

# Music Taste Across Time

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## Abstract

This report analyses the longevity and musical progression of some of the most famous bands over time, focussing specifically on a comparison of Metallica and Coldplay. While Coldplay is a relatively young band compared to Metallica, both have been successful and very popular as one can see in the graphs of this report.

*Keywords:* Spotify, Coldplay, Metallica

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## 1. Introduction

This report analyses the longevity and musical progression of some of the most famous bands over time. It looks into different data sets provided on popularity and other interesting determinants of music like valence of songs. The main focus lies on the musical progression of the two bands over time and their popularity in general.

## 2. Data

The data used for analysis focuses on the two bands Metallica and Coldplay. Moreover, data from Spotify and the Billboard Top 100 list were used for the analysis below.

## 3. Analysis

Let us first have a closer look at the popularity by album for each of the bands individually:

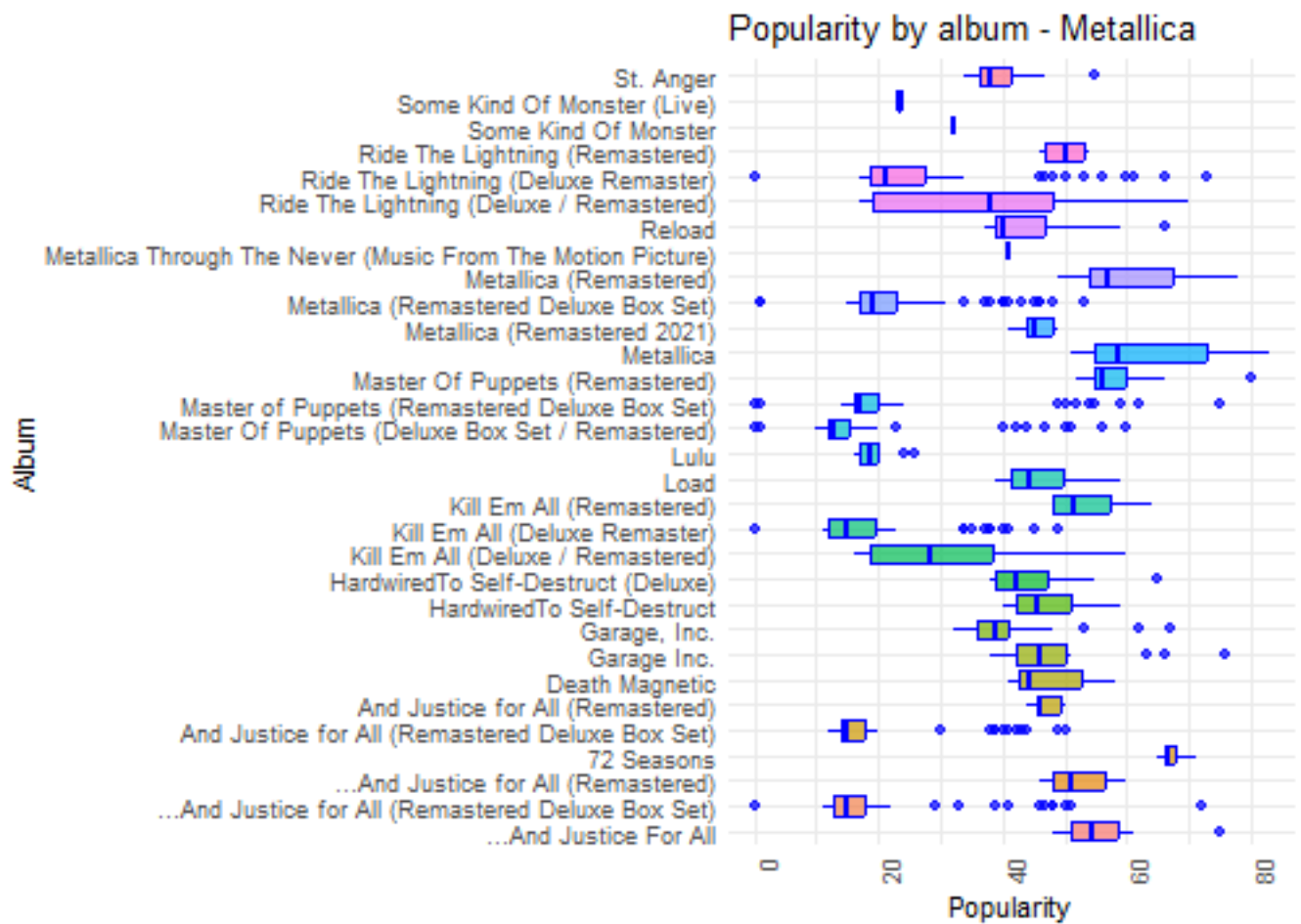


Figure 3.1: Popularity by album of Metallica

As one can see, there is large variation in the popularity by album for Metallica. The on average most succesful album seems to be 72 Seasons. The on average least successful album seems to be Master of Puppets (Deluxe Box Set/ Remastered).

In a next step, let us have a closer look at Coldplay:

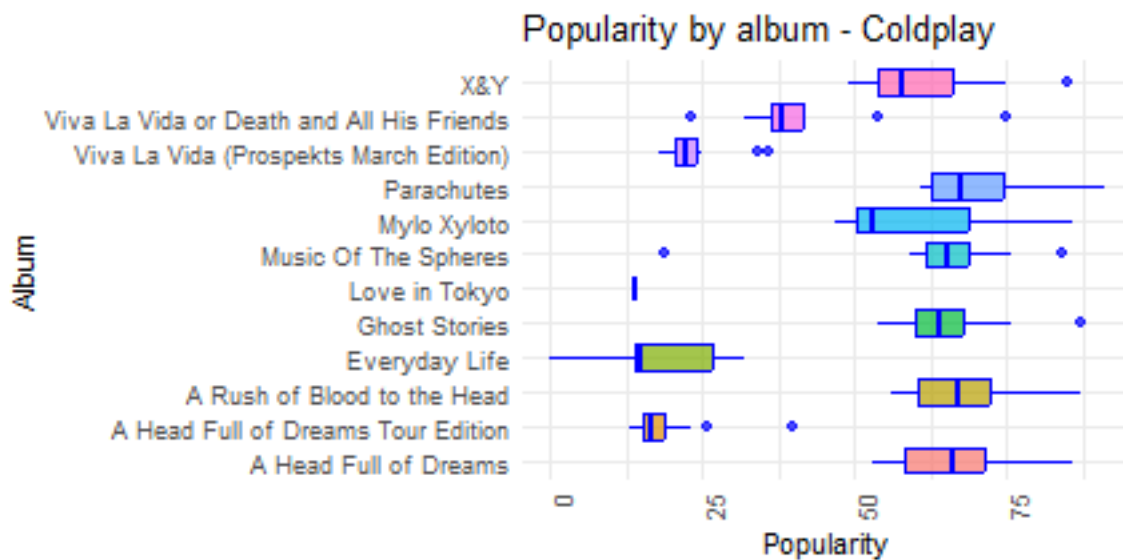


Figure 3.2: Popularity by album for Coldplay

Again, we can see that some albums are more popular than others. Parachutes seems to be the most popular album whereas, Love in Tokyo and Everyday Life do not seem to be comparatively very popular.

Let us now compare the two bands and their popularity over time:

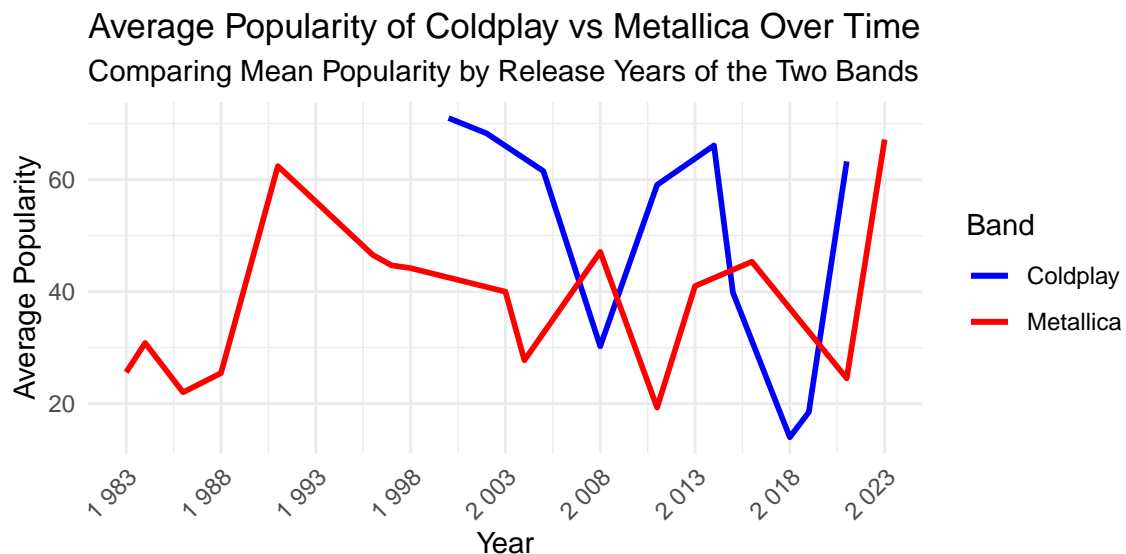


Figure 3.3: Average Popularity Scores over Time

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As one can see in the graph above, Coldplay only exists since 1997. However, their popularity was directly relatively high from the beginning. Using the release date of the different albums to refer to the years the bands were active, one can see, that there is in the beginning for Metallica a large variation across albums. For Coldplay, when they started releasing around 2000, their first albums were directly a huge success. However, variation of the popularity for the Coldplay albums increased over time. In general, the popularity score ranges from 0 to 100. One might wonder what the popularity score actually consists of and which criteria are used to assign points. If one wants to dig deeper into the sphere of popularity scores, Koutlis, Schinas, Papadopoulos & Kompatsiaris (2020) provide a novel approach to assigning popularity scores.

Another interesting aspect for comparison could be how often the two bands Coldplay and Metallica were in the top 100 Billboard charts:

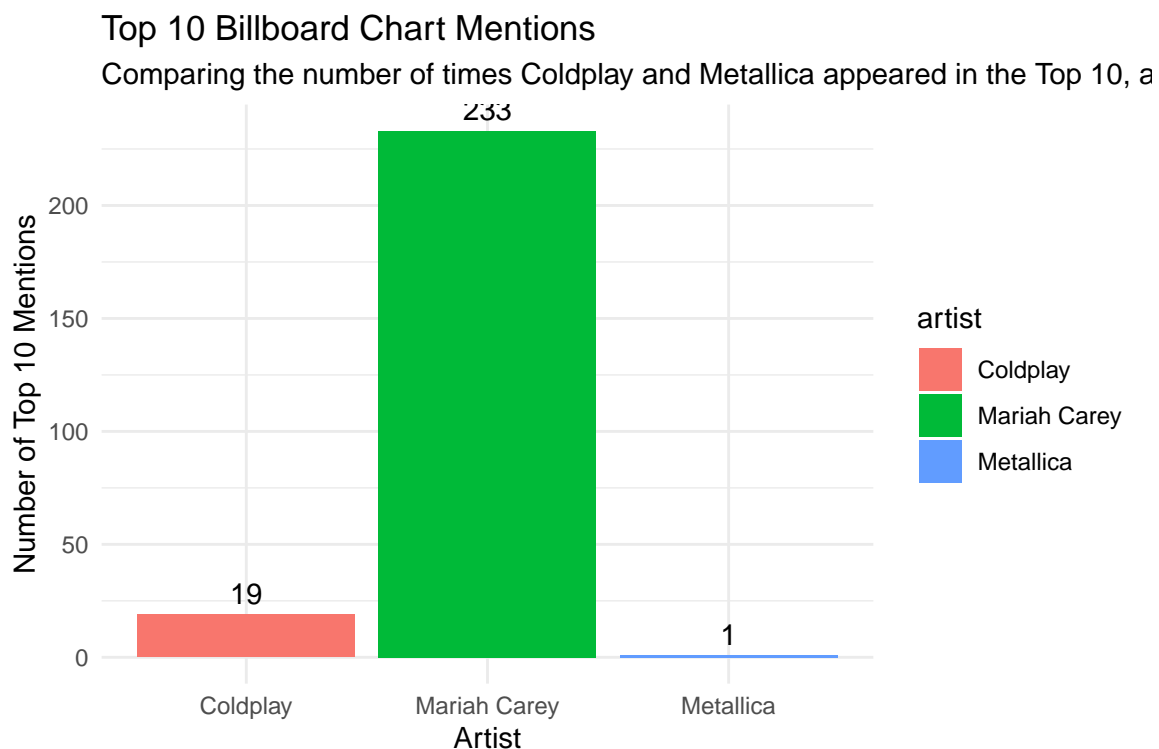


Figure 3.4: Amount of top 10 in Billboard 100 (no features)

Note that featurings are not included in the count. This graph is comparing Coldplay and Metallica with the singer/band that was ranked most in the top 10 of the Billboard top 100 ranking over time. Mariah Carey is clearly the winner here. Nevertheless, Coldplay was 19 times in the top 10 and Metallica once.

