collector's *Rare Record Price Guide*, a book that details the current value of records according to what condition they are in, as well as what the price is depending on what, where and when the record was pressed. As none of the stores my interviewees worked in really sold a lot of these artists, Big Dipper does to a certain extent sell these titles, as it is a bigger store, but at All Good Clean Records, Kaas told me that they have over time has specialized in certain genres.

“The only one of those titles I sell a lot of here is Pink Floyd, we also sell some Bob Marley when those are in the store, but I don’t think we even have any of those other albums here. We do have a crate of best-sellers, but as you can see there [a customer pulls out the album *Holy Mountain* by Sleep], that is our customer base. They buy those kinds of things, so that is what we have specialized in. “...” if people come in and ask for something that is not in those crates, I tell them: “oh! We do not have that in stock right now, I can get it for you, or you could order it on Amazon, or where have you.” (Kaas, 2018).

As more and more independent record stores are closing in Norway, as Husøy’s article in Aftenposten showed, a large part of the vinyl-buying public could be getting their purchases from Norway’s only chain-music store Platekompaniet. If the top selling LPs in Norway resembles the Billboard list for 2017, many of these titles could have been bought in Platekompaniet, rather than in record stores like Big Dipper or All Good Clean Records. There are few statistics on the actual sale of vinyl in Norway; there is one is the survey from IFPI Norge that showed an increase of 22 percent increase in the purchasing of vinyl from 2016 to 2017. There are no lists as to what titles that were most frequently bought, so to know for certain that if the top ten list from Billboard corresponds with the Norwegian audience is difficult to say.

Record Store Day

One thing that is mentioned often when discussing the resurgence, is Record Store Day, which is sort of the epitome of bank holiday’s in the vinyl community. Since the first of its kind in 2007 this has been about bringing attention towards the independent record store, so bigger chains like Platekompaniet in Norway do not participate. In part it can be seen as a resistance, or defence, against bigger corporations pushing out the ‘little man’. But as the creator of Record Store Day, Michael Kurtz, puts it in his interview with Bickerdike “mainly, we were just trying to resonate with the culture of the record store and idea of the record that has been catalogued in everything from books to movies” (2018, p. 138). The popularity of Record Store Day has grown alongside the popularity of the vinyl record, and has encompassed large parts of the music industry on its way to becoming the global event that it is today.

Record Store Day has gone from a time when vinyl was bought and sold in large by audiophiles, and when few to no record labels were releasing vinyl records, to now when it is fronted by artists like Foo Fighters, Metallica and Run the Jewels. This doesn't just say something about the popularity of vinyl amongst listeners, but also about how artists who go out of their way to support this older recording format. However, the event has garnered some criticism from certain parts of the vinyl community. Some stores decide not to partake as they believe Record Store Day has become too commercial, and in ways lost track with what it's supposed to be. Since 2007 Record Store Day releases has increasingly revolved around re-presses of 'classic albums' from the likes of the Velvet Underground, Led Zeppelin, Prince and Canadian prog-rockers Rush. Many view that pressing these records again is a waste of the few vinyl pressing plants that still exists, which creates long waiting periods for newer, and lesser known releases. One of these critics here in Norway is Kristian Kallevik, who owns and operates the record store Tiger in Oslo. This is a store that has been a big part of the Norwegian underground scene since 1996, and with its own record label Fysisk Format, it has released some of the most talked about Norwegian records that never would make it to our equivalent to Billboard: VG Lista Topp 20. Kallevik said this to Norwegian giveaway NATT&DAG:

"I'd rather work at Rema 1000 [Norwegian chain-supermarket] than to sell 'bread and milk' records, like Record Store Day is full of. With the Record Store Day releases the cultural work is already done, and it feels redundant to stand there and say that the Beach Boys, Beatles, the Cure and the Velvet Underground are great, when there are so many great records that need our attention in a small country like Norway. Record Store Day should focus on the new and current." (Bamle, 2015).

In a way it's easy to see where Kallevik is coming from. He's been doing a service to the Norwegian underground music scene for years, and though he gets recognition from his peers, it's understandable that he's reluctant to open his shop to releases that can be bought elsewhere. I asked both of my interviewees about Record Store Day, and they both had interesting things to add to the discussion. First was Jacob Krogvold, who elaborated on the criticisms surrounding the global event:

Jacob: "Record Store Day is in ways controversial, let's start with the criticism first. It revolves around old products being pressed again."

Olav: "Yes, because "... the mission statement of Record Store Day seems to be to strengthen the small independent record store..."

Jacob: “Yes and it has worked, for us, really well actually. Records are released “...” but it is for the collector though, a great deal of it is for the collector. And for people like me, “...” it’s a day of a lot of releases, and it could be things you didn’t know about, and of course a lot of new presses of old records, but I do have the feeling that it interests all kinds of people. “...” so a lot of the criticism has had to do with it [Record Store Day] occupying the vinyl presses, we have not had that experience, getting a record pressed can be time consuming, but you can order it in good time, and it is possible to have it done in time for your release date. It is a somewhat artificial problem, Record Store Day has been very good for us [Big Dipper] (Krogvold, 2018).

Jakob Kaas also discussed the pros and cons of Record Store Day during my interview with him, similar to Krogvold he knew of both the praise and criticism that seems to surround it:

Olav: “do you feel that Record Store Day has contributed to the recent spike in the popularity of vinyl?”

Jakob: “It might very well have, I do not know in what scope it has, as I believe that records and vinyl would have become popular regardless. “...”. “For people who have an interest, the event of it is fun, I believe that this is true for most lines of business, that events are created that bring with them extra interest. This is good for the milieu, so I would answer yes to that question.”

