

### **The Very Heavy Metal**

According to the Encyclopedia of Heavy Metal by authors Brian Cogan and William Phillips, the music genre “metal” is a subgenre of rock and roll (Encyclopedia of Metal). The loudness and heaviness of the music gives the listener a sense of power that can be seen at the concerts by energizing the fans to headbang and yell.

Led Zeppelin, the first band to tour with the heavy metal genre had many blues covers of their era (Cogan, Phillips pg 4). In the beginning many of these bands that were considered heavy metal bands were really playing heavy bluesrock (Cogan, Phillips pg 7). The guitar originally started out with its basic tuning but the guitarist from Black Sabbath had tuned the strings of the guitar down which loosened the tension of them. He did this because he lost his fingertips of two of his main fretting fingers in an industrial accident. This darker sound that this tuning produced is what gave Sabbath their unique sound and made them different from other bands.

Classical music was a big influence in the rock genre, but the genre that had the most impact on rock was the blues. Where the greatest influence was present was in the soloing of the rock artists of Machine Head the pianist and the guitarist both used classical progressions (Cogan, Phillips pg 9). A way classical music influenced major artist in the rock industry was how Yngwie Malmsteen incorporated classical music into his guitar playing. By incorporating classical music into his works Yngwie created a subgenre known as neoclassical rock and metal which is focused on playing classic scales and arpeggios played at extreme speeds with pinpoint precision. While many of the contemporary artist try to stick to what they know and not improvise in their music Yngwie does which ties him closer to classical music because many of the classical performers were live performers and liked to improvise (Cogan, Phillips pg 9).

The genre of metal started in the 1960's with the help of rock and roll bands. The two bands that are associated with starting the style of metal are Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath (Cogan, Phillips pg 5). The style that they helped develop for metal was not only in the clothing but in their appearances. They lead the culture by influencing other to dress like them and style their hair like them as well, although they once lead the culture just like any other culture it's always changing. Although the introduction of metal was agreed to start in the 1960's the start of the term "heavy metal" wasn't as concrete. A journalist by the name of Sandy Pearlman claimed to have coined the term in her review of the song "Artificial Energy" by Byrds. Another claim was by Lester Bangs who used that term to describe the band the MC5. No matter who it was that started using the term first it was widely accepted by the 1970's and used to describe heavier bands. In the Encyclopedia of Metal the authors say that the metal era had died and that subcultures have developed under it. It is still said that Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath were the fathers of metal and that anything that came after that is just another subculture. Many of the bands in the 1980s wouldn't get much radio time and had to tour in order to get their music out there, their audience members were usually white male and of working class. After this many musicians started being accepted and received more radio time (Encyclopedia of Metal). The two most significant musical influences on heavy metal music is blues and classical (Encyclopedia of Metal). Many of the guitar progressions that can be found in modern metal can also be found in blues. The power chord is something blues and rock musicians use, even though they are found on in both music genres the distorted power chords are individualistic to heavy metal. As blues progressed and amplifier companies started producing bigger and better, the drums kits started becoming bigger. The drum kits were now larger and drummers would play more muscular beats to compliment the louder guitars (Encyclopedia of Metal).

## The Fun Details

Music that I can't live without is really an understatement, although I can in a literal sense survive without having heavy metal in my life. Although my life will remain intact my day would drag on and not be as interesting without metal music. The current forms of music that have developed from heavy metal bands is extensive, the two that I mainly listen to are metal and metalcore, although some of these bands might be categorized into different genres I have just put them together to make it easier. The metalcore genre is one that I have been listening to since middle school. There are a plethora of bands that I found to be musically appealing during my middle school years. The bands that I found the most interesting were the ones who wrote their songs about relatable topics.

Miss May I, a band that falls under the metalcore genre focus their energy towards having a unique sound by having high screams, melodic sounding guitars and drums that are played at lightning fast speeds. I love how individualistic the vocals of the lead singer are. Also the guitarist plays riffs that are mesmerizing to the ear; they show his ability to play with grace. The guitarists of Miss May I, seems to have been influenced by blues music because he is often playing blues scales. The band's music has changed throughout the years. Before the change of style the band was more focused on vocal development, but since the change they are more focused on the development of their guitar riffs. Miss May I's lead singer Levi Benton and other group members started the band in 2006 in Troy Ohio and were signed to Rise Records because of the release of their EP in 2007 *Vows of a Massacre*. Their official signing was in 2008 after the release of their demo that same year (Screamo Wiki). The original band members were Levi Benton, Justin Aufdemkampe, BJ Stead, Ryan Neff and Jerod Boyde. Their first album released

through their record company Rise Records, “Apologies Are for The Weak” had reached seventy six on the top two hundred Billboard Charts all while the band members were still in high school (Screamo Wiki). The lyrics from their song “Apologies Are For the Weak”, “Wanted for my time spent searching for the world … Take me back to how it used to be” made an impact on me by giving me a perspective on life and how everything you search for may not be rewarding at all and just might something that only you find valuable. The second part of the lyrics explains how a simpler time was easier to handle than the more complicated times with every new experience.

