

Authentic music assignment



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Authentic Music Authenticity is broadly defined as what is genuine and real. People look for authenticity in aspects of life that are important to them, such as relationships, designer clothing, art, etc. Music is a form of art where authenticity is valued greatly. As video has killed the radio star over the past few decades, authenticity in music has become less appreciated and unimportant to many listeners where listeners choose popularity over originality.

Similarly, artists are not concerned about themselves in the music they make, but only about what the majority of listeners are concerned with hearing. Today's music audience seems to always be looking for the next Justin Timberlake, or Brittany Spears single with a catchy beat consisting about five words that are repeated through the songs entirety. I myself enjoy these songs, despite them being unoriginal and inauthentic.

This emphasis on product over process cannot be considered authentic for the main reason that it is not genuine; such musicians do not necessarily believe in the words they produce, only the end product that yields the most profits. Authentic music is the opposite of this. It is written by the artists themselves, enabling he or she to connect with their listeners on the basis of being heard or related with. Truly authentic music is that which is not influenced by anything but the musician, and is created to express whatever the musician wishes, as does the artist Billy Joel.

One reason that Billy Joel is such an authentic musician is because he is an authentic person. Carrie Brownstein says that musicians can be influenced by the expectations of the outside world, and due to this “ artists can begin

to lose sight of their own motivations. ” (Brownstein). Many artists, as well as people, do get influenced by the outside world, which often causes them to lose their originality and motivations they once had that made them authentic.

This is where Billy Joel differs from the others, making him genuine and real. Billy Joel decided he loved music, and that’s what he set out to do with his life; so he went in search of finding a band to join, and it was there he was discovered and given his first record contract. Joel moved from his hometown of New York to Los Angeles, where he would now be working, and after three wasted years in Los Angeles as Joel referred to it, he moved back home to New York.

This is authentic in every way because Joel never forgot who he was or where he came from and that it was those characteristics that influenced him as a person and musician. Although some musicians may lose sight of why they began in music to start with, the authentic one’s do not allow the outside world to erase that remembrance. If musicians are not true to themselves then it is difficult for them to be true to their music. By being a genuine person, Billy Joel provided himself with the tools and traits to be an authentic musician.

Contributing to his authenticity, Billy Joel is one of the few great singer-songwriters ever. This allowed him to make his own music, through which he could express himself. In one of Joel’s early hits, Streetlife Serenade, Joel sings “ If you’re gonna have a hit, you gotta make it fit, so they cut it down to 3: 05”. (“ Billy Joel”). This line is Joel being upset with radio’s power over

music, and how it forced him to shorten the length of his earlier hit, Piano Man.

This is authentic because Joel is just singing about his life and feelings, and letting the popularity with the audience take the back seat. Like Streetlife Serenade, another song where Billy Joel expresses himself is We Didn't Start the Fire. In writing this song, Joel actually wrote the lyrics before the melody so that he could sing about his biggest interest, history. In the song, Joel expresses his opinion that it was not his generation, but the one's before who were to blame for the countries situation at the time the song was written.

This song is not only authentic because Joel expressed his thoughts on an issue, but more so for the fact that he cared first about the message of the song before he showed concern for its beat and melody. Joel did find a fitting melody to correspond with his lyrics to this song, but it was the message that was the larger factor in the songs being at the top of the music charts in the 1980s. A final feature that Billy Joel possesses, contributing to his authenticity, is his passion and excellence in live performance.

Carrie Brownstein believes that “ the live experience elevates the art of music by making it permeable and improvisational,” as well as that “ the dialogue in a live context exists in the sonic and visceral relationship between the artist and the song and between the artist and the audience. ” (Brownstein). This is true because in a live concert the artist is in essence holding a conversation with the audience, where he or she is telling them their stories, feelings, and opinions.

In his concerts, Joel has been known for his passion of performing and interaction with the crowd. Journalist and Billy Joel fan, Mike Newman, talks about a concert where Joel said to the crowd “ don’t take shit from nobody,” in reference to current issues during the 1980’s concert, and received a colossal applause. (Newman). This instance shows that Joel and his audience share similar beliefs, and its these common beliefs like the ones in his lyrics that draw people into his music.

This displays better than anything else that authentic music truly connects the artist to his words and the audience. Truly authentic music is that which is not influenced by anything but the musician, and is created to express whatever the musician wishes, as does the artist Billy Joel. Authenticity in music is irrelevant to many people in some of their music preferences or all, but artists like Billy Joel show how the originality an realness of authentic music gives you an interaction and understanding of the artist and their music, which other genres cannot do.

Billy Joel never allowed the music industry or critics change his style or who he was, and by doing so he stayed doing what he loved, what made him who he was, and what makes him authentic. Works Cited “ Billy Joel. ” Wikipedia. 24 Sept. 2008. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 24 Sept. 2008 . Brownstein, Carrie. “ More Rock, Less Talk: Live Music Turns Off the Voices in Our Heads. ” The World is a Text. Ed. Jonathan Silverman and Dean Rader. 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc. , 2009. 693-96. Newman, Mike. “ Music Review: Billy Joel – The Stranger. ” Blogcritics Magazine 15 Sept. 2008. 23 Sept. 2008 .