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Creating a Journal Through a Musical Journey

Jenelle E. Papin
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Creating A Journal Through A Musical Journey
by

Jenelle E. Papin

An Abstract of a Project
In Creative Studies

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Science

May 2006

Buffalo State College
State University of New York
Department of Creative Studies

ABSTRACT OF PROJECT

Creating A Journal Through A Musical Journey

Music has always been an important part of my life. It has helped me through some extremely challenging times. Music has had a profound impact on my feelings, thoughts and moods. I seem to connect with it on a deeper level, which has helped me deal with personal issues that I have endured. Because of the help that I have received from music, based on my own life experiences, I feel that I needed to share this connection with others who may be struggling with life's uncertainties as well. Therefore, I will compile a collection of journal entries in which I will listen to different types of music for thirty days. I will reflect primarily on how the music has affected me including thoughts and feelings and memories. I will be sure to use as many different genres as possible in order to get a wide range of reactions. In order to reach out to other people and get feedback on my observations, I will transcribe my journal entries onto a personal web blog, where they can leave feedback and comments. I feel that my journal will be an extremely creative outlet for me and others because of the ability to reflect on the music and how it affects us on a more personal level.

April 17, 2006

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State University of New York
Department of Creative Studies

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Dates of Approval:

Dr. Mary Murdock
Professor

Jenelle E. Papin
Student

Dedication

I would like to first and foremost thank my parents for their support and belief in me. Without them this project or my success thus far would not be possible. I would also like to thank my best friend Amanda for being there when I needed it most. And to Abe – my favorite – thank you for all your inspiration. J.M. - I can't articulate in words what your work has done for me but I hope one day you will understand that you have greatly changed my life and will always be a part of it. I want to grow old with you. To all the artists who have dedicated their life to music – you are my motivation. And of course to all of my friends and family you will never know how much your kind words helped motivate me through this ride.

Table Of Contents

Background

- Purpose – pg. 8
- Rational for Selection – pg. 9
- What this Project offers to Creativity – pg. 10

Pertinent Literature

- Introduction – pg. 11
- CBIR Abstracts – pg 13
- Bibliography – pg. 19

Process

- Introduction – pg. 20
- TimeLine – pg. 21

Outcomes

- Introduction – pg. 22
- Tangible Results – pg. 23

Key Learnings

- Introduction – pg. 25
- Content – pg. 25
- Process – pg. - 27

Conclusion

- Pg. 30

Appendices

- Appendix A – Journal – pg. 32
- Appendix B – Web Blog Print Out – pg. 63
- Appendix C – Suggested Listening List – pg. 75
- Appendix D – Concept Paper – pg. 76

Background

Purpose :

Ever since I was born, I have been exposed to music. From the mobile that hung to the side of my crib when I was just a baby to my mp3 player which is attached to my hip almost every waking hour, music has been a part of my life. Music has played such a versatile role through the years by becoming a part of the healing process through some challenging times in my life. It has also been the catalyst for some very memorable moments. Therefore, I felt it was important to put down into words what exactly I felt music does for my soul and be able to share it with others. I decided to create a journal of my musical experiences. I felt this was a way to contribute and give back to something that has helped me immensely through my life journey and who I've become today thus far. In addition, I feel that by sharing my experiences with others, I will be able to help them use music to help overcome some of life's burdens that they may be facing as well. By becoming aware of thoughts, feelings and moods, an individual can better understand him or herself, which is important in the life process. My hope is that this project unearths the deep connection that music has on moods, thoughts and feelings in order to help make others lives more meaningful.

Description:

For thirty days, I will designate at least thirty minutes to listen to a different type of music whether it was a different genre or artist. I will then write a journal entry based

on all of my thoughts, feelings and musings that came out after listening to the music. I will try to incorporate as much diversity in the music choices as possible by using my resources, which include magazines, radio and peers. In order to gain some feedback on my journal entries, I will transcribe each one and publish them to a web blog so that others can read and relate to my personal writings. In addition to the web blog, I will create a list of suggested pieces of music that I particularly find useful in my listening experiences. At the beginning and end of each journal writing, I will keep a record of my moods based on a scale from 1 to 10 where one being not good at all to 10 meaning happier than on Cloud 9, so that I can help keep track of how my emotions and feelings are affected by the music I will be experiencing.

Rationale:

I chose to create a musical journal because of the passion and connection I have with music. It seems climate of a situation is always enhanced when music is present. The details tend to sparkle and the story seems to have more meaning when it is graced with a soundtrack. I feel that with music, everyone can benefit from its effects. I also feel that since music is such an abundant resource, it would be a project that could be enjoyed by anyone who has access. Music has touched my life in so many ways and I have attached immeasurable memories of my life to songs. I felt that by creating this journal, I would be able to reconnect with some of the lost songs that I had forgotten along with the memories. I would also be able to help others create their own life soundtrack so they could reconnect with those memories and experiences that made them who they are today. And for others, it would help them discover new music that could

potentially help them along their journeys and unlock other personal areas that they never knew existed.

Creative Benefits:

One of the creative benefits this project lends to others and myself is that we will be able to better understand ourselves on a deeper personal level, which will help us deal with problems that may arise or situations that may surface. By using music, I am tapping into a source that is not usually associated with thoughts and feelings. However, music is highly creative and has very high creative qualities that lend themselves freely to anyone who has ears to listen, giving them the opportunity to become something creative.

Another benefit of my project is that it can help release creative tension that may be trapped in an individual, whether it is a well known music writer, or a business student attending his or her first semester in college. Everyone needs a way to tap into their creative abilities and sometimes it comes from stepping away from their current project and stepping into a completely different one. This project can be utilized in so many different ways to help so many different people. It's free form allows people to make the changes needed in order to fit their particular situation without losing the fundamental purpose of the project, which is to better understand oneself using music.

Literature

Prior to establishing my project idea, I started to investigate areas that highly interested me, one which was music. From day one of the semester I knew on a personal level that I wanted to incorporate music into the project on some level. To what extent I wanted music involved, I had no idea. In addition, coming from a sociology background and my fascination with people and their lives, I ultimately wanted to create a project that could be beneficial to not just me but others around me. I started researching music and the effect it has on mood on the Internet. I found some interesting articles through CBIR, which is part of the Buffalo State College Library system, regarding music and how it affects creativity. These articles helped give me a good background of what I am looking to accomplish in my project. I also found some interesting books dealing with music and its ability to affect moods. I found one in particular that really intrigued me that was called *Emotion and Meaning in Music* written by L. Meyer. It got me thinking about my past personal experiences and how much I live, eat and breathe music. Ever since I was young, music has always been there to either lift me up when I am feeling down or to help raise me up higher when I'm riding high. What better way to increase my connection with music and my emotions then by discovering what I can do to foster and increase that connection?

I also found that the music magazine *Rolling Stone* played a major role in defining what I was going to produce for my project. They have a section where they list new comers to the music scene and a brief background about who they are and where they

came from. Knowing an artist's history helps me relate to their music on another level and really understand where a song came from, which is important to the emotional bond I attach to it. Seeing all of these artists with so much passion for what they do and create really inspired me to uncover this relationship on a broader scale, hence the journal of my musical journey was created.

CBIR Abstract

Cameron, Julia. (2002). *The artist's way: A spiritual path to higher creativity* (10th Anniversary Edition) . New York: Jeremy P. tarcherPutnam.

Type of Resource: Book

(ISBN: 874778212)Library of Congress (LC) or Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC)

Call Number:

LC: BF408 .C175 2002; DDC: 153.35

This book was written for writers, poets, actors, painters, musicians and creative people in all arenas. It is a comprehensive 12-week program that is aimed at helping recover creativity from a variety of blocks and barriers. The book links spirituality to personal empowerment and learnable skills. The basic principle of the book is that creative expression is the natural direction of life.

Arts / art / artist / stimulation / creativity / stimulating creativity / person / individual

CBIR Abstract

S. A. R. K. (1998). *The bodacious book of succulence: Daring to live your succulent wild life!* . New York: Simon & Schuster Trade Paperbacks.

Type of Resource: Book

(ISBN: 684833778)Library of Congress (LC) or Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC)

Call Number:

LC: BF637.C5S274 1998 ; DDC: 158

This book is for anyone looking for some advice on how to fulfill his or her artistic dreams. The author has included tools that will help the reader to put their ideas to action and move forward. She addresses those interested in the arts, specifically writing, music, performing, and design.

Person / self actualization / self image / arts / performing / writing / process

CBIR Abstract

Snider, Jerry; Langevin, Michael Peter. (1996). *A magical universe: The best of magical blend magazine* . Mill Spring, NC: Mill Spring, NC.

Type of Resource: Book

(ISBN: 926524399)Library of Congress (LC) or Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC)

Call Number:

LC: BF1411; DDC: 133

This book contains articles and interviews in 21 topical sections spanning 15 years. The topics included cover music, health, myth, ecology, shamanism, and humor by a variety of authors. The authors include some of the most recognized names in the new age, new science, and new culture movements such a Jerry Garcia, Carlos Castaneda, and Josh Campbell.

Creativity / science / culture / arts / process / humor / writing

CBIR Abstract

Bjorkvold, Jon-Roar. (1992). *The muse within: Creativity and communication, song and play from childhood through maturity* (English trans.) . New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Type of Resource: Book

(ISBN: 0-06-01925-6)Library of Congress (LC) or Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC)

Call Number:

LC: MT1 .B6313 1992

This book presents in an ecological and holistic manner, human development and play, creativity and music, schools and pedagogy, as well as social development and politics. From the start of human life, with the prenatal stage, through old age the importance of sound, rhythms and music is expressed.

Age / Child / Age Elderly / Arts / Performing / Behavior / Process / Person / Culture / Education / Teaching / Programs / Product / Process / Psychology

CBIR Abstract

Merritt, Stephanie. (1990). *Mind, music, and imagery: Unlocking your creative potential*. New York: Plume.

Type of Resource: Book

(ISBN: 452264979)Library of Congress (LC) or Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC)

Call Number:

LC: ML3920.M45 1990

This text explores music and its affects on our bodies and on our feelings. It offers forty exercises for children and adults used to increase learning and memory retention, to overcome blocks and barriers and to stimulate imagination and to create a positive environment. Specific data is presented on music's affects on the brain.

Arts / Fine Arts / Stimulation / Creativity / Blocks / Barriers / Press / Brain

Hemisphericity

CBIR Abstract

Burns, M. T. (1988). Music as a tool for enhancing creativity. *Journal of Creative Behavior*, 22 (1) , pp. 62-69.

Type of Resource: Journal Article

(ISSN: 0022-0175)

This article dealt with using music as a tool to enhance ones' creative behavior. Music creativity in a child's world may well begin in a play setting where the child sings, dances and dramatizes what he or she is pretending or imagining. On its most simplistic level, improvisation may intergrate performing, composing, and listening. One's cognitive and psychomotor levels of improvisation or extemporization depends upon previously acquired skills in performing and listening to music. Therefore, the author believes if musical growth and literacy are goals in the schools, creative musical experiences should begin in kindergarten. The purpose of composition in the classroom is to provide creative experience in manipulating the elements of music at the problem solving level.

Arts / Assessment / Creativity / Age / Child / Education / Classroom / Problem Solving /
Creative problem solving

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Process

Although music has been a constant in my life since I was born, I am still not familiar with all the different genres of music that are out there. And now as we are going full bore into the twenty-first century, the genres seem to be exponentially growing. So, one of the first things that I set out to do before I began my journal entries, was to research some new areas of music that I hadn't experienced yet. I was able to make up a list of some new artists and music that I wanted to implement into my writing sessions. I also went around asking my friends and family what their music preferences were and made up another list so that I had some alternative options each night to choose from. I found it extremely important to take into account not just my tastes, but tastes of those who are around me so that maybe I could better understand what they enjoy from music as well and in turn get to better understand them as individuals. Prior to each session, I would take the time record my current state so that I could see if there were any significant changes in my mood while my listening to a particular type of music. I found that performing the listening at night was easiest for me and was able to be consistent, which I felt was important when trying to determine my thoughts, feelings and moods. I also set out a schedule that allowed me some flexibility as to when I could perform these listening experiences, which was extremely helpful in fulfilling my goal of thirty entries.

