
Classic Rock and Corporate America

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The culminating events of turning 13 were making out with four girls at Arielle De Pinto's birthday party and discovering my dad's vinyl record collection. While I've lost contact with the four ladies at that birthday party, I still play my father's vinyl records.

Amidst his collection were a dozen or so albums which have become the definitive records of classic rock. Namely, Zeppelins I-IV, Floyd's Dark Side, the Beatles' Sgt. Pepper's, the Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust, Highway 61 Revisited, and AC/DC's Back in Black. As I grew older I digressed from classic rock and shifted to a variety of genres to widen my musical palette.

Several years of working at a record store that was more elitist than the Jack Black/John Cusack tandem in High Fidelity, led me towards a bitter hatred toward classic rock as well as classic rock fans. Memories of subpar hygiene, T-shirts of Rush, and fuck-face comments such as "Dude! Rush is the best band ever!" will forever be embedded in my "placid" mind. But just when I thought I had detoxed from despising classic rock, the artists, as well as the industry, have once again fucked me over for ever again being able to truly enjoy anything labeled "classic rock."

The once credible AC/DC have become the latest classic rock shit-puppets to pact with a retail giant, regrettably becoming another shameful act in Wal-Mart's shit-show of tasteless commerce. Unsurprisingly, Angus Young and co. are following the pathetic trend of washed up "artists" trying to make another dollar via corporate America. Country dickhead Garth Brooks, the paralyzingly lame Eagles, and the greatest power ballad band of the '80s, Journey, have all gone exclusive with the power retailer.

Let's face the facts: fewer outlets means lower costs, ergo, more profit for the record label as well as the supplier. Additionally, by possessing exclusive distribution rights, Wal-Mart could essentially charge whatever they deem fair to the consumer. Sadly, the truth of the matter is that this trend will continue until media reinvents itself to coincide with the digital age. What is the most upsetting about exclusive distribution and the music industry is that bands such as AC/DC, who have habitually prided themselves on being about "the music" have disrupted those claims by partnering with Wal-Mart, a company whose yearly profits are in the billions, yet refuses to provide medical insurance or allow the formation of unions.

In an age where artistic merit is more often than not compromised for sales, endorsements, publicity, and fame, we as consumers are standing at a crossroads at which our purchasing patterns, decisions, and behaviours could very well dictate the shape and direction of the music industry to come. Record companies are losing profits, and are shitting digital bricks due to peer-to-peer file sharing, pirating, and lack of consumer interest. Consequently, we are now seeing the death of the record store in which both independent and franchised music retailers are closing down due to big box and internet retailers such as BestBuy, Future Shop, iTunes, Amazon, and the aforementioned Wal-Mart.

These once relevant senior citizens articulate how depressing the music industry has become. Why not go against the grain? Why not offer your CD as a pay-what-you-can? Why not cut out corporate America? AC/DC had the chance to do something monumental, much like Radiohead did last year. Instead, they copped out and have become another piss stain in the carpet which we call the music industry. In this music snob's opinion, AD/DC can take their recycled power chords, tired-distraught vocals, and big wrinkled balls back to the land down under.