Pullin' the wool over a music lover's eyes: how to act like you know what you're talking about

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

By

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Abstract

This thesis is designed to give the music novice as much new information as possible in a short work. Most importantly, the author had no desire to reprint information which already exists in print form. For this reason, the resources section is provided to aid in further inquiry into multiple topics in music. Along with this, in many sections of the work the reader can see the best methods which he or she could take to find new information on music. Also addressed in the work are the subjects of CD burning/music downloading, organizing one's music collection, a glossary of often-used music-associated terms, and, most prominent in this guide, common mistakes a music novice will make and how these problems can be rectified.

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- Of course, I must also express appreciation to music novices. Through their ignorance of music, they inspired me to write at length on their most embarrassing mistakes and how they can be remedied.
Introduction

Everyone knows at least one. It may be your boyfriend, the girl down the street, your boss, your son, your friend, or your father. It doesn't matter. We all know music lovers, and often cannot understand how this acquaintance of ours can spend so much time, money and effort on music. Outsiders can't comprehend why anyone would spend so many hours cleaning their records (or why they would even have records at all), arranging their music, perusing web sites at length for every tidbit of information about one's favorite band, camping out over night for concert tickets, or spending literally thousands of dollars on music.

But it all makes sense to music lovers. They drop references to songs and recording artists at every level of speech, always have a song in their minds, or, better yet, they have music playing. For the music lover, music is much more than background music to dance/drive/party—music is not situational. Rather, it plays a key part in life. Without music, these people wouldn't be able to cope with loss, fully rejoice, or express anger. Music is what completes these people.

Perhaps you, the reader, wish to be one of these people. Or perhaps (the more likely option) you wish to appear as if you are one of these people. You may have friends who slander you in public due to your lack of music knowledge; you may have been banned from touching your friend's record collection permanently due to your mishandling of the records. Or maybe you're not the subject of ridicule, but you simply have an interest in modern music and want to learn more information which may not be found on the radio or in many music stores.
Regardless of your motive, this book will provide outlets for you to further yourself musically in one way or another. In order to do so, however, two terms need to be explained. First, the definition of the word “album” is different to many (see glossary for more details); in this work, “album” means any format of released music (CD, cassette tape, 8-track, record). Second, “CD” is also used a lot. This is also used as a blanket term for a release. With that information in mind, we shall begin. Skip through it, read the whole thing, it doesn’t really matter, as long as you feel as if your musical intelligence has been furthered after reading. Enjoy.
Common Mistakes of Music Novices (Conversational and Otherwise)

Though everything in this book is intended to aid those who wish to make
themselves more knowledgeable (or at least look more knowledgeable) on the subject of
music, this section really is the meat of the whole book because a music novice most
often reveals his ignorance on the subject of music during casual conversation and
interaction (though he may not know it). Individual problems will be addressed here, but
if there is one key thing to remember, it is to one’s advantage to admit one’s ignorance on
a subject before talking about it. By doing that, even the most extreme critic will be soft
on the poor soul who is trying to learn more.

Novice Says: “I have all their albums.”

Music Lover Hears: “I have all their popular albums and am unaware of any others
because MTV is my source for new music.”

The Problem: Though one may believe he has all the artist/band’s albums, he probably
doesn’t. Most bands dwell in at least some obscurity before becoming popular enough to
be heard on most radio stations or MTV. Even barring self-produced demos and
bootlegs, it is quite likely that, during this period of obscurity, the band released at least
one album (or more). For many bands, these albums are available in most music stores
(though often not stores such as Wal-Mart or Target) or online and can be obtained
relatively easily—therefore, there is no excuse the novice saying he has all the band’s
albums when it is quite obvious to anyone who does even the smallest bit of research that
there are more (albeit less popular) albums of that artist.
**The Solution:** There is a relatively simple solution to this problem. A person should never assume she has all a band's albums until research is done on the subject. This research can be done quite easily. One could: look in a rock n' roll encyclopedia for information on the artist, which almost always contains the title, label, and year of each release for all of the band's albums, popular or not; go to the band's website and check the "discography" section, which usually contains all the band's official releases; search an online store (such as Amazon.com) for the band's releases, which will usually return official US as well as foreign releases.

