

THE VINYL REVIVAL:

ARE VINYL RECORDS POISED TO ONCE MORE ROCK THE MUSIC INDUSTRY?

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PURPOSE

- Introduce the culture of vinyl.
- Why buying vinyl is trendy again.
- Why people find so much value in purchasing vinyl.
- To make you consider starting your own collection.

SCOPE

- The history of the rise, fall, and revival of vinyl.
- The reasons why people have once more returned to purchasing vinyl.
- The limitations of production.
- Conjectures about the future of the industry.

INTRODUCTION:

WHAT ARE VINYL RECORDS?

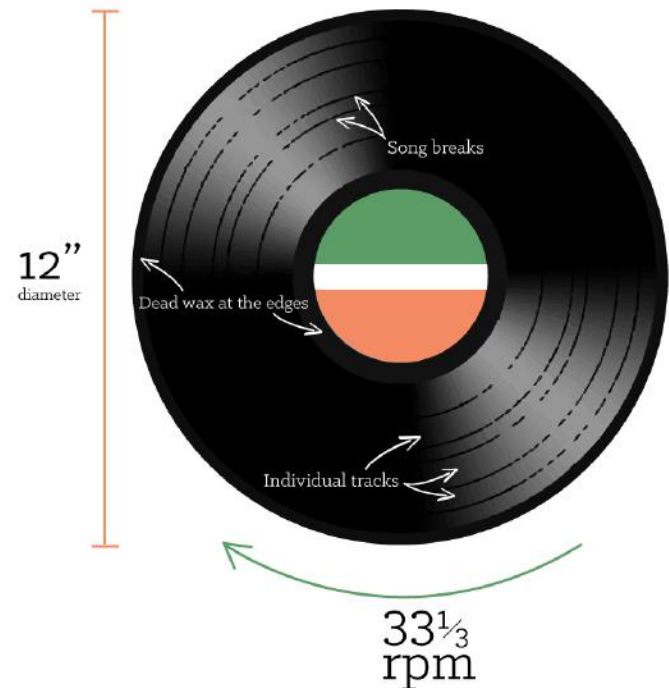


U-Turn Audio. "Turntables." Last modified 2013. Accessed April 7, 2015.
<http://turnaudio.com/turntables/>

WHAT ARE VINYL RECORDS?

- Polyvinyl chloride, a durable plastic.
- Grooves are made by the translation of electrical impulses to an etching device.
- Played on turntables.

The Anatomy of an LP



One Twenty Five DB. "A Deliberate Combination: Coffee, Records & the Spirit of Rock and Roll. Updated 2014. Accessed April 7, 2015.
<http://www.onetwentyfivedb.com/portfolio/a-deliberate-combination-coffee-records-the-spirit-of-rock-and-roll/>

A BRIEF HISTORY LESSON



Pullman Photography. "Gramophone." Accessed April 7, 2015.
<http://www.pullmanphotography.co.uk/prints/stilllife/gramophone.html>

THE RISE OF VINYL RECORDS

- Emile Berliner created the first gramophone in the late 1800's.
- First to use etched disks.
- Remained true to Berliner's original concept through most of the 20th Century.



