

STUDENT LIFE

Past to Present: *The battle for modern day supremacy*

Past to Present is a new monthly series where I take musical artists from earlier decades and compare them to the modern day artists that come closest to representing them. E-mail any opinions or ideas for next month's section to rpg5004@psu.edu.

Neil Young



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Young and Oberst, a wonderful comparison in so many ways, have given enough to the world of music to make up for the lack of creativity in the mainstream modern rock culture today. Oberst, front man of the increasingly popular Bright Eyes, can sing about anything he wants and make it profound and intriguing. Whether he sings of his childhood loves, or his political loathes, his words are true and serve meaning that go beyond total comprehension. Young was one of the first musicians to succeed in this lyrical style, which makes Oberst a great contender for this comparison.

Young is known for experimenting with a variety of

Song Comparison

"Old Man" vs. "First Day of My Life"

-Their biggest similarity is what they sing and how they sing it. In each of these songs, the artist talks about their early life as a singer and experiences that affected them profoundly.

By Ryan P. Gallagher

Conor Oberst



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instruments on different songs, and, if you pick up a number of Bright Eyes' works, you will hear significant similarities. At first listen to either singers, the average person will agree that their voices are extremely controversial and take a few songs to get used to.

However, Oberst and Young sing in such a way to express their emotions, that the actual sound of their voice often goes overlooked. Young's nasally, whining vocals dig deep into the ears of the listener, while Oberst's shaky, vibrato bass trickles deep into the mind and leaves you wanting more and more.

My Similarity Rating: 8

Frank Sinatra



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When you hear the words "modern Sinatra" most people would think of Michael Buble without hesitating. However, I'd like to critically analyze Sinatra and say that the band Cake is a great contestant. Firstly, John McCrea, singer/guitarist for the band Cake, has a voice that is directly comparable to Sinatra's. Each possess a rich, full voice that sticks out and can etch a story into your head better than anyone. Each can sing a love ballad, or a song that appeals to a drunken, optimistic crowd. Listen to Cake cover "Strangers in the Night" and "Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps" and it's obvious that Cake is going for the crooner style- especially since Sinatra, in fact, sang "Strangers in

the Night".

Instrumentally, the trumpet that consistently screams behind Cake's music represents the big band horn section of Sinatra's style in a satisfying way and the bass/guitar riffs aren't anything too insane that a big band couldn't handle. Finally, what really brings these two together, is the dependency on the singing/lyrics. When you sit down to listen/watch the two artists, all attention is focused on the frontman for the most part because they are what make the show. They are another great example of how vocals and words can make music truly complete.

Song Comparison

"Strangers in the Night"

-The only thing better than comparing the two songs, is picking a song that each artist has done. On Cake's B-sides and rarities album, they did Sinatra's "Strangers in the Night" and represented the Sinatra style in a terrific way. Definitely check it out.

My Similarity Rating: 6

Cake



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Elton John



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

An arguably obvious match up is singer/songwriter Ben Folds and legend Elton John. While Folds' lyrics tend to be a bit harsher and at times, humorous, the two are each so prolific and critical to the music world that it's hard to imagine anything without them. Each has the ability to fill enormous venues and attract a mixed, dedicated audience that isn't shy to sing. Folds actually covered "Tiny Dancer" by Elton John on his 2002 live album entitled "Ben Folds Live" and that just speaks for itself.

A good, successful pianist/singer has to have the ability to rock a crowd accompanied by a full band or even orchestra, but also has to be able to serenade an audience by themselves as well. Saying that both of these artists are capable of this is an understatement, and if you've seen Ben Folds, Live in Perth, you already know what Folds' is capable of, and Elton's "Saturday Night's for Fighting" gives you a good idea of how he can rock out.

Song Comparison

"Candle in the Wind" vs. "Late"

- Each song is written about the idols that inspired each artist to be whom they are today. Elton's "Candle in the Wind" is dedicated to Marilyn Monroe/Princess Diana and Ben's "Late" is about Elliot Smith. Without their idols, they would not have significantly affected the music industry. It's only humane to dedicate a ballad to them.

My Similarity Rating: 9

Ben Folds



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Billboard album charts: *Now and then*

2007

1. Soulja Boy- "Crank That"
2. Kanye West- "Stronger"
3. Fergie- "Big Girls Don't Cry"
4. Timbaland Featuring Keri Hilson- "The Way I Are"
5. Sean Kingston- "Beautiful Girls"

1967

1. Lulu- "To Sir With Love"
2. Monkees- "Daydream Believer"
3. The Association- "Windy"
4. Bobbie Gentry- "Ode To Billie Joe"
5. Nancy and Frank Sinatra- "Somethin' Stupid"

"Top Five Movies with a Fonda"

By Chris LaFuria

5. *Ulee's Gold* (1997)
-Peter
4. *Coming Home* (1978)
-Jane
3. *12 Angry Men* (1957)
-Henry
2. *Easy Rider* (1969)
-Peter
1. *My Darling Clementine* (1946)
-Henry



"Top Five TGIF Shows"

By Andy McLachlan

5. Step by Step
4. Hanging with Mr. Cooper
3. Boy Meets World
2. Dinosaurs
1. Perfect Strangers