Olav: “still, it has garnered criticism from some stores that don’t want to be a part of it”

Jakob: “And it’s very easy to find parts of it to criticise, Record Store Day, there is no doubt about that. “...” I think many who run record stores, they are in a way idealists, they do this out of love because they love music, and they love to show off new bands that they like “...”. That was perhaps in theory the start of Record Store Day, but it has become very commercialised since then, and that’s why I think a lot of record store proprietors “...” to keep face and their image that they have to criticise Record Store Day, in order to distance themselves from the commercialisation that has happened there. They do this to stay ‘true’ to themselves and their concept. “...” this is a day when [Jakob leans in towards the mic and almost whispers] on Record Store Day we can make as much as we do in a month. [He leans back] right? So in a way it would be like [shoots a theoretical gun into his temple] boom [to not partake in Record Store Day], but at the same time I would rather have that revenue spread throughout the year, “...” instead of people queuing outside my store one day of the year” (Kaas, 2018).

It is especially the claim that Record Store Day is holding up the vinyl presses by reissuing so many albums, that I find most enticing when discussing the pros and cons of Record Store Day. Of course, it is a valid point that having a record pressed is an expensive and time-consuming venture, and it must be frustrating to not get your record pressed in time because of countless re-presses of an album like *Rumours* by Fleetwood Mack. There is a finite amount of record pressing plants in the world at this time; in Europe two giants are GZ Media

in the Czech Republic and Record Industry in the Netherlands. In large there haven't been many new plants opening since the 1970s. Thus, it is easy to criticise Record Store Day as they hold up the finite amount of vinyl presses that actually exist today. However, looking at the situation in a different light, one could argue that Record Store Day is creating not just a high demand for vinyl records, but also a high demand for places that make vinyl records. In Japan, Sony announced last year that they would be opening a brand-new record pressing plant in 2018. They had shut down their in-house plant in 1989 as the CD was growing rapidly in popularity, but as demand for vinyl was sky-rocketing they saw the need to open a new plant (Ellis-Petersen, 2017). Similarly, in the U.S.A. Jack White, from the White Stripes and his own record label Third Man Records, opened a brand-new record pressing plant in his native Detroit in 2017. Stacked out with brand new equipment made in Germany, the new plant seeks to both provide the community with jobs, and to help both established and lesser known artists by pressing their records (Zlatopolsky, 2017).

The Process of Getting a Record Recorded, Pressed and Released: an Autoethnographical Account

This autoethnography draws on the experiences and lessons I have had and learned through my years of being a part of the Norwegian underground music scene. A lot of the choices I and my band Bokassa have made stem from things we have either learned by making mistakes or seeing what other bands in the scene have done well or done not so well. All this serves as a background for this autoethnographical account of when my band Bokassa released our debut album in the spring of 2017.

The band was formed some four years ago in a WW2 German built bunker in Persaunet in Trondheim. Today the bunker has since been refurbished and now serves as rehearsal rooms for different bands in the area. During 2016 we worked on material that would eventually end up on the album in question and spent the rest of the year playing at different locations in Norway, stretching from Porsgrunn in the South-West to Tromsø in the northern part of the country. As the roughly ten songs were deemed to be ready we booked time in a local studio

by the name of Støy with an engineer we had worked with on a previous EP called *War on Everything*.

What we set out to do this time was to release our debut album, previously we had released the aforementioned EP on digital and CD, a 7-inch vinyl single and the EP *The Great Northern Trendkill* that was solely released on digital platforms. We recorded around 85 percent of the album during one weekend in September of 2016. What remained was to record some additional vocals and guitars, and a men's choir based in Trondheim called Svartlamoen Hardkor who would sing on the album's final song. These additional recording were done in two different studios in Trondheim during October of 2016, and as the songs were done they were sent to a person who would mix and master them.

As the person who was mixing and mastering the album lived in a completely different part of the country than us, the process of giving and receiving comments on what had to be changed became a long and tedious one. The mixer would not necessarily know what kind of a sound we were after, or what instruments on certain songs needed to be higher or lower in order to convey what we as a band wanted to. This resulted in an endless stream of messages and temporary mixes of each song being sent back and forth via Facebook, which easily added an additional two months to the process. Had the band been present for the mixing of the songs, I'm sure that we could easily have avoided these two months.

In January of 2017 we were finally content with both the mixes and the masters of the album and sought out someone to release the record. As we had previously worked with Jakob Kaas, the proprietor of All Good Clean Records, who had released our 7-inch single for Record Store Day 2016, we were now looking into working with him again. It should be noted that Bokassa has been DIY since its beginning, from recording, to booking gigs we have always done things on our own accord, and thus financed all our releases ourselves. Kaas was on board and contacted a pressing plant located in the U.K. that would press and deliver it in two to three months.

There are however more things to consider than just sending over a master of the record to the pressing plant that is manufacturing the record. One is the artwork; we wanted to go for something that would stand on the record shelves. We took to the Internet to seek out different artists who would fit the albums sound and feel, as well as being an eye-catcher. By using Instagram we found an artist by the name of Anders Rockum whose art had some of the qualities we were looking for. When we found a piece of him we all agreed on, we contacted him to see about using it for our album's cover art. The deal we struck with him involved paying a flat price for the rights to the image, so that we could use it when making merchandise like t-shirts, tote-bags and alike. We have since made a backdrop with this piece that hangs behind us on stage when we play shows. All this, including a text that went on the back of the vinyl sleeve, had to be in order when we commissioned the pressing plant to produce the records.



Figure 10 Bokassa *Divide & Conquer* album art. Downloaded on 30 April 2018.

Our deal with Jakob Kaas was that we as a band would pay for the pressing of the records, that it would be released through his record label, and that he would get a portion of the records to sell through his record store. He also had some ideas considering how to package the records. Of the 300 we pressed 100 of them were hand-numbered and included with them were a postcard with the album art on it which was signed by the three members of the band

(some also included drawings, as we started to joke around when signing the one hundred postcards). Hand-numbering and including certain promotional material within a vinyl release is something some of the vinyl collectors seem to be drawn towards. This idea was something Kaas got from his knowledge from owning and operating a record store.

