

Season 1 Episode 2: “Music and Nostalgia During COVID-19”

Matthew: [00:00:00] Hi listeners, welcome to *Everything But the Music*. We're a group of undergraduates and former undergraduates from the UCLA musicology program [here to] talk about, among other things, horror music, the sounds of [other] animals, modern opera, Billie Eilish conspiracy theories, protest anthems, and Disney nostalgia. Today, we'll be having a conversation with Torrey about music during the COVID-19 pandemic. Let's bounce.

Torrey: [00:00:24] Thank you guys for being here! I'm really excited. What I want to talk about is something I've been really noticing myself and also been using as a tool myself during this terrible time, and that is...the comfort of nostalgia, and specifically musical nostalgia. The question I put in the document that I wanted to ask is, if everyone feels comfortable sharing, what music have you been using as a "safety blanket" during COVID, and at what age did you originally listen to this music, if it's not new music?

Lori: [00:01:17] Well, I'm gonna be super unhelpful and actually tell you all that I've been having a hard time listening to music lately. I actually, I don't really know what it is, I can't quite put my finger on it, but, like, today was the first day I even listened to lo-fi in months. I know, I know, like, hold your applause, but actually, what I've been listening to lately is not music, but I've been getting more interested in ambient sounds, because a lot of what I'm doing right now is, I'm just, like, I'm trying to read and, like, play video games, and just do leisure activities that make me feel better, and when I try to read, music gets way too distracting. Like, I can't do those two things at once. It's just difficult for my attention span, so I've been, like, [listening to] library noises on YouTube, like 10 hour, like library noises, ambience, or even white noise and different, like, colors of noise I've been listening to and trying to decide which ones I like best for different activities that I do. It's just the presence of a sound or some noise happening that is not distracting me that I've been finding a lot of comfort in and being able to enjoy some kind of sound that is not music.

Karen: [00:02:48] I will second that. I have not been listening to music. I started quarantine out by really getting into different podcasts, and then that fell out and I just stopped listening to anything at all and kind of just kept to myself for probably a month and a half, and didn't want to listen to anything. I basically just wanted to be by myself with my own thoughts and just kind of wallow in my own depression, which sounds really terrible, and it was really terrible, and I think somebody else asked, I don't know if it was in this podcast, or if it was in this podcast group or if it was in something else that we were doing, but somebody asked, like, "Oh, hey! What are you guys listening to?" and I was maybe the only one that was like, "I'm not listening to *anything*." It was kind of isolating at the time, I guess you guys weren't in this particular conversation, because I'm not the only one in this particular situation, but when I read through what you wrote, Torrey, about how there are all these accounts that are doing these nostalgic things, I'm not even going on social media, really, so I'm not engaging in those, and maybe that's part of why I'm not listening to music, either.

Lori: [00:04:26] Yeah, I feel like the times that I am listening to music is like, on social media, TikTok especially, which is something you mentioned, Torrey, is like, a lot of nostalgic music and, like music from, kind of like, the near past is getting a lot of resurgence and becoming very trendy on platforms like TikTok.

Matthew: [00:04:49] Yeah, I have been listening to music, sorry to be the outlier so far. A) I've been listening to Hamilton, because I am a cretin, I guess, yeah, I know, but it is weirdly nostalgic for me because I've never listened to it before, but when I was in high school, two of my best friends were really into musical theatre, and so I started to get really into musical theatre, and they would tell me, they were like, "Oh my gosh, this guy's writing a musical, and it's like a rap musical about the Founding Fathers, it's going to be so cool, it's going to be really great," and I was like, "That sounds like the lamest, stupidest thing ever," and then when it finally came out, I was still in high school, I think, Torrey, were you...?

Torrey: [00:05:44] Yeah, senior year.

Matthew: [00:05:46] Yeah. So whenever I was in my friend's car, she would always be playing it, and I was like, "Yep. It's exactly as lame and stupid as I thought it would be," but now, four years later, I'm listening to it, and I'm like, "Okay, it's not...," and the songs get stuck in my head. So it's been

weirdly nostalgic. It's like comforting even though I've never listened to it before, or like, I've only ever heard it playing in the background, like, I've never paid attention to it.

Lori: [00:06:14] Would you say that you are actively listening to Hamilton?

Matthew: [00:06:19] I would say that I am going to beat you up for asking that question. No, yeah, I have been, and this is a whole separate podcast episode.

Karen: [00:06:31] I will say that I do listen to music when we're doing the podcast, or something, and they're in there. Like, I listen to everything that Allison put in, and I enjoyed it so much. And then, after that, I just, like, went on a binge of all those artists. Then it fizzled out, so.

Matthew: [00:06:55] The other thing I've been listening to is Taylor Swift's new album, because...[unintelligible] is obsessed with Taylor Swift, so I have to listen to it to have opinions on it, and she is someone who really traffics in nostalgia, and it's like fake nostalgia, so I've been feeling very nostalgic about stuff that's never actually happened to me, like, I don't know, running away with a boy and wearing sweaters and stuff. Whatever her songs are about.

J.W.: [00:07:25] You've never worn a sweater?

Karen: [00:07:27] I've seen you in sweaters.

Lori: [00:07:31] It's the running away with a boy part that we're missing.