Comparing it to the total amount of times the two bands appeared in the top 100, Coldplay was

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ranked there 281 times and Metallica 197, which is remarkable, as Coldplay only exists since 1997 and Metallica longer. However, the different genres and the fact that Metallica probably addresses a smaller group of listeners, might explain that difference.

Finally, comparing and analyzing how valence developed over time for Metallica and Coldplay Valence “describes the musical positiveness conveyed by a track. Tracks with high valence sound more positive (e.g. happy, cheerful, euphoric), while tracks with low valence sound more negative (e.g. sad, depressed, angry)”.

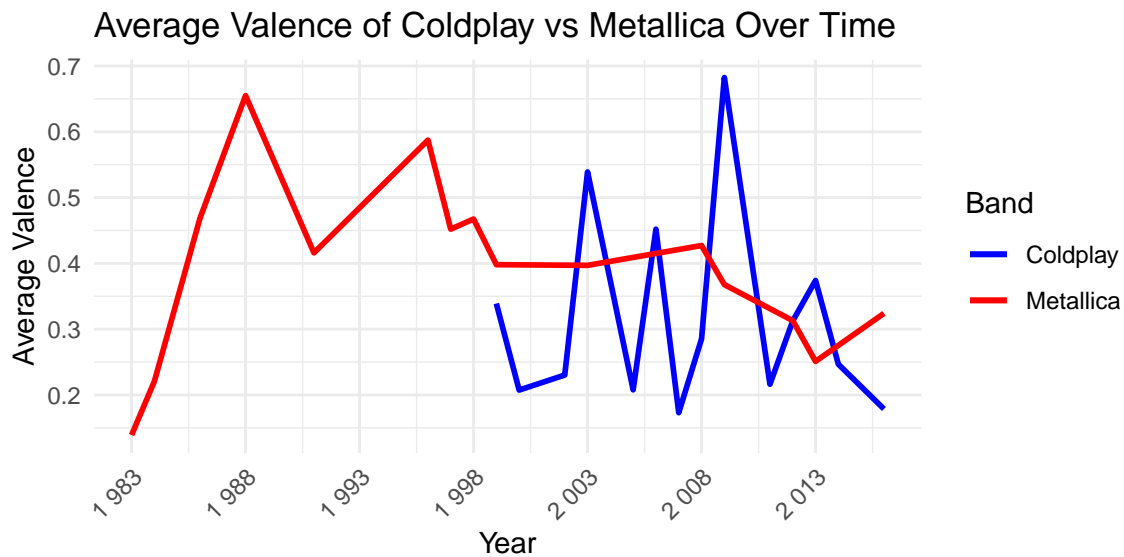


Figure 3.5: Valence over time

As one can see, there is a large variation in average valence, especially for Coldplay. However, for Metallica there seems to be a downward trend since the end of the 1990s, meaning that tracks of Metallica seem to sound more negative on average recently. For Coldplay, it varies a lot, even more than Metallica, which might be a reason for their success as they address both groups, those that prefer more negative and those that prefer more positive music. In the 2010s the music seems however also to be more negative for Coldplay.

#### 4. Conclusion

To conclude, one can say, that both bands are clearly popular and famous. Some albums are more popular than others and although Coldplay is younger, they have more top 10 rankings and also in general top 100 rankings in the billboard ranking than Metallica. One reason might be that Coldplay maybe addresses a larger amount of listeners given that they cover a larger spectrum of for example

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valence in their music but also address listeners of a genre in general that is probably more popular than the genre Metallica is in.

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## References

Koutlis, C., Schinas, M., Papadopoulos, S. & Kompatsiaris, I. 2020. [GAP: Geometric aggregation of popularity metrics](#). *Information*. 11(6).