



SPRING 2024

K X S C
BIBLE

Contributors

"That One Thing" by Matt Chan	pg 1
"The Ten Commandments of Concert Attendance" by Gia Canto	pg 5
"KXSC's Most Listened To" by Andie Kirby	pg 7
"1984: A Year in Review for Music" by Nick Virnich	pg 9
"The History of KXSC" by Jackson Nehls	pg 11
"More Popular Than Jesus: The Development of Music Fandom" by Cordelia Janow	pg 19
"In Defense of the Sample" by Tahlia Vayser	pg 21
"Gregg Araki on..." by Madeline Frino	pg 23

Zine Staff

Jackson Nehls *General Manager*
Quinn Soltesz *Director of Music Writing*
Lorenzo Hinojosa *Design Editor*
Claire Fogarty *Consulting Editor*
Lydia Ace *Photo Editor*
Audrey Serrano *Social Media*
Michael Lagos *Designer*
Maya Zingaro *Designer*
Hannah Logo *Designer*



1
9
7
5



kxsc staff

Editor's Notes

Music exists in the memory. Lilted by, played out, mixed together, a great song is only as great as its fleeting soundwaves. KXSC Radio lives in those soundwaves, our DJs spinning them and broadcasting them for an audience — wherever they may be. Rarely do we get the opportunity to record something for posterity. We've been around since 1975, and sadly, have very little physical memorabilia to show those 49 years. Being able to read, to touch, to feel the work of the amazing individuals who have come through the station remains crucial to the mission of KXSC. That is what this zine, The KXSC Bible, hopes to accomplish. In reviving our print output, lost to the ether of the pandemic, we're setting ourselves back in stone.

The work contained here is from the very best, our very own. We fielded pitches over several months, working with DJs and designers to create something that speaks to the moment. Whether that moment comes from what KXSC is listening to, or is a rumination on the unknowable nature of desire, the writing speaks to all of it, a direct reflection of what was on the minds of the station this year.

Everything in The KXSC Bible is student-created, and as the editor of the zine I could not be more proud of what my peers came up with for this iteration. Thank you to every one of our DJs, staff, alumni, and benefactors. An extra special thank you goes to Gregg Araki, I still can't believe we got your words in our zine. And finally, thank you to the readers. I hope you enjoy.

Quinn Soltesz

Director of Music Writing

"I am majoring in college radio," is a phrase we use here at KXSC to express our commitment to the station. Though it is technically an extracurricular, sometimes classes feel like a side hustle while radio is the main event.

Our radio programming itself can be isolating, with each DJ holding their own solo time slot, so it is important to manufacture opportunities for collaboration. Working on this zine was like the fantasy football of class projects where we got to pick the writers, collaborators, and topics, and

The best part of college radio is the diverse skill set everybody brings to the table and the space it gives us to create something truly special, like The KXSC Bible.

Claire Fogarty

Director of Content

That 1 Thing

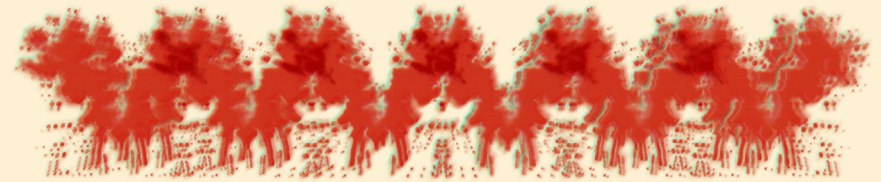
Matt Chan

For most people there exists a laundry list of songs that they've become intimately familiar with through cultural osmosis. Within the crevices of daily existence these songs worm their way into your consciousness. Most young people can't tell you the first time they heard Outkast's "Hey Ya" but they can maybe conjure the faint memory of the song playing on the radio in a long car trip, at the CVS checkout or the busted speakers of a local Starbucks. You don't discover them as much as they discover you. Nostalgia has a way of making the mundane and manufactured seem phantasmagoric, but just accepting that would downplay the mysterious qualities of the best pop songwriting, which appeal to the sublimated and unquantifiable desires of the listener. Maybe the song that best encapsulates this is Amerie's 2005 hit "1 Thing," in which while tumbling through a transcendent funk sample, she bemoans "*this 1 thing that got me tripping*," presumably musing about the thing that keeps her coming back in a relationship. Most listeners won't think too hard about this, and I don't blame them, because the chorus moves with such force that it immediately nullifies the need for interpretation over momentary pleasure. And yet I keep coming back to it. What exactly is the 1 Thing? What is this feeling that can't be verbalized but nonetheless consumes Amerie with such intense anxiety and infatuation.

Music writer Drew Daniel unpacked this best in his blurb for Pitchfork's Top 50 Singles of 2005: "*In projecting a hallucinatory, unspeakable core to sexual desire this tune is very Bush era (adios, abstinence education) and you could call its tightlipped stance a cop out, but it's also a pretty fucking smart move to wrap perfect pop around a question that stays open all night.*" The unanswerable question Amerie posits, one simultaneously chaste and radio-friendly but also deeply obsessive in a way that knowingly gestures towards sexual desire, is not just unique to "1 Thing," but perhaps forms the backbone of modern pop songwriting. In thinking about the allure of the answerable, other songs come to mind. In similar fashion Rihanna and Calvin Harris' "This Is What You Came For" centers on a statement never given a clear answer, as Rihanna hops around in the third person, between someone searching for something unspecified and a woman who turns the listener into their object of desire. It's a maze of questions and gestures that never finds resolution or consummation. In the same way One Direction's "One Thing" (which in essence is a fully gentrified Y/N version of Amerie's song) essentially switches the perspective, from having the listener in the place of obsessive desire to being the object of it, especially in the sense that you don't identify with the singer since there is no single dominant voice.