Time Line

January 20 – January 31

- Brainstorming on potential project ideas – approx. 5 hours
- Searching for music including new genres – ongoing

February 1 – February 20

- Creating the lists of music to experience – 3 hours
- Begin set-up of web blog profile and site – 4 hours
- Researching Rolling Stone Magazine and internet for more sources – ongoing

February 20 – April 2

- Listening Experiences – at least ½ hour of music listening a day for 30 days
- Journal Writing after each listening experience at least 30 minutes for 30 days
- Continue setting up web blog and profile – 7 hours
- Start transposing written journal entries to computerized version – 10 hours
- Editing journal entries – 4 hours

April 2 – May 1

- Put the finishing touches on journal entries for publishing – 5 hours
- Upload journal entries onto web blog in order to receive feedback – 4 hours
- Write up and Analysis of Project – 12 hours
- Printing and Binding of Journal – 3 hours

Presenting to Audience – 5 hours

Outcomes

My main goal for this project was to be able to develop and create a journal that would be useful to not only me but others when looking for a different outlook on the usual situations regarding our current life. In the process, I wanted to discover new artists and genres so that I could expand my music repertoire while being able to introduce other artists to those who may not have had the opportunity to experience their talent. I was able to prepare a list of names of artists and groups that were useful to me in my project. Each group and/or artist was extremely imperative in the creation of my journal and making each individual entry unique in some capacity. Therefore, I thought it was important to give credit where credit was due. I owe many of these artists a majority of my life because without them I wouldn't be who I am or where I am today. It is my small way of showing my appreciation for what they do day in and day out, which is do what they love while bringing joy, trust and comfort to others.

In addition to the journal and the list of suggested artists, I also decided to create a web blog where I was able to post all of my thirty journal entries. I found this a good medium in order to reach out to people who wouldn't ordinarily have this opportunity to review my project and its outcomes. Through this web blog, as well, I will be able to receive feedback on my ideas, which is important to see if I have helped anyone better understand themselves, the main purpose of my project. From the start of my project, I had a great support system from my friends and family who were really interested to see the outcomes of my experiences so I felt that not just my peers would benefit from my

entries. I hope that it would inspire others to maybe do their own project based on similar principals.

Bound Journal:

This is a collection of all thirty days of my journal entries. Each entry includes the date, the time that I listened, the type of music I listened to and my mood scale before and after the entry. I set aside about thirty minutes of writing after each listening experience so that I could record all of my thoughts and feelings that I felt throughout the session. See Appendix A for journal entries.

Web Blog:

My web blog is an area where I have been able to post all of my journal entries and gain insight and feedback from others on my project. A web blog is an online journal where people can write what they feel and think while letting millions of others have access to it. My web blog is posted on Weblogger, which is a free website that hosts blogs. Each entry is labeled the same way as the original journal entries. When it is posted, people will be able to post their comments and thoughts on my project. Hopefully, through their postings I will be able to see where this project has helped in their lives to make it better. See Appendix B for my web blog.

Suggested Listening List:

This is a list I compiled using the music that I used for each journal entry. Different music and artists brought out different memories and feelings and affected my mood differently so by sharing some of the artists that evoked these kind of emotions, I

would be helping others. These are only a few suggested choices and are not limited to these. There is a whole music world out there to explore and this isn't even the tip of the ice berg. See Appendix C for Suggested Listening List.

Key Learnings

Although music is such a prominent part of my life, I have realized that it affects everyone differently and on so many levels. For me, I don't think that I would be able to go on without it there helping me through. However, working on this project I had the opportunity to talk to my peers and their thoughts and feelings about music. At first it was hard to understand how someone could not be so emotionally attached to an individual song or artist like I have been, but I was able to see that some people don't connect the way I do with music and lyrics. I also understand that this is not a bad thing but rather something that intrigues me to search for other aspects of art to see what inspires other people and helps them through some challenging times in their life. One way in that music can make a difference in other's lives is by enhancing their mood. Therefore, my main purpose then for this project was to seek out what types of music makes other people happy.

Content Key Learnings:

One of the skills that I found worked well in this project was my ability to be unbiased during the journal entries I wrote. I made sure not to listen to different music before each session and also when I was writing my journal entry as to not cloud my newly formed perceptions. There were times when I did the session at a time where I was unable to write down at the exact moment what I was thinking but I was able then to incubate on the feelings, moods and thoughts that did arise. I felt that this was a good way to truly see how music affects me and it reflected also in how I interacted with other

people. However, I never listened to anything else before I was able to write my feelings down so that I wasn't tainted. This helped me realize how powerful music has been in my life and the visible effects it has on my mood. I learned so much about myself and what makes me tick in certain situations and how to relax in other situations that I would usually overreact.

Another skill that worked for me while performing this project was my listening skills. I found that my eagerness to start my project made me particularly attentive to each session and therefore I was able to give my full attention to each entry. I found that I was able to interpret my thoughts and feelings better when I concentrated on listening to each genre of music. I found it important to have each session in an isolated area so that my attention was focused on the music and how it affected me rather than my thoughts or feelings being altered by others around me. However, in the beginning I initially realized that I had to work at keeping my attention on the music but as the project wore on, I found it easier and easier to listen in and tap into the music while blocking out other disturbances.

One of the things that I would change within the project would be locating hard to find and unique music. I found that it was very difficult to find music that was not mainstream in today's world. I was hoping to add a little more diversity into my listening experiences but due to time constraints and limited resources, I was unable to locate some genres that I was looking forward to analyzing. This is when I realized how sheltered our lives are to the rest of the world and how the media dictates what and who we listen to. Our preferences are hindered to what they meaning the media, feel is appropriate for us to listen to. I believe that the Internet is one of the best resources to obtain music that we

usually do not have the opportunity to listen to. But because many people do not have access to the internet or do not know how to access different music on the Internet, this valuable resource is lost.

Process Key Learnings:

One of the skills that I utilized from the Torrence Incubation Model was Look At It Another Way and found that it helped me clear my mind and see beyond some of the obvious thoughts, moods, and feelings that I initially felt and was able to dig a little deeper into my self. I found that I was finding new emotions that I, when listening to the songs that I was familiar with, hadn't experienced before. I am not sure whether it was because I was trying to look at each song in a different way as someone who hadn't heard a song before but this skill was definitely helpful in unlocking new thoughts and feelings that I could link to the song.

Another skill that I felt was important in the success of my project was my time management and the schedule that I allowed myself in order to accomplish my goal of thirty entries in the time allotted. I gave myself two days off every week of the sessions so that I didn't get stuck in the monotony of the project which might later be replaced by fatigue and then my entries wouldn't be as genuine because my interest wouldn't be at its fullest capacity. By allowing myself those two days, I didn't feel strapped down to the project and felt I had the ability to go and plan things around my project but still had some responsibility to get it done. I think that my time management skills really helped keep me grounded and keep up with my expected goal of thirty entries. I never fell behind and I believe that had to do with my careful planning and scheduling. It's

important not to get overworked on a long term project because when the interest is decreased, then the project's purpose tends to get lost and the outcome is not up the original standards and expectations.

One of the things that I would change during my process would be to begin working on my entries sooner into the project. I found that there was a lull in between my main research of music and the project itself causing some procrastination to set in so it was hard to begin and get refocused. There was a little disconnect that could have been filled with more musical experiences. When there is a time table set and deadlines to meet at the end of the project, even if well prepared for them, the sense of urgency of crunch time does tend to play a role on the latter part of the entries. I believe that if I had set out more time in the beginning, there would be less stress in finalizing the project.

Another thing that I would do differently in my process would be to take into account my style and preferences in a working situation. I am an Ideator and tend to take time to think up ideas about what I wanted to have as a final product but when it came time to implement these things, I found I had difficulty motivating myself to actually get them done because I could not commit to one way that I was satisfied in displaying my results. Even now, I have more ideas as how I should have performed the project and this played a role throughout the project because I was constantly getting stuck at the actually doing of the journal entries. I also realized I had a hard time retyping my entries because after I had time to go back and read what I wrote I thought up so many other things that I wanted to add to the entries because they sounded like they belonged. However, I realized that then the entries wouldn't be genuine of my true feelings and mood at the time of the original experience. So I believe that next time I will focus more on

narrowing down my ideas and sticking with one and working through it even if something better may come along.

Conclusion

Through my musical journey recorded in my journal, I was able to discover things about myself that I never realized before. My moods, values, thoughts and feelings are all affected and reflected through the music to which I listen to. I have created such an emotional attachment to music that I will forever seek it out to help me get through my life. One of the things that I feel helped with this bond is my ability to use it to help me become a strong person inside and out and therefore initiate change. Whether it is with my own personal life or helping those around me, I find that music gives me the strength to push forward and accomplish my goals. Music is so dynamic and allows me to achieve things that I wouldn't ordinarily attempt. I never really realized how much of an impact that music has on the relationship between me and my ability to lead change. This project definitely has taught me that I am a creative person and have the opportunity to do great things just like the artists to whom I listen to.

Therefore, in order to continue on with this project even after it has been completed, I see myself seeking out more musical genres that I wasn't able to experience during my journal entries. I can only imagine what kind of impact other genres would have on me in comparison to what I have already experienced in this short time. I have also found myself with an abundant amount of new artists to listen to and am finding it hard to find time to give each artist the listening time they deserve. In addition, this is such a pivotal time in life right now and I have realized that music is one of the biggest factors that is helping me cope with the changes. As my world is continually and vastly changing around me, one thing is remaining constant and that is my music, my comfort zone. It is what makes me happy. I have a new found appreciation for music and what it

can do for me as a person. Therefore, I believe that I owe it to myself to continue on and find even more music that positively affects my thoughts, feelings and moods.

Appendix A – Journal Entries

Date: 2/20/06

Time: 9:00 – 9:30pm

Music: The Beatles

Scale: 7 (before)/ 8 (after)

Although my mom was and still is a huge Beatles fan, I never caught the bug. However, just listening to the songs had me reminiscing of simpler times when my parents were growing up. The songs were upbeat although not always positive, I didn't sense any melancholy. One thing I noticed with the music and my experience is that the words and meanings in the songs were not strong to me and therefore I didn't find a deeper relation within the songs. I remember a particular song which a close friend from high school uses as part of her online profile. This song does have some meaning to me because it was voted our prom song for 1999. A flood of memories of the last dance came to mind including the ever embarrassing garter ceremony and saying goodbye to my life as a high school student. I particularly found the music to be a pleasant distraction of the normal hustle and bustle of what my life has turned into. I was able to slow down and reflect on times that I have read about and experienced. It was easy to let go of what I was worrying about and just get lost in a time capsule called "Rubber Soul". However, it also brought up memories of how things have changed since that music came out. It will remain a classic choice for many generations. I can still remember my mom telling me how rebellious it was to listen to that type of music when she was growing up in the 1950's and 1960's. It's funny how the times have changed. Music today may have more profanity but I believe there is a deeper meaning and connection with the artist's feelings. Its use has changed from entertainment to almost a therapeutic healing. I must admit I do feel a little lighter after listening to it. It did want to make me get up and dance. Surprisingly, I knew a majority of the words. What I also realized was how short the songs were. Just enough to get a taste of their energy. I would definitely listen to this when I was feeling the modern day stresses of the world meaning -> heading for collapse if I don't slow down. It gave me a feel good attitude and I felt I could reassess the problems at hand. The lyrics on a whole made me chuckle to myself. I still have trouble realizing the Beatles greatness and their effect on American music as we know it. They paved the way for some of my favorite artists, which I do have a tendency of forgetting. This experience gave me a feeling of inspiration that music is a tool for assisting us in our current state whether it's positive or negative. If music takes me on a vacation without me leaving my home then it has accomplished the mission successfully.