The Devil Wears Prada is another band from Ohio that has also changed throughout the years. This band was my personnel favorite at the time. At first when I began following them in middle school I would love the guitar parts because they chugged, which is a form of muting the top string of the guitar and striking it in a galloping or variety of patterns. The Devil Wears Prada has also influenced many aspects of my life, they have shown me a way into the music world. They made songs that turned music into a getaway for me and gave me a way to release my stress by listening to them. I would listen to their music and go to the gym and workout, this music gave me energy to get through the workouts in the gym that also helped relieve my stress. With the release of every album my interest in their music had increased. Not only did I still enjoy listening to the guitar but I also enjoyed the vocals as well, in a way many others who love metal core can agree with. The individuals who do not understand why I enjoy the growls and screams of the vocalist do not understand that, I love how someone can take something that only gets expressed through anger and make it art. The artistic way in which a vocalist can express many emotions through this music is what has drawn me to love this music.

The next genre of music that I started to enjoy was the heavy metal/ thrash bands like Metallica. Although they weren’t one of the original metal bands that led the metal movement, they still

have made their way in the metal world as one of the most heard of metal bands out there. One of Metallica's songs that I enjoy most is called "Enter Sandman" this song has the combination of drums that seem to fit perfectly in sync with guitar. The author of Metallica and Philosophy: A Crash Course in Brain Surgery, Wiley Blackwell gives a brief description of the song, "Enter Sandman". This song talks about not being able to sleep because of the thoughts running through the mind of one at anytime. "Dream of wars, Dream of Liars, Dream of dragon's fire"(Wiley pg 25) shows that there could be millions of reasons someone doesn't sleep but actually have something going on internally that won't let them sleep. This is the reason I listen to music for the content of the lyrics.

### **The Reason This Music Should Live On**

Every single person that listens to music has his/her own preferences. Not every person is going to like the same type of music or the same bands, but when people do come together to enjoy a band it's a beautiful thing. Music is how people choose to express themselves. When people go to concerts they are showing appreciation for the artist's talents. The first reason that I believe people should continue to listen to metalcore and metal music is because it brings fans from all over the world together. It also helps people who aren't accepted by many to be accepted by a community of fans. Not only do fans come together to but they are ultimately a family. If a fellow metal music fan is not accepted by his own family because of the music he listens to, he will be accepted by fellow fans. This is why metal music is so important to keep around.

When people do go to concerts they get to see their fellow peers and interact with a group of strangers and easily interact with them by discussing a common interest, the music they listen to. Being at a concert is in a way going to a huge family reunion, although you might not

know many of the family members there because you haven't seen them in years but once you get caught up and talking to one another it feels as though you've always known them. The reason I believe this music to be so important is because these genres don't fit in well with other genres. Metal music gets criticized for being satanic, demonic and the type of music that corrupts youths, but truly metal is the music that brings people together and provided them an outlet to release their worries. This is a way that allows people who don't fit in with others to choose a genre of music that many aren't exposed to. This genre provides outlets for people who need a way to forget about their problems and also brings fellow outcasts together.

All music around the world is listened to by people for different reasons, some like the instruments, some enjoy the vocals and others might just enjoy the environment it provides. This appreciation towards music is something that musicians and fans around the world can relate to. I remember listening to Metallica with my cousin for the first time and enjoying every note played by the guitarist. This led me to investigate more about the band and then trying to learn how to play guitar. When I started playing guitar I began to appreciate the hard work that went into these songs, I remember thinking to myself wow that must have taken numerous amounts of hours to come up with these guitar riffs. This new found appreciation for music is something that can only be obtained by understanding the difficulty of the task of creating a song. If I wouldn't have been exposed to this genre I would have never played the guitar, this music inspired me to become a musician and express myself through music.

Losing yourself in something whether it is music, sports, videogames, or even homework if that's your thing is the great thing about hobbies. Metal music can become a hobby in a way by letting the listener become lost in a world of ridiculous guitar notes and crazy drumming. Being able to let yourself unwind from a crazy day is very important to keeping one's sanity. In

the metalcore music the vocals switch between singing and screaming and it gives the listener an outlet by letting themselves release their anger or any emotion by singing along with the vocalists. This music provides outlets to many listeners and allows them to get lost in the music without having to worry about the outside world. This genre of music is inspiring and very influential, accepting and non judgmental this is why I believe this music should live on.

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Miss May I (Screamo Wiki)

[http://screamo.wikia.com/wiki/Miss\\_May\\_I](http://screamo.wikia.com/wiki/Miss_May_I)