

'Underground' vs. 'Mainstream'

Mainstream music is too expensive; underground music fits the budget and lifestyle of real people



Isaiah Creel
Staff Writer

Underground is a term that implies secret, nonconformist, individualist or simply alternative things.

Mainstream is a word used to describe conventional, ordinary, typical and otherwise mundane things.

These terms are regularly applied to forms of popular culture: fashion, music, film, art, etc. For our intents and purposes, however, we will apply them to music, particularly rap and hip-hop.

Mainstream artists are those you hear on the radio, or see on television. Their part of expression is based on, for the most part, tried and true methods of selling records.

A goodly amount of the rappers on the radio/television promote and even flaunt this unscrupulous form of greed. They devote entire songs to either the label that pays them ridiculous amounts of money, or to the fact that they can afford any material luxury they wish. They basically endorse a lifestyle that only those at the pinnacle of the social pyramid can begin to relate to.

Otherwise, they dwell on the poor conditions they were brought up in, or even on the corrupt means they chose to gain money, e.g. selling crack, selling prostitutes or robbing people.

I have no idea where they are coming from. My family can be considered lower

middle class. No one among my kin makes the kind of money these mainstream rappers seem to care so much about, and my mother always taught me not to steal, do drugs or buy prostitutes.

I can't pay \$35 to see mainstream shows and still afford to eat. Even if I could, why would I want to sit hundreds of yards from the stage with 20,000 people?

Underground shows cost on average \$10 (that leaves \$5 for food and \$20 for entertainment), and are held in small intimate venues, allowing you to be mere feet away from the stage.

A mainstream compact disc costs roughly \$15, and is available at any record store (but will probably cost approximately \$18 at Sam Goody). Underground cd's, on the other hand, cost at most \$10, but are only available at the show or online. This might mean that you won't be able to find an album that you really wanted to hear, but when you do find it, it becomes far more valuable and sought after.

The most important advantage of underground music is realized when someone becomes so popular in the underground that they are forced into the mainstream. This benefits not only the artist, but also the die-hard fan that has all six of their ep's, which become instant collectors' items. Radically new artists appearing in the mainstream creates new platforms from which other underground artists can prosper in the marketplace.

So be the first one on your block to hear about a particular artist, but make sure you save the t-shirt.

Music should be judged by what it sounds like, not by the accomplishments or shortcomings of a band



Pete Ford
A&E Editor

Mainstream music, in addition to everything popular in society today, was at one time not so popular, or "underground."

I feel that the word underground is often over-used. A band is technically only "underground" until it becomes popular; often when bands become popular they are labeled sell-outs.

"Sell-outs" are shunned due to the fact that they sell insane amounts of records and their singles are constantly played on the radio. People who think they are true fans tend to like bands less once their music becomes popular. This makes me question how true those fans were to begin with. Granted, way too many new fans (typically little girls, radio-listeners or those less musically-oriented) come with a band's increased popularity, but that doesn't necessarily mean that the band's music has gotten any worse.

To be quite honest, it completely disgusts me when people (even friends of mine) have been following a band for a long time and as soon as it becomes popular, they act as if the band no longer plays good music. Seems ironic but their stereotypical arguments tend to involve the change from the bands older material or the costly over-produced major label releases. Really, these are just excuses not to be categorized as a "mainstream" listener.

In mainstream radio, the amount of airtime your band gets is directly related to the band's

album sales/popularity. Overplaying a band does not make it bad.

I personally prefer selecting my own tunes and abstain from listening to the radio as much as possible. I have my own ways of discovering music. However, all some people have as a guide to buy new cd's is the radio. I could never discourage that. It just shows how polluted people's minds can get as far as forming their own opinions about music: they have none, which this is more sad than bad.

On the other side of things, I have to address that bands become popular or "mainstream" for a reason. That reason is usually because they play good music. The mantra for any true music fan should be to listen to good music regardless of its popularity, genre or even the band's attitude. I sometimes even find myself listening to a band I don't particularly like just to hear one single guitar riff.

We all listen to music for our own personal enjoyment, so I am not ashamed to say I listen to a lot of mainstream music. Obviously, I prefer it when concerts cost less than a new pair of shoes, and I find it discouraging that getting a popular cd for under \$15 is almost a lost cause. However, if you like something (for whatever reason) you should not have to justify your opinion, even to yourself.

"Underground" bands do play with a different kind of heart when trying to succeed than they do after they have already succeeded. They also play at smaller venues where it is easier to get into the music, but well-written music should always be appreciated regardless of what a band has become, because in the end the music is the only thing that matters.

First Annual Children's Poetry Forum

The Clackamas Community College English department, Childcare Club and Student Government are proud to announce that on May 9, between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. in Gregory Forum, they will host the first Annual Children's Poetry Forum. Poems from local authors will be read in addition to favorites from around the world. Children will have the opportunity to write their own poems and create Mother's Day cards. ***All activities are free and open to children of all ages!*** For more info contact Julia Palshikar at (503) 723-8812 or atpalshikar@juno.com

Epic Events

Epic Events presents: Shows to prepare for Van's Warped Tour 2003:

Who: Rancid, Pennywise, Rufio, Thrice, Dropkick Murphys, Taking Back Sunday, Glassjaw, The Ataris, Less Than Jake, Paved the Way, The Used, Avenged Sevenfold, Unseen, Andrew W.K., Suicide Machines, Face To Face, Slick Shoes, Mest, A Simple Plan, Mad Caddies and many more.

- The Van's Warped Tour continually brings all of the best alternative rock musicians together for one of the largest and most successful annual events to date. Not only will the Warped Tour host more bands than one can watch in a one day but there will be all kinds of crazy booths and strange attractions.

When: Sunday July 6 noon till end
Tickets available through TicketsWest (parking included)

Where: Columbia Meadows (off I-5 N) (Formerly Portland Meadows)

Cirque Du Soleil presents:

Who: ALGERIA

- Anyone who hasn't experienced one of Cirque's off-the-wall performances is in for something new

When: October 2 - October 26
Tickets on sale now and available at cirquedusoleil.com

Where: Under the white Grand Chapiteau

Acoustically amazing music:

Who: The 2nd Annual Northwest Spring Summit will host: Yonder Mountain String Band, Keller Williams, Old & the Gray, Fiddlers 4, Reeltime Travelers, Jerry Douglas Band, Piano Throwers, Two High String Band, Jackstraw and more.

- This three day long festival will most likely be an earth-friendly, mellow, overall good ol' fun time with available camping.

When: Friday June 27 - Sunday June 29
Ticket prices vary based on how soon tickets are purchased and how many days one will spend at the festival. Tickets available online at stringsummit.com.

Where: Horning's Hideout (North Plains, Oregon)

Pop Punk-rockers unite:

Who: Good Charlotte, New Found Glory, MxPx and The Movie Life are touring together on "The Honda Civic Tour."

- This show definitely aims to please a younger crowd and the lack of creativity in some of the songs played will be heavily overpowered by all four bands.

When: Tuesday May 27
\$25 tickets through Ticketmaster

Where: Memorial Coliseum

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