About a month before they got the final product, we received some test-presses from the manufacturing plant. These are a kind of 'trial' vinyl that is sent out to the artist in order to see if the sound of the record is up to the standards that are expected. As these were to our liking, we gave the go-ahead to start manufacturing the records. While we waited for the records to arrive we started to plan the release concert for the album. Having looked into some of the few concert-venues that are left in Trondheim - two very important ones closed in 2016 - we eventually got the idea to have the concert at a local brewery in Trondheim by the name of Austmann. After reaching out and finding out that they were interested in this, we decided to have the concert in their warehouse. This being a warehouse and not a concert hall, there were certain things we had to get in order. First we needed someone to do the FOH (front of house/sound mixing) for the concert. This job was done by a friend of the band, who also had connections to an AV-rental company that supplied the PA-system for the concert, as the venue in question did not have one of these. We also wanted a band to warm up the crowd, so we contacted a local act by the name of Red Mountains. They were instantly on board with the whole thing. Then came the need to promote the event through social media. The brewery told us that they could not allow more than 70 people in the warehouse at the time, so not more than that amount of tickets were to be sold.

The album, which had been given the name *Divide and Conquer* was released on Saturday, 25th of March 2017. On the day of the release, Jakob Kaas had arranged a meet-and-greet event at All Good Clean Records, where people who wanted to come and buy the record could have a chat with us in the band and have the record signed. A week later the release-show happened. We had been able to sell all of the 70 tickets, and a whole lot of people were inquiring to see if there were any left. In all, the release concert was a great success, the audience enjoyed themselves, and the brewery even sold a special beer for the occasion: Bokassa New England IPA.

In the weeks following the release of our debut album we played some more concerts around Norway promoting our record. Now that we had a debut album out, and a physical release we could sell alongside our other merchandise before and after concerts, it in ways made us more legitimate as a band. The importance of vinyl is something I've discussed in detail throughout this thesis, and that importance is also relevant for a small band from Trondheim. As far as physical releases are concerned, there really is no point in selling anything physical that is not vinyl. This is something we as a band have observed over the years, as we know other bands that have boxes full of CDs they are most likely never going to sell. Even in the dormant years of vinyl, before the revival, the format has been a large part of the underground music scene. In light of these observations, it seemed more than worth it to pay the large costs of pressing vinyl, as it would create a product that would be more enticing than a CD. This is also something I talked to Jacob Krogvold about when I interviewed him. He said that, "We are both in bands, so we know the value of standing there [after a concert] with tangible products and pushing them on people" (Krogvold, 2018). As everything is also released on all the digital platforms as well, the physical products are more or less for the people who show an extra interest in the band. Most people will listen to the music on their streaming service of choice anyway, so to think that you need to accommodate a vinyl for every person who listens to the music is somewhat redundant.

As *Divide and Conquer* began to get some reviews in a few different outlets, the word about the album started to slowly spread around the Norwegian music community. We experienced that it became easier to book shows as people now had an album to connect to our name. In May of 2017 U.K. magazine Metal Hammer reviewed our record, which in many ways opened up some doors, and legitimised the record meaning that we could compete with already established artists. When the magazine in December announced that the album had made their list of the 11 best debut albums of 2017, this also helped both with something to boast about on social media, as well as to know that there are people outside of Trondheim who are paying attention to us. In terms of sales the record had a slow and steady sales record. There had been some peaks here and there, like the Metal Hammer review, but in all it wasn't flying off the shelves. However, in November of 2017 we saw that we might be running out of the initial 300 first-pressing records and decided that we had to press some more. This time

we decided to have the record be another colour than the original black, so we went with the kind of orange/yellow that our band name has on the cover. At the present time the second pressing has also sold out, and there is a third pressing of 300 LPs ordered, that should arrive in time for the 2018 Norwegian summer festival-circuit.

Being in a band like Bokassa has brought with it a lot of different skills and experiences I never would have thought would be relevant when playing in a punk-ish band. This includes things like registering the band as a company with divided liability, so that we could send invoices to venues, cover our own travel-costs and alike. Also the importance of owning one's own music is something I thought was a given before actually financing our own recordings. Since we own our own master-tapes, we can take the album to different record labels when we need to press more records. This opens up the opportunity for doing deals where the label we approach could agree to cover the costs and mailing of the records, where we get a certain portion of the records to sell at concerts and alike. In some ways the decline of the record industry has made artists of all levels of popularity more aware of the business side of things, whether it be in promotional, copyright or general managerial aspects of the business. I certainly never thought that I would have to learn about VAT when playing in a small semi-successful band, and certainly not that I would come to enjoy doing bookkeeping. But as one has put so much time into something, you come to care a lot about every aspect of it, from the sound, songs and eventually how the economy of the band is doing.

Summary

By conducting interviews with two people who work in Record Stores I have tried to get a better understanding of the vinyl revival and the factors that have made it possible. It seems that there is no one reason to explain what has happened in the last twelve or so years, but there are different explanations that all play their part in the revival of the format. Be it nostalgia, that it is hip, that it is superior in sound or that people are drawn towards a format that caters to the album in a larger way, people seem to have their own personal reasons for listening to vinyl. Despite the fact that record stores are closing down in Norway, as well as elsewhere in the world, it seems that vinyl is continuing to grow in popularity.

From my own experiences as a musician in the Norwegian underground music scene I wrote an autoethnographical account of the process in which my band Bokassa released our debut LP. I wanted to do this to highlight all the thought and time that goes into an album, even if the band that releases it is for most people unknown. I have learned that there is a pride involved with releasing an album. It's like opening yourself up for all the world to judge and see, and if you put something out that is not up to your own standards, you have in ways failed. Also with the promoting, and with Bokassa self-promoting, I have come to realise that this is something that one just has to abide by, and to partake in. As social media enables you to be in direct contact with your fans, it is becoming increasingly important to update the fans as often as possible. Still one has to be aware of not doing this too much, as this can be perceived as nagging your followers.

