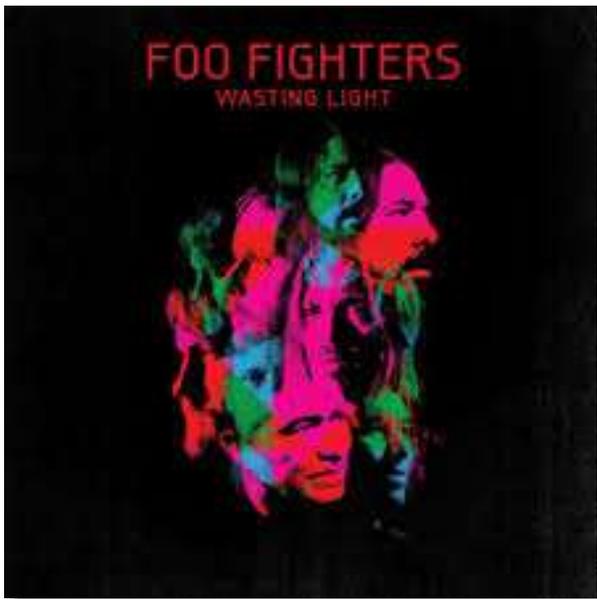


THE MAURELIAN

Here We Go!

Inform and entertain



In this edition of the Maurelian, students were tasked with exploring what they consider to be their favorite album of all time and why. Enjoy this wide range of musical tastes.

Please share your thoughts, observations or commentary with us.

Send to skelly@cbhs.org

A few thoughts on youth...

"Music is for every single person that walks the planet."

--Robert Plant

Spring 2016, edition 7

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Here to Party – Luke Bryan

By Michael King



Luke Bryan's spring break album, *Here to Party* is one of my favorite country albums of all time. It was released in 2013 right before school started to get out for spring break. In this album, lyrics express what many college and high school kids do on spring break. The songs: *Wild Weekend*, and *Sorority Girl* are obvious attempts by Bryan to reach out to his high school and college fans. Bryan's album is filled with songs about hanging with friends and going to the beach. Images of fishing and having bonfires are prominent in a few lines.

Springtime has seen Bryan's album receiving much airtime for country fans.

Here to Party is my favorite album because I enjoy going to the beach on spring break. This time of celebration and relaxation needs a soundtrack. This

album is the one I enjoy.

Bryan also expresses some of the potential lows of spring break such as having to leave a girl and new friends behind. The song *A Little Later On* is one of the most relatable songs to most high school and college students. When people go on spring break, they enjoy meeting up with friends. Finding a song that really reflects my spring break mood has been pretty fun. *A Little Later* really connects with my desire during spring breaks to simply relax with friends. I look forward to more spring and summer albums from Luke Bryan.