Date: 2/21/06
Time: 10:17 – 10:50pm
Music: Garth Brooks
Scale: 7 (before)/ 9.5 (after)

I realized that this was going to be a good night when I found my mom trying to dance and floss at the same time. Note to self – don't ever attempt that. I was pretty primed for this experience by watching American Idol. I must say that each song that I heard had so much energy. My own levels really reached their highs for the day, which may not be a good thing right before bed. Each song was different and unique. I was able to clearly visualize the story in *Beaches of Cheyenne*. It helped me escape to that place that she was in. To me, that is power. Every song should be an untraveled journey for the listener to explore. Even in the duets, each song really came alive. For some strange reason, every time I hear these songs I want to sing my heart out. The great part also of Garth is that even if you don't like country, people still enjoy his songs. It puts him at an untouchable level. Each song I was able to personally relate to. The first time I heard Garth was when my dad brought home a cd. I was like country?! Are you serious? But from that day I realized that it's not about the genre of music but rather the connection each singer has with the song. Lyrics are a powerful thing. By listening to him, I, as a personal always get inspired like I can do anything I put my mind to. If he can get away with tight, tapered leg Wranglers®, then I can let loose a tad. He has such a way with the music that I don't feel ashamed singing about a Ms. Robinson episode. He makes it fun and helps make light of certain sticky situations that even comedians tip toe through. Every situation, no matter how great or dire is enhanced with music. Although many of his songs deal with situations that I am unfamiliar with, I have learned a tremendous amount about love, life and happiness. It also gets me thinking about my wedding. The one truly special day and what songs I want to include. I want to have a hand in every song played. An old neighborhood friend got married and played *Friends in Low Places*. I thought it was a great touch. The song totally fit the occasion. To me, I realized then how one song can bring so many people together. Everyone joined in on the verse. They ranged from the wealthy in-laws to the cousin from Virginia to uptight businessmen. To have one song be able to bring together all the differences gives me hope that we can do it with other people as well. Maybe I should start a petition in congress to lobby for music at the government meetings. Hey you never know, right? Music could potentially bring peace.

Roberts, D.; Kennedy, B; & Brooks, G. (1995). *Beaches of Cheyenne*. [Recorded by Garth Brooks]. On *Double Live: Garth Brooks* [CD]. Nashville, TN: Pearl Records (1998).

Blackwell, D; Lee, E. (1993). *Friends in low places*. [Recorded by Garth Brooks]. On *Double Live: Garth Brooks* [CD]. Nashville, TN: Pearl Records (1998).

Date: 2/23/06

Time: 10:17 – 10:53pm

Music: Backstreet Boys

Scale: 9 (before)/ 9 (after)

When I first turned the boys on, I almost instantly became nostalgic of my high school years and middle school dances. These were always the anthems to every girl's dreams. I must say it emoted happy feelings. I just can't believe that I used to cherish these songs like gold. Among slap bracelets and mall hair, and the mysterious rumor of the shampoo bottle that circulated among the seventh grade. All precious memories looking back. I was able to see the "Boys" perform at this year's Pro Bowl and I must say they were cuter then ever. Besides AJ's drinking and drug problem, they are the boy band that outlasted the nineties. Hearing these songs again and being able to remember the words sill amaze me. I can't imagine how many tests I took in high school that got answers crossed with a little flavor of the Backstreet Boys. Some of the songs make me sad because of the whole love issue. If you have loved you are one of the few. Think twice before letting go. I love the harmony of their voices and the emotion they transcend to the listeners. So they were a boy band meaning a band, minus the instruments, made up of boys. Was that a fashion faux pas? If it makes another person happy then I say let it fly. Music only turns into music when it finds an eager ear. As my John says, "It's only music now." This type of music, if preferred, I will call it "pop" makes me feel younger than my years add up to. I like the fact that these songs are cross generational and can bring a mom and daughter together. This sounds very similar to the Beatles. I am in no way comparing the two, rather posing some of the similarities. I remember my trip to Florida and having my cd player with head phones on the beach thinking how cool I was. This cd was climbing the charts, so all the passing cars with young women in them all had this blaring out their sun roofs and convertibles. As for its longevity, I'm not sure that they will have staying power unless "generation x" goes back to it roots, which is not too far away from happening. I must be very thankful to the Backstreet Boys because they definitely helped me get through some of the most challenging years of my life. Their encouraging words and energetic charisma lifted my spirits when I got down because I didn't have the "it" outfit of the week. I never have realized how the profound effect that music has played throughout my life. I wish I could go back and create a sound track of each year. Everyone's would be different and tell a different story like a person's personal tapestry, each unique to its maker.

Date: 2/24/06

Time: 11:00 – 11:34pm

Music: Rob Thomas

Scale: 6 (before)/ 8 (after)

Well tonight I am pretty exhausted. I need some neutral music to reduce the edge. I thought that Rob Thomas might do the trick. His voice is very soothing to me. I have always liked him, even when he was with the band Matchbox 20. I believe he is still in that group. Another reason I chose Rob tonight is because my boy, John plays on one of the songs about a color blind world. There is such a key style that he has when he plays the guitar, I can pick it up anywhere. This music definitely gives me an energetic feeling coinciding with a relaxing setting. Though it is definitely something that would keep me awake. I think one of the reasons I like Rob on his own, even though his style is a little different than what I am used to, goes back to the lyrics. I connect with the messages that are being emitted. I would never though believe that I would like Matchbox 20, when I first heard them, I would get them confused with 3rd Eye Blind, which I didn't really care for their music – they were on the one hit wonder path. I thought MB20 was as well. I find myself listening to their first cd still trying to decide which I like best. I bought their cds in weird order. From most recent album to their first and original album. Each time I listened they seem like just average joes jammin' out. They don't take themselves too seriously. I feel that this music is good road trip music because it doesn't get too personal and all his songs are different than the first. I hate buying cds and having only one good song on it. Thankfully though I am able to download just specific songs and save money. I just wish dial up wasn't so slow. I must admit that Rob Thomas is dreamy. He's also got a good head on his shoulders. The funny thing about this Rob Thomas is that he's been at work playing in my computer for almost a year before I got it home to listen to. That's usually a good indication of my liking the artist – if I play it at work I can tolerate it for long periods of time then he's been successful. Although I am unable to sing along tonight to him and sing back up, I hope I still have a voice so I can continue to serenade my fish. They have a personal liking for Rob Thomas too. What can I say, I raised 'em right. Rob Thomas just makes me want to sing and stomp my feet throughout the city in joy.

Date: 2/26/06

Time: 9:45pm – 10:30pm

Music: Craig David

Scale: 6 (before)/ 8 (after)

This evening was a little harder to choose a music genre. I have been sick all weekend and just recently came down with a sinus headache. I must say, however, he really lifted my spirits. These type of songs just want to make me get up and dance. I can remember driving with my sunroof open in the summers, cruising to his mellow voice. I find myself listening to this style when I'm being reflective on my past relationships and what I would like in a future one. It seems to make all of my problems melt away at this brief moment in time. Since I turn 25 today, I am also feeling reflective on my quarter century on Earth. What are the positives I can draw inspiration from? At this stage in my life, working my tail off in order to be successful, I need all the motivation I can get. Music seems to be a major outlet for me and the energy I potentially draw from it. As I look back when I ever was in a zone, aka "having flow", I realized that music was always playing in the background. And not just any old stuff. I tend to draw mostly from artists who show raw passion in what they do. That is why I believe some artists don't have staying power. Every once in a while an artist like Craig David breaks through, but is unable to maintain his stay because the "rawness" was missing. However, I still enjoy the artists because I can relate to them on one level or another. I wonder how he would sound live. Would it turn out as another Ashlee Simpson moment? That is one thing that really can bring out a real artist and crush the wannabe's. Another reason to dislike Britney Spears, despite her recent child escapades, which she should have received a harsher punishment for. If you need an electric synthesizer to enhance, then its just like having plastic surgery. The true and original being is lost. I think that is how, we as Americans, have and are able to lose our identities so quickly. We only see stars in our eyes and not our children, hence we try and emulate Hollywood, which are the "Untouchables" in society. Amazing to me what money can do and not do for people. The one good thing that Craig David does for me is give me a boost of confidence. Through his words, he doesn't disrespect women but rather treats them with respect. He makes it easy to think I may have it going on at least one day out of the year and that some men aren't all about the glitz and glamour that only stars can bring artificially. I know there are men out there who are good and I commend Craig David for making me a believer. I'm walking away...what an anthem for those guys who are out there and have given me heartache.

Date: 2/28/06

Time: 9:40pm – 10:15pm

Music: John Mayer

Scale: 7 (before)/ 10 (after)

I specifically chose John tonight because I feel I have been neglecting him. He has a way of bringing me a sense of comfort with his guitar and voice. I felt tonight I needed some familiarity in my routine. If I'm scattered, he brings organization. It doesn't seem to matter what kind of mood I'm in, he soothes and heals all wounds. He exudes such passion when he sings and captures your attention. It's only music now is his motto. I take that to mean take it how you want to take each song. He is offering solace, it's not about him or how famous he may be but what he can offer everyone. To be able to touch so many people on one level is truly amazing. He has captured my heart and I will follow him through every endeavor he takes us on. His greatness is not measured by number of records sold but by the number of people he has connected with. These days there are so many artists who come and go so fast but what our generation needs is someone to grow old with and John is that person. His ability to cross over into other genres and work with different artists, illustrates his versatility. Every song he sings, you can hear his personality come out. He truly is my idol and for many reasons that I can't possibly list here, new ones pop up all the time. The one thing to me is that through his popularity he has remained true to himself and that is very respectable. My personal joy is getting to see him live. Since not everyone has caught on, I still have the great opportunity to be close. His music just brings out the person in me that wants to let loose and know that everything will turn out ok. He has helped me through some very personal issues and I can't possibly extend my deepest gratitude enough. As a person, he just is a happy go lucky fellow. Not your typical rock star. Again, another redeeming quality. So my next venture on the John Mayer Journey is to meet him. That would be one of my ultimate personal goals. Through his songs, I could potentially write my whole life story and have one continuous theme song. He has brought me such happiness through my young years. I just hope that my children can experience such connectedness and longevity with an idol. No disappointments – one of the points that I feel is important to continued success. I can't ask for anything more out of one man. I already feel like I owe him my first born. I don't think he would accept because he is so gracious. My feelings are so strong regarding him that I feel like I should start a petition to put him into the hall of fame this year. However, I think he still has so many other heights to reach and I can't wait to be right there with him. I hope I have pleaded my case well enough to at least gain 1 new fan from my praise. Just so that he gets what he gives us – pure and raw emotion. I love you John.

Date: 3/01/06

Time: 5:15pm – 6:00pm

Music: Kasey Chambers

Scale: 8 (before)/ 10 (after)

This was my first taste of a new artist from Australia. Her sound was very similar to the older group Fleetwood Mac and a little country twang. The feeling that I got from the music was a happy one. She has a fun voice that jazzes up the melody. Her songs ranged from slow, sad songs to upbeat and fun ones. It definitely matched my mood when I got out of work and was ready to kick off my shoes and do a two-step. I was introduced to her by a friend, Abe, who is a musician himself. He was definitely right. She is contagious. So is her attitude. I would definitely use her music for a road trip. From her sound I would expect her to be about 18 years old and fresh out of high school. That is just a guess though. I wonder who her influences are? If I was an artist I don't think that would be an easy question to answer. I would have to say first and foremost, John Mayer. But also groups like the Traveling Woolberries and Neil Diamond. And I can't forget all the travels to and from Philadelphia when I was a child when we would listen to Bon Jovi, Weird Al, and Michael Jackson. It was a part of my life growing up. I would like to thank my dad for that because we always had music on when I was young. That may be why I need it to concentrate? I also remember singing Don McLean and dancing around our living room to it. I definitely danced a lot when I was a child. I even mimicked the Sure commercial with a towel on my head and the remote control as my torch. Those were the good old days. I definitely get the vibe from Kasey to relive my childhood experiences. Being care free would be one of the feelings I would use to describe her style and what she lets her audience feel. I get that warm fuzzy feeling inside when I reminisce. I must say it helps me step away from the dramas of today's world, my way of running away. I can have a Calgon moment without ruining my hair, which is always a plus. Kasey has a smoky squeaky voice that just works with her style. I must say she is a crossover. So if you like country she may just do it for you. She seems like a non-white trash version of Gretchen Wilson. Again, always a good thing. I would definitely vote for her. But maybe she wouldn't make it because she is Australian remember. Doh. But if all of those athletes that play for their pseudo countries in the Olympics, I'm sure they could make an exception for her. I'm assuming Randy would like her. Paula would slur her name and Simon would say she has likeability but the song was abysmal. Darn you Simon, don't rain on our parade!!