Thomas Edison's phonograph

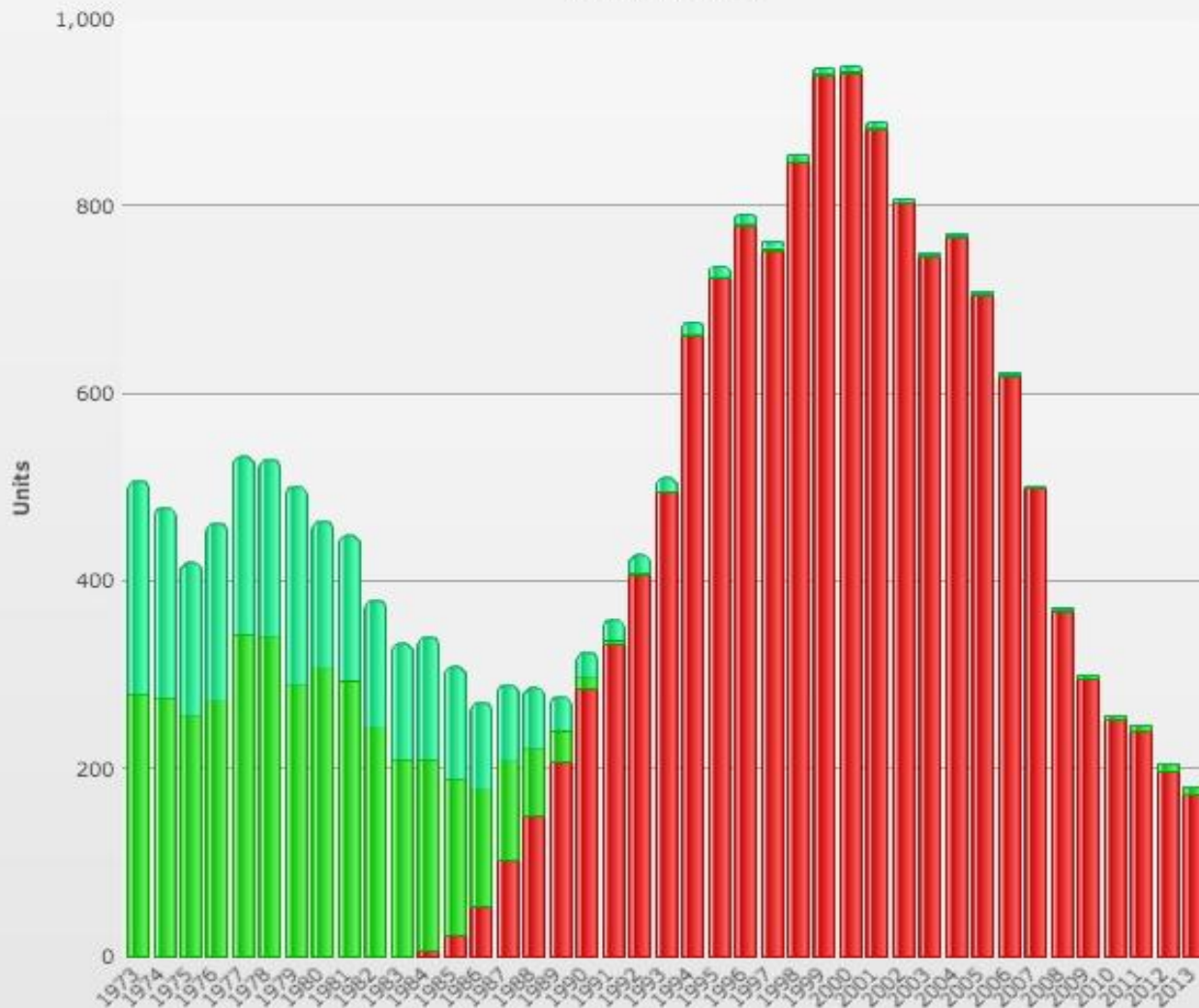
Emile Berliner's gramophone

The Long Dog. "Interacting with the Known and Unknown – Blogs, Forums and Q&As." Updated April 29, 2009. Accessed April 7, 2015. <http://www.thelongdog.co.uk/?m=200904>

THE FALL OF VINYL RECORDS

- CDs killed vinyl in the late 1980's.
- CD's were marketed as perfect, permanent, and compact.
- Vinyl records are the opposite and highly imperfect..

In Millions of Units
(1973 to 2013)