40 Licks – The Rolling Stones

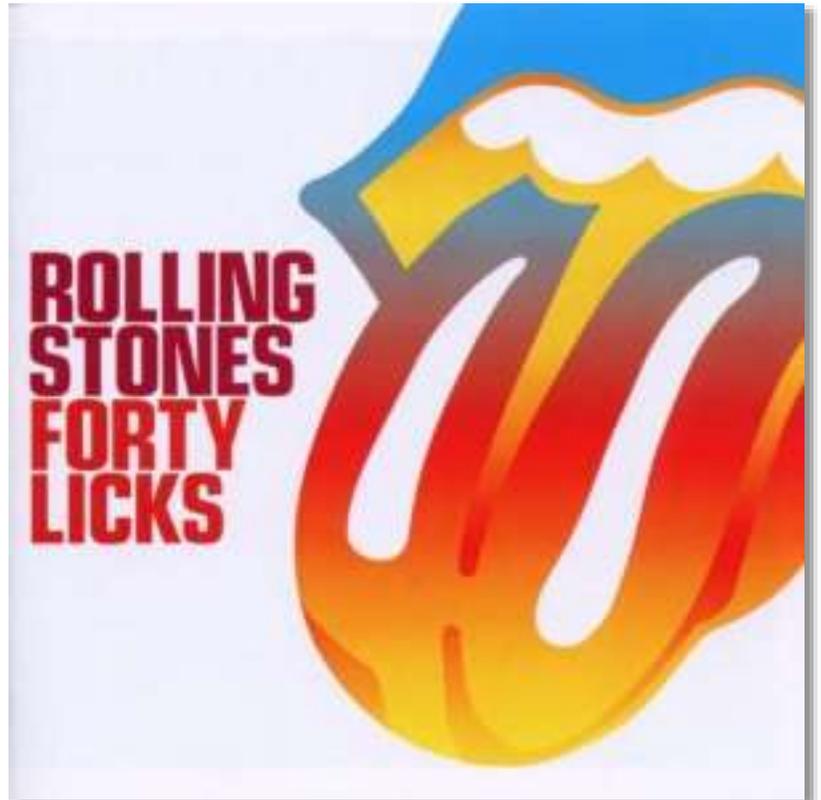
By Alex Geiger

In 2002, the Rolling Stones released their double compilation album, *Forty Licks*, which contains some of their best songs. The album contains 40 songs total, 20 per disc. Even if there are numerous other fantastic Rolling Stones' albums, I hold the opinion that *Forty Licks* is the best. It provides comfort for during tough times as it explores love and the troubles love can bring. The songs vary greatly but there is that special underlying connection to the sound and lyrics that have made a legend out of The Rolling Stones.

The majority of the first disc's songs, *Paint It Black*, *Sympathy for the Devil*, *You Can't Always Get What You Want*, *(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction*, *Wild Horses*, and *Gimme Shelter* focus on life's journey that can often be filled with troubles. *Paint It Black* conveys the attitude of dislike, which results from enduring a tragedy that depletes one's joy, such as losing an intimate friend. *You Can't Always Get What You Want* focuses on the universal frustrations of settling for the basics of life instead of the elusive dreams in our heads and hearts. Though *Paint It Black* and *You Can't Always Get What You Want* may seem dissimilar, both songs communicate comfort amidst the pain, frustrations, and the difficulties of life. All the songs in the first disc of *Forty Licks* share this similarity.

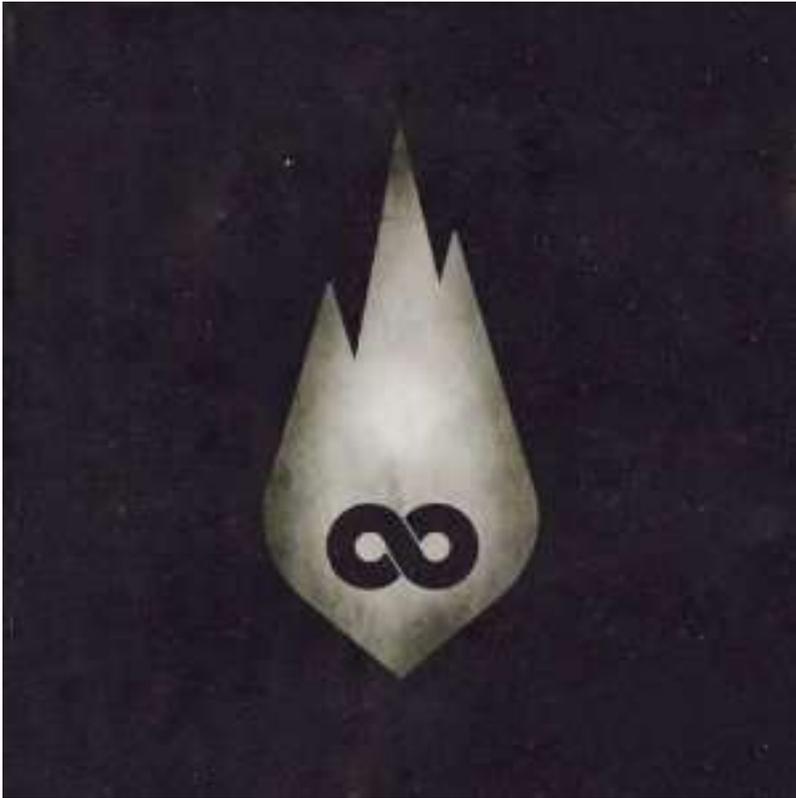
Featuring some of their other famous songs, the second portion of the compilation album, includes smash hits such as *Start Me Up*, *Brown Sugar*, *Mixed Emotions*, *Love Is Strong*, and *Stealing My Heart*. These songs emphasize excitement within romantic relationships. "Let's grab the world by the scruff of the neck And drink it down deeply. Let's love it to death" from *Mixed Emotions* exerts a Bonnie and Clyde type attitude. *Brown Sugar* goes even further as it expresses the excitement generated from a relationship between lovers.

