

# Face off: drug induced music

## Drugs rock ... billboard charts Attention musicians: just say no

Mike Kimberling

The Clackamas Print

The late comedian Bill Hicks once said that if you think drugs don't do anything to add to the world, you should probably throw away all your old music.

Like most of Hick's sober routine, this comment is home to many of the extreme assumptions we have piled over our eyes in society. Drugs may never win a Nobel Prize, or ever find any of the missing children advertised on milk cartons, but drugs have more influence in western culture rock and roll than sex had on men's minds.

Though many of us can turn our noses up at the rap star who brags about how much weed he smokes while spanking a bootyie, or point fingers at everyone from punk-rock to butt-rockers, of us can do it without becoming cocreates. Every adult may squirm, but I must mention this band first not purely for their indispensability to rock and roll. Yes, the Beatles. Sometimes a person can get high just listening to "Strawberry Fields Forever," in even rarer cases just by sim-

ply looking at the "Yellow Submarine" cover.

Sorry, jazz music hasn't saved you from falling into this category, and neither will country music. Both almost seemed like an easy out, but unfortunately jazz musicians have been known to be fond of heroin, and country music was built on people who were too drunk on cheap beer to play the blues without altering the sound.

Kurt Cobain's career revolved around heroin abuse, cocaine was the official sponsor of every nose job in the musical industry, and Jim Morrison might have inhaled once. Jimmy Hendrix grew marijuana fields on the lower 40 of his afro, Led Zeppelin has been dazed and confused so long it's not true, and Pink Floyd's Roger Barrett's nickname Syd came from his use of LSD. The Rolling Stones are still feeling it, Bob Dylan supposedly introduced the Beatles to weed and the King of Pop smokes pole.

Drugs might not be good for us, but they do something worthwhile. If you don't believe me, look through your album collection.

David Stark

The Clackamas Print

Recreational substances have a long history with music, dating back thousands of years when people got drunk on wine and sung songs. But just because there is a precedent doesn't mean that it should be touted as a good thing. After all, as the oft-quoted George Santayana said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

Now I'm not saying that musicians shouldn't use drugs, and I'm not saying that the music they make when on drugs isn't good. I just posit that they shouldn't need drugs in order to write songs.

There is no proof whatsoever that recreational drug use increases creativity, concentration or anything else that helps in the writing process. In actuality, due to the reality-altering affects of most drugs, the creation process is in fact

hindered significantly.

And in fact prolonged drug use can have a rather adverse affect on the health and wellbeing of the artist. The Doors' Jim Morrison, the Who's Keith Moon, the Sex Pistols' Sid Vicious, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin and the Rolling Stones' Brian Jones are just a few of the artists who have died of drug overdoses in just the last 30 years.

While Paul McCartney admits that a number of the Beatles songs were "informed" by drugs, he also states that "just about everyone was doing them in one form or another. We were no different." Later adding that "the writing was too important for us to mess it up by getting off our heads all the time."

If we take what he says as fact and everyone at the time was using, then perhaps we should go back further in time to examine music in a more historical context. Let's look at the great classical compositions from history which had no assistance from any sort of drug use - Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty, the Nutcracker or the concertos and symphonies of Mozart. And we absolutely cannot overlook Beethoven's nine symphonies, most especially the Ninth.

Music that has survived for centuries, and will most likely last millennia, came from utterly sober individuals. Perhaps we should consider how long modern day music will last.

The sad truth of the matter is that if a musician of any sort needs any kind of reality-altering substances to claim talent, then perhaps their skills are more questionable than punching babies in the face.



## Dear Hollywood, please stop destroying American cinema



Photo Illustration by Jeff Sorensen Clackamas Print

Rayo Stalnak

Editor

In the late 1960s through the '70s were the last great years for American film. No longer are films being made that offer intriguing characters, great drama. Sure, some great movies have come out since then, but you have to dig through the hundreds of lackluster Hollywood films to get them.

During the 1960s America experienced a renaissance in film. Great filmmakers were emerging out of the dead Hollywood studio system and creating some truly great films. "Taxi Driver,"

"Scarecrow," "Dog Day Afternoon," "The Graduate," "M\*A\*S\*H," "2001: A Space Odyssey," "Midnight Cowboy," "Easy Rider" and "The Godfather" are just some of the many gems that came out of this era.

So, what happened? Two words: Steven Spielberg. Now Spielberg has created some great films, but his 1975 film "Jaws" kicked off the blockbuster mentality of Hollywood. Ever since then we've seen hit movies that may have been entertaining, but that's all they were. Films such as "The Terminator," "Star Wars," "Alien," every 80s slasher-flick, "Independence Day," "Armageddon," "Godzilla," and "The Island" offer only eye candy to the American public

and not much else. In the '90s, a small revolution in independent film occurred. The Sundance Film Festival was bringing independent films to a wider audience by showcasing them in art theaters, and even some major theaters, all over the states. Video rental stores even started carrying more independent films. Then, as expected, Hollywood decided to step into Sundance and the indie film market. Now instead of Sundance being used to showcase films made by real people and not by suits, it's used to showcase corporate Hollywood "neo-indie" films. Hence the reason why "Napoleon Dynamite" is, unfortunately, a household name. Recently, Hollywood has been churning out remade

films and television shows. Films such as "Fun With Dick and Jane," "The Omen," "The Honeyymooners," "Bewitched," "The Amityville Horror," "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre" and "When a Stranger Calls," have been plaguing the cinemas for a few years now. Is there any original thought left in Hollywood or have they just run out of ideas? I guess the real question is why Hollywood wants to subject the American people to bad remakes of bad movies. However, the Oscars this year (unlike recent years) actually had some good films nominated. By some, I mean three. "Capote," "Good Night, and Good Luck" and "Crash" (it definitely deserved the Best Picture award) are the only ones

worth mentioning. "Brokeback Mountain" was all the talk in Tinseltown only because it "broke boundaries" in romance movies. However, it actually didn't. I guess Hollywood forgot about Gus van Sant's early films, the "taboo" romance story "Harold and Maude" amongst others. So, will Hollywood ever get its act together and start making good films again? This doesn't seem likely given the fact that the American public keeps going to these dreadful movies and actually likes them. Things have gotten better in the past two years, but don't expect that to last for long. Now if I may excuse myself, I have to go watch "Serpico" and cry away the pain.