Date: 3/2/06

Time: 10:00pm – 11:15pm

Music: Alicia Keys

Scale: 8 (before)/ 9 (after)

So tonight I chose to go with a more soulful selection. Alicia Keys is such a breath of fresh air. She writes her own music and plays her own instrument. As I work my way through each song, each one seems to grab me and touch an emotion, or string in my heart. She has her own style and does her own thing and rocks it. Her voice matches the deep soul of her songs. Each song tells a story. Sometimes with female singers, they tend to either beat up on guys or give them way too much credit. Alicia has found a nice balance. I like the idea that both males and females like her and respect her. She is a great role model for aspiring stars. She has no outstanding warrants for her arrest and hasn't embarrassed herself publicly, which to me is very respectable. I never realized how talented she really is until she won her Grammy's. I feel bad that I didn't jump on the bandwagon sooner. Her message is positive. I feel very inspired to be a woman, an independent woman for that matter when I hear her sing. She is helping to balance out a male dominated history of fame. To me, I believe playing an instrument is just as important as singing. To have both those talents, she definitely was blessed. I love to see people use to their max, their potential and strive to make others around you better. She is one of those "stars" who is giving and selfless. I know that if I ever have a talent that could help out others, I would definitely use it. I know that Alicia Keys is also involved in Saving the Music program sponsored by VH1 for future generations. This is so important because it helps kids stay in school, work hard and want to better themselves. These days, life is so challenging for kids growing up, music helps them stay focused and stay out of trouble. I remember though my own personal tries with musical instruments. My first was with the cello in third grade. I never practiced and I think it was because I was too tired of lugging it on and off the school bus. I specifically remember at my concert, my strings broke so I was out of tune – real bad and so I pretended to play the entire concert. It was awful. I, to this day, will never forget that night. My second experience was learning to play the organ. Again, I had a hard time practicing. Was it the instrument, teacher or me? No idea. Either way, every week I would go to the lesson, never gaining an ounce on that mammoth machine. After about three months of this, I decided it was not for me. I would still though sit at it in an attempt to bring life some Christmas carols, but no suck luck. Chop sticks even came out choppy, excuse the pun. I guess I should give up and leave it to the pros. I leave her with high respect for all she does and what she has the potential to do for her listeners. Bring on the triangle, I am ready to play!

Date: 3/03/06

Time: 11:00 pm – 11:37pm

Music: Steve Tyrell

Scale: 9 (before)/ 9 (after)

Oh, I love this music! It reminds me of the part of a movie where the characters are madly in love with someone special. How can you not feel special yourself listening to this man? When I first heard it I thought it was Christmas music because of how upbeat and cheery it is. I also go back to the last scene in the movies *Michael* with John Travolta, where Michael and the old lady dance in the street together as the world stands still. Good times, as my friend Abe would call it. Indeed, I could definitely feel a good time with this music as a serenade. When I hear it, I picture a swanky cocktail party and the perfect little black dress swaying to the music coming from the tux at the piano. High society and white zinfandel are the compliment to this music. I feel like kicking off my heels, letting my hair down and slow dancing. Very relaxing and comfortable. I can see this at an upscale bar where martinis are dry and the whiskey is sour. I want to play some of this at my wedding. It would definitely get the old couples up and dancing. That is adorable when I see old couples kiss or hold hands. It makes me wish times were simpler and life was longer, which brings up the issue of nursing homes. Do I want to ever be put in one? I hope not, I want to live a full and happy life and everyday be fulfilling until my last one. To go peacefully into the next phase with good music ringing in my ears. Though, I have seen some cute stories of love that have occurred at nursing homes, I still don't think it would be a place for me. I must say this music makes me think of my grandma and grandpa and the love they shared. They had to keep their love under cover for the longest time because they didn't think their parents would approve. They got married and kept it a secret even after my grandpa moved to California to try and find work as an actor. This would be their perfect soundtrack. They were so in love with each other. I hope everyone gets the opportunity to find true love once in their lifetime. I won't give up hope but it is very disheartening to see how people treat each other in relationships these days. This music helps restore some of the joy that has been lost over the years. One of the songs that he sings is one that my brother got chosen to dance for in 5th grade and I remember him being in a lead in a concert at Struble Elementary in Philadelphia. He got to dance with a girl and at that age, that is impressive. He had to wear dark blue pants and a white shirt. He is my older brother so I was the cool one in class that day. I remember he also got to play Santa as well. We had a lot of fun in Philly. It's amazing the abilities a school can have when money is not an issue. I learned some very valuable songs because of those music classes. Mrs. Tuss – I will never forget that poster as long as I live...

Daniel, S.; Ephron, N.; & Jacks, J. (Producers), & Ephron, N. (Director). (1996). *Michael* [Motion picture]. United States: Warner Brother Productions.

Date: 3/05/06

Time: 7:00pm – 8:00pm

Music: Various Artists

Scale: 8 (before)/ 9.5 (after)

For this evening, I was fortunate enough to have a friend with such an eclectic music collection. The mixed cd was jammed with old and new music that I have heard before but was not familiar with and some songs I was hearing for the first time. When I started listening, I must say I was unsure of what I was going to hear. It definitely makes me feel like I am “in the know” with good music now though. Some of it was more poppy sounding, which was mixed with rock. I love it. It’s upbeat and catchy. I remember going over to his house and there was never a shortage of music. Speakers in the house and outside for your listening pleasure. Out of all the time I spent there, I never heard the same song twice. It was a constant concert that played through the night. Personally, I’m surprised the neighbors haven’t complained yet. Though, maybe they like the stream of music too. At least they don’t have to pay the Sirius bill. What I really like about the cd is that there is such a range on there that there is something for everyone. I can’t classify it into a specific genre, which is what music should be about – being borderless. It should be made up as we go along. The only weird thing is that there was only one female on the entire cd of nineteen songs. To me, that says a lot about the history, present and future of music. I think sometimes women try and conform to the latest styles of music instead of doing what they want to do. They get sucked into the popular world, which has a six month turn over rate. Listening to the mix, the feeling that I have is privileged. I got to taste what makes up another human being’s musical soundtrack. Music is such a powerful instrument of communication and I feel it should be utilized to its fullest potential. This music really reached in and connected with me and brought up images of my life. Each song brought a memory of a piece of my experiences and adventures. It fascinates me that for each person that hears a song, how different they connect with it. The interpretations that come out of each musical piece is such a random collection. I love to hear different groups do covers of other bands songs because they interpret each note differently. Even artists that perform their own songs live add and improvise. I don’t think you can find a John Mayer song with the lyrics and notes as they originally appeared on paper anywhere. That is the fun of music, being able to play around with the melodies and choruses to fit and conform to the current environment for which it is being played. I wonder how many new songs have come from playing songs in a different key or instrument or artist? It takes all kinds of creative inspiration to write songs – more power to them, rock on!

Date: 3/07/06

Time: 9:45pm – 10:36pm

Music: Eminem – The Eminem Show

Scale: 9 (before)/ 7 (after)

Well I have to be honest, I am a fan of Eminem even if he is all about controversy. For some who just hear the numerous explicitives, they will never truly understand that he has very intelligent points in his lyrics. Why does he have to swear they always ask? Well, it's like an exclamation point on his views. He fakes a façade that adults and parents have trouble seeing through. For a while, in the beginning, I thought he was just another rap artist wanting to get the ladies, but in actuality, Marshall Mathers uses his music as a canvas form of therapy for his own past. Yes, some songs are mindless fun but a majority oh his songs have reason behind them. When I listen to him, I feel a bitter sweetness. I understand his point of view and realize that the world really is in turmoil, something that I tend to shy away from. I know that I have to take off my rose colored glasses and he helps do that with his honesty. I believe that parents don't like his music because its "hate music" but I have learned more about our government and how it is run then I did in my history course at the University at Buffalo. To me, it's more like tough love. Kids can relate to him and can respect him for his determination and inspiration. The world is not a perfect place and Eminem knows that and uses that as ammunition. Maybe he is a genius by using reverse psychology on the government to start making some changes. He doesn't want his daughter growing up in a declining world. I applaude him for his efforts. The reason my spirits have also declined while listening to him is not because of the hostility but rather the truth with which he speaks. I really hope that he continues to make music with the embedded messages. People need to remain open minded when listening to different artists. To be offended by a swear word really is sad because the real message gets missed or overlooked. I have heard that recently he has tried to clean up his act and attempting to straighten up his personal life. The name Eminem is just a cover up for him, which allows him to take stabs at others. However, he doesn't want a feud, rather he wants to motivate others to take action like in his movie 8 Mile. He let his music do the talking and he was able to come out on top. He is such a talented and intelligent artist. Each move is carefully calculated for fullest controversy. I think he is smarter then some politicians. And sometimes you can compare him to them. It may seem like an insane idea but he, or someone like him could become a political leader. Who knows, I personally think that he has some good points. He is a dad, first and foremost and that has helped guide his decisions. Think outside the box and let Eminem in. What is the worst that can happen? There may be more ice (bling) in the White House then at the gala this next election year.

Date: 3/08/06

Time: 10:01pm – 10:35pm

Music: Abe Hall

Scale: 7 (before) / 10 (after)

The greatest part about tonight and the music I experienced is that I know the personal stories behind each song. I was actually an inspiration for one of the songs. Therefore, my connection with the songs is stronger than usual. I tend to feel more empathy when I hear each song. I can also hear the singer's personal growth, which is unique. I have a different perspective on the process of what an artist undergoes when they write lyrics. The artist and I have many similarities in our personality so I feel through each song, the pain, anger and happiness that he experienced on a first hand basis. He said that it is his therapy. I am glad that such a painful experience though can be worked out or helped along with the aid of music. Another great thing about Abe is that he plays the guitar. He is multitalented, which will help him succeed in his search to make it big. The words from a majority of the songs deal with feelings of heartbreak and loss. One of my favorites though is based on a friend's untimely death, called Jared's Song. I think that many people will be able to relate to him on so many levels. He sings from his heart and puts it all out there for everyone to hear. To me, it's so special to have a friendship with the artist and he has opened up for me to really see what and where he gets his inspiration. When I hear him, I think that everything was bad at one time but it's getting better all the time. I am so motivated by the lyrics. His songs would create a great soundtrack to a romantic comedy. Even though there has been a lot of turmoil and tough times surrounding him, he has been able to pull himself together. There is even a hint of positivism coming through. Another great thing is that the songs sound great live. The chords and riffs are awesome. I personally can relate to Jared's Song because I have been affected by suicide. The essence of my feelings were instantly captured. I know that I will never get over my losses and either will anyone else but I think that in time we will be able to better cope with it. I think that it is such an honor that there is a song in his memory and the others who were lost. The connection and closeness that music can bring absolutely boggles my mind, in a good way of course. I am instantly brought to tears when I hear certain songs. I definitely think that Abe has poured his heart into this work and I can feel it. I am already attached, like a soap opera. I want to know what happens next. Thankfully there is more to come. I can't imagine how hard it is to create a new song month after month. The pressure, emotions and feelings that go into it is always in the back of their minds. I don't know how they do it especially because if I don't write something down, it will be gone for a lifetime. I would definitely describe this music as a little bit punk with a mix of country and pop mixed in for good taste. He has a unique style with a unique voice. Just what the music world needs right about now... Abe you have arrived.