Many of the Rolling Stones' albums are great, but *Forty Licks* is the greatest of them all because it combines songs from many of their albums, each introducing a message from their original albums. *Forty Licks* possesses the messages from each of the Stones' albums. It is amazing so check it out!



The End is Where We Begin

By Cole Baker



My favorite album of all time is *The End is Where We Begin* by Thousand Foot Krutch. *Light Up the Sky*, *Let the Sparks Fly*, and *I Get Wicked* are all impressive songs. This album holds one's attention the entire time it is rolling. The lead singer's emotional timing evokes the passionate feeling throughout every song.

The music is engaging and fun while not overwhelming the lyrical strength of all the songs.

What I love most about this album is that it's fun to have on in the background, but it also has deep substance when I listen closely. Each song has its own tone, but keeps with the consistency of the entire album, which is strong, engaging rock music.

The song, *Let the Sparks Fly*, is a loudly aggressive, in your face tune. Other

songs such as *All I Need to Know* are subtle and restrained. Not all of the music is hard rock, which is another thing making it great for any listener.

The emotion this album evokes from me is real and raw. *Thousand Foot Krutch* did an impressive job with this album. All of the songs on the album get better the more I listen to them. This is a rare experience for me. I hope more of their albums will be like *The End is Where We Begin*.

Wasting Light – Foo Fighters

By Patrick Pietrangelo

Wasting Light is the seventh studio album by the American rock band, Foo Fighters. It is my favorite album by this artist. It is a perfect blend of the signature Foo Fighters' vibe and newer techniques and material. Dave Grohl, the main songwriter, does some experimentation but for the most part sticks to his easily recognizable lyrical style that includes meaningful lyrics.

In regard to instrumentation, the album is stellar. The album opens up with *Bridge Burning*, which involves a searing hot rock riff with screaming vocals before it gets into the verses. In the chorus, the instruments really blend in well with the harmonized vocals. The next two songs are indicative of classic Foo Fighters' style and embody the anthem sound. *Rope* opens on a guitar lick with a very interesting delay effect while simultaneously another guitar plays a harmony to the lick and then moves into a really catchy chorus. *Dear Rosemary* is groovier but still retains elements of an anthem with a catchy chorus.

As always, the percussion heavily drives the Foo Fighters. In this case, Taylor Hawkins does a fantastic job. My favorite songs to listen to the drums on are *These Days*, *Rope*, and *Walk*. *These Days* features an upbeat unconventional drumbeat at first and then moves into a much smoother beat. I love to listen to *These Days* and compare the two dynamics. *Rope* features a kind series of drum fills during the bridge, in which the lack of vocals allows Taylor Hawkins to shine; during this moment he uses toms and the snare to really fill out the empty space. My favorite part of *Walk* is how the drums build up to the climax of the song throughout its entirety; this gives it bump and energy.

Dave's vocals are perfect – not in the sense that they are flawless, but in the sense that he is real and there is no auto tune. The imperfections make it perfect because people know it is real. My favorite lyrics on the album occur in the chorus of *Rope*:

Give me some rope I'm coming loose, I'm hanging on you

Give me some rope I'm coming loose, I'm pulling for you now

Give me some rope I'm coming out of my head, into the clear

When you go I come loose

The signature screaming is heard in *Walk* and *Bridge Burning*, but the main vocal achievement is in the song *White Limo*. In this song Dave's vocals are barely understandable because he is screaming and there is a grainy effect on his voice. However, there is meaning behind the distortion because it adds to the sense of confusion when the song talks about being under the influence of something.

This is my favorite Foo Fighters album because it is the culmination of their six other albums. All of the classic techniques particular to the Foo Fighters are evident in the audio sensation. Not to mention the fact that *Walk* won rock song of the year, it is a well-received album from a very mature and quite possibly the best rock band in America.

Alex G

By Justin Howerton



Alex Giannascoli, often referred to by his shortened stage name Alex G, has produced some of the most poignant and raw songs that I have heard in years. Growing up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Alex G began his career in the early 2000's and has since gained an impressive following. All of his releases are currently on bandcamp.com for free and his plethora of merchandise, vinyl, and discs are available for purchase as well. At the young age of 23, Alex G has already produced and released an

impressive assortment of music and his future seems even brighter than his already impressive compilation of albums.