**Novice Says:** "They don't make records any more."

**Music Lover Hears:** "I'm saying they don't make records any more because I buy my music at Wal-Mart, and they don't have records."

**The Problem:** Records are still made, though obviously not in the quantities as they were in, say, 1971. Almost all releases on the smaller, independent labels (that is to say, not under the umbrella of the five large music labels of the world) are released on CD as well as record, and some major-label releases are also still produced on record. The reason the music novice doesn't know this is simply because most music stores don't carry new records (if they carry records at all) due to lack of popularity.

**The Solution:** Finding new records can sometimes be a daunting task, and there's no guarantee that the album was even released as an LP at all. Looking at a band's official discography online can often solve this problem because the format is often noted directly after the title of the work. If this does not work, personnel at most music stores
can check an online or print catalogue of music the store has the opportunity to order, and this catalogue will most definitely have the format listed.

**Novice Says:** "Why do you still have records? Do you think it's 1974?"

**Music Lover Hears:** "I am insecure because I don't even know how to play a record, so I'll criticize them to make myself feel better."

**The Problem:** Unaware of the benefits of records, the music novice has criticized them and, really, music lovers in the process.

**The Solution:** For the solution to this problem, let us look at the benefits of records so that the novice can become a music lover, not a hater.

1. **Some music has only been released on vinyl.**

   There are thousands of albums that were released before the advent of CDs that will never see release in CD format. It simply wouldn't be profitable to produce the music in another format since it probably did not sell too well in the first place. However, one could say that since this music wouldn't even be profitable to produce, it must not be worth listening to. Though quite possibly wrong, let us accept this for a moment. Even doing so, however, does not make this a null issue for two reasons.

   First, many popular artists have albums they produced that will never be released. Yet why would this be? It could be due to the fact that the album has since been combined with another and released on CD. It could also possibly be that it is a greatest hits collection that has since become obsolete
due to a newer, remastered (and possibly containing different songs) greatest
hits collection.

Second, even music produced today could fall into this category. Some
bands, for example, will release a 7-inch record single that has a non-album
track as the B-side. Also, some independent labels have been known to have a
7-inch club, meaning that every month a band on the label will produce two
new songs to be released to those in the club. Very rarely do these songs
resurface on CD.

2. *Records will not disintegrate over time.*

Though CDs have not been around long enough to say for certain that they
will not stand the test of time, some CDs produced (usually the ones from the
mid-1980s) have been known to malfunction even with careful use. Whether
this is indicative of a “bad batch” or the fate of all CDs is not yet known, but
records have been around much longer and, as long as proper care is taken,
they will most definitely last a lifetime.

3. *Some records contain artwork that cannot be reproduced or is minimalized in
the CD format.*

This “artwork” could be many different things: raised lettering on the cover
(such as AC/DC’s *Back in Black*), collages (Dead Kennedys’ *Plastic Surgery
Disasters*); posters (Prince and the Revolution’s *Purple Rain*); moveable parts
(the spinning wheel in the cover of *Led Zeppelin III*); pictures (The Beatles’
self-titled release [a.k.a. “The White Album”]); and colored, clear, or picture
discs (Each KISS member’s solo record). This, of course, is only a partial list;
there are many more different kinds of artwork that can be (and have been) produced in the vinyl format that do not transfer well to CD.

**Novice Says:** “I just heard that Dixie Chicks song ‘Landslide’ on the radio; it’s a high quality song.”

**Music Lover Heals:** “Since I think any music made before I was born is not worth listening to, I have exposed my ignorance by thinking that ‘Landslide’ is a Dixie Chicks song.”

**The Problem:** The novice has no idea that she is incorrect in attributing said song to the Dixie Chicks because she has not looked at the roots of the music she likes. But the problem goes way beyond incidents like this one. This is likely one of the most dire problems in the world today because it is quite often that this happens with other artists and songs as well. The artist who wrote the song often does not get credit from the general populace for doing so because the public has a short-term memory or has never heard the original, which is often much better than the cover version that is produced later.