Date: 3/10/06

Time: 11:50pm – 12:30am

Music: Cherry Poppin' Daddies

Scale: 7 (before) / 8 (after)

I must say this music really got me energized. It's the type of music that you don't have to hear over and over to enjoy it. It reminds me of music played in clubs during the 1930's and 1940's when they were a faux pas rather than an acceptable place to congregate. I instantly think of the silly trombone players sliding up and down with their fully filled out cheeks. It has such a fun intonation, it makes me want to start tap dancing in my pajamas. Now that is saying something. Another image that comes to mind are cheap polyester suits and mob hats. Dark allies and guns. A certain rabbit cartoon as well, his wife along side, who is bubbly strolling along these allies. I can just imagine my Grandma and Grandpa dancing to this music. Their arms swaying, their legs splitting. The joy on their faces could be pure or just that of simpler times and less stress. Again it brings up the instrument issue for me. I wish I could have been born with one musical bone in my body in order to create such masterpieces. I like how each song describes a story. The lyrics are unique and have an antique feel to them. I can hear such an enthusiasm for the art that is being created. I almost picture this as a soundtrack to an old mob movie with dark lighting, obscure offices, odd romances and off killings. I feel like no matter what happens, the outcome is going to be okay. They always are in those old movies. But again that shows the power of music. I am experiencing the nostalgia of a time only known to me through history class and personal experiences told to me by elders. The music puts an added touch on my own personal storyline and history. Since I enjoy comedy, this type of music fits my thoughts and personality perfectly. The upbeat rapid pace really keeps you on your toes. The only time this music wouldn't be helpful was if you were going to a funeral, well if it was the mob boss then maybe it would be acceptable... I really wonder what the times were like back then. Was it as the movies projected it? Or was it different? My Grandpa flew to California to be an actor and I wonder if these were the type of movies he wanted to get a role in. To imagine how different my life would have been if he would have stayed there and made it into some of those movies. I would have been born in California and my opportunities would have definitely been a lot different. And to think the music was there the whole time. Would I have been exposed to different music? I can't imagine my life with a different soundtrack but if it was, it would still play a major factor on my current and past life time. The power of music – who knew it could play such an integral part in every individuals life including those who don't appreciate it.

Date: 3/11/06
Time: 1:00pm – 1:45pm
Music: Great Big Sea
Scale: 8 (before) / 10 (after)

When I was first introduced to the Great Big Sea, I found them to be so free spirited and upbeat. Their stage presence is one of the most energetic I have seen. By the end of one of their songs, everyone is either jumping around or swaying gently to and fro. It's like getting a shot of caffeine without the crash and burn after affect. The instruments that they use to enhance each song are so unique. I remember listening to these guys when I was in high school and going on weekend road trips. We would have a sing along in the car for the two-hour trip. They are definitely a part of one of the most important phases in my life. Its funny how people change but music stays the same. Even though I am not friends anymore with the person that introduced me to them, I still listen to them. And for that I thank her. They are from Newfoundland and their Canadian accents are prominent along with the lyrical content. They just have raw fun playing and entertaining. To me, it shows they aren't doing it for the money but the enjoyment. I wholly respect them for that. That may have to do with why they have been together so long. To see them live in concert is a trip. The passion they have for doing what they love is such an inspiration for me to continue on and find something I am passionate about. They really haven't made it big in the US, but maybe that is a blessing in disguise. Like what happens when restaurants grow and expand, the quality deteriorates and the customer satisfaction level plummets. In other words, they get too big for their britches and are overcome by popular pressures. They lose their identity and charm. Another great thing about this music is that no matter what your genre is, they fit into everyone's taste even if it is through the backdoor. Buttoned up lawyers and hippies are part of the following. I must say it just makes me feel good when I hear the first few chords. The great thing is that each song can be identified with just the initial few notes. All the songs have character and even if you don't really know what they are talking about, you just have fun singing along. Going to one of their concerts is like going to see Richard Simmons. You don't stop moving. I remember an old best friend even got a nickname while listening to them. We then became groupies. Thank goodness Canada is so close. We are blessed to have two great country's music so close. Because we receive their radio and television channels, we are introduced to their culture and a big part of that is their music scene. Though sometimes their music, or what they call music is pathetic. It's funny when you are listening to the radio and the normal songs are on and your singing along and then all of a sudden on comes a zinger. You think, who the heck is this? Am I supposed to know who this is and you get self-conscious about it until they announce the unknown source who came from a little place called Saskatoon. Usually thought the music crosses between the borders freely especially because Buffalo really appreciates good music and fine beer, Blue that is.

Date: 3/12/06

Time: 8:15pm – 8:53pm

Music: Titanic Soundtrack

Scale: 8 (before) / 8 (after)

It was almost instantaneous when I heard the haunting bag pipes that I was brought back to the ship, the one that wasn't supposed to sink. The surrealness of the music brought the movie alive and along with it bringing such vivid memories of the terrible tragedy on that unfortunate voyage. To me, I feel a pang of sadness because I know what happens, but the music tells the story all over again. I don't think I have heard a more clarifying music where the emotions pour through the acoustics. You can almost hear Rose screaming out for Jack. The many trials and tribulations of the couple can also be visualized, along with the freezing, rushing water rising, just through the music. I enjoy music most when I am able to emotionally attach myself and relate to the situation that the characters of the song or movie, in this case, are going through. The voices are haunting as well. I wish sometimes that I had been able to experience the time era and all the stories that lived on when she went under. I remember on my cruise two years ago, finding myself searching for the front of the ship to relive what it must have felt like to be "flying". The horror and pain that those poor people had to endure still astonishes me. The way women and children were taken first and how the severity wasn't taken seriously at first, just like with Hurricane Katrina. Not enough was done and so many innocent lives were lost due to a miscalculation on the part of the leader or captain. However, the difference is that the captain was respectable and went down with the ship. The leader of FEMA went down too but not before making a mockery by emails and such of the day of the disaster pertaining to frivolous things. Another similarity was with the "unsinkableness" and the "unbreakableness" of the dam. Neither were thought possible until their weaknesses were exploited. The music really captures the essence of everything, every emotion that occurred. Its like you can almost hear the water rising in certain parts of the songs. The fear and horror are also captured, so it can be relived as it once happened. To me, what was amazing was the love throughout. Again, the music enhances it with a sensitivity and romance. I still get misty-eyed when I hear the bag pipes and the angelic voice singing the sorrowful goodbyes of the many lost at sea that night. I get such a brave heart, but sadness ache when I listen because of what I know is going to inevitably occur. The drums signaling danger, the water, rising, the ship listing, the lost battle of love and survival. It's an emotional roller coaster that will end in the same ending, but each time I wish for the love to pull them both through. The music creates such a real atmosphere, I feel the chilliness of the air and darkness of night as I slowly become submerged in the frigid water...

Cameron, J.; Landau, J. (Producers), & Cameron, J. (Director). (1998). *Titanic* [Motion picture]. United States: Paramount Pictures.

Date: 3/13/06

Time: 8:15pm – 8:47pm

Music: Paul Simon

Scale: 6.5 (before) / 7 (after)

I know I keep harping on this idea of crossgenerationalism, but I feel it is very imperative to the survival of music as we know it. From the likes of Britney Spears and O-Town, the future did not look promising. I am, therefore, impressed that many of the artists coming out today have a style similar to one of the greats. I am forever grateful for musicians such as Paul Simon, the Beatles, and the Eagles and how they created such great music, which inspired the next batch of artists and so on. To me, nowadays, the emerging artists are a collection and blend of many different idols and icons, coming together to create a new sound. I find it interesting as well that I can sing whole songs of his yet some songs I hear, I swear I have never heard before. However, my brother, who is three years older than me comes in and starts belting out an unknown. To me, I like to see what songs stick with each individual. My favorites are obvious choices, well to me at least. When I found out that I am the only one who likes a certain song, I start to panic thinking I must not be hearing the song correctly. But the great thing about music is how it brings everyone together. I like a certain song because of the personal history and memories that may have gone with it. To me, it's like going to the airport, everyone coming and going in different directions but are connected by the place that holds the planes. Everyone has a story that has a connection to why they are where they are. Same with music. It can be a sad story or fun story filled with happiness. When the song comes on, only one thing remains – the lyrics and feelings that come with the remembrance. I love going to say the Sabres game, and an old classic song comes on that is crossgenerational and everyone sings it at the top of their lungs. Even though it's an older song, kids still sing it because it's a classic. Everyone has a different story as to why or how they know that song, but all those stories are brought together in one place. It has been able to survive generations. It reminds me also of how stories got passed down by the Indians and our ancestors. Word of mouth – people hear it and can't seem to get it out of their heads and soon are spreading it on to the next. Paul Simon is one of my favorites, especially because of his sense of humor. Him and Chevy Chase just crack me up. He has made music fun for not just my parents but for me as well. I get happy feet and want to start dancing when I hear his songs. Again, I'm not able to relate to the lyrics as such but the upbeat nature and catchy lyrics keep me coming back for more. It's too bad that we only see Paul on WNED anymore with his balding head and goofy grins. I wish we could keep him timeless and treasure his gifts the way we have with Elvis and the like. He is a good part of my music background and he is definitely part of my personal music montage, which is included in my own personal life soundtrack. You can call me Al anytime Paul.


Date: 3/15/06

Time: 8:15pm – 8:54pm

Music: Guster

Scale: 8 (before) / 9 (after)

The first time I heard Guster, was when they were opening for the Bare Naked Ladies. It was one of my first concerts, so I didn't realize that the opening bands are always supposed to stink. They have such a unique sound and I guess they have a huge fan base in Western New York and in Rochester. And when I say fans, I mean die hard fans. They are almost on the line as "Dave" fans. They road trip, tail gate for days on end... I don't believe that they have caught on in the mainstream music scene but definitely in the "underground" (what I call it) circuit they have. I have found that to be a good thing sometimes because when you follow a group, tickets are always available and there is a better chance to get up close and personal with them. I remember going to see NSYNC in concert and they were the size of ants on stage and there were teeny boppers all around me screaming at the top of their lungs for no apparent reason. Not my cup of tea or java for that matter. I would rather be cozy up in a make shift concert hall with standing room only, just jamming with my favorite artist. Guster's sound again is unique to that of today and what helps in that is the unique instruments they use to create that sound. I feel like going to a grass roots protest or something like in the 1970's. I feel a bit nostalgic back to the scene in Forrest Gump, which they went to Washington D.C. Their sound also has a little 70's funk to it as well. The best part: its happy music. Easy to sing along to almost reminds me of hippy music. I wonder if the 70's inspired this type of music or this music inspired movements in the 70's? Kind of like the chicken and egg dilemma. I am not too concerned with finding an answer more with realizing the effects of music on our history. Now I feel as if I'm in a rerun of the Brady Bunch, or one of those infomercials selling the "Best of the 70's" collections. Either way the music has done its job – brought me somewhere without me leaving the comfort of my room. As I listen to the lyrics more closely, they are very simple. I love the simplicity because there are times that I just need to let go of a bad day and can't take an emotionally loaded song even if it is sang by one of my favorite artists. Especially when I am upset, I find that I can't listen to hip hop because to me it means fun and hanging out. Sometimes though I am stressed about everything and that's where Guster comes in. They have a way of brightening up my day, which may have been a lot grayer. They are like that friend who, no matter what the circumstance, just have a knack for lifting your spirits reminding you that there could be other things really wrong but they are not and help bring a smile to you even through the tears. A majority of the time, it's a friend that comes in and out of your life numerous times but no matter how many times, you always have a bond. They are definitely your angels watching and helping you out, cherish them!