Matthew: [00:07:33] Yeah, like I keep his sweater, and he left it in my car, and then I wear it, and then we kiss and, I don't know what her songs are about. They're about nothing.

Karen: [00:07:45] Are you telling me you've never worn another person's sweater?

Matthew: [00:07:48] That's a good question, I'll have to reflect on that one. I'm just saying that me and Taylor Swift, I don't connect with the narratives at all, and yet, she's pretty good at making you feel nostalgic about stuff that's totally not connected to your life.

Liv: [00:08:08] I've heard Taylor Swift's new album also, but I listened to it once or twice, and I agree, she's really good at making you feel sentimental

and nostalgic. Or at least me, it works on me. But that's not really what I've been listening to. I think it's changed a bit, like during spring, I was listening to my crying playlist on Spotify, which is quite nostalgic. It's all songs that I have some sort of history with because that makes them more powerful. For some reason, in spring I was also listening to Brockhampton, which I guess is nostalgic, and I was listening to opera, and I was listening to Western classical and dancing around my kitchen, and that was fun, and now I pretty much listen to the same songs over and over again because I really only listen to music when I work out or when I cook, and they have to be pretty darn upbeat, so to be honest, it's like anime music and it's hyperpop, the hyperpop especially, and like, industrial pop, and any sort of, like, electro whatever, that hits right now. I wanna hear things that just sound like a car crashing. So that's, yeah, that's pretty much it. I'm more in search of, like, newness right now, I think. I've been reading and watching a lot more than I've been listening, but yeah. I haven't seen any nostalgia on TikTok, honestly, I'm probably...my algorithm's probably a little different. I get like these music recommendations where they'll just be like, "If you like this sound, then here's all these ones," and that's, like, where I got all the hyperpop, mostly, so.

J.W.: [00:10:02] I've been kind of the same way, where it's like, I've been really trying to find new things to consume in general, because at least when I'm thinking about my regular music listening practices, it's usually...probably the majority of time I spend listening to music is like, going somewhere, just like, earbuds in and walking to class and stuff like that, and usually when I do that I usually put on stuff that I know because I want to kind of have it internalized so I don't have to pay attention and like, really...because when I'm trying to listen to something new for the first time, I'll usually like, try to do it where I can, like, give it more attention, so that's not really when I'm out and about, but now, there's like no transit time anywhere, so I'm like, *Oh! Let me try to get into new stuff and try not to listen to anything I've listened to before*, and like, now I'm listening to, like, sled dog recordings and, I don't know, just like random...

Lori: [00:11:07] Wait, hold on, I'm sorry. Did you say sled dog recordings?

J.W.: [00:11:14] Yeah.

Lori: [00:11:15] Like, what does that mean?

Matthew: [00:11:15] You missed his episode.

J.W.: [00:11:17] Yeah. If you were at my episode of the podcast, on animal music, that's part of the reason why. It's not just like, I'm not just like, *Oh, discovering them for the first time*, it's like, there's a purpose there, too, but it's like, even when I'm just trying to listen, and anime music too, because I'm like watching new shows, so I'm like, *Oh, new music!* and then like same thing, like if I'm folding laundry, I need, like, really hard hitting, and anime techno and Suicide Boys just does that for some reason. I feel like because everything is at least physically not really in motion, let me try to compensate for this inactivity and just like, within the things I can interact with and kind of experience, let me branch out as much as possible, and have a heavy foot on the gas there, since it feels like I'm not doing anything, so it's like, okay, let me try to go away from what I'm comfortable with as much as possible.

Allison: [00:12:24] So, I guess, I feel like I...I've been avoiding finding new music. It's like such a chore for me, so I have, in that sense, been like listening to music that I'm already acquainted with, so like, Foster the People, Two Door Cinema Club, Vampire Weekend, like, 2011 to 2015, that type era, like, my middle school days is what I've been listening to. But then I'll just listen to like, full albums and like, I've been listening to *Flower Boy* a lot, which is 2017, which is not that old, but it reminds me of the transition from high school to college, and like, the depression that caused, so it's been super helpful for me. If anything, my watching habits have changed a lot as a result of nostalgia and with like some of the TikToks you mentioned, I literally watched *Camp Rock* and *Jump In* and then *Stuck in the Suburbs*, I literally watched all of them just because I saw TikToks about them, and I was like, *I really need to watch them*, and then I literally just got a subscription to Nick Kids or something so I can watch *Zoey 101*, so...yeah.

Lori: [00:13:42] It kind of seems like a lot of what we're listening to is, either, like, we want to be very comfortable, so like, listening to things that we are very familiar with, or things that are new and kind of simulate the motion that we kind of feel like we're lacking because a lot of the life that we got used to prior to like 5, 6 months ago, we're just...trying to like, get some semblance of that pace back, it seems.

Karen: [00:14:14] I was just gonna ask because I haven't been listening to any new music, new, old, or whatever, but has anybody been hearing new music that's either been sampling or referencing music from our childhoods?

Torrey: [00:14:29] TikToks do. I've been hearing Mary J. Blige, "**All Night Long**". So good. Everyone should listen to that album anyway, it's one of my favorite albums of all time. Also, I don't know, I don't want to sing it because I'm going to do it dirty, but someone else could sing it, but that's a 90s song by a one hit wonder band. I've seen a lot of like, 90s, specifically. A lot of people have been listening to "**Return of the Mack**". I'm like, *yes, please, everybody*, so, that's what I've seen, Karen. Anybody else?