**The Solution:** Though it is inevitable that every cover song will not be immediately recognized as such, one can minimize her losses by simply exploring music of previous decades, not just current music. One should not study earlier music, however, simply for the purpose of recognizing covers, but for personal gain in finding some great music. More specifically, however, one can look in the CD booklet (if she has the CD), which almost always lists the writers of the songs; also, one could also use an online search
engine and type in the song's title and also "lyrics." Many of the sites that have the lyrics also have the original author's name.

**Novice Says:** "Have you heard No Doubt's cover of that Vandals song, 'Oi to the World'? It blows the original out of the water."

**Music Lover Heeds:** "Because I am not accustomed to the type of music the Vandals play and am familiar with No Doubt's style, I'm going to say that the cover is better even though I've not really given the Vandals a chance."

**The Problem:** Though the novice at least knows the original performers of the song, the novice has not really given the original a chance. Certainly, they have heard it, but they have not heard other songs by the band. As with the previous example, the problem is much broader than the specific reference given here. It is possible that the new version of the song does indeed appeal to the listener more than the old version. However, before criticizing the original version, perhaps listeners should search for more songs by the artist so they understand the source from which the song comes.

**The Solution:** In order to legally find more music by the band who wrote the original song without simply buying an album, one could ask his friends if they have any of the band's albums, or many bands' websites have song samples or full songs available for download and often have at least a few songs (if not the whole album) available to listen to online in streaming audio (meaning it is not downloaded to the user's computer).

**Novice Does:** Mishandles his own collection of music in any fashion.
Music Lover Thinks: “What a dumbass! Regardless of how much he paid for that music (if any at all), he still shouldn’t treat it as such. Does he want to have to buy a new copy of that album? I guess the best way to look at it is that it’s not mine.”

The Problem: Though the novice is hurting no one but himself, he still is making a mistake. If he wants to continue to listen to the music he owns, he needs to take care of it. Plus, he sure won’t be impressing any music lovers any time soon with that approach.

The Solution: The solution to this problem is quite easy. Regardless of whether the novice has his CDs in any order or in their jewel cases or not, he could still quite easily find an empty spot in which to place CDs which are not currently in use. Though it is unlikely that the novice would have other formats of music, he can do the same with his records and tapes as well—put them in some sort of protective case (the best one, of course, being the one in which the music was originally packaged).

Novice Does: Mishandles a music lover’s collection of music in some fashion.

Music Lover Thinks: “That asshole! Who does he think he is, treating my music like that? It’s sad enough that he doesn’t treat his music the way he should, but why does he have to mistreat my music?”

The Problem: Wanting to expose his novice friend to new music, the music lover has let his friend borrow an album or two. When the music lover gets his music back from the novice, it has been rendered either unplayable or damaged in some way which may or may not affect the play of the album but most definitely affects the appearance of the album in a negative way. Of course, this is not the only way a novice can hurt a music lover’s collection. He could also be trying to play a record on the music lover’s device
and use incorrect hand maneuvering, failing to place the needle down gently, scratching the record. He may take CDs out of the music lover’s CD player in order to place new ones in it and leave them lying about or replace them in the collection out of order. The list goes on and on.

The Solution: No special insight is needed for this one. Quite simply, one should always treat the property of others with extreme care, whether it is music or not. Just because the novice never puts his CDs back in their cases, for example, does not mean it is the greatest of all ideas. Everyone should know how to properly care for music, and if one does not, then he should ask before he borrows the music or touches it in any fashion—there's no harm in asking.

Novice Does: Wears a t-shirt (or other article of clothing) to a concert of the band that is being touted on his clothing.

Music Lover Thinks: “Of course he likes that band; he just shelled out fifty bucks for a ticket to come see them. And guess what? Everyone else is at this concert likes that band, too, so you’re not impressing anyone, buddy.”

The Problem: The novice, thinking he’s showing support for the band he’s going to see, wears the same t-shirt that two hundred other people at the concert are wearing. And as the music lover said, the novice obviously likes the band if he’s at the concert.

The Solution: Quite simple. Wear something else. If it seems necessary to be wearing some sort of clothing supporting the band, the novice should at least wait until he gets to the concert and (if he can afford it) buy an expensive tour shirt so that it looks as if he simply did not want to have to carry it, so he put it on.
Novice Does: Listens to the band he is getting ready to see in concert on the way to the show or, even worse, in the parking lot before the show.