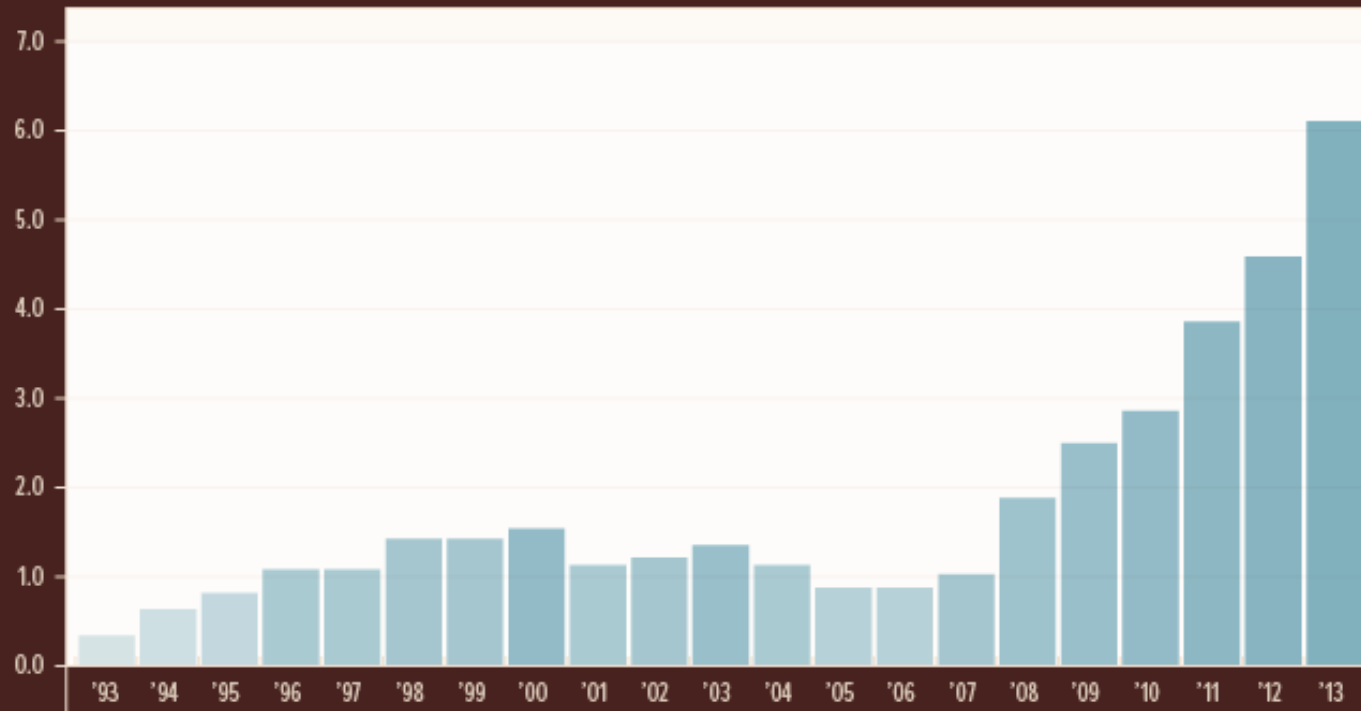


Hogan, Marc. "Did Vinyl Really Die in the '90s? Well, Sort Of..." *Spin*, May 16, 2014. Accessed March 20, 2015. <http://www.spin.com/articles/did-vinyl-really-die-in-the-90s-death-resurgence-sales/>

THE REVIVAL OF VINYL RECORDS

- Confusing given the widespread popularization of digital audio.
- In 2008, vinyl sales were double what they were in 2007.
- 1 million units sold in 2007.
- 6.1 million units sold in 2013.

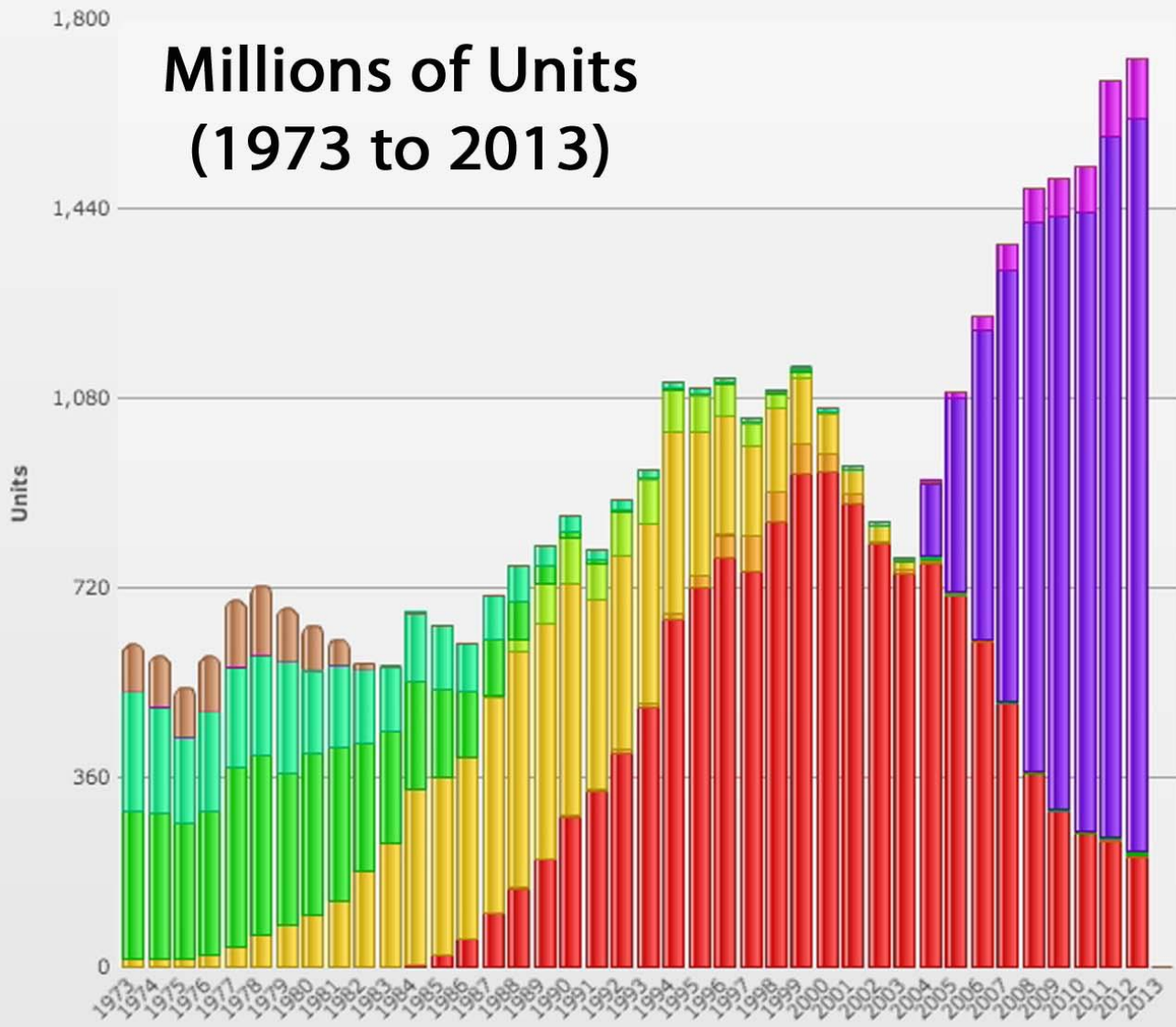
VINYL ALBUM SALES IN MILLIONS SINCE 1993