Allison: [00:15:19] I saw yesterday, also on TikTok, and then I went to listen to it on SoundCloud, but it was a mashup of "**See You Again**" by Miley Cyrus and "**Love Galore**" by SZA, and so it was like, it's literally so good, it's so good, but like, it's like, that really made me nostalgic, honestly, because it just made me think of that show and then I was like, how do I still know all of these words, and I love SZA so much, so...yeah, highly recommend.

Matthew: [00:15:54] I've seen so many of those mashups on TikTok, like the guy who plays the guitar for The Killers, he was playing the guitar part for "**Mr. Brightside**", and then someone would sing, what's that song, oh, Taylor Swift! Someone sang like "**Love Story**" or something over Taylor Swift. Or not "**Love Story**", one of her other dumb songs. I'm sorry, one of her other great songs. I've seen a lot of those same, like mashups, like two songs, old songs, that everyone knows.

Lori: [00:16:32] When I do listen to music, for some reason, I think this is also because of TikTok, 'cause it's poisoning my life, and I can't escape it, but I love right now this trend of like, slowed down reverbed versions of songs? I don't know what it is, but it just takes a song, even if it's as new as, like, this year, and just makes it sound just totally different, and makes it somehow sound older and kind of, like, farther away somehow, both musically and like, in terms, of like, time, and it tends to be just super stylish and like, silly, I don't know. I just think it's cool and it usually has some sort of like minimally moving anime clip, which I'm a sucker for. I've been really into those lately.

Matthew: [00:17:18] Yeah, I think that connects with what your capstone is about, Lori. Like, what is so compelling about a really weird mashup of lo-fi sounds and anime?

Lori: [00:17:32] Yeah, I was talking to a friend about it earlier, because I was trying to explain it to him, and he's like, okay, 'cause he's like in his 30s, so he's like, "I think I get it!" But I was just like, yeah, it's just, I don't know, it's just super stylish and cool and very urban, so I think that makes people long for a time where like, living in an urban area comfortably and like having this supposed, cool, fast-paced life but somehow also seeming very, like, nostalgic and chill and very vibed out, it's like this unattainable thing, that like maybe people who lived before us had but we don't really get to have, so kind of like how when Matt listens to Taylor Swift and is nostalgic for something that's not happened to him, it's kind of worked the same way, you're nostalgic for something that you don't even know that exists but you sure would like it to.

Matthew: [00:18:32] Yeah, it's romanticized. And maybe that's what I was thinking, to your questions on that doc that you sent out, Torrey, like, is it healthy, is nostalgia healthy? I think the first thing that came to mind was...you romanticize things so hard. Like, *my childhood was so great* and like, all these things, like, no, it probably wasn't that great. Like, kids are always complaining, they never have fun, but then you look back and you're like, *that was the best time of my life. It's never been better.*

Lori: [00:19:12] And the thing about nostalgia too is like you don't get nostalgic for bad things. It's only ever things that you want to think about fondly. So, usually, very pleasurable or leisure type stuff, so I think that's why I like anime and video games and music from Disney Channel Original Movies and stuff like that is what comes to mind when I think, *what makes me nostalgic*, because those are feel good things that you remember. You probably don't remember mosquito bites or scraping your knee riding a bike...maybe you do, because they're kind of endearing, but yeah. It's a romantic thing. You look for all the good stuff.

Torrey: [00:19:59] Totally. I'm really glad you both said the word "romanticized", 'cause that's a word that I was using a lot in thinking about this and like how we do romanticize things through nostalgia, and it kind of puts us in a place of joy, at least for a little bit, like *Oh! Remember this?* In that second, everything, or most things, are okay, and that's how I've been using

it as a way out. So the music that I kind of have been listening to has been video game soundtracks, so, compilations on YouTube that I used to watch, like, 75 minutes of calming Nintendo music, or the favorite lately has been Summer Nintendo Music, or whatever, also Nujabes. I was thinking, *why am I going back to this music*, other than the fact that it's good, but I used this music to cope with high school and middle school, and similar, Allison, to what you said, going to back to music from middle school, I was thinking about this and It's almost like we're going back to music that we used to maybe cope with something before, that we listened to during another really bad time. Nothing is like COVID, but middle school sucks, ok? Middle school's the worst. Bad times in high school, too. So, I was thinking about that specifically, and I'm glad you brought that up, Allison, because that directly related to what my experience is.

Matthew: [00:21:54] Torrey, do you have some trauma you wanna unpack right now?

Lori: [00:22:03] This is actually group Zoom therapy.

Matthew: [00:22:06] This is a safe space.

Torrey: [00:22:08] It was just pneumonia in high school.

Matthew: [00:22:15] That's not funny at all, I'm so sorry.

Torrey: [00:22:16] No, it's okay! It was just a mild version. I had it twice, which was the funniest part, because I had it sophomore year and senior year, so like, senior year, I was like, *it's fine, guys, like, I'm going to be fine!* Anyway.

Lori: [00:22:30] Nothing cures the blues and pneumonia like Hannah Montana.

