

MTV and the Influences of Television

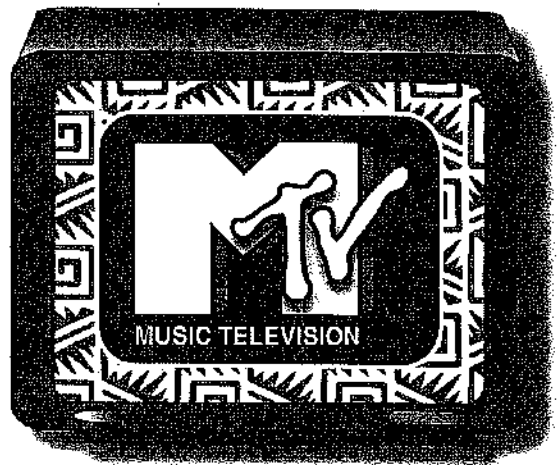
With the increase of and improvement in the technology being developed in the world, it was a natural course of events for music to find its way into television. Indeed, from the very beginning of television, music has played an important role. Music has always been very important as a background for movies, television shows, or commercials. Also with the increased accessibility to public broadcast stations, music of both classical and popular types has been more available for public enjoyment.

Television, in addition to providing an increased audience for popular music, has also played an important role in its development. The "Steve Allen Show" vaulted Elvis Presley and the new style of rock-and-roll to national prominence. The Beatles appeared on the "Ed Sullivan Show" when they first came to America. These and other appearances on television launched rock singers' careers and catapulted their music to the top of the charts.

A number of shows have been presented on television that have helped to further the care and attention given to the popular music idiom. These can be seen in special broadcasts of live concerts and seasonal broadcasts such as holiday specials, and so forth. In addition to special programs, many people, both performers (Dolly Parton, Sonny and Cher) and non-performers (Ed Sullivan), have hosted weekly variety shows that featured artists of different musical genres.

It was not until the 1980s and the boom of the cable television industry, however, that the idea was developed of having a single television network devoted to the popular music idiom. Twenty-four hours a day, MTV (Music Television Video) showcased the new music videos that came out and presented programs that discussed new styles and directions that popular music was taking. Since MTV's inception, there have been other networks that have developed a focus on music videos and the music industry. This did more than perhaps anything else to further the cause of popular music in the 1980s and 90s. Today, music videos are also available on-demand on the Internet.

Closely associated with MTV and other music networks was the development and production of music videos. In these videos, the performers act out the words and meaning of the songs. However, one of the problems that has arisen in this practice is the aspect of sensationalism that is inherent to any production form such as this. In many respects, a number of today's performers push the viewer/listener to, and in some cases past, the limits of what is acceptable in society. Indeed, there are increasingly more violent crimes being committed in society today that may be directly linked to the influence of music videos on young viewers. Many of the videos glorify lust and crimes of violence and package them neatly so as to be appealing to the viewers. Nevertheless, music videos have greatly helped in the development and refinement of popular music as both an aural and visual art form.



With the help of television, access to many different forms of music has increased greatly. However, there is also the concern that some music videos are not suitable for children to watch.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Questions for Consideration

1. What role has music played in movies, television shows, and commercials?

2. What type of stations feature classical and popular music for public enjoyment?

3. Elvis Presley became famous after an appearance on what television show?

4. The "Ed Sullivan Show" featured what British group when they first came to America?

5. What type of television shows featured performers from different musical genres?

6. What was the first network to schedule 24 hours a day of music videos and music-related programming?

7. What is a music video?

8. Why have problems arisen with music videos?

9. What positive influence did MTV have on popular music?

10. Why do you think that music videos have become so popular?