Music Lover Thinks: "He'll be seeing that band perform for two hours tonight. Why doesn't he wait to get the pleasure of listening to the music live, which is much better than hearing a recording of it?"

The Problem: The novice, perhaps thinking he's getting "pumped" for the concert he is about to see is actually ruining the experience by "cheating" himself and listening to the band right before the show.

The Solution: In order to get the most enjoyment from a concert, one has two things which are under his control. While some things cannot be controlled by the individual concertgoer (songs played by band, price of beer, length of restroom lines, cost of parking), there are two things that definitely can be.

First, one should be familiar with the band's music. This seems obvious, but it is quite often that people go see a band because they like a few songs. This makes for a relatively unenjoyable concert experience for the concertgoer and annoys his neighbors at the show in the process, since he only stands for the popular songs he knows. Obviously, listening to a CD of the band is one of the best ways to become familiar with a band's music. So, then, what is the problem with listening to a CD right before a show? Isn't that just re-familiarizing one's self with the music?

The reason it's a problem leads to the second thing one must do to fully enjoy a show: go without listening to the band for as long as one can before the show. A month is recommended, but a few weeks is OK. Why is this such a big deal? As with anything,
too much is always a bad thing. Though it may seem as if one is torturing himself by not listening to the band before the show, it all pays off at the show. The excitement builds before the show because it has been weeks since the last listen, and when one finally hears the band, his body erupts in joy because it has been so long.

**Novice Does:** Listens to the band he just saw in concert while on his way out of the concert parking lot.

**Music Lover Thinks:** "Put that away! This is even worse than listening to the band before the concert! Your energy for the band should be drained at this point, and you're defiling the great concert experience we all just had with studio versions of the songs we just heard. Put on something else!"

**The Problem:** Very like listening to the band before the show, the concert experience is minimized by listening to the band after the show.

**The Solution:** The novice obviously didn’t expend much energy at the show, or he wouldn’t still be listening to the band after the concert. One should get into the music in whichever way he sees fit: singing along (though not loudly; see below), dancing, or cheering, whistling, or screaming (though sometimes annoying to one’s concert neighbors) between songs. With this, the concertgoer will feel exhausted after the show, meaning he will put some other CD in the player on the way out of the show.

**Novice Does:** Goes to a concert and sings along (often quite horribly) to all the songs she knows at the top of her lungs.
Music Lover Thinks: "Holy hell. I paid good money to get in here to hear the band perform, not the drunk girl beside me. Lay off!"

The Problem: The novice either doesn’t realize or care that it’s rude to damage someone else’s concert experience just so hers can be better (not to mention the fact that she will be hoarse after the concert). This is especially rude when the novice has a horrible singing voice.

The Solution: Singing along is sometimes encouraged by the band, in which case it is one’s own discretion as to whether she should sing or not. Even singing during songs isn’t really rude, as long as it’s not too loud. Concerts are very loud places, and people seem to think they have to be able to hear themselves sing to be sure they are really doing so. Though some people at shows may seem quite immature, all are mature enough to realize when they are and when they aren’t singing.
How to Organize Your Music Collection(s)

As with anything that is based on opinion, how one arranges his music collection is an issue of personal preference rather than following specific guidelines on do so. It should be noted, however, that some ways seemed to be more smiled upon by most music lovers than others. Though there are many ways one could arrange his or her CD collection, this section will look at the five most popular (Random, Purchase, Genre, Alpha-Alpha, Alpha-Chrono) and weigh the pros and cons of each. (Note: though CDs are referred to below, these methods of arranging can be used for any format of music.)

Random Order: Music is not grouped or ordered in any fashion

Pros: One never has to worry about finding a specific location when returning a CD to its storage area, often, while looking for a specific CD, one will stumble upon a forgotten classic that perhaps would be overlooked if the CDs were in any set order.

Cons: Hard to know if CDs are missing since they are in no order, anyone looking through your collection for a specific CD will have to look at each CD, you may not be able to find the CD for which you are looking, most music lovers would be ashamed to see a collection so disorganized.