Torrey: [00:22:36] Exactly! It's a bummer, like you wanna breathe okay, and then you can't and you're just coughing, and you're like, *Oh no! I can't stop!*

Karen: [00:22:50] Did anyone have swine flu?

Matthew: [00:22:53] I did.

Karen: [00:22:54] I did.

Matthew: [00:22:57] It was fine. It was like a cold. Oh, yours was bad, Karen?

Karen: [00:23:05] Mine was terrible.

Matthew: [00:23:07] That sucks.

Lori: [00:23:09] What did you listen to when you had swine flu?

Karen: [00:23:12] The sound of my dying.

Lori: [00:23:16] Oh no. That sounds poetic. I'm sure like all the great composers kind of did the same thing back in the day. Tuberculosis and stuff. There were whole operas about that shit, so...oh, wait, am I allowed to say shit?

J.W.: [00:23:32] Oh, my, okay, we need to restart. Just kidding. Torrey, what you were saying before we started talking about Karen dying of swine flu reminded me of two things. 1) It makes so much sense on the surface why we're maybe kind of more conditioned to watch old Disney movies and stuff from our childhood, because I think I can speak for all of us, like, I'm back in my childhood home, I know Lori's back in her childhood home, and I'm sure you are too, so you're back where you actually were when you were actually a kid, or at least, like, you're living with your parents, so you kind of feel like a kid. 2) It reminds me of that audio on TikTok it reminded me of Tumblr a lot, it's like, the girl, she's like "You need to start romanticizing your own life," like, "You are the main character", that people started making fun of so much, but it's exactly like that, it's like, I don't know, it just reminds me of Tumblr and like being a teenager. Oh, God.

Lori: [00:24:50] I hate that you brought that quote up, because I deadass put that in my thesis, and I cringe every time I think about it, so thank you for that. Maybe a small degree of truth to it, but...

J.W.: [00:25:03] "Favorite TikTok audio?"

Lori: [00:25:09] Are you asking?

J.W.: [00:25:09] That's what Liv wrote in the chat.

Liv: [00:25:10] I don't want to get us off track, so maybe you can drop it in the chat, if you want.

Torrey: [00:25:16] No, this works, because I wanted to talk about TikTok anyway, so I think this is a good intro to what TikTok is like, so we all name our favorite audio. I think my favorite, other than the Mary J. Blige one, just

'cause that song is like, really personal to me, but when someone is showing a Tweet that's really honest and they're like, dancing in front of it, and it's "They Don't Really Care About Us" by Michael Jackson, and...yeah. That song is nostalgic for me because I listen to Michael Jackson all the time, and that song was on *[Michael Jackson: The Experience]*, the dancing game, and so I probably like it because I'm like, *Oh yeah that's nostalgic, remember that game? Remember Michael Jackson? Love that music*, so that's personal for me.

Karen: [00:26:07] I don't go on TikTok, so please put links if you can.

Lori: [00:26:12] I don't know if I can say it out loud, because it has the f word in it, am I allowed? Is this okay?

Karen: [00:26:23] Bleep it in post!

J.W.: [00:26:25] This is a children's podcast.

Lori: [00:26:30] Okay, well, it's the one, I don't know who it is, I thought it was DMX, 'cause it was just like that growly voice, the one where he says, "I make a motherf***er say 'Oh yeah!' I'm cold as a lion with no hair. If you ever see me fighting in the forest with a grizzly bear. Help, there! That b***gon' need it." That one gets me every time. Or the one where that guy's like, "We got the accent challenge..."

Liv: [00:26:51] I'm obsessed with that! I bully J.W. with that day and night.

Lori: [00:26:58] I sent it to my best friend, and he's like, "How do you have that memorized?"

Liv: [00:27:05] I love the wretched ones that are at, like, 2 times speed, or they're super distorted, or they're like a mashup of 10 different things. I was just looking at my favorites and they're all disgusting.

Matthew: [00:27:19] My actual favorite is that girl rapper, that same song has gone viral twice, but the first one is where she's like, "Imma let you hit it for free," that rap song, because the first time I saw that was, it was a girl dancing, you know, like they dance in front of a picture of like a guy and he's supposed to be like, hot, or something, but the first time I saw it, it was the guy from Barstool Sports who rates pizza, and I was like, that's the guy?! Very funny. But my on-topic favorite one is the Bon Iver song from *[The Twilight Saga]: New Moon*, 'cause that one's super nostalgic, again, for things that haven't happened to me, 'cause I'm not a vampire.

Lori: [00:28:37] I also love that song, absolute banger. So good. Makes you feel like you're in Forks. You could be Bella Swan! Easy.

Matthew: [00:28:49] I'm honored. I've always wanted to be a poorly written fictional white girl.

Lori: [00:28:54] Aw, Matthew, you're already halfway there.

Matthew: [00:28:57] Matthew: You know what? This podcast is canceled.

Karen: [00:29:03] Tangent: It's not about vampires, it's about Mormonism.

Lori: [00:29:07] God, I wish we had more time to explore that, tangent, Karen. You have no idea how badly I want you to say more.

J.W.: [00:29:16] Okay, the new podcast, meeting to talk about whatever that was, is right after this one.

Lori: [00:29:23] See you there! Bring refreshments.