Oliphint, Joel. "Wax and Wane: The Tough Realities Behind Vinyl's Comeback." *Pitchfork Media*, July 28, 2014. Accessed February 10, 2015.

<http://pitchfork.com/features/articles/9467-wax-and-wane-the-tough-realities-behind-vinyls-comeback/>

Millions of Units (1973 to 2013)



Swensson, Andrea. "40 Years of Album Sales Data in Two Handy Charts." *The Current*, February 20, 2014. Accessed March 20, 2015. <http://blog.thecurrent.org/2014/02/40-years-of-album-sales-data-in-one-handy-chart/>

WHY ARE PEOPLE BUYING VINYL RECORDS AGAIN?



Atkinson, John. "Everyone was Buying Vinyl." *Stereophile*, April 5, 2011. Accessed April 7, 2015.
<http://www.stereophile.com/content/everyone-was-buying-vinyl>

GIMMICKS AND SPECIAL OFFERS

- Increasingly intricate orders.
- Limited editions and special prints are becoming more widespread.
- Fans want an aesthetic, physical testament to their fandom
- Suggests that people have a fascination with individualism.



Lantinen, Christopher. "4th Pressing: Dads – Pretty Good." *Modern Vinyl*, June 24, 2014. Accessed April 7, 2015. <http://modern-vinyl.com/2014/06/24/4th-pressing-dads-pretty-good/>

Pixgood. "Dads American Radass." Accessed April 7, 2015. <http://pixgood.com/dads-american-radass.html>



RECORD STORE DAY AND SOCIAL CULTURE

- Digital downloads eliminated the socialization in record stores.
- First Record Store Day (RSD) in April 2008.
- RSD focuses the entire industry on vinyl records for one whole day.
- Stores have special deals, releases, and performances to garner media attention.



White, Caitlin. "Dave Grohl is This Year's Record Store Day Ambassador." *Stereogum*, February 11, 2015. Accessed April 7, 2015. <http://www.stereogum.com/1737250/dave-grohl-is-this-years-record-store-day-ambassador/news/>

RECORD STORE DAY AND SOCIAL CULTURE

- 50% increase in sales on RSD between 2013 and 2014.
- Due to more than just media attention.