Purchase Order: CDs are arranged chronologically according to the order in which they are purchased

Pros: You know exactly where to find every CD you own; relatively easy to know if any are missing, one can see the musical phases he or she has went through in his life by looking at his or her CDs.
Cons: No one besides you will know where a specific CD is located; you can’t use the excuse “I got that a long time ago” for that New Kids on the Block CD if it’s not true.

Genre Order: CDs are arranged according to the style of music that most defines each

Pros: Finding a CD for a certain mood is much easier since the CDs are already arranged by genre; people looking through your CD collection can quickly get an idea what kind of music you like.

Cons: Who’s to determine in what genre a CD would fit (if any at all)? Certainly, that Cannibal Corpse CD can go in your “metal” section, but what about that Aerosmith CD? Classic Rock? Hard Rock? Modern Rock? Not to mention that each genre can be divided up further so that one could possibly have hundreds of sections in his collection.

Alpha-Alpha Order: CDs are arranged in alphabetical order according to artist’s last name or first significant word of a band’s name, and CDs by the same artist/group are then arranged alphabetically as well

Pros: As long as you (or anyone else looking at your collection) know the alphabet, you should have few problems finding and replacing the CD; this method is smiled upon by music lovers due to the ease of finding each CD

Cons: Where do you put a band like Jethro Tull, which is actually the name of an 18th century agriculturalist, under “J” or “T”? And what about abbreviated band names, such as the MC5 (Motor City Five)? Would such a band be before Minor Threat alphabetically or after? Though minor, this is something that must be considered. Also, one must realize that he or she could skip over a great CD in search of something to listen to due to the monotony of the set order.
**Alpha-Chrono Order:** CDs are arranged in alphabetical order according to artist's last name or first significant word of a band's name, and CDs by the same artist/band are then arranged by release date.

**Pros:** Same as Alpha-Alph; also, having CDs in chronological order will make you much more aware of when each CD was released, thereby simply making you more informed; again, very highly smiled upon by music lovers.

**Cons:** Can be hard to recall where a CD goes since, though the band/artist is easily located, the release date may be forgotten; often seen as overly anal retentive.
A Music Lover's Stance on the Issue of Illegally Obtaining Music

Illegally downloading music and/or CD burning (heretofore referred to as "copying" for ease of writing) is one of the biggest issues in music today. Anyone with any amount of interest in music is aware of it and has an opinion on it. It is certain that copying is illegal, yet most people who download music have not had charges brought against them. Give the title of this section, the reader may believe that all music lovers generally have the same view on this issue. However, they do not. Let us look at two hypothetical music lovers with two very different opinions on this issue.

Music Lover 1:

This music lover is against all forms of copying music except for personal use (e.g. copying a CD to a tape so he can listen to it in his car), which is legal. One who takes a stance such as this is likely to cite one or more of the following reasons:

1. It's Illegal. The music lover would compare copying to stealing: that is, a good or service has been obtained without purchase. Perhaps the music lover believes it's morally wrong to copy, or perhaps he is just afraid of getting caught by law enforcement authorities.

2. The music lover enjoys the "official" packaging. A burned CD isn't appealing to the eye like a purchased one is, and even if label and covers are printed, they usually aren't as high quality as those that come with the CD when purchased. It's also possible that whatever comes with the CD cannot be reproduced easily on a computer. The music
lover doesn’t enjoy this because he wants to listen to the album, look at the pictures, and read the lyrics like the band originally intended: as a total package.

3. Copying doesn’t show support for the band. The band, obviously, receives no money when copying is performed; nor does it help their album sales, which can give popularity. The music lover may believe that not purchasing albums will cause the band to not be able to afford to be a band any more, or he may believe that those who do a good job at what they do should be recognized and rewarded—here, through album sales/money.

**Music Lover 2:**

This music lover believes that all music should be available for download, legal or not, and has no qualms about burning CDs. He would be likely to cite one or more of the following to support his stance:

1. All musicians are rich anyway. The music lover believes that since the band makes so much money through concerts, t-shirts, and lending its talent to corporations (putting their songs in commercials, for example) that they could sell zero albums and still be quite rich.