Torrey: [00:29:26] Well, TikTok especially, and in my experience, Twitter, are both really big for nostalgia, and music and nostalgia, music is an important part, I would say less so of Twitter, but with TikTok, it's a really important part, so a lot of people have been going to TikTok for nostalgic content, and I know that like, you can also send things really easily on TikTok, like send to "blah, blah, blah, blah, blah" and now your people are there and I know that I send nostalgic stuff to people all the time. It's like allowed us to really connect with each other, even though we're not hanging out like we usually do at UCLA, or wherever. There's also this really cool feeling that you get, I kind of explained this, but I also wanted to say this out loud on the podcast, that when you see a TikTok, and you're like, *Oh, this is exactly how I felt!*, with the TV infomercial guy, that's like, *Oh, I remember doing this thing, like, Mom, I really want this really cool thing on the TV*, and he's acting just like I was as a kid, or maybe how most kids are like. Now that like put me in a place, like, *Oh, remember*, and doing the whole romanticizing of childhood, but also, seeing 100,000 likes, I'm like, *oh, other people feel the same way that I do*, and right now, we are definitely lacking social connection, and while nostalgia isn't like this new thing, I was nostalgic before COVID, I think everyone experiences it at some point in their life, with or without the pandemic, I think now, because we're all forced in this position to be, you know, stuck in a childhood home, like Matthew said, or we don't have too much to do, we can be together through social media, which is something

we didn't have before. I don't know how it was during the Spanish Flu, you know, they didn't have TikTok, so it's fantastic that we get to connect with each other on these things with nostalgia, so that's why I really wanted to bring up TikTok especially. I don't know if anyone else has felt this way, like, oh, I do feel a social connection to other ppl through nostalgia and if it by any chance has helped you during the pandemic or has given you a new relationship or a stronger relationship with a friend that you didn't have before.

Lori: [00:32:35] Well, yes, because like you said, you can share these things that you think are funny and might relate to you, and it's like, *oh, I think that my friend would really appreciate this too*, so now you get to send that to them, and also I think we experience nostalgia as a very singular thing, like nostalgia feels very individual, like, *oh, this brings back very specific memories for me*, you think. It's kind of like a me first experience, but these same things are present on social media, especially now because people are flocking onto social media and being very active on there to kind of fill the void of like, being able to really go out and see people and interact, makes you realize, like, oh, these things that you thought were very just like personal to you are actually super shared experiences and there's something super cool about knowing that these very, like, specific things are more widespread than maybe you thought before.

Allison: [00:33:36] don't know if you guys have Snapchat, but I noticed that right now a lot of people are really into posting their memories that they get every day from like 2 years ago, 3 years ago, 4 years ago type thing, and everyone's super, super into it right now, and, like, even when I see it, it's super comforting to just be like, *oh, I was at Disneyland, I was at Six Flags*, and it's like, I can't do those things now! I think in that way, seeing what I was doing in the past is really helpful. Also, seeing who I was with, that helps me further talk to that person and be like, *oh, how are you doing*, and so I guess in that way it kind of, like, in that way, renews relationships with people I had in the past.

Torrey: [00:34:32] That's awesome. I totally forgot about Snapchat, but I have been seeing the same thing, I've done the same thing where I feel like there's nothing to post on my Snapchat story now, there's nothing interesting that I've been doing, but I can definitely, a few years ago I was doing something interesting, and I think it's just a prime time to be posting

memories, and feeling that nostalgia and romanticization of the past, I know I've been feeling that as well.

Matthew: [00:35:06] I don't wanna get too theoretical, but one thing i've been thinking about is like Jameson's postmodernity theory. Part of it was like we don't have a collective memory anymore. our collective memory is being eroded, and so that's part of why we're bound to repeat and recycle the same cultural things over and over again. And so this kind of, like, collective memory thing that we're finding on TikTok and also on other things, it kind of reminds me of the thing with like McDonald's, or like what McDonald's kind of revolutionized. So you can go to like a McDonald's in California and get a Big Mac, or you can go to a McDonald's in China, on the other side of the world, and get the exact same thing. The point is you can go to any location anywhere in the world and get the exact same food. This kind of mass media, that we've all been a part of, or that we've been subjected to, I'm not gonna go Adorno on us right now, we're all part of this mass media, so we're all kind of having the same experience that we would have going to a McDonald's in New York. We're all having the same experiences because everyone kind of goes through the same, kind of, like, mass culture. Everyone goes through the same cultural bottleneck, especially when you're a kid. It's almost like we're all nostalgic for the same things, which is kind of scary, or kind of weird, like *why am I so nostalgic about something that's so impersonal?*

J.W.: [00:37:47] It's interesting, because maybe it's not nostalgic for the same things, but there are all these very, very specific cultural milieu that you're going through, and like the way social media is now enables a like, very specific bubble to feel like a really big community, because of algorithmic tailoring to specific user needs, so it's like everybody still has this feeling of like, *Oh, I can't believe*, like when you see a TikTok, with 100k views, like, *Oh my God, like this very niche thing is shared by all these people*, but at the same time, there's all these other very, very niche things that other people are kind of feeling like are embodying their own experience, and it creates this kind of false sense of togetherness, which also allows you to connect with these niche communities in the same way. But it's really easy to extrapolate that more than it's actually happening, I think.