Most of the issues with releasing music on vinyl without a record label backing you is the price

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have provided a picture of current listening habits in Norway. Initially I wanted to find these out as I had a notion that the album format was being phased out due to the increasing popularity of playlists. However, before going into this specific issue, there needed to be established a historical background. Considering how much technology has changed in the past 50 years, one cannot begin to discuss listening habits today without taking into account how these have been reshaped by these technological transformations. By conducting a quantitative survey that over 500 people responded to, I have found out certain habits and feelings towards streaming, digital and physical music formats. Much to my own surprise, the findings from my questionnaire showed that many of its participants did indeed still listen to albums. This in a way contradicts Kassabian's (2013) ideas of "ubiquitous listening", as she argues that we listen with less attention paid to the music. Using a platform like Facebook closes it off to those who are on it, and the length of the questionnaire does not necessarily contribute in getting into the participants' individual habits. There is also the issue of the participants and their views being influenced by the bubble that exists on social media, where your own views are reinforced by algorithms specifically showing you things you agree with. Even if this is the case, the sheer number of participants seem to contradict this.

When discussing the fairly recent vinyl revival I have tried to find some sort of answer to why it has happened. It is, if nothing else, puzzling that people in this age of technological innovation are drawn towards a format as old as vinyl. Through my two interviews with people who work in record stores in both Oslo and Trondheim it is evident that there exists no one type of customer. So trying to pin the vinyl revival on either middle aged men or the perpetual punching bag that is the hipster, as certain journalists from The Guardian have done, is in ways both redundant and far from the truth.

This thesis does not provide any definitive answer to any of the questions I raised in its beginning. However, by conducting both quantitative and qualitative research approaches, I have found that there is not necessarily one simple answer to these. As both listening habits, and music formats can be as individual as your taste in music, no two people will have the

exact same preferences or practices. If anything, this thesis has proved that we as people are in large our own curators, be it that we make our own playlists, or make a decision to listen to an album from start to finish.

Further research on these topics could be to do a more in-depth study of people's streaming habits. Although this has been done by Hagen (2015), future research could be done with more participants from a wider array of age groups. In terms of quantitative data, a longer, and more in-depth questionnaire which could be distributed to a larger public, could possibly produce data that might be different from the one I have found. As for the vinyl revival in Norway and what types of records people are buying, one could include the Norwegian music store chain Platekompaniet. Since a lot of record stores seem to be closing in Norway, a large number of vinyl buyers might be getting their vinyl from this chain. Whereas my study focused on independent record stores, further research could include more established shops like Platekompaniet in order to elicit different data.

Considering that technology is ever-changing and happening at such a rapid speed, a study like this would have to be updated fairly regularly, perhaps every two years or so. There is also the issue of streaming services either being created like the rumoured YouTube streaming service, those going public like Spotify did in March of 2018, or those who are currently making headlines in Norway like Tidal. As Tidal was marketed that it would be a streaming service for artists by artists, the outcome of the ongoing scandal is going to be very interesting to follow. Especially as they are currently denying any manipulation of streams, and are at this time (the 10th of May 2018) threatening to sue NTNU as they participated in uncovering this data. Another ongoing development which is going to be interesting to follow is the vinyl revival. Is it going to continue to grow in sales in the coming years? If so, can we continue to call it the vinyl revival? Does something that has happened for over ten years count as a revival, or do we have to admit that this is not something temporary and rather a more permanent thing. Will something newer replace today's streaming services, or have we reached the zenith of musical technological innovation?

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Questionnaire

Spørreskjema om lyttevaner

Hva er din alder? *

Hva er ditt kjønn? *

- ☐ Mann
☐ Kvinne

Hva er din nasjonalitet? *

Yrke/Type utdanning *

Hvor ofte lytter du til musikk? *

- ☐ Daglig
☐ 5-6 dager av uken
☐ 3-5 dager av uken
☐ 1-3 dager av uken
☐ Nesten aldri

Når i løpet av dagen lytter du vanligvis til musikk? (Flere svar er mulig) *

- ☐ Tidlig på morgenen
☐ Når du kjører eller pendler
☐ Når du jobber eller studerer/leser
☐ Under trening
☐ Om ettermiddagen
☐ På kvelden
☐ Før, eller samtidig som du legger deg
☐ Stort sett gjennom hele dagen

Hender det at du lytter til musikk uavbrutt? (at du ikke gjør andre ting samtidig som du lytter) *

- ☐ Ja
☐ Nei

Hvordan får du tilgang til musikk? (Flere svar er mulig.) *

- ☐ Spotify
- ☐ Tidal
- ☐ Apple Music
- ☐ Google Play
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Vinyl
- ☐ CDer
- ☐ Kassetter
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Andre

Om du bruker en streamingtjeneste som for eksempel Spotify, betaler du (eller noen andre) for et Premium-abonnement?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nei

Har du kjøpt musikk digitalt det siste året (som for eksempel fra iTunes store)?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nei

Kjøper du noe musikk på fysiske formater? Om ikke kan du hoppe over dette spørsmålet, om ja vennligst skriv hvilke formater under.

Hva slags lydutstyr benytter du deg av når du lytter til musikk?

- ☐ Hodetelefoner/ørepropper
- ☐ HiFi-anlegg
- ☐ Telefon-høyttalere
- ☐ Laptop-høyttalere
- ☐ Bluetooth-høyttaler
- ☐ TV (smart TV, Chromecast, Apple TV)
- ☐ Radio

Lytter du til musikk i spillelister?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nei

• Om du svarte ja på det forrige spørsmålet, lager du dine egne spillelister, abonnerer du på venners spillelister, eller abonnerer du på forhåndslagde spillelister fra Spotify eller andre streamingtjenester? (Flere svar er mulig)

- ☐ Lager egne
- ☐ Abonnerer på venners
- ☐ Abonnerer på forhåndslagde

Benytter du deg av shuffle (en funksjon som spiller av sangene i tilfeldig rekkefølge) når du lytter til musikk?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nei
- ☐ Både ja og nei

Lytter du til album når du bruker streamingtjenester (fra første til siste sang)?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nei

Tenker du noen gang over hvordan artisten du lytter til har sett for seg at lytteropplevelsen skal være, som for eksempel utformingen av et album?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nei

APPENDIX B:

INTERVIEW WITH JACOB KROGVOLD

Torsdag 1.3.18, klokken 14:10 på Glassmagasinets Spiseri i Oslo.