2. The music lover wouldn’t have bought the album anyway because he doesn’t like it well enough. Maybe he only likes a few songs from the album, or maybe it’s an album that he wouldn’t call “bad,” but he certainly wouldn’t call “great” either. Therefore, his copying it harms no one since the music lover’s money would have never supported the band anyway.

3. Music needs to be available for preview before purchase. The music lover would say that since all bands (new or established) need some sort of exposure for their new album,
why not let copying of their music be that exposure? If people like the music well enough, they will buy their own copy.

4. Copying generates interest in bands. The music lover would say that he is exposed to much more music than he ever was before copying, and that actually has led to him to spend more money on music, though in other forms besides CDs such as concerts and t-shirts.

So as stated, there is no official consensus on the matter but, like all issues, most people are “in the middle.” Some music lovers won’t download music but will borrow a CD from a friend and make their own copy, while others won’t “borrow and burn” but will download music. Most music lovers, however, will purchase CDs from bands they like, regardless of whether or not they already have the album in some form. Even music lovers with huge stacks of burned CDs often have many times that amount of purchased records, tapes, and CDs and they continue to purchase music.
Resources

Rather than compiling information from other sources, this author has chosen to discuss issues that perhaps have not yet been addressed. However, in order to further one's knowledge of music, the following websites are recommended. With the Internet available to nearly everyone (either at school, home, or work), the resources available are almost boundless. The following section is designed to highlight websites that the author has found to be most informative on each topic listed.

Cleaning and care of records, tapes, and CDs


**Library of Congress** – www.loc.gov/preserv/care/record.html. Very thorough official site of the US Library of Congress. Also contains other resources one can check out for more information.

**Care and Feeding of Vinyl** – www.care-and-feeding-of-vinyl.com/index.html. Obviously, only deals with records, especially care, storage, and restoration of records. A user-friendly site that also contains links to places where one can buy records.

**Dishwasher** – www.dishwasher.com. Dishwasher is generally thought of as the premier company that provides cleaning products for the major formats of music as well as DVDs and videocassettes.

Buying records, tapes, and CDs

**Ebay** – www.ebay.com. Of course, the most popular site for buying any used item on the Internet. Rarely, if ever, will one not be able to find the music for which he is looking, however, with very heavy site traffic, the chances of finding a remarkable deal are slim.

**Amazon.com** – www.amazon.com. Contains much more than music, but a pretty good site for locating new, hard-to-find CDs (though not records or tapes). Prices are generally equivalent to or less than what one would pay in a store.

General information

**Gem Records** – www.gemrec.com. Though it touts itself as giving "free downloads" of music, the best part about the site is the comprehensiveness of the genres it has listed and the wealth of links it has to other sites.

Dead Musicians -
http://www.geocities.com/trcolemangeo/dead_musicians/dead_musicians.html. A very thorough and current list of musicians who died before age sixty and their cause of death, though many of the links don't work.

Billboard – www.billboard.com. This is the online version of the print Billboard magazine that provides music industry news such as sales charts. Besides the charts, mainstream music news is added often more than once a day.

Tour Information

Pollstar – www.pollstar.com. This site has a very thorough listing of all confirmed concerts by area, venue, or band and even allows a search to include surrounding areas. Much better than Ticketmaster when just looking for who will be playing where and when.

Ticketmaster – www.ticketmaster.com. Though Ticketmaster is notorious for charging extra fees for everything they do, there often is no alternative to using Ticketmaster for concerts. Though the website is not the easiest to navigate, it does provide vital information about the concert and when tickets can be purchased (both at Ticketmaster outlets and online).
Glossary

This section may contain words not used in the preceding text due to the fact that this glossary is meant to address as many music-related terms as possible without defining the obvious (e.g. "CD") or going too in-depth and defining terms unlikely to occur in conversation (even one with a music lover). Words in bold are defined elsewhere in the glossary.

7" The diameter of 45 RPM and often used as a term for them.

10" The diameter of a 78 and also some 33 1/3 maxi-singles (containing more than two tracks).

12" The diameter of a 33 1/3 LP and also some singles.