Matthew: [00:38:49] And it kind of explains the whole gatekeeping thing, like, *you listen to Rex Orange County, or Tame Impala? Like, you're so basic*, like

people want to be like, *oh, my experiences are special. The mass media I consumed as a kid was actually really cool and yours was not.* It's like, shut up. Come on.

Lori: [00:39:16] And isn't it interesting how it feels very personal until you're forced to realize that everyone else also had that experience and then also all of a sudden, like Matt said, it feels, like, impersonal all of a sudden? I think people don't want that. They want to feel like their experiences and the things they held onto were personal and individual, and special, in some regard.

Torrey: [00:39:41] Totally. And that also goes back to what J.W. was saying, like, with the the algorithm and everything, like, I know that I'll see a video and be like *Oh my gosh, this is perfect for me* or like, *This is so perfect*, and then I'll show it to my sister and she'll be like, *"Oh, yeah, I saw that yesterday."* And I'm like, *Okay, whatever*, and like, you know, the algorithm is tailored to you, so it makes you feel special and in actuality a lot of people are seeing the same thing, and I also think the algorithm forces you to feel nostalgic for things you may not feel nostalgic for, like, they kept showing me ***Avatar: The Last Airbender*** stuff, and I'm sorry everybody, I had never seen it, I know! So, I was like, now I know the names of the characters! Well, actually I don't, but I've heard them several times and they're like Zuka, oh wait, that's the backpack that you carry your ice skates in, sorry! But same with, like, ***Twilight***, like they're showing me ***Twilight*** stuff and I'm like, actually I never read the books or saw the movies, I'm sorry! But I'll still do the dance, so, there's a weird forced nostalgia there, so I don't know if anyone else is experiencing that and I wonder what that could mean, if it has forced anyone to feel nostalgic for anything that they didn't actually experience or may not actually know, like Taylor Swift.

Lori: [00:41:28] Is there anything people have seen on other people's social media that you've never seen or interacted with before, but you were inspired to do because somebody else talked about it and was like, I used to really love this thing or still really love this thing, and since we have nothing but time on our hands, we decided to give it a shot?

Matthew: [00:41:49] Socialism?

Karen: [00:41:50] Good answer!

J.W.: [00:41:53] Otherwise, no.

Lori: [00:41:58] Brilliant, thank you.

J.W.: [00:42:02] I feel like with shows now, especially with like shorter shows, it's like, okay, if you see something recommended, you're like, *okay, why not?* What am I going to do for the rest of my day? I'll just binge 12 episodes of a show and then just do that tomorrow with another show. Same thing with music, honestly, that's how I've been getting into a lot of my music. It's a little bit different now because I'm working on a project, so that's how I'm getting a lot of it, but it's more like, if I see a piece of music mentioned in a paper I read, or a book or an article mentioned in a paper, it's like, instead of tabling it for later, I actually have the time now to like freestyle and actually dig into all this stuff, whereas like before, I actually might've come up with an excuse, like, oh, I actually gotta run somewhere, I just gotta get through it, but now now, it's like I can really take my time, even if it's not something I would've directly looked at anyway, there's no better time than right now to just get into something completely random that you've never heard of before.

Lori: [00:43:20] Yeah, that's kind of how I found the whole ambient sounds thing on YouTube, 'cause a lot of my recommendations on YouTube are like lo-fi, and they kind of started to turn into vaporwave related stuff, and then that's when I started to get like ambient sounds recommendations, and I was like, well, I could give this a try, because for some reason, I just don't feel like listening to music right now, and even though, like, a lot of these lo-fi or vaporwave related livestreams or playlists are often so like, so seamless, that like you're listening to new stuff but it doesn't feel like you're listening to new music, it was still stressing me out, for some reason, so I just wanted to listen to noises instead. I think Torrey mentioned listening to video game music, too, especially for like the little nostalgia kick. I'm playing an extended re-released version of a game that I really, really love, and the music in game is just...chef's kiss, so good, and now I'm playing this extended re-released version and it's got new music in it, so now I get to hear all my old favorites from the game, but also new stuff and it's exciting. It's like hearing new music that actually makes me excited instead of stressed out, and that's really fun. I get to do something familiar but still get something new, and that's striking a pretty manageable balance for me right now.

Torrey: [00:44:53] So, I feel like that actually kind of relates to a question I had that I wasn't sure I was gonna ask, because I don't know if it's the appropriate use of this term, so, when I actually looked up nostalgia during COVID, all the articles that came up were for brands and businesses saying "This is how to capitalize on this huge turn of everyone having nostalgia", and I know that weren't some like sports television channels showing old reruns of sports? I know it's been happening in the UK, so brands are trying to capitalize on that, and I know that we've seen a general wave of retrofetishism, like even with Dua Lipa's new album, which is good, it was super 80s themed, and people are totally taking these themes that we have heard before or that we know, and they're nostalgic, even if we may not have experienced the 80s. You know, we're like, oh this is so cool 'cause it's retro. So, I'm wondering if because of COVID we're gonna see brands continuing to capitalize on nostalgia, but also like a stronger wave of retrofetishism.