O – Olav Dowkes

J - Jacob Krogvold

O: Hvem er du?

J: Jacob Krogvold, jeg jobber i platebutikken Big Dipper, som er spesialisert på spesialisert på salg av LP-plater og musikk på vinylformatet, samt at vi selger en god del platespillere.

O: Ja, dere er en slags one-stop-shop aktig sted?

J: Ja, egentlig, alt av utstyr egentlig, alt du trenger, både plata og alt utstyret du trenger for å høre på.

O: For dere gjorde noen reissues også, gjorde dere ikke?

J: Ja det er riktig, Big Dipper er involvert i noe som heter Round 2, et plateselskap som spesialiserer seg på reissues av norske klassiskere, eller mer eller mindre klassikere, særlig de med et visst potensiale utenlands. For det er noe av det vi gjør, og har distributisjonsavtaler med Light in the Attic [Records] blant annet i USA. Kredible selskaper da.

O: Litt om din interesse for vinylformatet, det gikk jo noen år da det ikke var så populært...

J: Riktig, riktig.

O: Har det vært der hele veien for din del?

J: Det var populært hos meg, også, men du kan si, jeg er 45 så når jeg var liten hadde jeg kassetter, vi var et godt radikalt hjem. Kassetter med Vazelina Bilopphøggers og annen kvalitetsmusikk, så jeg fant på en måte LP formatet selv litt seinere, CDen kom husker jeg omtrent samtidig som jeg fant LP-formatet. Jeg husker veldig godt at jeg kjøpte meg CD-spiller for jeg fikk en billig en og var veldig opptatt av musikk, og det var liksom greia da, så av en eller annen grunn fikk jeg tilgang på å kjøpe en CD-spiller billig, og vi ble imponert, men det var litt dritt og, også fikk vi ganske raskt en opplevelse, selv om vi var tenåringer da, unge tenåringer, så fikk vi en opplevelse av at det lyder ikke så fett da. Så jeg var på en måte han fyren som, kompisene mine vi gikk til andre kompiser, jeg har vokst opp på vestkanten, gikk til andre kompiser som hadde sånn russebil-aktig anlegg med Bose høyttallere og CD-er, også var vi enige om at det lød bedre hjemme hos meg da. Det er ikke sikkert det bare hadde med platespilleren å gjøre, men da ble det liksom tingen med LP-plater. CD-er har vært med hele tiden, har selv gitt ut musikk selv på CD-er og sånne ting som kanskje ikke har vært tilgjengelig på LP, men LP-ene, jeg ha de aldri opp. Så de mørkeste åra, var vel etter at plateselskapene, så vidt jeg har forstått, bestemte seg for å ikke trykke LP-plater, bli kvitt greiene, for det ble jo veldig mye bryderi med å lage LP-plater, de ville helst ha alle med seg over på CD-er, men de små plateselskapene, indie-selskapene, både i England og USA, og til en viss grad Norge, de fant ut det å trykke en del hundre, eller opptil endel tusen LP-plater, det var sikre penger, dette var ikke varer som plutselig kosta 79,- på Platekompaniet, dette var varer du fikk solgt ut til fullpris, og derfor så gjorde de det, for det var naturlig for dem å skulle tjene noen tusen her, og mange tusen der på en måte. Mens flere av de store selskapene, de tok seg ikke bryet til å gjøre det før etter en stund, eh ja. Og ja, etter en stund så må du nesten sjekke kalenderen, og det er rundt på slutten av 90-tallet det begynner å snu for alvor.

O: Ja, rundt 98-99 kanskje?

J: ja.

O: for en del av oppgaven min har en slags historisk bakgrunn, der snakker jeg litt om forskjellige formater, når kassetten kom og CD-en kom og sånn. Og sånn jeg forstår det når CD-en kom den første gangen, så var det fortsatt veldig dyrt for veldig mange, så mange holdt igjen med vinyl eller kasset, fordi de formatene ble billigere i lys av CD-en på en måte. Du har også opplevd det sånn, kanskje?

J: Altså når CD-en kom så, var den jo dyrere, men i Norge, på den tiden var kassetten vesentlig større enn LP-platen allerede da, hendig format, og CD-en var dyrere i starten og litt mer sånn high-class produkt da, så jeg tror nok at det ble solgt endel LP-er til folk, fordi det var billigere, men egentlig ikke så mye altså, jeg tror mange av de som kjøpte de billige platene hadde lyst til å fortsette med LP-er.

O: for mange holdt på formatet på en måte. Da tenkte jeg å gå litt over på der vi er i dag, 2017 markerte det tolvte året på rad der vinylsalget har gått opp hvert år i følge Billboard i alle fall, tror du da dette er en trend, eller at det er noe som kommer til å vare i årene fremover?

J: Ja, en trend som i en motegreie, altså det at vinyl er hipt det snakker jo folk om enda, og det er jo idiotisk på en måte. Mulig det var hipt en liten stund, men at vinyl da skulle plutselig være det eneste, det eneste i hele verden unntatt Prince som har vært hipt i mer enn ti år, det tror jeg ikke på liksom. Det har ikke vært hipt i ti år, så det er veldig veldig overdrevet, og etter å ha jobbet i platebutikk, og vært i platebutikk i kjempe mange år, la oss si at det er til en hver tid så har det vært noen få man kan beskrive som hipstere på en måte, og fryktelig mange platesamlere, og veldig mange som bare opplever dette her som en annen måte å oppleve

musikk på. De fleste benytter seg av begge deler [streaming og vinyl] hipsteren, hvis han fremdeles finnes, og det er alltid en han, han kjøper et par billigplater også klager han stort sett, og sånne ting. Men det vi har da, det syntes jeg ikke skal forveksles med hipsteren, fordi han er ikke hip, det er han fyren, og det er alltid en han, som vil ha de samleobjektene, farga vinylplater og sånne ting, limiterte opplag, elitistiske greier, som er blitt noe vi... jeg må innrømme at jeg syntes det er litt kjedelig, litt sånn der mas om tingene som ikke alle andre skal få tak på da, men det er enten vi liker det eller ikke, en vesentlig del av vinylmarkedet, samlergreiene, og de er der og det tror jeg ikke kommer til å forsvinne, det kommer nok litt til å dø, interessen for de derre veldig limiterte opplagene, fordi markedet på et visst tidspunkt vil bli oversvømt av det da.