The three songs outlined here are some of the most popular of the past couple decades and still consistently clog the airwaves, yet on paper

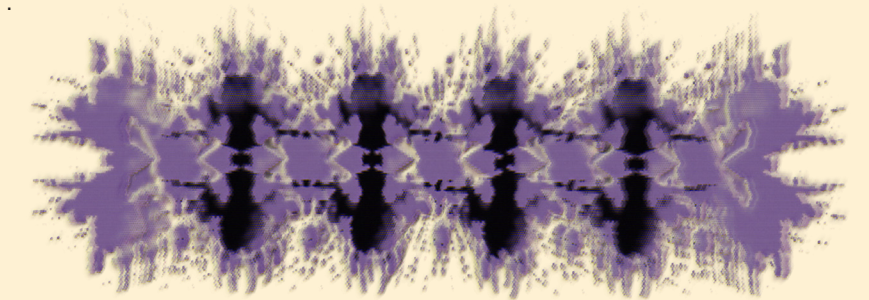
seem maddening rather than pleasurable: featuring an endless procession of teasing, vague emotion and the denial of any such closure. Perhaps the best way to approach the allure of pop songwriting is not by thinking of it literally but through the Marxist concept of the Commodity Fetish. For Marx the value of a commodity came not from the actual human labor that went into its creation but from the social value imparted after it was produced, which can be wholly arbitrary and mysterious. There was a magical, illogical quality to the commodity that could not be explained by the direct context of its creation but only as fetish. In this light most of these pop songs function as fetish objects, ones in which our attraction to them can't be neatly explained by the quality of the songwriting or production but something far less directly accessible. They speak to unconscious and sublimated desires that we ourselves cannot fully articulate.



In this sense I am reminded of the litany of hit pop songs that are made up entirely of non-sequiturs. DNCE (Joe Jonas' forgotten attempt at anonymous artistic credibility) famously attributed the lyrics to "Cake By the Ocean" to Swedish producers Mattman & Robin's erroneous belief that "cake by the ocean" was a real phrase and that it had the same meaning as "sex on the beach." Once again you have the denial of meaning, with sexual desire being sanitized, reducing the song into a family friendly product that could easily end up soundtracking a TV spot for the newest Minions movie. Another song that comes to mind is LFO's "Summer Girls," a white boy pop rap classic which could easily serve as the soundtrack to Chet Hanks' life. Lyrically it features an accumulation of Proustian detail as the singer recounts his summer back home, filling in his milieu with lyrics like "*New Kids On The Block had a bunch of hits. Chinese food makes me sick*" and "*Macaulay Culkin was in Home Alone.*" LFO stated that the nonsensical lyrics came from the fact that they were all placeholders for the melody they became too lazy to fix, but through the half-heartedness one can witness the post-80s spiritual rot and impoverishment of American culture: a woozy frat boy existence earmarked by ephemera in a meaningless world where pop culture has replaced family and religion. All of this aside, again, despite the lack of clear meaning these songs still hold an indeterminable stickiness that listeners can't help but be attracted to.

The cynical answer would be that Pop music, as a mass popular art form, is distinctly engineered to appeal to the lowest common denominator, and because of the nature of censorship it has to elide any explicit sexual meaning and jump through hoops to retain the insinuation of desire but none of the actual thing. But I'm inclined to believe there's something more.

Ironically, the closest artistic parallels to a song like “1 Thing” I can think of are the formally daring, and nominally avant garde works of filmmakers like Claire Denis or Angela Schanelec. Whose films favor elliptical structures, intentionally leaving out scenes and specific shots, to the point where they border on full narrative abstraction. In Denis’ *Beau Travail* (1999) we are never explicitly told or shown Galoup’s intense animosity towards Sentain, but understand it through his gaze. For these filmmakers the insinuation of an image creates a mental picture far more powerful than being confronted with the image itself. All of this speaks to a quality innate to human perception: perhaps the insinuation of meaning is as powerful, if not more than meaning itself. We gravitate towards that “1 Thing” because of all the things it could be: whether lust, longing, tenderness or quite literally anything else, and not because it actually means anything.



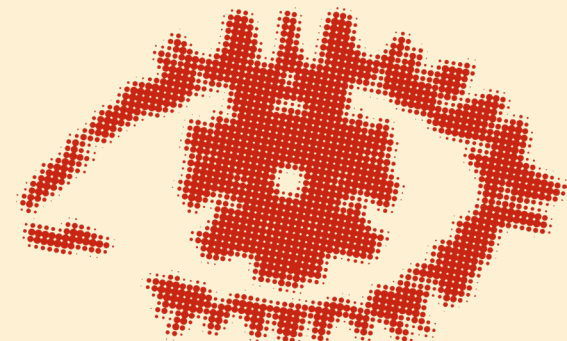
When Amerie cycles through every quality of the 1 thing: “*This 1 thing, your soul made me feelin’ (Yeah). It’s this 1 thing you did, oh-oh-oh-oh-oh. It’s this 1 thing that caught me slippin’ (Oh-oh). It’s this 1 thing, I want to admit it (You did) (Oh, oh). This 1 thing and I was so with it (Yeah).*” I am reminded of the Gen Z concept of “the ick,” which is perhaps the negative inverse of Amerie’s 1 thing, something which doesn’t keep you coming back for more but instantly repels you. Seeing someone have 3-in-1 shampoo, conditioner and body wash in their bathroom, noticing the way they move their feet when they walk, hearing how they pronounce yogurt, or maybe nothing at all except some unquantifiable feeling. Romantic attraction can so easily fall into irrationality, and the strange, fizzy indeterminacy of Pop music perhaps best expresses it.



Somewhere (2010) dir. Sofia Coppola

Maybe the most famous use of “1 Thing” in a film (other than *Hitch* (2005), which it was made for) is in Sofia Coppola’s *Somewhere* (2010). In *Somewhere*, Hollywood superstar burnout Johnny Marco (Stephen Dorff) finds himself in a depressive spiral whilst staying at the Chateau Marmont. Between endless drinks and painkillers he hires pole dancers to come into his hotel room and it is here where, clad in full tennis gear, they perform an elaborate routine to “1 Thing,” with both the song and the performance presented in real time. And yet all Marco can muster after is a half hearted compliment where he gets their names wrong. Throughout the film he engages in these absurd exploits for seemingly no other reason than to fill the void, to seek meaning in a world that promises it but never seems to actually present it.