Date: 3/17/06 
Time: 9:30pm – 10:07pm
Music: James Blunt
Scale: 6 (before) / 9 (after)

Hmmm... let's see. The feeling I get with his music is pure bliss. I instantly get the feeling of being in the movie "Magnolia". It was a very abstract movie but had such deep meaning and really stuck with me as does his music. I read his biography online and I realized that he comes from a very different life than most of the artists that are similar to his style. The raspy yet soulful voice haunts me, yet brings me solace. His voice to me is like an angel looking down on me and helping me along through some trying times. I use music and rely on it to get through my personal hurdles and it has helped immensely. Music doesn't talk back, won't stab you in the back and you can turn it off whenever you want to be alone without it getting hurt. I love how each artist has a story that needs to get out. A good artist is able to let each listener experience the drama or story that they are leaving out on the table and adapt it into their own personal tribulations without losing the meaning or power. Lyrics are the strongest part of a song, but sometimes it's the melody meshed with the lyrics that really brings power. To me, music is the cure all for all things, except maybe hangovers. Maybe on those days, a nice warm bath might work. I must say also that no matter what mood I'm in, I can always get out of it with music. No matter how dire, I pop in a cd and my troubles seem to melt away, if even for just a half an hour. Again, of course they don't truly go away but definitely more tolerable. I start to calm down and realize that a bunch of other people are dealing with much worse situations at the same time than my little petty dilemma. I have also noticed the power of music when I'm at a sporting event. No matter how bad your home team is doing a good jock jam tends to liven the crowd out of their funk. Keeps peoples minds off of the current state and it takes a piece of the agony of defeat away. Like for example, at the Sabres game (notice a trend here?) we had just scored and so they were playing an upbeat song to get the momentum up in the arena and get the people moving and while this took place, the opponents scored. Instead of silence, the PA guy started to play another fast tempo song. It definitely took the sting out of the goal. I was taken into a different mind set so it wasn't hard for me to forgive the sloppy play that just occurred. Come to think of it, maybe there are subliminal messages being infiltrated through the music. Maybe that's why I instantly get a craving for cotton candy when I enter the building. Though on a musical note, I just love that I bought him on a whim because of one song and I can't get it out of my cd player. It's just the passion that I hear in his voice. To me, that is such a great thing and to know that there are other people who believe in the magic of music along with me is really exhilarating. I know sometimes I even get emotional because of the strong connections I have with a particular song. I feel it helps me live a more enriched life. Maybe that's why I'm always so happy, because whatever your mood there's music to help you get out of it, or help keep it.

Date: 3/18/06

Time: 9:38pm – 10:17pm

Music: Neil Diamond

Scale: 6 (before) / 8 (after)

I still can't tell yet if at the age of 25 and know most of the words to Neil Diamond songs is an embarrassing characteristic flaw or is a personality golden nugget to be proud of. Ever since I was young, I remember Saturdays when my parents would put on music. Neil Diamond was a regular in our cassette player. The feeling I get from his songs is a sense of comfort from my childhood when I had no cares or worries, and especially no bills to pay. Another great memory that I have is all of us, as a family singing and dancing around the house when this came on. Every time I see him on TV. or in the news, my mom always laughs at how silly but good he looks at his age. He, even after all those years, can still sing each song and they are familiar. When I listen to him I believe that he is in a top category of artists that has that cross generational factor that helps keep his music timeless. From what I hear, he puts on a good show, but have never experienced it personally for myself. Something that impresses me about music is the legacy it leaves behind even if the artist was a one hit wonder, or the artist was taken from us way too soon. And when it lives on, so do the old and new memories that it creates with old and new listeners. Each song can have such different feelings and meaning for different people. Listening to this particular artist feels almost like riding on a roller coaster because each of his songs are different sounding and some are upbeat, some are just average and some are slow, sad songs. However sad they are, I still sing along to help heal something that may be going on in my life that is similar, or if I want to know that everyone undergoes difficult times in their lives and some just have the talent to put a melody behind it. I wonder how easy or hard it is to write songs on personal issues. Is it different for each writer? I would think it would good therapy as my friend Abe, the budding artist, has said. I give these people all the credit for them to open up their lives to us and having to be strong enough to share their stories so that others do have that opportunity to relate to it and use it to help them deal with whatever may be bothering them. I also wonder how many unwritten songs don't come out because the author is afraid of seeing the truth in a hard copy. I can see where the motivation though can help break through barriers like that. I would have to be so open and brave to let them in like that. To me, artists are just opening up their diaries and airing out all the dirty laundry for everyone to see, which is such a tremendous ordeal because of what might be lurking behind that one dirty sock. That is why it surprises me that some artists are introverts. For them to have to build up to exposure must be a real challenge. To think of all the songs, great or not, that are not being heard because of fear or shame of the past. I hope though we have a promising music future in store for us.

Date: 3/19/06

Time: 7:06pm – 7:38pm

Music: Tencent Tip

Scale: 7 (before) / 8 (after)

I always enjoy listening to new music, especially when it comes from a local band or someone who is trying to make it because that is when the music speaks for itself and is in the purest state. You can see and hear the enjoyment that the artists get out of it as well, feeding off the crowd and their reactions. They leave it all out on the table for everyone to pick up and do what they like with it. At this point in their careers, it's not about the money or publicity stunts. When music is in its rawest form, there is nothing that can be hidden behind smoke and mirrors. I'm so impressed too, that they play their own instruments. To me, it shows that it's a true rock band because they don't need amps and synthesizers and back up music to play an impromptu concert. It surprises me too to see how young they are and how advanced their talent is. They have a different sound, kind of punk, kind of Mighty Mighty BossTones-ish. It's a break from the normal music that I usually hear on the radio. I consider myself lucky that Buffalo has a great local live music scene. It helps to foster more great music to come. There is never a shortage of concerts going on. Many bars always have some kind of music group performing. And every night it is usually something different so there is a good mix. I think that sometimes we take it for granted, like Thursday in the Square. Most places don't have free concerts like that. I'm also surprised at the type of talent that they can get to come here as well. Even our venues for music concerts are pretty impressive. Usually though the best concerts are held either outside or in the small quaint places where it is standing room only and you are practically sitting on the lap of the person behind you, but in these circumstances the band's respect overrule personal space boundaries and political correctness. Have you ever noticed though people at concerts? Some watch in complete silence and would never know that they had a great time by the stone cold look on their face. While others have their rituals like face painting, beer drinking, and lighter waving. I find it interesting how people enjoy music in so many different ways and on so many levels. I personally love to sing along at the top of my lungs while rocking slowly to and fro to the beat, while every once in a while throwing my hands up. I remember being at a concert where the people in front of me sat the entire time at an upbeat amazing concert while the rest of us were standing and dancing around them the entire time. I felt bad at first but realized if they wanted to see, they would stand. Then I was like how could they possibly be enjoying this but at intermission, they couldn't speak fast enough to each other at how great the concert was and that it was the best they had been too. That is when I realized that we all experience music differently and that you don't have to show your loyalty by losing your voice and tiring your legs but rather simply listening with both ears.

Date: 3/20/06

Time: 9:30pm – 10:04pm

Music: Handel

Scale: 6 (before) / 8 (after)

It's funny to me how classical musical calms me right down no matter what the situation. I immediately set into polite mode like when I'm at the theater or something. It exudes such richness and respect. Just the sounds of the instruments can tell a story from beginning to end. When I close my eyes, I can imagine the royal court with king and queen and peasants looking on to see the news of the day. Gossip was a form of entertainment back then like it is today so that is how most days were spent. It's amazing to me how all the instruments play a part in each of the pieces. Each instrument individually don't sound anything like when they all come together. Another thing I think about when I hear classical music, are the many movies with great soundtracks. Especially when there is no dialogue just music and a story line is played through the music. It was so entertaining to see just one depiction of the story through the creator's eyes. Classical music to me soothes away most of the tension from the day's events. It beats paying the price for a massage every week. The enchantment that is brought through the notes and the untold stories are part of the essence and magic of classical music. It's fun how there are, again, certain pieces of music that are cross generational as with a lot of other genres of music, though not as popular. We may not know the title or composer but we can recognize the notes. Many of the satires and historic movies use these familiar pieces in their work. When I hear classical music, I also think of the holidays because that is when many church hymns come out and are played instrumentally and beautifully. I think that people often forget classical music plays a major part in films and motion pictures. Many sound tracks that I do have, have at least one song from the movie that are classical. A majority of the time, they are not recognized rather the popular artist is recognized for the song that will have it's fifteen minutes of fame. However, I do like the fact that some artists are incorporating more and more diversity into their music. Artists such as Madonna, Kanye West and John Mayer have crossed over and delved into different genres fearlessly. Critics thought it would be devastating for John Mayer to get away from his poppy vibe, when actually his roots are in blues. I hope this crossover of music genres continues and we see punk and classical come together, along with jazz and hip hop. We are always striving for the bigger and better and what better way to create then use something that already exists and build on it? I think there is a new front of music about to be unleashed at full throttle speeds. I only hope that we can handle the onslaught. Music makes my ears happy, no matter what is being sung about or who is performing. I hope it continues to grow so that we don't lose the great music culture we have and that it continues on into the next generations.

Date: 3/22/06

Time: 11:12pm – 11:54pm

Music: Toby Keith

Scale: 8 (before) / 8 (after)

Toby Keith...ahhh. It brings back memories of going to Wild Bill's in Atlanta and just having a good old time with my friends. When I hear him, there always seems to be something good happening. I want to let down my hair, grab a non-alcoholic beer and find my way to the dance floor. I remember when I first heard him, again on a whim, I bought his first cd based on one song and fell in love with it. Somehow though it fell into my mom's hands and I haven't seen it since. He is the epitome of all American cowboy. Rough around the edges but with a soft core. The flow of his voice helps raise and heighten emotions. Since I have a cousin who is in the AirForce and lives in Missouri, many of the circumstances that he sings about hit close to home for me. He, meaning my cousin, told us that even though Toby is behind the soldiers, when he was in Kansas City, only a couple of miles away from a huge AirForce base, during his concert, he never mentioned the soldiers once or even visited the base. Showing support just doesn't mean lending your name to a cause, but actually making a difference once involved. I can't make any judgments, he has done plenty for our men. I have actually had the opportunity to meet Toby about four years ago when he was in town. Maybe it was because he was just a rising star, but he was extremely somber and was very shy. Maybe that's why I like him - he has the protective feature that makes me feel comfortable. To me, I find it different that he can sing about a bar, then about whiskey, right after that jumping into a song about the war and then Jesus. That is quite a range of subject matters that are controversial nowadays and somehow he pulls it off with ease and elegance. I like to listen to Toby when I'm in a self confident mood and sing it loud and proud. Even though he is country he has many crossover fans who enjoy him from outside the country realm. In concert, he sounds better as do most good artists. I believe that it is a sign of a good singer and performer because it shows they don't need the extra jazz to sound good. I remember when I saw him in concert and the way he presented the songs was exceptional. I think that if you can get me to like a song with only hearing it one time then you are doing a great job. He did this numerous times in a matter of an hour or so. By the end of the concert, I was hooked and was singing him at the top of my lungs coming home. It also helps that he is easy on the eyes. Through his music, he has done a lot for society and continues to pull ahead to try and make a difference. I highly respect him and his values. I would hope future generations get the opportunity to listen and enjoy the messages of each song as I have had. He had definitely been a piece of my musical montage.

Date: 3/24/06
Time: 9:15pm – 11:15pm
Music: Jaime Cullum
Scale: 10 (before) / 10 (after)

This installment of my musical journey actually traveled to another destination: Cleveland. My best friend and I were going to see Jaime Cullum, someone who I was not familiar with but was Amanda's favorite. The venue is the House of Blues, which is a very casual but cozy concert hall. When Jaime took the stage, a whole new level of "rock" concert was born. For two hours, he jammed with his band with such high energy. Even the critics deemed him the Energizer Bunny. He started out with his piano but later broke in with a guitar and later, a tribal drum jam which he pounded through the entire song. His energy was relentless. It came at us with waves and waves. He rocked every song like it was his last. Even though I couldn't sing along to a majority of the songs, I thoroughly enjoyed myself and believe this concert ranks tied for number 1 as the best in my book. The crazy part about it is they sang, "I Got A Woman", just like John Mayer did at the same place just five months earlier. Can you just imagine such an old song that was brought back to life by two genuine artists, live. Each song I was able to connect with and felt truly content and stress free, something I haven't felt in over a year, besides that one day in October for John's concert. I can't for sure classify Jaime in a particular genre of music, some of its alternative jazz and some is punk jazz and the rest is just Jaime and seems to be appealing to all that hear him. There is something for everyone it seems. The greatest thing for Amanda and I is that Jaime Cullum is not that well known yet in America so we were still able to see him at such an intimate venue and feel the passion at such close range. The crowd ranged from young girls in their early teens to older couples, to couples on their first date. He really was able to bring everyone together to truly enjoy such a great experience. He had everyone standing up, singing along, and clapping their hands. I think he should put out a workout video because of his extreme energy level which rivals that of Richard Simmons. This was an experience I will definitely cherish and in the process, I found a new favorite artist and he gained a new fan. He sang songs from Pharrel, Ray Charles, Barry Manilow and Elton John and did them justice. He made each song sound like it was an original. The trip to see a live show was worth it because you really get to see the passion of the artist and how they interpret each song and feed off each other and the crowd. He was very generous to let each of the four members high light one of their talents. He was so gracious with the respect that he showed each of them. He was so unselfish by letting each piece fall into the puzzle and it worked all the way around. It was such a spectacular show and I will definitely remember the time we had. Now if there was only a way to pick up and drag the House of Blues up the 90 to the B-Lo.