As shown from his previous short and sweet albums, Alex G is not afraid to experiment with different beats and sounds. This experimentation comes through with full force in *DSU* released in 2014. Furthermore, his lyrical genius shines through on all of songs, especially within the song "Skipper" in which Alex G writes, "Are you a tripper, can you feel the drag?"

All of his songs are written with a massive amount of emotion and power. The depth of passion, which Alex G manages to access in his music, is something to praise and admire. His music calls to mind the feeling of being on the brink of death, worry, depression, or anything horrible, and then suddenly and overwhelmingly being able to block all of it out with a tranquil indifference. His theme of constant heartbreak and authenticity are also ever-present and the joys and pains of being young are highlighted in his song *Boy*. This album to me is his quintessential work that can be listened to anywhere or in any circumstance; whether I feel happy, sad, or indifferent this album manages to inspire me to remove myself from a rut of apathy and to go out and appreciate everything that I have and even appreciate everything that I will have.

This album does not try to make everything better but it relates to the idea that it's okay for things to be bad as long as there is some semblance of hope or redemption left. Overall, *DSU* marks Alex G's continual rise in the music world and even years down the road will still be regarded as one of his best works because of its combined innovation, lyrical prowess, and authentic depth of emotion.

Good kid, mAAAd city – Kendrick Lamar

By Sean Green



My favorite album to listen to is *good kid, m.A.A.d city* by Kendrick Lamar. It was released in 2012 and is his best album, by far. It features songs such as *Swimming Pools* and *Money Trees*. Kendrick Lamar made this album with the help of Dr. Dre and Anthony "Top Dog" Tippith.

The album is comprised of the first twelve songs. The rest of the songs after the twelve are bonus tracks or remixes that were made based off other songs already in the album.

There are plenty of songs with deeper meanings than just rap music that sounds good. He has a song on this album called *Poetic Justice*, and one of the main lyrics is "if a flower could bloom in a dark room would you trust it?" This basically describes him making it out of Compton, California

where he was born in 1987.

Lamar asks the audience if they believe a good person can come out of a horrible neighborhood. He came out of Compton as the flower who bloomed in a dark place. This song goes into saying how good people can come out of a bad place and that people are not always products of their environments.

Kendrick Lamar puts together an album that pleases the ear and lets the audience listen to a combination of calmer rap with *Swimming Pools* and faster rap with songs *m.A.A.d City*. He gives an album to the people. An album that many people can appreciate.

Sonic Highways – Foo Fighters

By Conner Buse

Sonic Highways, an album by Foo Fighters, was their most recent album hit the rock charts on November 15, 2014. This album is much greater than all of the other seven because Dave Grohl and the band went to eight different cities and eight different recording studios around the United States: Chicago, Austin, Nashville, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Seattle, Washington D.C., and New York. Dave talked to many inspiring and well-known artists to discuss why they are in the music industry. The main subject of the interviews involved the history of not only their music, but the city's music as well.

Each song on the album featured a famous artist who lives in the city where the Foo Fighters recorded. Every song on the album is amazing so it is difficult to pick a favorite one.

At first, the band traveled to Chicago and recorded the song *Something from Nothing* with Cheap Trick's guitarist Rick Nielsen in the studio called Electrical Audio. The song is about someone who struggles in life but finds a way to conquer anything. "I'm something from nothing!" Dave later adds a rebellious mood by screaming "F--- it all I came from nothing!"



Another song that grabbed my attention was *I Am a River*. It was recorded in Seattle, WA. This last song on the album ended with a bang. Foo Fighters have never recorded with an orchestral line in any song before except for this one. The violins and other beautiful instruments express deep emotions at the end of the song.

Another great thing about this album is that there is a DVD containing videos of the recording process for each of the eight songs. This is such a brilliant idea because the fan base can see the cities they went to and the music history behind them. The band has recently come out with an EP called *Saint Cecilia* including only five songs for a sneak preview of an upcoming album. In my opinion, *Sonic Highways* is the best album that Foo Fighters have ever made.

My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy – Kanye West

By Andrew Bowen

On November 22, 2010, Kanye West released *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* to the public. This was his fifth studio album. It received many awards, such as the Billboard Music Award for Top Rap Album and NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Album. His album sold millions of copies within the first week it was released and it is forever regarded as one of Kanye's best albums. It has many tracks that are regarded as classics and will forever be remembered for their elegant wordplay and track design.