If we can’t fully communicate or understand our desires why should Pop?



The Ten Commandments of Concert Attendance

By Gianna Canto

Seeing your favorite artist live is an indescribable, transcendental occasion. Concerts are a shared, sacred space. Fans get to experience the music that's informed their life, in its purest form. At times, however, audience members lose sight of these defining qualities. They forget that the event is as communal as it is individual, victims of the main-character epidemic that has only gotten worse since the dawn of social media.

I'm sorry to be the one to break the news, but the concert is not about you. Concerts are a shared experience, allowing the artist to freely share a piece of themselves with the audience through every note. The artist-fan relationship can be transactional by nature, but knowing these ten rules at your next concert can help us prove that they don't have to be.

I THOU SHALT NOT DISRESPECT THE ARTIST

Musicians are people too, and they deserve to be treated as such. If the artist is singing a song about being objectified, that's not the time to scream "You're so hot!" At the end of the day, they don't owe you anything, even if you did pay to see them. Allow them to express their art how they want to, just enjoy all they have to offer.

II RESPECT THY NEIGHBOR

Stan culture has made "getting barricade" the crown jewel of the concert experience. People camp for hours, days even, just to be one person closer to the musician they adore. So if that's your goal, and you arrive late, don't expect people to react kindly when you push them around because "my friend is up there!" If the barricade is truly what you want, you have to be willing to do what it's going to take to get there.

III REMEMBER YOUR PLACE

If you're not going to be dancing or don't care as much about an artist as the people in the front might, don't go up there.

IV THOU SHALT NOT PUSH AND SHOVE

Pressing against the person in front of you to get one inch closer to the stage is not going to change much. It's not worth packing yourselves in like a bunch of sardines when you're just going to end up squished, uncomfortable, and distracted. Mosh if you please, but know your place. I can assure you that the pit at a Big Thiel gig is nothing like the pit you'd expect from Mannequin Pussy.

VI THOU SHALT NOT YELP

Singing along to your favorite songs is part of the fun in live shows, but if the person next to you can't hear a thing over the sound of your Fergie-National-Anthem yelping, it may be time to tone it down a bit.

VII THOU SHALT NOT VIDEO THE WHOLE THING

I am slightly ashamed to admit that my camera roll is clogged with hundreds of concert videos. So I understand wanting to take a video of your favorite song, but taping the entire show is crossing the line. Phones prevent the one-on-one connection that concerts are all about.

VIII THOU SHALT NOT LAUNCH PROJECTILES DURING THE PERFORMANCE

If you want to give the artist a gift and are close enough for it to reach the stage, wait until the show is over to gently toss it past the barricade. This kind of thing varies from artist to artist, as some welcome the offerings, and others don't. However, throwing something on stage for attention alone will get you absolutely nowhere, no matter the situation.

IX THOU SHALT NOT INTERRUPT THE ARTIST

I get that you want to have a conversation with the lead singer. But don't take away from the collective experience just because you want your moment. Wait for a pause or a lull in their mid-set conversation with the audience. And remember to always respect the artist, so if you're making a joke, make sure they're in on it.

X ENJOY YOURSELF!

All jokes aside, concerts are some of the most fun you can have. The important thing to remember is to stay mindful and respectful of the artist, fellow fans, and the experience as a whole. A little human decency can go a long way.

1984

Nick Virnich

Looking back at the evolution of arts and entertainment throughout the 20th century, the 1980s were a particularly interesting and exciting period, especially for music. Since we are now in 2024, it's time to rewind the cassette 40 years back to 1984. Ronald Reagan is president, but Madonna is Queen. MTV and Friday Night Videos play your favorite songs. If you're lucky, you have a cousin over in England who can send you all the newest music before your friends ever hear of them—the Smiths, Frankie Goes to Hollywood, Echo and the Bunnymen.

1984 was a groundbreaking year for music, with MTV continuing to push out eye-catching music videos from artists like Van Halen, the Cars, Prince, and Cyndi Lauper. While 1984 was an important year for both commercial pop and rock music, it was also a monumental year for alternative and underground artists that would prove themselves influential in the following years. This was a time when you could hear the iconic songs of today on the radio: “When Doves Cry,” “What’s Love Got to Do With It,” “Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go,” and “Dance Hall Days.”

By 1984, there were bands sporting long luxurious hair and playing hard rock and heavy metal melodies—Van Halen, Def Leppard, and Twisted Sister told us to JUMP, commanded us to POUR SUGAR, and urged us NOT TO TAKE IT! Van Halen in particular had already been a well established hard rock band since the late 70's; however their last album with lead singer David Lee Roth in 1984 marked a unique transition. Van Halen's final album with Roth 1984 perfectly captures this trend and helped to answer the question of where rock and metal were going. The songs were synth heavy, marking a new sound for fans to like. The synth-driven song “Jump” is their most popular to date, and the music video for the song that aired on MTV is one of their most famous to date.

Another artist worth looking at from 1984 is Prince and his band the Revolution who released their famous album *Purple Rain*. To go along with the album, the movie *Purple Rain* was also released which basically acted as a long music video for the album. As if we needed more proof of the staying power of *Purple Rain*, it was recently announced that it will soon be a Broadway musical.

1984 was particularly a colossal year for the SST label based in Southern California. This label was home to bands like Black Flag, the Minutemen, Husker Du, the Meat Puppet, St. Vitus, and Saccharine Trust. Three years following the release of Black Flag's debut LP *Damaged*, the band decided to follow up their fast-paced, aggressive hardcore sound with a more slowed down and stripped down sound on their 84' record *My War*. While the album retains some of the bands earlier style on the A side, many

fans were not pleased with the sound of *My War* since the B side sounded nothing like the fast tempo hardcore they had helped to popularize with other Southern California hardcore groups. However, *My War* would turn out to be influential for the future sounds of “sludge rock” “stoner rock” and most notably “grunge”. It was this album that helped inspire bands like the Melvins, Mudhoney, Soundgarden and Nirvana.