Date: 3/25/06

Time: 6:30pm – 7:00pm

Music: Jack Johnson

Scale: 8 (before) / 10 (after)

Although I have been a huge fan of John Mayer, and his style of music, I have never been one to go out and find similar artists. I choose music very randomly and therefore there is no rhyme or reason for my method. That may be why only now, have I discovered another new favorite of mine. I have heard about Jack Johnson but never heard his music. If you aren't played on popular radio, VHI or MTV, I probably wouldn't have the opportunity to experience you. Jack Johnson, to my knowledge is not mainstreamed regularly into those mediums. I understand there is a huge underground music scene and I have only scratched the surface. I am so excited that I have been able to experience all this new music. I almost feel overwhelmed because there is so much I want to listen to and not enough ears or hours in the day. His style is mostly guitar and mellow tunes. It's just relaxing – something to kick back and forget the problems of the day and focus on the simplicity that he sings about. I feel very connected to his lyrics because I am enduring some of the things that he sings about. Again, with him I feel at ease and relaxed. I could listen to him any time of day. There are definitely some artists out there who I can only tolerate on a limited listening basis. Those are usually the one hit wonder artists that have one hit song that is way overplayed so you hope they would just fall off the side of the Earth until the fad passes. From what I have heard, Jack Johnson has been around for a while. He has staying power. Maybe it is a blessing that he isn't played on popular radio. He still maintains a mystique that is of the "in crowd". It's like a secret club and if you are in the know then you are allowed to brag about your love for him. I know many people classify artists like him in the same pop field and so his name sometimes becomes interchangeable with other artists, but I don't think that is fair. Each artist has his own sound, which is unique. I can pick out each individual based on their style alone. I think people take for granted music artists and therefore dismiss some of them that really deserve to get heard. Jack Johnson is one of those artists, but really it's the other people's loss. My music repertoire has grown by leaps and bounds because I don't discriminate against certain types of music. I keep an open mind with all music but each has a message to the listener. I love music and its an invaluable part of my life. Why would someone want to limit a resource such as music because the artist has been known to be similar to another artist or doesn't fit a particular genre. I want to hear as much as I possibly can. As long as my hearing doesn't fail me I want to overload my ears. Call me greedy, but I feel that I am able to experience more than just my own life through music. I get to live short spurts of other lives and their experiences. Music is free for those who want to listen and more than enough people willing to share it. I am thankful that I can and have the opportunity to listen to it all and then some.

Date: 3/26/06

Time: 6:48pm – 7:23pm

Music: Rusted Root

Scale: 7 (before) / 9 (after)

The first thing I think about when I hear Rusted Root, is the movie *Ice Age*. I have been familiar with Rusted Root for about thirteen years or so and couldn't believe it when the song was used in a popular cartoon movie. It fit the movie perfectly. When I hear Rusted Root, I always feel instantly happy. I must admit their songs are not ordinarily heard on the radio but they definitely have their place in music. They are always having fun with many unusual instruments, which brings such a distinct sound that they use brilliantly. It's always like an instant mini party when it is turned on. However, funny story, my brother would always put this on right before he would go to sleep, however how could you possibly sleep through this? But I guess a good explanation would be that it's comfort music. When Rusted Root is on, what could possibly go wrong to ruin the positive message and atmosphere? Again, they are artists who just go out and have fun together. They are not necessarily concerned with publicity and record sales as they are with satisfying their own needs and wants along with their fans. The great thing about them is that they could be rated "G", which means they are for general audiences everywhere. Everyone in the family can enjoy the sounds and experiences of Rusted Root. I have heard that their live concerts are ones not to miss. They truly enjoy what they are doing and it shows through their performances. I don't know what I get more joy out of – listening to the music or watching them perform it. It always makes me a little envious because I would love to play an instrument or sing and right now both are out my realm of opportunity. I would love to play guitar and am determined to learn whether it takes me five months or five years to play just one song. It really intrigues me when people are able to play more than one instrument. I hold the utmost respect for those people. I know that there is some skill involved but most can be taught with much determination and motivation. I have already tried my hand at the cello and organ. Neither of these two instruments were able to kick start my musical career. However, the more and more I research music and the different artists, I can really separate and divide out the true artists from the people who are in it for the perks and money. It amazes me when I learn that a majority of artists that play an instrument taught themselves how to play. John Mayer was like 14 before he decided he was going to learn. It really motivates me to start something that I would love to learn how to do and that I can do it myself with the right amount of determination. I don't have to be great at it or an expert but just trying something and breaking out of my barriers is the most important thing for me in order to grow as an individual. Learning to ease up on my perfectionism is a personal goal of mine and by trying something that I'm interested in but not familiar with is a great way to break out of my paradigm and try new things that will broaden my horizons.

Forte, L. (Producer), & Wedge, C. (Director). (2002). *Ice age* [Motion picture]. United States: Twentieth Century Fox.

Date: 3/28/06

Time: 9:12pm – 10:03pm

Music: Linkin Park

Scale: 7 (before) / 6 (after)

I think I need to clarify before I go on that alternative music can either put me in a good mood or bad mood depending on the mental state I am in prior to listening to it. There are times when I like to hear screeching and yelling out all of their anger. Sometimes its good to let off a little steam but if I'm in a sensitive mood, forget it. I can't take the stress on my ears. However, when I am all teed up, bring it on. There's just something about it that helps release the tension that could be bottled up and making the mood worse. I find that Linkin Park has a very different sound then the usual punk or pop group. They have collaborated with Jay Z for heavens sake. The music I notice is very intense. Powerful feelings wrapped up in strong meaningful lyrics. I am still confused on whether or not I particularly like this type of music but I guess I like certain songs because of the meanings behind them rather than the artist. The one thing I don't like is that I can't sing along as easily as I do with other artists. There's a constant break of yelling and rapping and singing wrapped into one, I don't know what part to stick and with and work on learning. I do know that when I was younger, I would try and memorize the words in the rap part of the songs so when it would be played at the dances, I could potentially look cool and sing along to the best of my ability. Goodness, as I get further into them, I nearly jump out of my skin at the screaming, maybe it's my old age but I don't remember being this shaken by it. Can you actually call this music? Alright now I sound like my mom. Obviously it is but I just don't think it's for me. But if it brings happiness or comfort to one person then they earn my respect. I wish I had just a little musical talent to take advantage of but I was not the lucky one. Well I was blessed with ears to enjoy it all so I guess I can't complain that much. I wonder what the generations of my grandkids would think of this music. I can only imagine what their music may be like but I am thankful to the current artists who are bringing back the older stuff and infusing their own flavor into it to make it their own. I am just thrilled that many of the uptight barriers that existed around music have been broken thanks to artists like Linkin Park, so that there is so much more to hear and experience. The joining of two erratically different sounds is one part of the blending of new/old generation music that I like. There seems to be a place for everyone nowadays and they don't have to be stuffed into a cookie cutter genre. It's so great to see the artists also get the respect and support from the fans as well. They are the key or glue that holds it all together for the artists. If it wasn't for them what motivation would a good passionate artist have to continue to break molds and create new music? As long as there are ears for the music to fall on, they will keep playing.

Date: 3/29/06

Time: 10:00pm – 10:33pm

Music: Train

Scale: 9 (before) / 9 (after)

So this whole thing with live versus recorded music... whose ever idea it was to record the artist really should have come up with a better way to exude or enhance their originality each time they sing a song. From top down, live music is 100 percent better then when it's recorded, by real artists that is. That is why it is important to go out and see as many concerts as possible and support these venues. I feel that I was deprived when I was a child and teenager because I never went to concerts. However, the few concerts I have attended in my later teen years were definitely worth it. Great Big Sea was at the Tralph – amazing show. The only concert I would have rather seen on dvd was NSYNC. I had the unfortunate opportunity to have seats on one side of the football stadium as they danced and sang all the way at the other end. In addition, their dance moves were more entertaining then their singing and it all it looked like to me was a group of marching ants who were getting ready for the queen's arrival. But then again, I think that they may have been lip-syncing as well. Where is the fun in that when all the songs sound exactly like the album without any variation? Can I spell B-O-R-I-N-G? However, I have not seen Train in concert but I think it would be something to experience. They make me feel like a thirty something dealing with grown up problems, like my career and relationships. Don't get me wrong, I like it. They are like an older crowd version of John Mayer. Again, they are cross generational and many people relate to them on so many levels. I believe that that is what makes a good group or artist – their ability to connect with their audience in addition to having a whole other realm of respecters. I don't know how long they have been around but I feel as if they snuck in the backdoor of my music collection. I feel like I would play them on a lazy Saturday morning when I am just relaxing and enjoying my day off. I never realized either how many followers they do have. Again, they always seem to be on that middle or second shelf, never quite making it on all cylinders and earning the respect they deserve. However, I believe there is a false sense of security up there because a majority of groups that make it up on the top shelf, end up broken up and on reality television shows. Flying under the radar may just be okay with groups like this so their stardom doesn't propel them into that Hollywood stupor. It is a totally separate world there where all good things are a mirage covering up what really goes on there. To me it's kinda like the chicken and egg dilemma, what came first – artists' attitudes or stardom and Hollywood corrupting them to make them act like that? Whichever it is, their fifteen minutes of fame usually runs out and blows out their flame, which then is used to cast flickers of light onto secrets and lies of the artist. I hope those stars have a good p/r person because cleaning up is always the worst when the party is over.

Date: 3/31/06

Time: 10:04pm – 10:38pm

Music: Eiffel 65

Scale: 7 (before) / 8 (after)

So does he bleed and die or is it just a bo de a bo di? I instantly see where they get their name from. This music reminds me of a dark underground rave somewhere in the suburbs of London. Only the elite dancers and ravers are allowed. Though I can see how it could make one want to dance even if you aren't a dancer. I see a future workout video from these guys too. I feel on the verge of being ecstatic, which then borders on epileptic seizures. Believe me, it's a great combination. Wouldn't recommend this if you were trying to put a baby to sleep, rather I would suggest it to start a party. Songs about play station, and plastic surgery – it's a great conversation piece. This brings me back to the summer between high school and college. Every night my friends and I would be on the go and every time I had the opportunity to drive I would stick this in the cd player. At first the buds didn't take too kindly to it but after a few go arounds they were hooked. But since there is only one of me and two of them I couldn't make up for the number of times that they razzed me for listening to this. It's okay though, I'm confident in my extensive music repertoire. I listen to what makes me happy not what is popular at the moment, which may be the same at some point but will all the payola going on, I feel taken advantage of like we were being fed only half the story when we listen to the radio. A good example is how just recently I heard some new artists that have been around a while but I haven't had the time to experience them because they weren't being played on local radio because they either didn't have enough money to bribe the stations or decided they weren't going to play that game. I guess that is what makes the internet good on some levels because you can find so many options for live streaming music and you can choose for yourself rather than some over paid music producer. I think it's horrible and I'm glad that a law maker is finally stepping up to the plate and taking care of this matter. I believe that every artist has a right to be played and heard so that America can decide on who they want to hear. Not everyone likes pop music. Well at least the pop music that we are exposed to on a limited basis. Though that may be why we haven't heard anything else from Eiffel 65. They had one major hit and there is no loyalty in music. You need to continue to produce "quality" every time in order to stay on top and one little stumble and the artists fall even fast off the radar. Listening to them makes me remember why I liked them in the beginning. They are different from the mainstream. They also did their job by bringing me back to a place in my past. It helps me remember the little things that happened in my life that I sometimes take advantage of or just forget about. I sometimes wish I could physically go back to the times but realize that it wouldn't be a good thing because I'd be living for the past. The only way to be successful is to live for the future and carry with you all the important things with you that make you who are you today. And for me that has been music.

