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QUARANTINE: A MUSICAL?

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Maya Angelou once said, “Music was my refuge. I could crawl into the space between the notes and curl my back to loneliness.” For the past 5 months, this has been a quote I live by, as music has been a tool for me to combat my loneliness and sadness too. Does that make me anywhere near as cool as Maya Angelou? No. But it does suggest that as people, music can usually ease emotional distress in our lives. I've found that life as a student in quarantine is exceptionally hard. Whether it's trying to balance out school and work or being stuck at home, there's so much stress that comes with being someone who is a student during these times. We've dealt with uncertainty with school activities, sports, and applying to college. However a common ground I found when talking to my peers is that music is one of the only things that we can lean on.

It's no surprise that the past few months have been an horrific roller coaster for most of us. Whether it's Killer Bees, COVID-19, or like, the constant murder of innocent Black people at the hands of police, it seems that the Universe is extremely tired of dealing with us. However, every week there's a new release to help keep the woes at bay. Still got tear gas in your eyes from yesterday's protests? Heal the pain with BTS. Business shut down due to the pandemic? Drown out the frustration with Lil Baby.

In all seriousness, the constant stream of music has served as mental aid to many struggling during these trying times. A study of 7000 surgery patients led by Brunel University in the UK found that when played music after their operations, patients experienced less stress and anxiety, ultimately not needing as much pain medication. So not only is music a remedy for our mental distress, but it heals our bodies. But why? Does this mean listening to *HOME*COMING on repeat will cure your depression? No. But here's what one student has to say about it: “It helps to get out of my own head for a few minutes to pretend like we're not living the sad life that we're living. I listen to Pop, Hip Hop, and Rap. With Rap I can get frustration out and the lyrics make me emotional, with Pop the melodies make me happy because I'm still alive.” Another student adds, “I feel excited when artists I like release music, because it's something I've never heard before. My favorite artists are Greenday and Panic At the Disco.”

Overall, many feel that music has had their back during quarantine, as a way to combat boredom and loneliness. It's not fair that students going into their senior year, college, and anything else have had to deal with this trauma at such a young age, however it's something we must deal with. It is proven that making music, listening to music, dancing to music, and doing whatever makes you happy will reduce your stress during this time, and I think we should honor that. So go listen to your favorite album or try something new. It may not be a solution to living in a country that hosts armed protests against face masks, but it definitely helps soothe the aggravation. Maybe we should think of ourselves as the main cast of one big quarantine musical. I doubt that makes anyone feel better, but it's worth a shot.

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