Lori: [00:46:45] Totally. I feel like you can almost guarantee it because it's clearly already working, but then again, how long can you really stretch that out? I know that productions for new works, live music, live theatre, everything, is kind of put on hold right now, movies, cinema...right now we're seeing a little bit of a stall in new things getting put out and it's at a slower pace than what we're used to, so I think that there's a lot of attractiveness to, like, here's something old, but maybe now it feels new, but like, how far can you really run with that? I wonder when the appeal of that is going to run out.

Matthew: [00:47:47] I personally cannot wait for the day when early 2000s fashion comes back in style, because that's the end of humanity. We failed. It's not worth it. On a real note...this is the end of the world, so...yeah, I think we're gonna continue to see what you're talking about. It's getting near, it's pretty close to the close, so I think we'll be spared it before too long, not to be, like, apocalyptic.

Lori: [00:48:40] Yeah, I want to get far enough away from the early 2000s, that lawless wasteland of whatever the hell that was. I can't wait to get far enough away from it where we can really start to like, pull it back, romanticize it, the same way people romanticize the 80s and the 90s. I'm so ready. Low rise jeans, they can keep those, but everything else, like, I wanna buy something from a catalog!

Torrey: [00:49:06] Bring back Limited Too! no, just kidding. I mean, my sister's actually been very 2000s dressing, like she wears the bootcut leggings, like, where they come out, and I'm like, *I don't know about this*, and the tank tops you would find at Limited Too, and I'm like, *This is too close to home!* I'm not ready for this to be romanticized, but this question kind of leads into my last question: is it healthy to revert to nostalgia during this time, but also, is it fair for brands to be capitalizing on this? Does it hurt anybody, other than creating bad movies that no one wants to care about or see? Not to bring like, the moral implications of nostalgia, but I was just thinking about it, like, not only is it healthy for us to be clinging toward it now, but also, is it ethical for brands to be doing it right now, when a lot of what they can do is nostalgic stuff right now because they can't really be making too much new stuff safely.

Liv: [00:50:36] I think nostalgia and capitalistic consumption practices are very much intertwined. I mean, if you're romanticizing the 80s, you're going to go out buy clothes and music from the 80s, so I honestly don't really know if it's, like, for me my initial thought is that it doesn't really seem to be an issue of morality or health, at least to me, just in that it's not really real, but like, what is? And you just construct your own view of everything in the world, so, cool.

J.W.: [00:51:25] For my class right now i'm reading Nietzsche's "**On the Use and Abuse of History for Life**" from his *Untimely Meditations*, so his outlook is like, there are like three types of person: there's the monumental person, there's the antiquarian person, and there's the critical person, and each of them use history to do different things, and they're all supposed to be like, great in some sort of way if they're using history in the right way, and there's a way to use history that's good, essentially, and like, life-affirming, and there's a way to use history that's like, bad and anti-life, and so the general thought is that, like, for example, the monumental person looks to the past, and sees the great deeds of the past, and uses that as a bouncing off point, but doesn't replicate them exactly, because that'd be kind of be against life, in a way, but then kind of uses that and recognizes that there's greatness there and uses that to inspire them so she can do good actions in the present. The antiquarian person is interested in preserving the past, so she wants to, in the same way, look to the past, and cultivate what's there to be used in the future, or in the present, but in certain ways, if you get too tied up in the past so far as to neglect things in the present, then that's kind

of what Nietzsche says is anti-life. For the critical person, she is interested in critically looking at the past to destroy the present, and [s]he has like, the norms of the culture in mind, so anything that goes against the norms of whatever cultural environment she's in is good, for Nietzsche, so it's like that kind of view of nostalgia, where it's good in so far as it doesn't inhibit productivity, as long as it's invoked to do new and progressive things in the present and looking to the future, it's good. So if it's used in service of the future, then it's good, but if you just get tied up in nostalgia, and that produces inactivity, then it's no good. And I think, like, generally, that's a good model, I mean, there are problems with it, but if you use it in the right way, it being nostalgia, in order to cultivate things that are meaningful but at the same time look to, like, other things in the future, and keep moving, then i think it's good, but if you get bogged down, you get into some trouble.

Allison: [00:54:16] This reminds me of [unintelligible] Class 101, and I feel like I can't really say anything comprehensive because I don't remember anything, even though that was just last quarter, but I just remember talking about how mass media really just like focuses on replicating things from the past, and because we replicate so much from the past, it prevents the creation of the future, so yeah, it's the end of the world, basically. Yeah, that's all I have to say, because I really don't remember, but yeah.

Matthew: [00:54:55] Yeah, to add to what J.W. and Allison are pointing out, like, I think part of what's so dangerous about neoliberal, racial capitalism is that it presents itself and all of the accompanying kind of things, like the military-industrial complex, the kind of hierarchical things that we're dealing with, like, I don't know, all of this is presented as the only option. You can't go past this. There's nothing better. There's no alternative. And part of what we're pointing out, the nostalgia machine of mass media is to kind of make that feel really real, like things used to be so much better. Like you can still listen to 60s music, because we're still living in the 60s, and the 70s, and the 80s, and the 90s, and sadly, the early 2000s, like, it's all the same, you know? Part of what communism was originally trying to say was we're supposed to be progressing, like we started at serfdom, then we transitioned into bourgeois, slavery kind of a split, and then we transitioned into capitalism, and now we need to transition into the next one, and that was like, 200 years ago, and we have not transitioned into the next one. We've been stuck in this one for way too long. So, I think nostalgia is a very

unique...the way that we feel nostalgia right now as like, young adults, and the way that kids feel it, probably, is probably a very, very unique feeling in history, I would imagine. The way we feel nostalgia is unlike the way it's been felt previously, if not like a totally unique, completely different feeling at all for these exact reasons, which isn't to say it's bad or good.

