

Rock ideology

[Art & Culture](#), [Music](#)



Does popular music equate to commercial success? Is mass appeal enough to describe popular music? The answers to these questions may not come in handy. Oftentimes, what are considered to be popular music are the ones that are often played in the radio or promoted through various television shows and programs. Record sales and concert attendance are also important factors in determining (popular music). Yet, if one has to take a closer look, the above-given considerations can be summed up in achieving commercial triumph. However, for experts, there is a thin line that demarcates popular music from those that have emerged victorious from the economy of music making.

Through the years, various musical genres have emerged. Their existence can be attributed for several reasons. First, music goes through a series of changes and transformations. Each and every generation of musicians and artists are on a constant experiment on how to create new sounds that can possibly exceed the expectations of their predecessors. The other reason stems from the fact that the audience's musical needs vary from time to time.

Like food, music is a media commodity that must be constantly consumed by its specific target market or audience. But the moment wherein the peaks of satiety levels have been already reached, there is a strong tendency for an individual to look or crave for another media commodity that can attend to his or her demands. If music is viewed both as a commodity and a form of expression, then there is no doubt that being popular is also relative to being commercially triumphant. However, this generic notion tends to abolish music's true meaning, essence, value and social significance.

Commercial success, if such will be used as framework for what accounts as popular music stripped off the latter's intrinsic and intangible characteristics and features. Each musical genre goes through such concerns. Musicians and artists alike are trapped within the norms of creating music for profit and at the same time maintaining their musical integrity and artistry. With regards to categorizing popular music, it is apparent that Rock and Roll often finds itself as the center of argument between music scholars and expert.

Many Rock and Roll bands have managed to become commercially efficient, yet sometimes that the lack of musical authenticity deprives them from being considered as popular music. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that there are some Rock and Roll bands which have remained popular only to a few selective audiences, their commercial appeal is not highlighted, yet they are often tagged as popular music.

This discussion aims to tackle how Rock and Roll struggles to balance its profit-based orientation and at the same time preserve the pure and unadulterated nature of its music. The paper will also deal with rock ideology, its effect on the music's fan base and youth culture and on the overall nature of Rock and Roll per se.

Rockin the Youth Culture

Beebe, Fullbrook and Saunders (2002) explained that Rock and Roll and youth culture are interrelated to each other. The two readily share a special relationship. Rock and Roll is the youth and the youth is Rock and Roll. The two seem to find it hard to be separated from each other. For one reason, a

number of youth groups are able to relate to the themes perpetuated by Rock and Roll. The music became the youth's language in articulating their own concerns and issues that cannot be overtly expressed through direct communication or confrontational scenarios.

As Epstein (1998) emphasized, rock music played an important role within many youth subcultural groups wherein musical tastes and preferences provide a sense of belongingness and togetherness. Rock and Roll allowed these youngsters to relate and identify themselves to the youth's basic needs and demands (Epstein, 1998). Gillet (1996) explained that Rock music is able to provide pleasure—the kind of satisfaction that no other musical genres can provide.

But of course, this is something that extends beyond entertainment purposes. Through co-optation, as Grossberg (1997) maintains, the intersection of youth culture and Rock and Roll is preserved and sustained.

Rock and Roll and Popular Music

Kellog (2003) discussed that popular music is a representation or reflection of the cultural facets of society wherein it emanates. He added that the evolution of Rock and Roll is heavily influenced by the post-war era. In a time wherein a nation is trying to recover from war's damages, the seemingly antagonistic and hostile nature of rock and roll would not really come as a surprise. It is not uncommon for such music to tackle social dilemmas that are experienced by the community.

This is most especially felt during the times wherein Rock and Roll is on the process of growth and development. In Latin America for example, rock music functioned for propaganda purposes (Hernandez, L'Hoeste & Zolov, 2004). Going back, it can be seen that such music is not merely used for entertainment activities. To give pleasure and at the same time take into consideration society's critical issues transformed rock music into something that is revolutionary in nature.

Commercially Popular

Sterns (2001) emphasized that Rock and Roll is “ eminently commercial.” The glitter and glamour that is associated with it is a concrete sign of a consumer-oriented music. There is the desire to garner mass appeal which is nonetheless avoided by those individuals that belong to the counter-culture (Sterns, 2001). Placing too much importance on form over substance makes Rock music prone to being a “ consumer item (Sterns, 2001).”

However, Hernandez, L'Hoeste and Zolov (2004) mentioned that under the circumstances wherein Rock music strayed from entertainment function, Rock and Roll as popular music has now differentiated itself from music that are commercially produced, this is of course in reference to the Latin American Rock music scene. Rock as popular music in contrast to rock as consumer item can be differentiated into four different ways. The latter's differences are deeply characterized by its content and social function.

First of all, rock as popular music possesses “ intrinsic intent” which is to promote awareness to social and political issues (Hernandez, L'Hoeste &

Zolov, 2004). Secondly, it breaks free from “bodily gratifications, wherein Rock is produced as something worth listening since it embodies the Pan Latin-American dream(Hernandez, L’Hoeste & Zolov, 2004). The last but definitely not the least is that Rock has revolutionized the term “popular” wherein it previously referred to music created via the use of indigenous instruments (Hernandez, L’Hoeste & Zolov, 2004).

In the meantime, going against commerciality, most especially as for the case of Rock and Roll bands may seem too complicated. This stems from the fact that these musicians earn their bread and butter from this industry. Yet, in as much as musical authenticity and artistry is concerned in popular music, Marshall (2005) explained that popular music must adhere to the canons of music making in the Romantic period. During those times, music creation was focused on maintaining the “truth” in artist and music’s intention, regardless of whether it would be socially accepted or not by many (Marshall, 2005).

Rock Ideology

In order to preserve authenticity in rock music, many bands have successfully practiced the so-called rock ideology (Frith, 2007). Rock ideology purports that the music has an exclusive fan base or community that highlights their individualistic approach and orientations (Frith, 2007). This is in stark contrast to pop icons and celebrities whose popularities are attained through excessive media hype and exaggeration. In other words, rock to maintain its ideology must create music that is not present in other genres and would cater to a specific set of audience. In this aspect, rock and roll is famous but

its scope and coverage is far by more limited and narrow. It can be categorized as popular music but only within smaller groups, compared to music that follows a certain kind of formula.

Once and for all, rock as popular music is something that cannot be readily digested and appreciated by everybody else. And so through following its ideological threshold, the genre qualifies into the context of popular music—something that is worth listening and packed with cultural and social significance.

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