

Where's Lester?

By Donnie Killorn, Contributor

People think rock and roll is dead. Not all of you. Some of you think it's humming along nicely. Others have managed to get cynical, read it the last rites and have dug a quaint little hole for the Revolution.

Eff that.

Lesson # One: Art is eternal.

Like you didn't know. As long as there's still a line-up around the block to take a look at the ceiling of a church in Rome, then there's always going to be a backbeat. Some may mutter that comparing the Sistine Chapel to the Rolling Stones of 1970, the simplest definition of rock and roll I can offer, is a kin to relieving myself on the cornerstone of the local parish, blasphemy.

A great jazz musician once told Lester Bangs that when the jam was truly on, the musicians weren't creating the music, it was simply flowing through them. True music is the sound of the soul, a pure expression of humankind, and all our spiritual excess.

Try and tell me rock and roll isn't art.

There's art in the notes on the page and the chicks in the front. Every word to Jumping Jack Flash is as much art as the two guys throwing punches in the back row, reeking of filterless Marlboros and malt liquor, simultaneously fuelled by and oblivious to what's happening on the stage a few hundred feet away. The spirit of rock and roll lives on. It's locked in the vinyl grooves of the classics, and continues to grow with each new artist that succeeds in spite of the industry, getting their message to those of us desperate to listen.

So don't tell me rock and roll is dead.

You may or may not know that rock music has almost saved the world once. Please suffer through the irony with me. The same machine that has pushed rock music to the very brink of insignificance can also

claim responsibility for helping us all forget why it was relevant in the first place.

Peace and love in a haze of drug use and meaningless experimentation.

Eff that.

Lesson # Two: It's coming back around again.

Vietnam/Iraq, Nixon/Bush: they didn't belong in Vietnam, and they certainly don't belong in Iraq. Nixon bumbled in the public but by all accounts had some savvy. Bush has been outed as a complete imbecile by one of his closest advisors who could take no more of it.

It's worse this time. You don't think this matters to you? Who do you think owns 70% of the world's measurable wealth. It isn't me.

The Earth is becoming more global by the day. We've got no Great Wars to fight, but AIDS in Africa, that's on us, epidemic in the far East, that's on us, powerful nations imposing their will on the rest of the world, you better believe that's on us, and the quicker we realize the better.

Abuse of power is nothing new among our kind. They taught me in science class that the big apes used to demand bananas from the smaller ones. They also taught that one action has a measurable effect on everything surrounding that action. It's ecology, Marvin Gaye knew it, and it's time we learn.

Someone's got to stop it. It's a job bigger than any democrat. You have no idea what kind of irreversible damage Bush has done. It's not only Iraq, the environment and international relations throughout the world are crumbling. It's time for a Revolution.

They tell you Woodstock didn't matter. They threw its name on two rock festivals just to ensure that we were totally jaded on the facts. The first Woodstock came about in a matter of days. Three hundred thousand people arrived, virtually out of nowhere. When the organizers were asked what they thought of the gate crashing,

they merely smiled and announced that it was all happening as it was supposed to. This wasn't about money, it was about Revolution, the backdrop: rock and roll.

When was the last time you saw 300,000 young people at something that wasn't washed out in a sea of corporate logos? When was the last time you saw that many people support an anti-establishment voice? Is it possible that our governments are just that good, guiding us deftly and with the utmost savvy through even the toughest of times?

Eff that.

Lesson #3: The Truth will set you free.

If you're old enough to pay taxes then you're old enough to protest. The pages of campus newspapers across the country have seen much debate on student apathy. Of course students are apathetic, we're at school. We want to get the hell out of there, get drunk, get high, get laid, and somehow return to coherence by Monday morning.

We're led to rally against student debt. That's not a cause. Knowledge is the most valuable currency we have as a species. Sure it would be nice if it was a few dollars cheaper, but we'd just blow the extra cash on 12 packs, dime bags and double cheeseburgers.

The problem isn't paying for it, the problem is taking our education, crawling in a hole and pretending

the world isn't happening around us.

There is no area of the Earth as privileged as the Western hemisphere's Northeast. That privilege results in the bullshit you've been fed: get educated, get a job, get a wife, get a mortgage and an RRSP. That's cowardly, it's the easy way out. You have to cut through that and decide your own direction, find your own Truth.

There's bravery in protest, there's a bravery in rock and roll. There's a war going on everyday, and it will take knowledge and great acts of bravery for good to prevail over the evils of greed and ignorance. I don't want to march a placard to the office of some provincial minister who will feed me the same line they've given the last five times a visit was paid to them. This is bigger than that. I'm not after lip service, I'm in to Revolution.

It's the music that is eternal. The same songs of protest still apply. The same messages ring, because it's Truth. Much of today's music, like today's government, ring with messages designed to appease and subdue.

Have integrity in your music, and integrity in yourself. Not the kind of integrity you get from putting on a suit, the kind that comes from doing something you know is right.

Demand Truth, accept nothing less, and if necessary revolt. Eff 'em all.

It's up to us, there's no other way.

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