Personally, I loved this album. It shows his true colors and how well he can produce and create music. Yes, Kanye's personality is often times unbearable, but his music shows a different, more mature and creative side of himself that the media does not often mention. Lately, his production quality has been lacking, but this was the album that showed his true talent as a MC. This is demonstrated in the song *Power* when he raps, "My childlike creativity, purity, and honesty. Is being crowded by these grown thoughts. Reality is catching up with me. Taking my inner child, I'm fighting for custody. With these responsibilities that they entrusted me." This line was a direct reference from a quote from famous painter Pablo Picasso. Pablo said, "It took me four years to paint like Raphael, but a lifetime to paint like a child." Kanye references this, as his creativity is the "child" in custody he is fighting for. Pablo Picasso was known for his amazing work as well as his ego, just as Kanye is famous for his often-unbearable ego.

The entire album blends together beautifully and each track bleeds into another with ease. I loved listening to this album and despite it being six years old; I still love listening to it every now and then. I regard it as one of Kanye's greatest albums since his top selling album, *College Dropout*. This album provides beautiful instrumental tracks along with elegant wordplay on Kanye's part. The album as a whole was wonderfully put together and definitely deserved all the awards it received.

Before his downfall on social media with his "twitter beef", if that's what you want to call it, with Wiz Khalifa, Kanye led the hip-hop charts in 2010 and before that with album releases such as *College Dropout*, *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy*, *Late Registration*, and *Graduation*. Kanye West was in the prime of his career, living the dream. Yet somehow, he evolved into a sadistic social media hound and slowly fell off the grid. Lately, he released *Yeezus* and *The Life of Pablo*. I have not had a chance to hear *The Life of Pablo*, but if it is anything like *Yeezus*, I will not be looking forward to it. He still has the skills of an amazing MC, but he lacks the motivation or the ability to deflate his ego to do so. That being said, Kanye will forever be regarded as one of the greats, hence his comparison to Jesus Christ with the name "Yeezus", but will sadly be remembered also as the man who ripped the mic away from Taylor Swift at the MTV Music Awards and whose twitter has been known to hurt the eyes as well as the brain. Kanye may not be the smartest man or even the most mature man in the world, but he is widely considered a genius when it comes to music.



If You're Reading This it's Too Late - Drake

By Alex Vincent

Picking the best album of all time is definitely a challenge. With rap music filling most of my music library, and the constant release of fresh records, the choice is hard to make. Drake is my favorite rapper of all time, hands down. He created a brand name out of success. Drake's music grabs my attention whether it's a slow and chill melody or a fast heavy beat track dissing Meek Mill.

The album, *If You're Reading This It's Too Late*, takes the crown in the competition for favorite album of all time. It dropped in 2015, and I still find myself going back pretty steadily to this album. It helped make the fall season "legit." Every weekend party was blaring this album. The track, *Legend* became a type of anthem for my friends and me. Drake fans filled the Twitter timeline with lyrics such as "if I die, I'm a legend" or "6 G-O-D I'm the holy one." Instagram pictures were captioned off with the best lines from the entire album.

One big factor that strengthens my highly applauded opinion for Drake's 2015 work is his musical hooks. Every song has a different chorus sound that leaves a mark after hearing them. It's hard to listen to *10 Bands* and not find yourself singing along to it later in the day. For me, I hummed it every day for weeks. Drake is often criticized, mainly for his 2013 album that featured many ballad-type songs instead of his usual aggressive lyrics and heavy beats. I can understand the reactions, even though I found myself really enjoying most of the songs off of *Nothing Was the Same*.

I think his work is a great art that deserves high recognition and praise. Check out all of Drake's work and I imagine you will be surprised at what you have been missing.

IF YOU'RE
READING
THIS IT'S
TOO LATE



Hot Rocks – The Rolling Stones

By John Reisedge

Hot Rocks 1964-1971, was the first compilation album that The Rolling Stones released. This album was the biggest selling release of their career and helped expand their already mountainous popularity. This album was compiled as a double album greatest hits package that includes the band's biggest hits during their first decade, such as *(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction*, *Sympathy for the Devil*, *Honky Tonk Woman*, *Gimme Shelter*, and *You Can't Always Get What You Want*.