Across the pond, post-punk and new wave bands continued to develop their sounds. One of the most notable bands to come out of this year was The Smiths. Their music rejected the mainly synth-driven pop and rock that was coming from bands both in Europe and America. Morrissey honestly declared “heaven knows I’m miserable now.” Another band from the post punk scene in England during that time is Echo and the Bunnymen. In ‘84, they released their most popular album *Ocean Rain*. This album also featured their most popular song “The Killing Moon” which has been used in iconic movies such as *Donnie Darko*. Fate is personified as the one who will “wait until you give yourself to him.” This is another example of how 1984 gave us such a mixture of carefree dance hits, with darker lamentations.



Echo & The Bunnymen - *Ocean Rain* (1984)

So maybe you don't have a Walkman, or you're not as familiar with this year when your parents were sporting their “Frankie Say Relax” shirts. But tune in to my next show to take yourself back 40 years to 1984 – not for an Orwellian reminder of these strange days we live in now. But for a totally tubular musical escape. So RELAX. We are going to ROCK YOU LIKE A HURRICANE!

A History of KXSC Radio (1946-2024)

Jackson Nehls, General Manager

In 2024, USC hosts a vibrant college radio scene. With 24 current staff members and over 80 active DJs, KXSC Student Radio is a pillar of the student community at the University of Southern California. The station has re-emerged from the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic, and as the current general manager, I believe it is time for us to reconnect with KXSC's lost history.

Origins - KUSC 1946

KXSC has gone by many names over the years, but the station's lineage can be traced back to 1946 with the founding of KUSC. After a significant donation from oil magnate George Allan Hancock, the university became the first private institution to own and operate its own radio station in the new Hancock Auditorium on campus. The station quickly expanded to serve the greater LA area, and because of its popularity KUSC was forced to set its eyes beyond USC's campus. To reach more listeners, the station took a pivot in 1973 with a new classical-only format.

That Spring, a graduate student named Wally Smith became the station's General Manager. KUSC's website quotes Smith saying "It was very clear to me that what this city needed and what public radio was uniquely suited to do was a really serious full-time classical music radio station". KUSC went all-classical on April 2nd. From that moment, the only music that was played on USC's college airwaves was classical music. This move left USC students without a station that served their interests, which sparked the immediate reaction to form a new, independent station.

The Great Split - KSCR 1975

The new station, with callsign KSCR, was founded by a group of USC undergraduates and led by Annenberg student/first General Manager Bob Moore. KSCR officially began in 1975, though its origins trace back to 1974 in the wake of KUSC's transition to an all-classical format. Moore recounts: *"A group of us got together at a time where KUSC was a full, professional broadcast station. We wanted to be able to do radio our way, so we started the station. And at one point, we knew somebody had to lead, and somehow I got elected to lead the group to battle as we tried to set up a radio station where nothing had existed before"*

Problems arose as Moore and his rag-tag group of co-founders tried to obtain support from the university. The students needed a space to broadcast their radio station from, but the only possible space on campus

was being used by the all-classical KUSC in the Hancock Auditorium. Moore explains "If you couldn't get the studio in Hancock Auditorium... then we were dead in the water and we weren't gonna go any further". Without a studio to record/broadcast shows, there would be no KSCR, so Moore had to secure allies within USC's faculty quickly. This began with Annenberg professors Kenneth Fowler Smith and Joe Saltzman, who served as the first faculty advisors for KSCR. With their guidance and support, the station was able to begin broadcasting in Studio C of the Hancock Auditorium.

KSCR's message was simple: Free Flow Radio. Students could broadcast whatever they pleased as long as it didn't violate FCC guidelines. This format immediately proved to be much more popular amongst students than KUSC's all-classical format. By refusing to limit creativity in their broadcasting, KSCR kept programming fresh and encouraged students of all interests to participate; taking the station from an obscure group of friends to an established community.

Moore claims that despite only expecting 20 people during KSCR's first interest meeting, "Every seat in the classroom was full, people were sitting on the back wall, there were people in the hallway, and I walked in and was just astounded". This interest amongst the students demonstrated the popularity of KSCR's programming format and sparked the beginnings of USC's alternative culture. The creation of an independent space had never been done before at the university, which prompted KSCR's early success as an organization.



KSCR Staff Fall 1975

Despite this initial success, KSCR's reach was fairly limited compared to today. The station had a low-power AM antenna that allowed broadcasts to nearby neighborhoods, but KSCR found most of its support from its student listener base on campus. The station was directly wired into popular hang-out spots on campus like 'The Grill,' a cafeteria located next to KSCR's studio in Hancock Auditorium. The station also had lines running to the men's and women's dorms so that students could catch shows while studying at home. This engineering allowed for KSCR to cultivate an early listener base, and these broadcasts became the station's most effective marketing strategy.

Gum and Duct Tape - 1980-1990

KSCR had made a strong impact in its early years, but Bob Moore and the founding members would eventually graduate and move on from the college radio scene. The station entered a rocky period during the late 70s to mid-80s as interest in KSCR dropped and the station struggled to recruit members at the rate it did during its founding. I took the opportunity to interview Terry Nelson, KSCR's Assistant Programming Director from 1983 to '85. When Terry arrived at USC in '83, the station had been restructuring from the ground up. He claims:

Terry - *There were a bunch of, like, false starts. But when I got there, Kelly Porter was the general manager, and he just started interviewing people for positions, and, you know, I lucked out, and got a shift.*

This new iteration of KSCR was able to band together and find a new home in the newly built Marks Tower. The new staff desperately scrounged up enough money to revamp the new station, which began the rebirth of KSCR. Despite the restructure, the station continued to broadcast on the familiar old 1560AM. Terry goes on to recount how, despite the rebirth, KSCR retained much of its old identity:

Terry - *It was AM only, it was carrier current, you know, you can get it in the dorms, you'd be tuned to 1560. And it was also being piped into the cafeteria. And that was, that was a bit of a challenge. You know, a lot of shouting matches from managers of the cafeteria who didn't want to listen to our weird music.*



KSCR's Studio/Office in Marks Tower, 1983

Despite a brand new studio and office space, KSCR faced many familiar challenges, including with the USC faculty. Without this support from the administration, the station would need a strong community within the student body. While building this community KSCR staff was met with great

difficulty, as Terry goes on to explain the resistance that was faced due to USC's unique environment:

Terry - *We were still getting our feet wet. We were, we were just trying to figure out how this thing works and you know, how we can make it fun. I mean, we met, we got met with a lot of resistance.*

Jackson - *Like what kind of resistance?*

Terry - *There was a very conservative band out on campus back then. You know?*

Jackson - *Totally.*

Terry - *The woman who was running for vice president back then, Geraldine Ferraro, Democrat, was basically chased off campus by the Trojan College Republicans.*

Jackson - *Were they a big presence on campus?*

Terry - *Huge, huge. A lot of the Trojan College Republicans, you know, they lived on The Row*

Jackson - *Yeah, makes sense.*

Terry - *So, yeah, I mean, it was definitely conservative and, you know, it was kind of hard for misfits like me and a bunch of my friends because the radio station was our home, it was like we were accepted, we didn't care how weird you were.*

This posed a significant threat to KSCR's alternative and independent identity. Terry and the rest of KSCR's staff had to keep a delicate balance between the freedom of their programming and the expectations of USC's conservative establishment. This struggle would define KSCR's tumultuous adolescence, but the station was ultimately able to survive and carve out a home for itself amongst these suffocating conditions. Near the end of our interview, Terry sums up the situation faced by KSCR and its community as it rebuilt itself from the ground up:

Terry - *We were holding this shit together by gum and fucking masking tape, we're barely getting this off the ground, you know? We didn't want to rock the boat too much. It was always this lingering fear of being shut down because we were just a little loose with our programming and things that we said.*

Revolutionary Radio - 1990-2010

As KSCR evolved through the 1990s, the station retained its rebellious spirit while continuing to expand. As the station entered this new era, it donned the nickname of “Revolutionary Radio”, scrapped its AM/carrier current broadcasts, and began broadcasting on a new (illegal) FM transmitter. This increasingly rebellious attitude landed the station in various crises with law enforcement and university officials, which once again led KSCR to the brink of a shutdown. Our knowledge of this turbulent period is best preserved by the station’s longest-standing member to date, Barry ‘The Bear’ Levine. In regards to our FM era, he claims that:

What happened was, in the summer of 1998, there used to be a guy here, whose name I won’t mention, who used to do a show over the weekends, and the local Latin community used to listen to it all the time, and he used to bring in a lot of money that way. But he’d always been pushing the directors to boost the signal, boost the signal, and we’re like, no, we can’t boost the signal. Well, somehow he got access to the transmitter, and he boosted the signal until you could get KSCR all the way almost out to LAX. And Mona Cravens, who was the head of the student media board, knew about that, and she came to the station, and she spoke to him and said, you can’t do this. And he was like, no, no, they know about us, they won’t care. Well, it didn’t take very long for them to find us that way... if we had not been broadcasting online, that would have been the end of the station.

Not only was the station nearly shut down, but KSCR’s reputation was brought to the lowest point in its history. If it wasn’t for sheer luck and a bit of technical prowess, then student radio at USC could’ve ended permanently. Luckily, KSCR could continue broadcasting as one of the first internet radio stations in America, which prevented its immediate closure by the university. In addition to internet streaming, the station would eventually re-establish a low-power AM transmission to continue its terrestrial broadcasts. Despite this small victory, KSCR could not seem to catch a break. After its run-in with the FCC, KSCR enjoyed only two years of peace before being threatened with another crisis. The General Manager of the station had stopped their enrollment as a USC student, but attempted to retain their position as the head of KSCR. This escalated into a full-blown power struggle as Barry recounts:

Our faculty advisor, whoever it was, they found out. And I was the program director at the time. I was called, and I went to meet with him because we were working on getting, you know, we were working on fixing the station’s reputation and all that. And, you know, he was there with someone, with I think Peter Kazanjian, who was the student senator at the time and became the GM after me, and they basically told us, we know that this girl is not a student

anymore. And, like, in another week, the university is going to start looking at all the student groups. They’re going to find out that she’s not a student, and they’re going to shut you down because of it. And so, basically, there was really no one else to take the position at that time, so I kind of had to take it.

The impact of Barry Levine on the station’s history cannot be overstated enough. His leadership and impact from the mid-90s until now has saved the station from disaster, and has ensured a seamless transition from the analog era to the digital one. Because of this, USC has remained at the forefront of technical and cultural innovation within the world of college radio. Despite the many challenges still facing the station, Barry’s influence placed KSCR in the strongest position possible going into the new millennium. Under his leadership, KSCR was able to regain the respect of the radio community and establish itself once again as a cultural force in Los Angeles. His continued participation in college radio serves as a living testimony to the rich history of the station and preserves the stories of a generation that served KSCR during one of the most critical periods in its 78-year history.

The KXSC Era - 2010 and Beyond

The modern era of student radio at USC began in 2010 when KSCR rebranded its call sign to KXSC. This rebrand coincided with the station’s move into a new office/studio at the recently constructed Ronald Tutor Campus Center. Along with a brand new office, the station received a new, more powerful AM Transmitter from the university which operated until it was struck by lightning and destroyed in 2019. Despite this setback, college radio has remained proudly broadcasting over the internet, which can be accessed on its website that boasts “our overall approach to radio has remained the same: All-student run music, sports, talk, and news broadcasts that encourage diversity and a student-centric approach.”

As KXSC looked forward to its bright future in a new home, the station won the award for ‘biggest improvement’ at the college radio awards hosted by CMJ in 2010. At the time, the station’s promotions director Michelle Roddy was quoted by Sammi Wong of the Daily Trojan stating “‘We don’t do it for the awards. We do it because we love radio, working with each other and doing quality broadcasting,’ Roddy said. ‘All of these achievements will simply get people to know us more and listen to our radio station’”. This award would kick off a promising new decade for the station.

KXSC emerged as a new force in the USC community with its on-campus presence. Not only did the station receive a new office in the heart of the school’s new campus center, but it also launched a yearly music festival to promote KSCR’s rebrand to KXSC. KSCR Fest was hosted for the first time in 2010 at USC’s Founder’s Park. The station hosted bands Chasing Kings, Princeton, and The Growlers for a beautiful day of celebration. Afterwards, the festival continued annually as KXSC Fest.