O: ja ikke sant, så det blir ikke så spesielt lenger.

J: det blir ikke så spesielt, men folk vil velge seg fremdeles sine artister, og jeg tror det. For å se litt på den andre siden da: det at lyden skal være, at musikk du liker.... fra den tredje siden da; vi har en, folk har jo kjøpt seg storskjermer og surround-utstyr for å se film da, i en del år, det er ikke så populært å gjøre nå lenger, men, for nå har alle det. Svære skjermer, svært utstyr for å se film, mens musikk skal bli på en måte mer og mer kompakt, til å bli så lite at man kan stappe det opp i rumpa liksom, det er helt ulogisk når du tenker over hvor glad folk er i musikk, de aller fleste, altså du kjenner ingen som har lik musikksmak, som liker alle de samme tingene som deg, det finnes ikke, alle er helt egenrådige på det, det er en helt personlig greie, og det er klart at folk vil ha sin egen måte å gjøre det på, og folk kommer til å ønske å knytte seg opp til fysiske produkter som kommer tett fra artisten da. Vi er jo begge i band som vet verdien av å stå der med håndfaste produkter og prakke det på folk, og sånne ting, det kommer ikke til å bli borte, men sjansen for at det dukker opp et nytt format, som er fysisk som oppfyller de kriteriene er liten da.

O: Ja, det tror jeg også. Tror du at noe av denne boomen i vinylsalget skyldes av at det er mer ønskelig å ha et håndfast ting da, om vi tenker på musikksamlere da, så er det mer stas når

man får besøk at folk kan se på samlingen din, vs. Spotify/Apple Music, du har ikke den greia der, du har tilgang til flere millioner låter, og kan på en måte ikke vise frem hva du liker da.

J: jeg tror på det du sier, men jeg tror kanskje folk er mindre opptatt av å vise det frem enn det man skulle tro, og det gjør det til en vanskelig ting å beskrive da, når man snakker om intervjuer med alle som samler og sånn, for da kommer det noen og ser på tingene, men de fleste har det for sin egen del.

O: Bare for å ta opp det igjen, for jeg hørte da du var på P1 eller noe sånt? For noen måneder siden, så la de vel fram en artikkel fra The Guardian eller noe sånt..

J: ja det var han andre fyren, Otto, Otto på P1 som var utrolig glad i å prate og som ikke hørte noe jeg sa.

O: Nei fordi, i den artikkelen han la frem var del vel om britiske ungdommer som kjøpte vinyl, men som ikke åpnet de, og hadde de bare for å vise frem, tror du det er en greie i Norge?

J: jaja, alle slags folk finnes, og det finnes samlere som kjøper plater på samme måte som folk kjøper frimerker, det finnes. Men det er ikke det som er drivkraften her da.

O: Nei fordi mange, jeg har jo lest utrolig mange artikler om det her, og det er ingen som har fasiten nødvendigvis om hvorfor det har blitt så populært, eller, hvorfor det stiger i popularitet, men mange prøver jo å dra det til nostalgi da, og da kan jeg bare presentere deg med de ti mest solgte platene i USA i fjor, The Beatles, Guardians of the Galaxy OST som også bare er gamle artister egentlig, Ed Sheeran, Amy Winehouse, Prince, Bob Marley, Pink Floyd, La LA Land OST, og Michael Jackson, og det var vel tre Beatles plater eller noe sånt.

Så når man ser på det ser det jo veldig ut som at det er av nostalgiske grunner da, at folk kjøper det, men det er jo ikke nødvendigvis sånn da, tenker jeg. Er denne lista på en måte representativt for det dere selger?

J: Ikke helt, vi selger veldig mye Beatles, veldig mye Pink Floyd, veldig mye Bowie, ikke nok Stones, men vi selger mye av disse til yngre folk ser vi, lekre plater, og jeg tror mange av de som kommer inn, og det er, ikke nødvendigvis nostalgi eller det er en, altså, er du virkelig virkelig glad i Beatles eller Pink Floyd da, så ser du den plata og du kjenner den igjen, det historiske elementet er, okay, for det var sånn den var og det er sånn den er fremdeles, det kan du godt kalle nostalgi da, men det blir jo liksom formatet de laga da, og det er veldig lett å se for seg Abbey Road eller de var jo der på alle platene nesten, både Beatles og Floyd, og det blir lett å se for seg at de satt i Abbey Road og så for seg å lage noe som så akkurat ut som den, og det er jeg enig i, det er nostalgi. At man ønsker det der. Men når det er sagt, det er ikke noe tvil om at det lyder annerledes, også kan mange diskutere om hva som lyder best da, som i og for seg blir meningsløst når det beviselig lyder så annerledes, så er det snakk om preferanse altså, hva foretrekker du lydmessig, men nostalgien er viktig her, når det gjelder, det som er interessant med den britiske lista, med La La Land og Guardians of the Galaxy da, der har noen gått inn i en butikk og sett noe som minner om den filmen, også har de sett ”ååå den vil jeg ha”, som er veldig spesielt da, altså alle har nok endel sånne ting, og i Norge er det veldig mange som ser ”Oi, Motorpsycho” også ser de et produkt som er, det er få produkter som er så Motorpsycho som en LP-plata med Motorpsycho, da må du ha Snah eller Bent da egentlig, det er nøkkelen her, at den plata er så Motorpsycho, at det kan ikke bli mer Motorpsycho, og på den måten er den mer Motorpsycho enn streaming er det da, fordi det er så lett å se for seg de artistene tenke at ”dette er det vi skal lage”, på en måte, så du kan, hvis du er fryktelig glad i keramikere så kan du ha masse bilder av de greiene de har laga, men det er det du har da, har du tallerkenen føler du at du virkelig er nær da, og det tror jeg er viktig for folk, den nærheten. Også da, jeg syntes personlig det er dritgøy når det kommer en ny artist, og har sluppet en plate, jeg har blitt veldig fascinert av en fyr som heter Bisse, dansk fyr som gir ut plater, han skal spille på By:Larm og hos oss [Big Dipper], jeg liker tanken av å kjøpe den plata han har laget, ta den med hjem, også se ”helvete hva er dette for noe da”, kanskje bli skuffa, kanskje bli positivt overraska, og når man allerede har kjøpt pakka hannes da.