Time Is on My Side and *Under My Thumb* are two often-underrated songs on this album. These do not get the same praise as songs such as *You Can't Always Get What You Want* or *(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction*. All of the songs on the album have the same passion and are just as good as the highly popular songs that The Rolling Stones have produced over the years. My favorite lyrics come from *Ruby Tuesday*. "Catch your dreams before they slip away, Dying all the time, Lose your dreams, And you will lose your mind." These lyrics are easy to connect to and they send out a good message of freedom and challenge to live fully.

This album is the greatest I have heard, and if you have not listened to it, or unfortunately have not even listened to The Rolling Stones, I suggest you do so now. My dad first introduced me to The Rolling Stones when I was in 6th grade. Every day, he would play *Hot Rocks* on the way to school, on the way home, and anywhere else he would take me. Listening to the live version of this album is what made me fall in love with The Rolling Stones. When my dad no longer took me places and I had my own car, the first thing I did was burn a CD of this album so I was able to listen to it daily.

Personally, I am not someone who listens to a lot of Rap music. I enjoy older "classic" rock songs. *Hot Rocks* was the album that got me hooked on The Rolling Stones, and it is easily one of the best albums of all time. I connect more to the lyrics off this album than from anything I hear in today's music. The power of the Stones' lyrics has really inspired me to listen more closely to what is actually being said in songs. So far, nothing comes close to what I have heard on *Hot Rocks*.



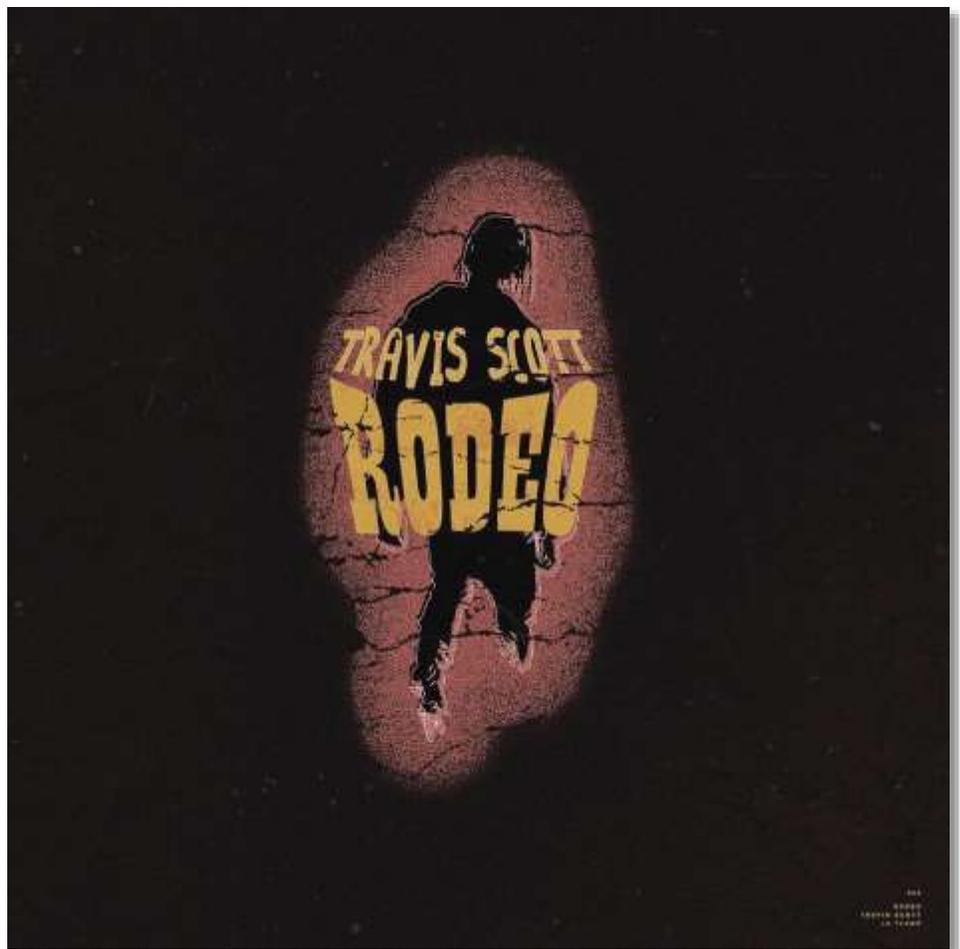
Rodeo – Travis Scott

By Sam Kennedy

Given that my taste in music and artists changes so often, my choice of favorite album of all time will probably be different by the end of the day. When you mix that with seemingly endless options I am given from services like Spotify, it becomes difficult to set aside an album and label it as my all-time favorite. One album I've noticed myself coming back to since it came out in late 2015 is *Rodeo* by Travis Scott. I like albums that incorporate several different styles and tempos throughout all of their songs. Scott definitely delivers on this preference having songs that range from extremely upbeat, to rather slow seamlessly maintaining the same hype throughout every song.