The Growlers live at KSCR Fest March 2010 [left]
Flying Lotus live at KXSC Fest April 2011 [right]

After the inaugural KSCR/KXSC Fest in 2010, the station continued to host concerts for many years. By continuing KXSC Fest and other live shows around the USC area, KXSC became a hub for live music in Los Angeles. In subsequent live events, the station managed to book up-and-coming artists such as Flying Lotus and Phoebe Bridgers (the latter of which performed on The Live Show - an NPR Tiny Desk-styled concert series hosted by KXSC). KXSC Fest would eventually wane in popularity as KXSC's limited budget failed to compete with the sub-branch of University Student Government known as Concerts Committee. This committee received a substantially larger budget than KXSC, and had more support from the student government. This conflict would eventually become a source of contention between the students and the faculty advisors of the station.

As KXSC approached the mid to late 2010s, the rift between students and faculty only widened. Students at the station began to adopt increasingly negative attitudes towards incumbent academic advisor [REDACTED], who oversaw much of the planning for KXSC Fest. This is because interest in the festival waned as student attendance dropped, and according to a joint complaint filed by 4 past general managers, the Fest was discontinued in 2017. According to this complaint, [REDACTED] became increasingly controlling over the station as a response to this decision, and excluded the student board from decision-making processes. One incident that came as a result of this occurred in 2019, when "[REDACTED] initiated a conversation with the advisor of Trojan Vision about the potential of Trojan Vision and KXSC co-hosting a revived KXSC Fest entirely without consulting then-GM Eliza Moley, indicating that she still did not understand that students at USC have little to no interest in attending KXSC Fest (preferring the well-funded and booked Springfest) and KXSC Fest distracts from the quality of our programming and functionality as an organization during the Spring semester" (Moley, Willis, Wertman, Schwimer). This breach of power, along with other complaints listed in the same document, led to the removal of [REDACTED] as academic advisor for the station. In response to this removal, [REDACTED] (faculty tech advisor for KXSC) also left the station, submitting a letter of resignation in the summer of 2019. This left KXSC without their academic advisor and their

technical advisor who had served them for 9 years.

As Fall of 2019 approached, KXSC hoped to pursue their newfound freedom from faculty oversight in a new era of independent college radio. Their plans were immediately ruined by the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced KXSC into lockdown in early 2020. The station went entirely remote, with in-person programming canceled indefinitely. No concerts were held, no shows were broadcast, and the station was completely dark. DJs were eventually able to submit shows via the station's MixCloud page, but KXSC's culture faced a massive setback over two years of lockdown.

I joined KXSC as an intern in the Fall of 2021, on the heels of COVID-19 lockdowns. I was there to witness the station's rise as it pieced itself together from the ashes. As KXSC founder Bob Moore said, "the whole student body changes at least by a quarter every year and every four years there's a new group of people there", meaning that over the two years from 2020 to 2022 KXSC lost half of all members who had in-person experience with the organization. Those who came in the wake had to figure out how to run a functioning radio station, in addition to reviving this vibrant community.

Since joining KXSC, I have seen a great transformation in the culture at USC. The station's live events have returned in the form of DIY house shows, some of which have attracted over 400 attendees at recent events. The station's live programming has returned as well, with over 80 DJs on air from 9 am to 1 am every weekday. Since returning from lockdown, KXSC's community has returned with renewed strength.

This is why I am undertaking this project: to give power to the KXSC community. To provide knowledge that was lost over the years, and to inspire the future of the station as it emerges from the pandemic. For the final part of my research, I called upon alumni and former staff of KXSC/KSCR to share the ways this radio community has changed their lives. A heartfelt testimony from Zach Nivens, KXSC Music Supervisor 2012-2014, serves as a reminder of KXSC's immense value:

College radio as a whole attracts outsiders in all their forms; its strength lies in the diversity of those outsiders. I hope the station never turns into a place where one style of music/one style of clothing/one style of meme reigns. The place thrives on the eclecticism and uniqueness of everyone involved. KXSC made me the person I am today, and I would probably be completely lost in the world without it. (Nivens)

As general manager of the station, I feel like it's my responsibility to ensure that KXSC continues not only as a station but as a culture with an independent identity. It's my honor to be able to hold that responsibility at such a crucial time in college radio history.

More Popular Than Jesus: The Development of Music Fandoms

Cordelia Janow

Have you ever seen a dispute on stan Twitter that has bordered on religious fanaticism? The utter worship of musicians long predates the internet. While we can trace music fandom back to the early folk movement, Elvis Presley and Rock & Roll culture is the most identifiable beginning of music fandom. Though the majority of Presley's work and image are stolen goods from the likes of Little Richard, his white skin gained him the privilege to bring hip-shaking rock music into the mainstream. Whether it was his sex appeal, musicality, or dance skills, Elvis became a source of obsession for primarily teenage girls. Soon enough, Elvis fan clubs began to emerge, and the beginning of music fandom was born.

The Beatles were the next musical act to steal the hearts and ears of millions. The Beatles' biggest fanbase was, once again, teenage girls. Fans could pick their favorite member, and stand outside for hours waiting just for a glimpse of them. Self-described as "more popular than Jesus" by Lennon himself, The Beatles' popularity was completely unheard of. Somewhere between the music and the image, fans found themselves captivated by the 4 person dream team that was The Beatles.

Beyond The Beatles came a new age of peace & love, where political views became synonymous with the bands you like. Psychedelic rock acts such as Jefferson Airplane and Jimi Hendrix gained popularity, with one in particular, The Grateful Dead creating a unique fandom. The "deadheads" were allegedly the first fandom to be given a name, thus turning adoration into identity. Deadheads held steadfast to their anti-war, pacifist views, making the community itself go far beyond a love for the band. Fans gathered in parking lots outside of venues to sell fan-made merch, posters, and illicit drugs. What mattered most, however, was seeing the band live. The Grateful Dead imbued their music with jazz traditions and improvisation, making each night a unique show. Whether it was Cornell '77 or Winterland '74, any night of tour could be the best, so the more shows attended, the better. Fans who couldn't attend shows weren't isolated, though, as the band actually encouraged attendees to record their shows. And thus, the bohemian, groupie, hippie culture of The Grateful Dead was born, making it one of the most beloved bands of all time and setting the precedent for identity-based fandom.