33 1/3 Though actually referring to the RPM of the record, many people drop the “1/3” and refer to their collection of full-length, 12” diameter records (LPs) as “33s.” Though there are exceptions, the 12” record is usually the only format of record for which the record player must be set at “33 1/3” (though it was always fun to play a 12” at 45 RPM or vice versa).

45 Like 33 1/3, the number refers to the RPM of the record, but when used in conversation, it usually means a 7” single which usually only contains two songs (one on each side). Though a 45 can contain about five minutes of music per side (meaning possibly more than one song can fit on each side), this is rarely the case and is almost always used as a “single” format. A special note: 45s of days past (and some of today) have a hole about as big as a fifty cent piece in the middle through which the spindle is inserted so they can be played on the turntable. Because 33s and 78s have a much smaller hole (approximately the size of a pencil’s diameter), this could seemingly present a problem when trying to play different RPM records on the same player (it was originally done this was a "one or the other" marketing technique, just as today one must choose between a Mac and a PC). The problem, however, is solved in one of two ways: first, most record players today come with an adapter to place on the spindle for 45s; second, there are inserts (usually plastic) which snap into 45s which make them playable on record players with the smaller spindle.

78 The oldest format of record that, unlike 33s and 45s, is now totally obsolete. As with the other two formats, the number refers to the RPM. They are usually 10” in diameter and much thicker and heavier than a 33 or 45. They are also much more likely to break if dropped. See "album" for a more detailed description.
4-track
One of the most traditional ways of a band recording music is by using a 4-track. Each track will record a different sound (instrument, vocal) so that each track can be changed without having to change the whole song.

8-track
Format for music that never caught on as much as the big three (record, cassette tape, CD). About the size of four cassette tapes if stacked 2x2, uses tape to play music and has four "programs" (often referred to as "sides") which contain the music. Tape can deteriorate over time, and songs often were split between "programs," making these eventually obsolete.

A-Side
The "hit" song on a single. When singles came out only on vinyl, the "hit" would be on side A, with an often less popular song on side B (except in the case of a double A-side). Of course, CDs only have one side, making the term obsolete, but the term is still used today to describe the "hit" song being released as a single.

Album
Though seemingly not needing to be defined, in fact, there are different interpretations of the word. The word originally comes from the days when 78 RPM records were the only records available (from about 1900 until 1950). Because technology had not yet made it possible to fit more than, on average, one song on each side, a whole recorded release could easily span six or seven records. To contain all the records was a binder of sorts that resembled a photo album. This is where the name "album" comes from, though it is now possible to fit a whole release onto one record (33 1/3) and the bulky photo album-looking binder is no longer needed. Today, there are people who call a recorded release in any format an "album" (as in this work), but there are some (mainly those who remember the time when records were the main format for recorded music) who would argue that only a record is an "album." Since the term is technically obsolete (unless referring to 78s), no one can really say which one is right (neither are).

B-side
In the days when records reigned supreme, this was simply the other side of the single on which one found a less popular song compared to the A-side, which contained the "hit." It should be noted, however, that B-sides have become increasingly more likely to be live versions of songs or studio-cut non-album releases and make the single a collector's item.

B/W
Backed with. Another term for a B-side, since the other song was originally on the back of the "hit" song.
Bootleg: An unofficial recording of the band, usually live. Depending on the legality of the recording (which usually determines the quality of equipment used), sound quality ranges from decent to quite poor.

Cover: One band/artist’s version of a song that has previously been recorded by another band/artist. It is quite a common occurrence for a band to cover another’s song in concert or on album; some albums are all covers (usually from bands/artists that are already established), though this is not extremely common.

DAO: Disc at once. That is to say, no gap is put between the songs when burning to a CD (especially helpful for concert recordings).

DAT: Digital audio tape. Many people who tape shows use DAT as a more effective (no tape to flip, song time placed in memory, easier to make copies of) method of recording.

Double A-Side: When the second song on a single is another “hit” song itself. However, one must be careful to remember that a B-side becoming popular does not make the single a double A-side, rather, a double A-side must be marketed as such to have the name.