This album wasn't made to force perspective on life or create some deeper meaning through which the listener has some profound epiphany. Rather, he created something that could be at the very least upbeat background noise to fill any period of boring silence. Rap, which consumes a large portion of this album, often times contain some of the least intelligent and fewest individual unique concepts.

This album has a mix of songs that contain lyrics one can actually reflect on, along with party music that requires little contemplation. On the surface, some listeners can consider popular hip-hop albums as vulgar and abusive. No doubt, there is nothing politically correct about Travis Scott's music, but the backstory of his life struggles explain why he dives into the gritty material of his songs. Regardless, the lyrics fade into the background of the amazing beats he creates on *Rodeo*.



Wildfire - Fingertrick

By Jackson Lewis

Wildfire is a fairly new album by a local band called Fingertrick that not nearly enough people have listened to. One of the members of Fingertrick is recent CBHS graduate Patrick Pietrangelo. He plays bass and sings backup. His older brother Chris is the lead singer and lead guitarist. Chris is also a graduate of CBHS. Chris introduced me to the band's fantastic music. When I first

listened to their work, I was shocked with how professional they sounded for a band that is still fairly new and rather young. Their music is of the rock variety and contains elements that are a throwback to the golden era of rock and roll. *Wildfire* is filled with great songs that are very consistent in their quality. There is no filler music anywhere on this album. Every song is solid and memorable.

Barefoot queen is my favorite song of the album with a close second being *Wildfire*. *Barefoot queen* has a very prominent original bass sound. The premise of the song is that country girls are better than any other girl. I like that idea! *Wildfire* is slower and features very deliberate thoughtful vocals. *Wildfire* contains some amazing lyrics such as, "Eyes like wildfire, melt the ice inside of me." *Slick Rick* is another celebratory song about country girls.

I have really enjoyed *Wildfire* since its release especially due to the rock and roll style that I grew up listening to. *Fingertrick* deserves a shot on the big stage at some point because they are really good. I am excited to follow what I hope will be an impressive career of this brotherly band.

The logo for the band Fingertrick is written in a bold, black, hand-drawn style. The letters are thick and blocky, with a slightly irregular, artistic feel. The 'F' is particularly large and has a long vertical stem. The 'i' and 'r' have small loops or flourishes. The 't' has a long horizontal bar that extends to the right. The 'r' has a long, thin tail that curves downwards and to the right. The overall appearance is that of a logo created with a marker or thick black paint.

Dr. Dre - 2001

By Daniel Crocker

One of the best albums was Dr. Dre's *2001*. This was one of his last albums before signing Eminem and it came out a few years after his last good album, *The Chronic*. Since his signing of Eminem, Dr. Dre has largely disappeared from the Hip-Hop scene, mostly due to his son's death in a gang-related shooting. Rumors of a new album were confirmed and *Compton* was released in 2015.



Dr. Dre is one of the last rappers from the period when gangster rap was popular who still produces music. Ice Cube's last album dropped several years ago, and Snoop Dogg remains largely out of the spot light when it comes to his music. Dr. Dre's latest album is a welcome relief to fans, but I think it doesn't have the power of *2001*.

2001 was more honest and relevant because it still caught the back end of real, socially aware gangster rap. Contemporary rappers have simply lost their authenticity by focusing lyrics primarily on sex, guns, and money. *2001* had the substance of someone from the poor background of America, and it was a great album to end on, because it was believed it might be his last album. Dr. Dre took a 14-year break before releasing *Compton*. The album had the beats reminiscent of the mid 90's when NWA was still around and touring.

2001 had hard songs that are still listened to today like *The Watcher*, *The Next Episode*, and *Still D.R.E.* The album helped Eminem get noticed as Dr. Dre did several tracks with guest musicians. In *The Watcher*, Dr. Dre points out what's changed since the beginning of the rap scene and how he's adapted to the changes. Most of the songs in the album revolve around this theme. *2001* allowed Dr. Dre to respond to all his critics and show he was still around and still capable of staying relevant in the evolving rap scene.