O: ikke sant, da er du allerede litt investert i greia

J: Ja! Egentlig, han har fått meg til å, ”har Bisse lurt meg?”, og det er en kul følelse da.

O: det er gøy selv om man ikke liker det og da.

J: Klart det, du får en helt egen, du forplikter deg og involverer deg på en eller annen måte.

O: ja, fordi jeg leste en undersøkelse om, angående det å høre på ny musikk på streamingtjenester, og det viste jo at, hva var det, 40% skruer av en låt etter fem sekunder, når de ikke har hørt den før, også er det noen som bli igjen til 20 sekunder, også skruer vel nesten alle av etter 30 sekunder. Og det her har hatt ringvirkninger på popbransjen da, at veldig mange popstjerner prøver å få inn hooket, ved å starte en låt med et refreng, eller å få inn hooket så tidlig som mulig da for å prøve å fenge lytterne, det er jo litt interessant, selv om jeg ikke helt vet hva det har å gjøre med vinylsalg, jo med vinyl som du sier, er det litt mer, som du sier, bundet til det da, når du først har kjøpt det, og det er mer stress å reise seg opp og flytte på nåla når du først har satt på en plate, på en måte.

J: det er en annen måte å høre på musikk på.

O: ja, og det er jo mer, i hvert fall en tolv tommer, er jo mer, du knytter deg mer opp til hvordan artisten har sett for seg at du skal høre på plata, med sequencing og hvilke låter som kommer hvor og, litt sånne ting.

Litt avslutningsvis om Record Store Day, hvordan, tror du den har bidratt til vinylsalget, eller hjulpet til på en måte?

J: Record Store Day er jo omdiskutert, kritikken skal vi begynne med den. Kritikken går jo på at det er gamle produkter som presses opp på ny.

O: ja fordi i, hva skal man kalle det, 'mission statement' til Record Store Day, går det for å styrke de små uavhengige platesjappene, er vel egentlig poenget med det tror jeg.

J: ja for det har funka, for vår del: jaja, det har funka kjempebra. Det kommer ut ting og det har, men det er for samleren da, i veldig stor grad. Og for de som er som meg, at de liker å få med seg ny musikk hjem på plate, så er det en dag med mange utgivelser og det kan være ting som dukker opp som man ikke har ikke fra før og, men det jo selvfølgelig mye nypressinger av gamle ting og sånne ting og, men jeg har en følelse av at det favner såpass bredt da, også, at det er litt for alle da, og til sammen blir det ekstremt mye, så mye av kritikken har gått på at de binder opp platepressene, og den opplevelsen har ikke vi hatt, det å få trykka en plate det kan være tidkrevende, men det går an å bestille i tid, det går an å få gjort det i tide. Det er litt kunstig problemstilling da, men Record Store Day har absolutt vært en veldig bra ting for oss.

APPENDIX C:

INTERVIEW WITH JAKOB KAAS

Fredag 16.3.18, klokken 13:00 på All Good Clean Records i Trondheim.

O – Olav Dowkes

J – Jakob Kaas

O: Vi kan begynne med det formelle, hvem er du?

J: Jeg er Jakob, jeg har platebutikken All Good Clean Records i Trondheim.

O: Hvor lenge har dere hatt åpent?

J: Siden mars 2015, så tre år.

O: I de siste i hvert fall ti årene har vinyl blitt gradvis mer populært, har din interesse for vinylformatet vært der, fra det var populært til.....

J: Nei, altså man kan si at jeg alltid har vært interessert i musikk, og vokste jo opp på 90-tallet, så derfor var det CDene for meg som fulgte veldig mye frem til 2010. Og da kom jeg i den situasjon hvor jeg liksom bare satt og ventet på at det skulle komme nye CDer med Foo Fighters eller Queens of the Stone Age, eller System of a Down, jeg satt og ventet på at det skulle komme ny musikk som jeg likte, også begynte jeg i stedet å baklengs for å finne ut av

hva musikk som fantes før. Og da fant jeg ut at mange av de utgivelsene jeg egentlig var interessert i å høre på var vanskelig å skaffe på CD, men veldig enkle å finne på...

O: ...ja for den første til Queens of the Stone Age er jo nærmest umulig å finne på CD....

J: Ja, men mer det at hvis jeg ønsket å gå bakover i tid, for eksempel om jeg ønsket å høre 70-tallsmusikk, fordi jeg var lei av å sitte og vente på at det skulle komme noe ny samtidsmusikk, så hvis jeg skulle kjøpe noe av denne 70-tallsmusikken var den faktisk enklere å finne på LP på det tidspunktet, enn det var å finne på CD i CD-butikkene. Så derfor så begynte jeg å kjøpe plater, så interessen oppstod i rundt 2010.

[Det kommer noen kunder inn i butikken, så Jakob spør om kundene trenger noe hjelp]

O: Så 2010 var da du begynte med vinyl

J: Ja, altså interessen for vinyl startet der.

O: 2017 markerer det tolvte året på rad, der vinylsalget har steget, har du noen teorier om hvorfor det fortsetter å stige?

J: Nei, jeg har noen egne små lomme-filosofier...

O: Utifra noen tekster jeg har lest, mener noen at det skyldes nostalgi, at det er eldre folk som...

