

# With vinyl's resurgence, what goes around comes around

**411** By Charles Beacham

No, those aren't giant black CDs. They're called vinyl records.

As digital music has become more prevalent, a counter-movement has taken place. Vinyl records, having long been confined to thrift stores and the houses of grandparents, are being embraced by listeners and musicians. While this latest trend might feel fresh to some youngsters, it's really just a new spin on an old favorite.

With the advent of the CD, previous mediums of audio storage became all but extinct, yet walking into a record store today will make most anyone feel like they're traveling back in time. Where six years ago the walls and shelves of the record store were littered with nothing but those small jewel cases we all love to hate, they are now occupied by another, more majestic form of audio storage: vinyl records.

Interestingly enough, most of the audiophiles frequenting record stores aren't baby boomers pondering on their past. They are millennials — college and high school students raised in the digital age, who all have an mp3 player or smartphone. These adolescents are indulging in an unforgettable experience they have made all their own. To many of these young people, discovering the LP started when they were children and has grown up with them into a life-defining passion.

"I always hear stories of nostalgia from my grandparents, who are always like, 'Man, I remember listening to Pink Floyd for the first time on my big sound system.' And that's cool," said Chris Andreasen, a native of Provo and avid fan of vinyl. "I got into vinyl by scrounging through my grandpa's records."

Having worked as an assistant manager at the

recently relocated Graywhale Entertainment in Orem, Andreasen has a unique perspective on the kind of people that buy vinyl records here in Utah Valley. While there are quite a few older people that purchase LPs from the store, there's also a big movement in the younger "hipster" community to purchase vinyl records. But they're not the only ones.

"It's really divided, the kind of people that come in," Andreasen said. "You get a lot of almost metal head-looking kids. It's a really diverse thing. That's a cool thing about these people. They'll always come in and buy diverse records. It seems like people who sit down and listen to records have a better sense of appreciation."

Being a millennial himself, Andreasen also has an appreciation for benefits of digital music, stating that mp3s are convenient and especially useful for those long cross country car rides. But even with that understanding, in his mind nothing beats the experience of the vinyl.

"With the digital medium, it's not so much an experience thing as it is a convenience thing," he noted. "The only downside to the vinyl record is you have to flip it, but that's also a reassuring thing because you get through the first side and then you're like, 'Wow that was cool. Oh wait. There's another side! This is amazing!'"

Corey Fox, owner of Velour Live Music Gallery, had his own spin on the LP. Growing up in a home where vinyl records were a staple on the musical menu helped Fox gain an appreciation for not only the unique sound and experience of the vinyl, but also the physical manifestation of the music.

"Everyone knows that vinyl sounds better, but to me the visual that comes with the music influences how you think about the music; I

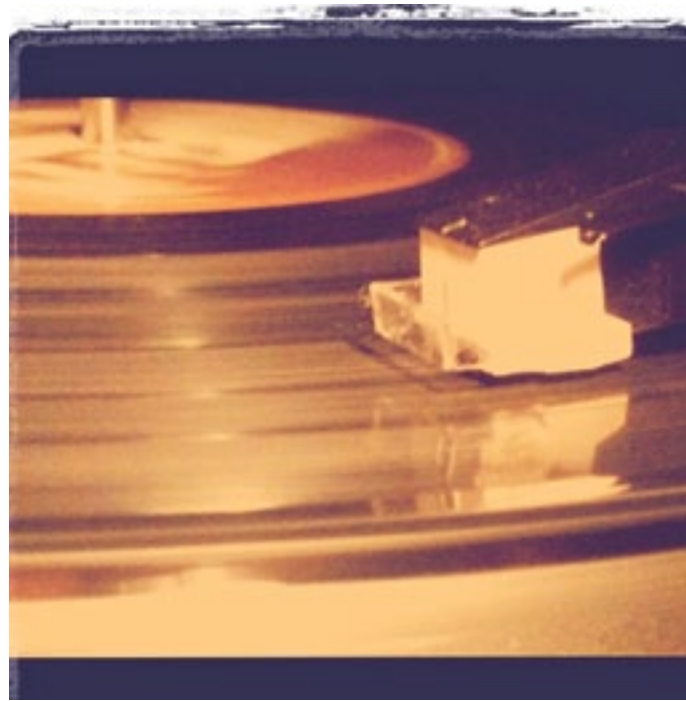


Photo by Charles Beacham

*Vinyls are popular once again. Surprisingly, the millennial children are the biggest fans.*

put those two together," Fox explained. "To me artwork is such a big part of the music. Even in CD form. But CDs are small, you know? I grew up with vinyl in my house. I would take my brother's KISS records and draw them like they were superheroes. I love looking through artwork, especially older vinyl, that had crazy artwork with pop-ups."

Fox, who comes from a professional history in band management, has been a part of the local music scene for the better part of 20 years. His venue, Velour, is the hot spot for up and coming musicians in Utah Valley and has already been the launch pad for acts such as Joshua James, Fictionist and most notably Neon Trees. It's safe to say Fox has a good ear for musical talent, but the guy doesn't even own an iPod.

"I don't even use an iPod," he said. "I have a cardboard box full of CDs on my (passenger) seat. I like to manually put my music on something, in some-thing — I have to have that

tactile connection with my music too. You just don't get that from an iPod or media player."

In many ways, digital music players have shifted the record industry's focus away from albums to individual songs. Fox said this approach takes away from the creative potential of the artists who make the music.

"I'm just such a believer in a full album concept," he remarked. "Most bands have a purpose to what they're doing. I mean, you're supposed to put [the album] in and listen from beginning to end and it takes you on a journey. Now, it's an industry of singles. I listen to music to get an emotional connection, and I don't think you get that from the 'hot single.' It's fun to dance to, it's fun to drive to and if that's all you care about music for, that's one thing. But there's a lot of people in the music industry and fans of music that want more than that from their music."

To Fox and many others, the vinyl record persuades

the listener to listen deeper and find meaning in the music and the artwork, adding value to the musical experience.

Locally, more and more bands are releasing their albums on vinyl. Julia Richards, a musician and student at BYU, said vinyl's permanency plays a big part in this local trend.

"There's something to having your album in vinyl; it's almost like a rite of passage," she said. "It's like going back to the organic roots of where original rock and roll came from."

Eyes Lips Eyes, a band formed in Provo and now based in California, released its album "Red Blue" strictly on vinyl in September. (Though their record comes with a digital album download.) Spencer Peterson, the band's guitarist, shared the band's thought process behind releasing an album strictly to vinyl.

"My angle is that it forces someone to sit down and listen rather than have a soundtrack going on while they're doing other stuff," Peterson said. "It creates more value."

The guys of Eyes Lips Eyes spared nothing when it came to creating an experience for their fans. Rather than hiring someone to create artwork for them, they hand painted each record jacket. What's more, they numbered and signed them too.

According to Peterson, the local vinyl revival is a microcosm of trends happening nationwide.

"I thought it was going to be just a fad, but you watch a late night show, like Letterman or whatever, and all the bands that go on there have a vinyl LP that they show rather than a CD, so it's even going to the mass level," he said.

Whether the vinyl has staying power is still unsure, but this new generation of music enthusiasts is proving that what goes around comes back around.