As the next wave of music fans grew out of peace, love, and rock & roll, fandoms settled around not just bands, but genres. The 70s and 80s saw a rise in two major genres: Punk and Disco. Punk artists such as The Clash, Sex Pistols, and Dead Kennedys offered a new form of political catharsis: anger. Fans of these bands went all in with the lifestyle and were easily identifiable

with their piercings, leather jackets, and crazy hair. The Disco movement, a time in which black musicians were finally at the forefront of music that they created, was identified with sparkly production and dance crazes that took the world by storm. Donna Summer, Cheryl Lynn, and their contemporaries created some of the most memorable, catchy songs of all time.



Through the 90s and 2000s, fandoms operated fairly consistently, until 2006, when the invention of Twitter changed everything. Twitter was specifically useful for fandom interactions because it was more about communication than photo sharing. You could tweet at your favorite artists, reply to them, and conveniently have chains of discussion. Fan communities began to situate themselves online allowing them to discuss their favorite (and least favorite) musicians anytime, anywhere, with anyone. More importantly, it gave fans access to their favorite artists in a way they never thought possible as they could directly interact with their social media accounts, and sometimes even get a reply. Both musicians and fans benefited from this, as artists could gain popularity and fans started to feel like they really knew their favorite artists.

This parasocial desire paved the way for the robust and intimidating fanbases today such as BTS' Army, Taylor Swift's Swifties, and Beyoncé's Beyhive. Each fanbase platform differently, Swift's fans hunt for hidden easter eggs together, The Army makes fan cams and trade photocards of their favorite members, and the Beyhive, well there's so much to say that an entire TV series, *Swarm*, was created about them. With the rise of parasocial relationships, fans now have a deeper attachment to their favorite artists than ever. Merch collectors, chart-obsessed streamers, and hashtag warriors fight for their favorite artist's place amongst the most famous artists of all time and function as a part of a well-oiled capitalist machine. Though each modern-day fandom has its own specific ways of operating, the wealth of online fandom has created a way for many artists to gain widespread popularity. A love of music ties these fandoms to their predecessors, though those from the past never quite had the access that we do now. Idol worship has made, as Lennon put it, artists more popular than Jesus, because now, our gods can write back.

In Defense of the Sample

Tahlia Vayser

Nothing is original anymore. When it comes to music, it seems that I've heard it all before every song on the radio being some "heavily-inspired-by" version of something I grew up listening to. Now here's the kicker—that's not always a bad thing.

Across Western music's 12 notes, repetition and sonic similarities are mathematically bound to happen. So why does the comment section of every TikTok read like a thinkpiece on the ethics of music sampling?

We know that samples can turn the average verse into a hit—Tracklib reported that 17% of 2022 Billboard hits contained samples, up from 14% the year prior. Most of my TikTok FYP progresses from J.I.D.'s "Surround Sound" (Aretha Franklin - "One Step Ahead") to Doja Cat's "Paint the Town Red" (Dionne Warwick - "Walk on By") to Doechii's "What It Is (Block Boy)" (TLC - "No Scrubs" and Trillville - "Some Cut"). It seems artists can't make a viral hit without relying on nostalgia; why else are the most-streamed tracks off of Nicki Minaj's *Pink Friday 2* "Super Freaky Girl" (Rick James - "Super Freak") and "FTCU" (Wacka Flocka Flame - "Fuck the Club Up")? I agree that this kind of excessive sampling can cheapen the creative value of the record. I firmly believe that record labels will opt for the cash-grab even if it means dealing with the hassle of clearing samples and losing out on more revenue. I empathize with the artist's perspective: if I am unrecouped (i.e. I owe money to the label), why *wouldn't* I make a viral hit that may not move the financial needle via streaming, but can give me enough publicity to get that next brand deal or 1,000 ticket sales?

It's not just rap; discourse continues to surround Beyoncé's head-turning *Renaissance* album nearly two years after its release. The record is, almost by definition, "inspired." She pays homage to the Black and LGBTQ+ legends that paved the way for and continue to uplift ballroom, drag, and queer nightlife—Big Freedia, Donna Summer, and Kevin JZ Prodigy to name a few—in the best way she knows how: music. This isn't a *Renaissance* deep-dive or review (though...10, 10, 10s across the board), but it is a critique of those using the album's frequent samples as a knock against its originality. As I see it, the feeling of being in a 70s nightclub or at an underground drag bar cannot be evoked without the sounds and voices that characterize it... nonetheless without the visual components (where are they, Bey?).

Why do I care? I love samples. One of my favorite things about music discovery is recognizing a vocal line as something from the year my parents were born, heading to WhoSampled.com, and falling in love with an artist I would have otherwise never come across. I spend my work day pouring over licenses, publishing ownership, and all the nitty-gritty of who-sampled-what and who's-getting-paid. To deny sampling is to deny music history—to force

old songs to stay old only deprives us of the joy in music discovery.

That said, I do see the argument that sampling a 50-year-old track doesn't uplift a genre more than creating a new beat in the style of said genre does. And to this, I say (atop my soapbox): we, as young people, need samples to connect with a world that still very much exists, while much of our present media is at risk of disappearing. So much of our music is digital that should we ever reach a point, like the film industry, where mega-corps decide that physical formats aren't profitable enough and should be pulled off of (or never placed on) streaming platforms, we lose that media altogether. The beauty of old music is that it's on a medium that is built to last; it's very hard for the label to take away your CDs and vinyls and cassettes. That isn't necessarily to say that we should all become physical media collectors—who can afford that, anyway—but it does mean that when we fall in love with classic pieces that sound best on aging formats, we can keep these sounds alive. We're not seeing many of these 70s, 80s, and 90s (hell, even 2000s) legends in-person, but we can get a taste of bygone eras by listening to and ultimately repopularizing that music so our generation can have our own sweaty club moments, whether to Donna Summer's "I Feel Love" or Beyoncé's "Summer Renaissance."