Date: 4/1/06

Time: 10:18pm – 10:43pm

Music: Enrique Iglesias

Scale: 6 (before) / 8 (after)

Listening to complete Spanish in his songs was actually very interesting. I felt as if I was a foreigner trying to understand the language and events that he was singing about. It's a very romantic language and even though I didn't know a majority of the words and couldn't sing along, I enjoyed listening to it. I know his father was a great Spanish singer as well and was a well known sex symbol. Enrique picked up right where he left off. His voice has a raspy but innocent tone behind it. I also like how he brings his personality into the songs. Again, this music brings me back to high school, where I would religiously listen to it over and over and over again and still never being able to sing the songs in Spanish. However, one thing I remember when I was growing up was that I really never purchased good music cd's. I would buy one because at the time it was popular on the radio and not because I connected with it on a personal level. This was definitely one of those discs that I bought on a whim. I actually ended up buying the wrong cd – this being the Spanish version but I like it more because it gives me a taste of the Spanish/ Latin flavor that he is known for. I like being able to cross borders without my passport to experience a different life through the artist and his or her work. It sounds like he had fun making this cd but I can't imagine how hard it must be to have to make two different versions – one in English and one in Spanish. Being able to keep the words straight in addition to keeping the correct language throughout must do wonders on the left and right sides of the brain. Maybe though that is how some songs are created or remixed. You are able to keep and bring more people into your audience while keeping your old tried and trues happy. I like that there is a mix of slow and fast songs on the cd. I really can get a taste of what kind of singer he is and can be. I'm glad that Enrique has hung around even if it is because he is dating one of the most talked about woman athletes of our time. I think he has done better then Ricky Martin. He hasn't tried to make a comeback, well in the US anyway so he hasn't had the chance to look a little goofy like Ricky. When your fifteen minutes are up then maybe you should hang it up and that goes for a lot more then just people in Hollywood. I'm sure there are many other jobs that he could be good at, which still involve music but maybe not being the front runner. Many respectable producers who have had their time in the limelight have been extremely successful in helping other people become stars or earn them their fifteen minutes. These people though are the selfless ones who want to help others achieve greatness instead of being greedy and trying to recapture the throne, which again, only lasts approximately fifteen more minutes so all of that hard work for a mere thirty minutes? Even that isn't guaranteed. To much risk for me, I'd rather help others be their best.

Date: 4/2/06

Time: 9:37pm – 10:16pm

Music: Outkast

Scale: 8 (before) / 8 (after)

Well, this is the final evening of my journal entries. I chose Outkast because I have heard such good things about these two guys as musical geniuses. They have always been in the background in my music collection, never a forerunner. I have enjoyed the few singles that they have come out with over the years. Definitely different music, and I can't really describe it or put it into a category or genre over another. It's seems to have a little bit of everything. When I hear them I get reminiscent back to my MTV days when I was addicted to TRL. I would watch the videos over and over. I still don't understand how Andre3000 can dress as crazy as he does but is considered one of the best dressed artists in America. I guess that is not saying a lot for artists these days. Only he could pull that style off and he does it with such flare. He has better fashion taste than me or maybe just a really good person who dresses him up for occasions. One thing that I like about Outkast is that they don't follow the trend but always remain trendy. Some of their songs on this album sound like they should have come out in the 1970's but somehow the public clutched onto them and away they went. They seem to come and go about every five years with something new and original. I could definitely see this music at a house party with people crawling everywhere and a majority not even knowing whose house they were trashing, located in South Beach. It goes along with Outkast's lifestyle, or at least the one they exhibit. I remember the Miss Jackson video. The animals, the rain, the fire. They are very unique artists. They seem to break the mold far enough where the public embraces their differences and gives them the publicity they need to get played on the radio. The one thing I noticed is that their music really is mostly about partying and not as serious things other artists take on in their music. However, I think that is why so many people like them because they are fun singing rather than taking themselves seriously. We need a break every once in a while from all the seriousness that is going on in the world today. They have been around a long time and continue to produce greatness. I find it interesting that for this album, they created two separate cds for each artist to show off their own individual styles. I think it takes a selfless person to be able to share your fame with another person. The courage it must also take to put both cd's together knowing full well there will be a clear cut favorite among listeners. Maybe it's confidence. I respect them as artists because they work so well together to create what people want to hear and are still together. Most Hollywood marriages don't last as long as their partnership. I would listen to them if I was getting ready to go out on a night on the town. They have a good pop beat that you can bob your head to. Gets the adrenaline flowing enough to get the rest of the body moving. They have definitely incorporated enough different styles of music to make listening to them an unforgettable experience.

Appendix B – Web Blog Entries

Appendix C – Listening Suggestions List

Suggested Listening

David Gilmour	Yanni
Jack Johnson	Caribbean Jazz Produc
Black Eyed Peas	Art Blakey
Neil Diamond	AC/DC
Garth Brooks	Marvin Gaye
Daniel Powter	Buddy Guy
John Mayer	Ray Charles
Jaime Cullum	Scooter
Ben Harper	DJ Quicksilver
Alicia Keys	Allison Kraus and Union Station
Kanye West	Glen Campbell
Queen	Tom Petty
Yeah, Yeah, Yeah's	Rolling Stones
Mozart Wolfgang Amadeus	Stevie Ray Vaughn
Bela Bartok	De La Soul
Frederic Chopin	Mighty Mighty BossTones
Leonard Bernstein	White Stripes
Sean Paul	Foo Fighters
Shayne Ward	Mariah Carey
Green Day	Sheryl Crow
James Blunt	Natasha Bedingfield
The Beatles	Collective Soul
Phil Collins	The Eagles
Paul Simon	The Temptations
Men with Hats	Elvis Presley
Gorillaz	Matchbox 20
Goo Goo Dolls	Enrique Iglesias

Appendix D – Concept Paper

The Moody Blues: A Journal of a Musical Journey

Jenelle E. Papin

February 1, 2006

Project Type: Use a Skill/Talent to improve the quality of life for others: A journal to help others use music to better understand themselves.

What Is This Project About? In this project, I will explore many different genres and types of music and their personal effects on my life. I will keep a daily journal and document my experiences with different music in the many situations that I encounter in my day to day activities. I will record my initial thoughts and feelings in a notebook that I will keep with me. I will transcribe my entries onto a personal web blog that I will create. Some of the musical experiences will be random and others will be deliberate. In addition, while using skills from the Lead Skills used in the Torrence Incubation Model, such as Look At It Another Way and Highlight the Essence. I will seek out different genres of music specifically ones that I am not familiar with.

Rationale for Choice: I chose this particular skill to use because music has always had an effect on my thoughts and feelings and I have found this connection extremely helpful when dealing with personal issues. I believe that others can benefit from my personal journey as I make my way through the many genres of music. I believe that music has psychological benefits in order to motivate individuals in a way that helps them succeed in the world today. Therefore, I feel it is important to reflect on music through writing down the thoughts and feelings that arise within me. I am extremely excited to see what feelings and thoughts I am able to unlock as I travel through this project.

What will be the tangible products? Through this project, I will create a bound journal of my experiences and how I have been affected. In addition, I will create a web blog, which will be an electronic version of my journal. I will also create a list of new music albums that I have been introduced to that will be attached to the journal as a reference.

Criteria: I will know when I am successful with this project when I feel that I have met my own personal requirements. I want to have a concrete product that I can take with me and a life lesson learned that cannot be taken away. I would like to experience at least twenty different styles of music and record the triggered thought, moods and feelings. I feel I will be successful when I have recorded entries for thirty days and am able to experience an array of music and reflect on the days to learn from each entry. Some of the benchmarks that I would like to reach are: understanding myself better,

learning what types of music make me motivated, and experiencing different types of music that I wouldn't normally be exposed to.

Who Will Be Involved or Influenced, My Role: I will be the primary individual involved in this project. However, I will be seeking out my friends and colleagues in order to expand my musical horizons. I have already had at least three people recommend music to incorporate into my project. The influence that I expect to have over this project is sole care-taker. I will be finding the music and recording the journal entries on an individual basis. As for my web blog, my influence over individuals will vary as to who reads the entries.

When Will This Project Take Place? This project will take place over the course of the Spring 2006 semester. I will start January 23, 2006 and expect to be completely finished by April 26th, 2006, or the end of the semester. I will write my initial concept paper at the end of January, 2006. The main part of the project when I will be journal writing will take place during the month of February and March, extending a period over thirty days. Around the middle of April, I will be taking the time to write up and bind my project. Some of the phases that I plan to go through on this project are researching and gathering music, transferring written journal over to electronic form, than analyzing my results and writing these findings up.

Where Will This Project Occur? A majority of the project will be completed at Buffalo State College and my home located in North Tonawanda, New York. In addition, some of these experiences will be taking place in my automobile as I travel to and from my job as an office manager at Hagner Industries. Other experiences won't be known due to the spontaneity of moods, feelings, thoughts and situations.

Why Is It Important To Do This? I feel that it is important to complete this project in order to help me better understand my thoughts, feelings and moods. It is important to me to find out why I like certain types of music over others. In addition I believe that others can benefit from my personal journey because they can learn and relate to the experiences that I have undergone. The benefits that this project can have on others are based on an individual basis and what each person takes away from it.

Personal Learning Goals:

- To reach and go beyond my plan of action within the given time frame.
- To use the CPS process to weave my journey into a learning experience.
- To be able to put my creativity into a tangible form that is visible to others.
- To take control of this project and its time line and accomplish all my goals in a timely fashion.
- To better understand myself as a person.

How Do You Plan To Achieve Your Goals and Outcomes? I plan to achieve my goals by keeping a strict time line and with persistent hard work. I will supplement this plan by inserting parts of the CPS process into it. I plan to experience a variety of different music in order to become more well rounded. When dealing with problems that will arise through out this project, I plan on using a convergent tool called Card Sort in order to make tough decisions that I may not to make on my own. I also intend to use other resources such as my friends and colleagues to utilize their opinions to help gain more information.

Evaluation: I plan to evaluate my results by comparing it against my expected goals for this project, which are to better understand myself and to interpret what types of music emote different moods. I plan to get feedback from comments made by visitors to the web blog. I am also plan on receiving feedback from friends and family that have read my journal to get their thoughts and reactions. My self evaluation will be my rereading my journal and reflecting back on the different interactions and moods. I will also perform a PPCo when I have completed the project. In addition, during presentation I would like to receive input as well from others.

Prepare Project Timeline:

- January – Divergence and Convergence on Topic – 5 hours
 - PPCO – 1 hour
 - Completion of Concept Paper – 5 hours
 - Searching for Music – ongoing
- February – Create a list of new music genres to experience – 3 hours
 - Seeking and investigate different types of music – 4 hours
 - Begin web blog – introduction, setting up – 3 hours
 - Listening to music – 30 minutes a day for 30 days
 - Start journal writing – 30 minutes a day for 30 days
- March – Continue journal entries and listening sessions – 1 hour a day for 30 days
 - Start transferring written journals into electronic form – 10 hours
 - Adding and updating web blog – 10 hours
 - Start to type up general pieces of project (ex. Title page). – 4 hours
 - Start getting a rough outline of project write up. – 4 hours
- April – Work on final draft of journal – 15 hours
 - Printing and binding – 3 hours
 - Update web blog – 2 hours
 - Write up and analysis of journal experiences – 6 hours.
 - Presenting to audiences – 5 hours
 - Preparing presentation – 5 hours
 - Creating evaluation form – 1 hour
 - Final loose ends – 2 hours

Identify Pertinent Literature or Resources:

Key words: mood and music, music affecting mood, music, web blogs

Resources:

Meyer, L. (1956). *Emotion and meaning in music*. The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL.

Harcourt, N. (2005). *Music lust: Recommended listening for every mood, moment, and reason*. Sasquatch Books: Alaska.

Rolling Stone Magazine – most recent and archives

Stone, B. (2003). *Blogging: Genius strategies for instant web content*. New Riders Publishing: Berkeley, CA.

MacDonald, M. (2006). *Creating web sites: The missing manual*. O'Reilly Media, Inc: Sebastopol, CA.