Drum Tech: A person who, like a roadie, works for the band while they are on tour. The drummer has his own tech who will make sure the drums are set up in the correct fashion and will be sure to fix any problems with the drums during the show.

EP: Extended Play. EPs often come out between full-length albums by bands to keep interest in the band high and usually contain at least one track from the previous album (though perhaps in a different form, such as a new studio version or a live version); hence the “extended play.” Usually containing between five and seven tracks, the rest of the EP will usually be new studio-recorded songs, covers, and songs recorded live or a mix thereof. Though there is no specified amount of time that an EP must span, they usually last twenty to twenty-five minutes.

Gatefold: A record cover which is more than a simple jacket; rather, it opens like a book (or a gate).

Goo Balls: A favorite treat of many hippies who often tour with bands such as Phish and Widespread Panic containing a variety of things such as granola, peanut butter, chocolate, wheat germ, marshmallows, margarine, but almost always marijuana.
Guitar Tech  A person who, like a roadie, works for the band while they are on tour. Each guitar player usually has his own tech who will make sure all the guitars he will play that night are in tune and ready to be switched at the will of the musician.

Import  An album that was originally released in another country, most often Japan or a European country, and imported into the United States, often contains bonus tracks on an album or was never officially released in the US.

Indie  Short for “independent.” Though originally meaning any band on an independent label (“indie band”), the term has now become associated with a style of music best described as a mixture of punk, rock, and emo, often with no regard to sound errors (feedback, etc.).

iPod  A portable mp3 player/hard drive produced by Apple® which can hold and play, depending on the one purchased, thousands of songs.

J-Card  The stiff paper insert in the plastic case of a cassette tape.

LP  Long Playing. Compared to its predecessor, the 78, this full album of recorded music played a very long time (now up to about sixty minutes). Often used interchangeably with “33.”

Miracle  When applied to music, this is what someone who wants to get into a show without a ticket needs: a miracle. By holding up one finger (usually above his or her head), the person designates he or she needs a ticket and, if he or she is lucky, someone has an extra to give (for free). Most prominent at shows where many people are touring with a band.

Mosh Pit  An area in shows (usually near the stage) without chairs where concertgoers, if it suits the music, push, kick, punch, and pull each other about as a way of dancing to the music. There are many variants on the name and what exactly is done depending on the type of music; also known as slam dancing.

Poseur  A person who knows very little about the music he is listening to but likes the band because it’s the cool thing to do. Frowned upon by any real lover of the music.

Pro Tools  A computer software program which makes recording music much cheaper (because it can be done at home) and easier (song mistakes are corrected much easier); often scorned by purists who prefer the tape approach.
Rider  Stipulations and demands a band makes in written form exchange for coming to a venue and performing. Often contains outrageous things such as “five pounds of blue M&M’s” or “three six-packs of microbrew (beer), no silver cans, brown bottles only.”

Roadie  A person who works for the band while they are on tour by setting up the stage, lights, and other associated items.

RPM  Revolutions per minute. Obviously, the lower the number of RPM, the slower the record will spin (and vice versa).

Sell-out  The term used when bands/artists compromise their integrity by doing something which will give them more money, such as promoting a product, being sponsored on tour by a company, or just generally changing their music so they can appeal to a wider audience. Everyone has different parameters for what selling out is and what it’s not. This word is used quite often, such as when a band makes their first video, puts their song in a commercial, or simply becomes more popular.

Tape Tree/Trading  Bands which allow their shows to be recorded permit their fans to trade tapes of the performance; tape trees are often set up so the fans can have others readily available with whom to trade.

Touring (With)  Not applying to the band itself touring, but a person going to multiple shows along the band’s tour around the country or world. There is no specific amount of shows to which one must go to be “touring,” but one must certainly go to more than one concert venue. Many people who tour will do so almost continually with any band they can find, while others will do so maybe once a summer for a few shows (or less).

Unplugged  Using acoustic instead of electric guitars. The “unplugged” comes from the fact that acoustic guitars can achieve a full sound without being plugged in, unlike electric guitars.

Veggie Burrito  It is what it is, but notable because many people who tour with bands sell these after shows to recoup their travel and ticket money.

Vinyl  Another term for a record.

Wax  Another term for a record.