Lori: [00:57:06] I wonder what, like, younger children who are living through this right now, I wonder what nostalgia, the experience, is going to be like for them. We think this is unique and very, you know, what it is, but like, I can't imagine, you know, when they get older and far enough separated from this event to look back, you know, what they're going to hold onto. You know, what will they romanticize? What will stick? It seems weird to imagine, almost.

Karen: [00:57:38] I saw this one thing, I think it was Tig Notaro, she said that her kids, they told their kids that it's just spring break, because it happened around spring break, and it's still spring break.

Matthew: [00:57:55] Yeah, that's sad. It's like, it's gonna be pretty hard to romanticize the pandemic, unless you're totally in the dark about it.

Lori: [00:58:06] But who knows? Maybe those kids will be. They'll just be like, *That was my long spring break*. It's hard to say.

Karen: [00:58:14] "*Remember that time spring break lasted forever?*"

Lori: [00:58:17] I'm truly thankful that I can't remember.

Torrey: [00:58:23] Maybe kids will experience similar to what I was saying of how like going back to a time when I was dealing with something bad and the music I listened to, so maybe people will listen to the music now and be nostalgic and still appreciate the music, because you know, maybe it did help them, like you know, this silly TikTok song, you know, got me through! You know, I definitely can say the same, that's what's gonna get me through is probably all the silly TikTok songs, so, maybe people will be nostalgic for such music, but I wonder if it'll almost be like a different kind of nostalgia. If anyone else has any other thoughts, anything else they wanted, to like, bring up, about TikTok or social media in relation to social connectivity and like the longing for that through nostalgia or just anything, any music-specific examples or thoughts, please say them!

Lori: [00:59:48] One last thought that I have is, we didn't really grow up on social media. You know, it became the real big phenomenon as we know it a little later on in our lives, probably in our teens or even like early preteen years, but that is not the case now for children in the world, so I wonder if experiencing nostalgia for them going forward is going to be as personal and individual feeling as it was for us, because now they are seeing it very collectively, because it exists in the social media sphere in a really big way, so I wonder what their attitudes about what it means to feel nostalgic and experience it are going to be like for them, especially post-pandemic.

Torrey: [01:00:40] That was brilliant. Couldn't have thought of a better thought myself.

Lori: [01:00:48] Sure, you could've, but thank you. You're too kind.

Allison: [01:00:52] Honestly, I think this generation of like, little, little kids, they're like a different breed, like, I have a six year old niece who like, makes TikToks, and I'm pretty sure that's like, illegal, because I think that's below the age limit, but it's like, the fact that kids are growing up with social media and can see, like, there are very serious things on social media, and like, I know that we do have the algorithm, but like, some of those things aren't filtered from them, so I feel like they're kind of just going to grow up and be numb to it all, and like, when they hear the music from their childhood, they're going to be like, *Oh yeah, that's when we were in a pandemic*, and they're just gonna be like, *Okay, moving on*.

Karen: [01:01:31] Is it gonna be like that, or is TikTok for them kind of whatever our childhood games were for us?

Lori: [01:01:46] That's interesting to think about too, because I didn't know what Bush was doing when he was president, I was playing Nintendo 64! You know, you wanna think sometimes, because a lot of what social media is for us as young adults is, you know, information and news and it kind of always feels like you can never get away from the influx of bad news in the world, but like, you know, that's because that's what's at the forefront of our minds. The forefront of a six to eight year old's mind, is probably like, I don't know, Nickelodeon? So, what they're seeing and what's being shown to them, it could be very different, and it could be just like Karen said.

Matthew: [01:02:30] I think what you just said is exactly what I was going to say, really, like, part of what's so dangerous about nostalgia and

romanticizing things and forgetting...or is forgetting, like, when you listen to music from the late 60s, early 70s, it's like, you know, our country was killing children in Vietnam, you know, like, we don't remember the things that are really terrible, or like, we do, obviously we don't forget about them, but like, the things we are nostalgic about, like we said, even from our childhood, are good things, and then the things that we're kind of collectively nostalgic for, like, when people are like, *Oh, the 60s, hippies and love*, and all this stuff, it's like, no, civil rights protests, segregation, we tend to just try to block those things out and nostalgia and nostalgic music, especially, is kind of a tool to do that.

Torrey: [01:03:39] Well, I mean, you guys covered more than I could have thought of or imagined, so I'm really happy and like, just, my brain is overflowing with thoughts and my heart is overflowing with love seeing you guys, so, you know, I don't really have much else to say, other than like, wow. My mind has been blown. I think there are some really, really cool things said, and definitely gonna think of nostalgia in a different way, at least myself, but probably I'll still do it 'cause I'm depressed.

Lori: [01:04:21] This is a great topic, Torrey, thank you for bringing this to the table. It's been super swell talking to all of you, as it always is.