White, Caitlin. "Dave Grohl is This Year's Record Store Day Ambassador." *Stereogum*, February 11, 2015. Accessed April 7, 2015. <http://www.stereogum.com/1737250/dave-grohl-is-this-years-record-store-day-ambassador/news/>

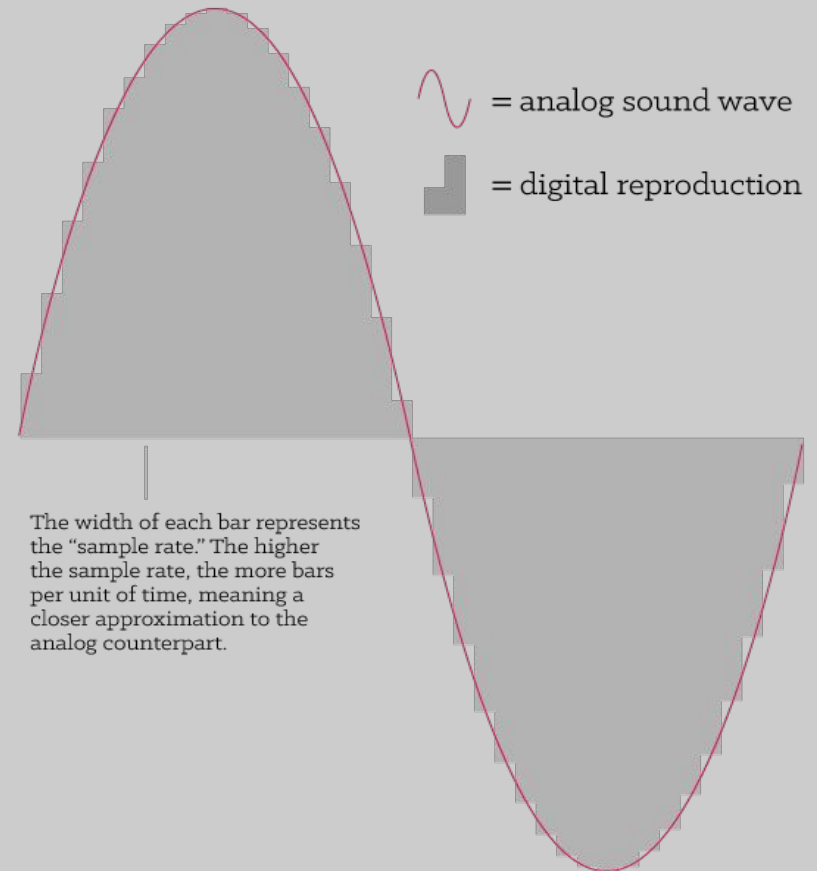
- "There's a social aspect of listening to records. You share musical interests and let others know the reasons why certain things are meaningful to you and others. Listening to records puts music into the foreground because its physical nature requires intention and attention."
 - – René de Guzman, Vinyl Exhibit Curator at Museum of California

RITUAL OF PUTTING NEEDLE TO GROOVE

- Requires focus and attention.
- Process can be enjoyed in and of itself.
- Screens feel vacuous compared to the tangibility of vinyl.
- Digital media has prevented music collections that feel as definitive and personal as analog collections.
- A vinyl record is a work of art. It is a trophy for fans that declares their devotion and fandom.

SOUND QUALITY

- Many people are convinced that vinyl sounds better than digital
- For convenience and space efficiency, mp3s initially had a low sampling rate.
- Higher sampling rates are now the standard.
- Sampling rates so high that the average human ear cannot tell a difference.