J: Jeg er ikke enig i det, slett ikke, fordi at det, musikk har alltid vært interessant for folk som liker musikk, og jeg tror at mange folk tilpasser seg format for å høre den musikken de liker, også kan det godt hende at det er en moteting å kjøpe LP-er eller fysisk eller å høre det digitalt, men jeg tror i langt større grad at det handler om at de som er ekte interessert, de søker der hvor de får det beste produkt. Altså hvis man er interessert i biler, så kjøper man også den beste bilen, eller man undersøker masse for å få det beste produkt, og derfor tror jeg at mange av de som interesserer seg for musikk, de på en eller annen måte ønsker å oppgradere den digitale stream, eller den litt for lille CD, til et produkt der de føler at de får mer for pengene.

O: Noe mer håndfast på en måte

J: Ja, og det tror jeg at derfor vinyl, at de som er interessert de liker vinyl, jeg tror den brede forbruker, den gjennomsnittlige musikkbrukeren, er fint fornøyd med download, og det er bra, sånn skal det fortsette å være, men jeg tror for de som er litt ekstra interessert da vil man altså lete etter det beste produkt, og som det er nå da har det vist seg, hvis man ser de siste 30 år, at vinylen er den som er mest interessant for musikkinteresserte, det er der man får mest ”feeling” for pengene.

O: Ja, for du tenker ikke at det er en trend som foregår? Jeg spurte Jakob Krogvold om det samme, og han sa at det er ingenting som klarer å være trendy i mer en ti år, bortsett fra Prince.

J: Altså, er det en trend å kjøpe symaskin? Nei, folk gjør det fordi de liker å sy, fordi det er en del av det man gjør om man er interessert i å produsere klær selv, er det en trend å høre på musikk på fysiske format? Nei, for hvis man er oppriktig interessert i det så gjør man det. Så det kan godt hende det er en trend for noen, jeg vet jo at det er mange som sier: vi kjøper plater fordi musikken høres, bedre lydkvalitet. Jo jo, men det er en platespiller fra Clas Ohlson, tenk over det før du snakker lydkvalitet. Så for dem kan det godt være at det er en

trend, og de som sier: ja det er så og så kult, og vi vil gjerne sees med vinylplatene når vi går i byen, eller ett eller annet, men jeg tror blant de som er genuint interessert i musikk, da er det bare et resultat av at det er det beste produktet på markedet.

O: Nå skal jeg bare presentere de ti mest solgte platene i USA i fjor, så skal jeg se, ja du har kanskje sett det før? Det var The Beatles, Guardians of the Galaxy OST, Ed Sheeran, (Amy) Winehouse, Prince, Bob Marley, Pink Floyd, La La Land OST, og Michael Jackson. Er de titlene, føler du at det er representativt for kundene som kommer hit?

J: Nei, den eneste jeg vil si at jeg selger en del av her vil være Pink Floyd som jeg selger masse av, selger en del Bob Marley også når det er inne, ellers tror jeg ikke engang at jeg har de andre titlene på lager, jeg har litt Prince. Altså vi har en kasse med bestselgere, som du ser står Nirvana der, hun [kunde som er i butikken] trekker opp Sleep, det er våres kundegrunnlag, som kjøper sånne ting, og det er det vi har spesialisert oss på. Og du ser kassene som er profilert her: her står det: weed-soaked psychedelic doom, vi har Painkiller (Judas Priest album), High on Fire. Så det som står i kassene her er det vi selger, og hvis folk kommer og spør etter noen andre titler sier jeg: å! Den har vi ikke på lager, jeg kan skaffe det, eller du kan bestille det på Amazon, eller hvor de vil.

O: ja, fordi forskjellen fra dere og Big Dipper for eksempel, er vel at Big Dipper har mer, hva skal man kalle det? Gjennomsnittlig musikk?

J: Ja, jeg tror de selger veldig mye bredere sjangere enn vi gjør, men med et så lite lokale som vi har her, da må vi spesialisere oss i en viss sjanger og type musikk, for hvis vi skal selge veldig bredt, vil vi ende opp med å ha for lite plass og rent økonomisk sett vil vi heller ikke ha råd til å kjøpe inn når det kommer nye plater av diverse popartister.

O: nei ikke sant, det er jo ikke alltid man får det man har lyst på heller.... Litt om Record Store Day, føler du det har bidratt til vinylens popularitet? Det ble lansert i 2007...

J: Det har det helt sikkert, jeg vet ikke hvilket omfang, for jeg tror at plater og vinyl ville blitt populært uansett. Men det er litt liksom når man snakker fort på det: har VM i fotball, ja det har det helt sikkert, og å måle hvordan det hadde vært uten blir helt umulig. Så for folk som er interessert, er det alltid artig med events, altså det er bare sånn tror jeg alle bransjer fungerer, der noen lager events så skaper det ekstra interesse. Så det er bra for miljøet, så jeg vil svare ja til det spørsmålet.

O: Ja, for det er jo laget for små independent record stores, det er jo ideen i alle fall, men det har jo fått kritikk fra Tiger blant annet, som ikke vil være en del av det.

J: Og det er veldig enkelt å finne kritikk mot det, Record Store Day, det er det ikke noe tvil om. Men det er også, hva skal man si, jeg tror mange av de som driver platebutikker, de er en form for idealister, altså de gjør det med hjerte fordi de elsker musikk og de elsker å presentere nye band som de elsker, og sånn og sånn og sånn... Og det var vel også i teorien starten på Record Store Day, men den har bare blitt veldig kommersiell siden, og derfor tror jeg at mange platebutikknehavere, for å ha skal man si, holde deres image så må de kritisere Record Store Day, fordi de må ta avstand fra den kommersialiseringen som har vært der, for å liksom føle at de er "true" mot dem selv og mot deres konsept, fordi det er en dag når [Jakob lener seg frem og hvisker i mikrofonen] på Record Store Day kan vi tjene det samme som på en hel måned. [Lener seg tilbake] Ikke sant? Så in a way vil det være å [avfyrrer en fiktiv pistol mot hodet sitt] boom, men samtidig så vil jeg heller ha den omsetning spredt utover hele året, og ha ti folk flere i butikken onsdag, torsdag, fredag, i stedet for å ha kø langt ned Nonnegata én gang i året.