To know your favorite artist's favorite artist allows us to preserve the memory and impact of those that laid the way for us. By being better students of culture, we can draw connections between 70s songwriter Labi Siffre and Eminem, or Jamaican DJ Sister Nancy and Jay-Z. I genuinely think I could write about this forever; how sampling is the lifeblood of hip hop (alongside MC'ing, graffiti, and breakdancing), how discourse around sampling and copyright infringement disproportionately targets Black artists (Johnson, *Sampling as Transformation*), how Shazam and WhoSampled.com deserve more attention (Shazam gets a bad rap for no reason), and how deeply I admire those who strive to master the art of the sample (J Dilla's 2006 *Donuts* and its 70+ samples come to mind). Instead, I'll leave you with an anecdote:

A few hours before finishing this piece, I kicked off my radio show T-Funk with Parliament's "P-Funk (Wants To Get Funked Up)," as I do every week. DJ Wolfman Max and DJ Cheez asked me about the funky horn-line they heard at the top of the hour, because they recognized it from Dr. Dre's "The Roach (Chronic Outro)," from 1992 hit *The Chronic*. It was a genuine joy to share with them that not only does that track sample "P-Funk," but that the bulk of the album samples the funk legends' 1975 record (and personal favorite of mine), *Mothership Connection*. This is why I care so much—when we know what inspired the music that inspires us, we, in turn, have the divine pleasure of inspiring music discovery in others.

Gregg Araki on...

Madeline Frino

Below is a selection of quotes from director Gregg Araki's interview with our station Director of Promotion, Madeline Frino.

The Decline of Western Civilization: That movie was very formative for me. When I was doing my undergraduate film studies degree at UC Santa Barbara, somebody had a VHS of it. We used to watch it multiple times a week. We could quote lines from it. When Amy Blue in *The Doom Generation* says "eat my fuck," that's a direct quote from the movie. When *The Doom Generation* restoration played at Sundance last year, Keith Morris from Circle Jerks and Black Flag was actually in the audience and he came up to me in the lobby and we were talking about *The Decline of Western Civilization*. That film was seminal.

Soundtracks: I listen to music all the time. I listen to music when I'm writing my scripts. It's always such an important part of my creative process. I kind of called *The Doom Generation* my industrial, Trent Reznor movie. I was super into that industrial sound back then, so it's kind of angry and very chaotic, you know? Like the opening scene with Jimmy [Duval] in the mosh pit. There's this level of chaos and violence in that movie, and there's chaos and violence in *Nowhere*, too. But by the time *Nowhere* came around, it was a few years later and I was starting to get into the late nineties, early zeros. I got really into electronica, so it was kind of starting to morph. *Nowhere*'s a little more eclectic - it spans a lot of subgenres of post-punk and alternative music.

Slowdive: The crazy thing about Slowdive is that they were so young when they started, you know? They were babies. They were like 17 or 18 years old. It's incredible to me that they could make this sound, the identity of Slowdive, at such a young, young, young age. There's something in it that really resonates with angsty teenagers all over the world. I remember looking around at [a recent Slowdive show] and thinking, "These are my people." Everybody in the crowd is on the same wavelength. Slowdive are my heroes. They've always been my heroes.

Punk ethos: My whole sensibility was formed by punk rock and new wave music. I was an undergraduate in the late 70s, early 80s, and I went to USC grad school from around '82 to '85. It was right in that peak of new wave and punk rock music. To this day, I still listen to music every day from the minute I wake up to the minute I go to bed. My inspiration has always come from that sensibility, which was always DIY. March to your own drummer, do your own thing. It's not really about giant mainstream success. It's not really about

becoming top 40. It's really about expressing yourself and being a little bit against the status quo. You're always kind of the weirdo and the outsider, the queer punk. All of that was so important to me. As a filmmaker, that philosophy and that sensibility was really ingrained in me at a very early age. It's such a big part of my identity.

Romance: [The Teen Apocalypse Trilogy] is just really earnest. And very romantic. That's one of the things I think really sets *Nowhere* and *The Doom Generation* apart from a lot of the other movies of that period, like *Kids* or whatever, which feel really nihilistic. There's heart. There's this center to them that's kind of sweet. Jimmy Duval's character is always searching for his soulmate. One of the things I noticed when we were doing the restoration [of *Nowhere*] is that the relationship between Jimmy's character and Rachel True's character is full of feeling and so much teenage emotion. He's just desperate for her to love him the way that he loves her, and I think that's something that really resonates across all generations.

The music from *Nowhere*: I love every song, all 50-something of them. Especially the ones you can really hear now, because there's a lot of songs in the original movie that are so poorly mixed and just sound terrible. "Avalyn II" [by Slowdive] is a favorite, for sure. When it started to play at the Academy Museum, I literally started to cry. It's mixed now in such a way that's so monumental and magnificent. The sound of that song in the theater literally shakes the seats. It's amazing. I love when the Cocteau Twins song ["Seekers Who Are Lovers"] starts playing in the whole coffee shop. It just takes over and becomes kind of mysterious and ominous. We remixed The Future Sound of London song ["Papua New Guinea"]. It really announces itself now, and it's super fun to hear. And the Seefeel song ["Time To Find Me"] when they're playing kick the can is really cool.

Being young: It's a very romantic period of life. I mean, I'm in my 60s now, so I have a different perspective on it. I can see the forest through the trees a little bit. But that's one of the reasons why it's so fun to make films about young people, and people who are really struggling and really going through it. That's when your life is so big. Every emotion, every time you fall in love, every breakup, everything that happens to you, it becomes amplified. Every decade that passes, you get more and more comfortable, more and more secure. You feel you're more and more yourself. It takes all of this experience and all these years of crazy adventures and all the stuff that happens to you and all the people that you sleep with and all the relationships you have. It's what makes you the person you're going to be.





LOS ANGELES 1560AM KXSC.ORG