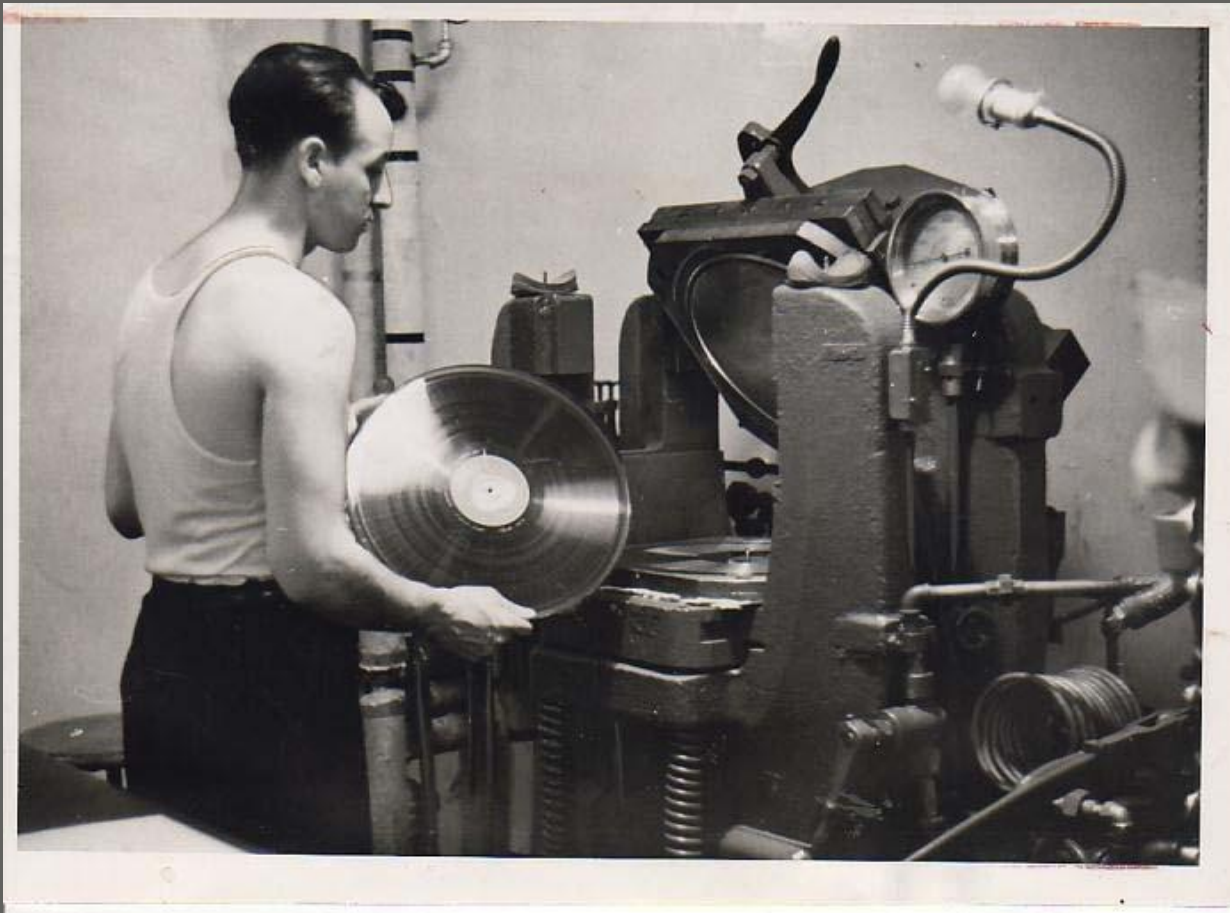


One Twenty Five DB. "A Deliberate Combination: Coffee, Records & the Spirit of Rock and Roll. Updated 2014. Accessed April 7, 2015. <http://www.onetwentyfivedb.com/portfolio/a-deliberate-combination-coffee-records-the-spirit-of-rock-and-roll/>

SOUND QUALITY

- Hearing is highly subjective.
- Many individuals simply prefer the tone of vinyl records.
- Familiar and comforting static and warmth associated with vinyl.
- These are actually blatant distortions of the music.
- Totally valid to prefer these distortions if they are familiar or enjoyable to you.

CONCLUSIONS



Discomix. "Vinyl Press in Madrid Before the Civil War." Accessed April 7, 2015. <http://cgb-1.de/system-cgi/blog/index.php?itemid=673>

LIMITATIONS

- There are only about 20 pressing plants in the United States.
- Many went out of business, few others have opened.
- Sudden surge in demand and yearly spike in orders for RSD have strained pressing plants.
- Presses are complex and there is no spare time to train new operators.
- Vinyl production is imperfect and prone to error, more an art than a science.

FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

- Vinyl will continue regaining popularity and eventually the pressing plants will catch up with demand.
- May soon reach the ceiling on vinyl production and the revival will stagnate, leaving vinyl to constitute a meager 2% of sales.
- People may begin dualistically listening to music, using digital services for on-the-go convenience, and using vinyl records for a more in depth home listening experience.

CONCLUSION

- Vinyl is a tenacious format that will likely never fully disappear.
- But it will likely never again dominate the market.
- Whether vinyl is better than digital services or CDs is a very personal question.
- I hope that you all will feel informed enough to decide whether you would like to start a vinyl collection of your own.

HEAR FOR YOURSELF

If you think you might like to start your own collection, go to a record store and see if they have a demo turntable. See how it feels to manually place the record on the table and place the needle in the groove, you might just fall in love like so many have before.