



Spotify Told Me to Go to This Concert

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Assistant Editor-in-Chief

Every Monday, Spotify updates its “Discover Weekly” playlist, a model the company describes as “your weekly mixtape of fresh music,” featuring “new discoveries and deep cuts chosen just for you.” The playlist does not recycle songs, instead replacing each track once a week based on the user’s current listening patterns. Through a combination of algorithms that monitor personal music taste, Spotify connects its users to songs that they may have never heard before, but will potentially enjoy. With approximately 232 million people streaming music from Spotify this month, there were presumably 232 million Discover Weekly playlists created this week, and with that, countless new songs to enjoy.

Of course, not all Spotify users listen to their Discover Weekly playlist, myself included. Often, I would rather stick to the comfort of a well-known song than listen to something new, as if there is no room for more music in my catalogue. When I finally do connect to my Discover Weekly, I hear singers that I love, opening up entirely new avenues for myself. Almost two years ago, when the song “My Thoughts on You,” by The Band CAMINO played from this recommended playlist, I had no idea that in a couple of years I would know all of its lyrics. I never expected to sing every word back to the band’s members as they performed to a crowd of 1,200 people in Boston.

Discover Weekly did not inspire me to be an instant super fan of The Band CAMINO. My embrace of the group was slow, but by listening to that one recommended song, my Discover Weekly soon featured another The Band CAMINO song. This one, “I Spend

Too Much Time in my Room,” is another slow, bitersweet track, yet I wouldn’t make the connection that it was by the same band for months. When I finally did, I fell in love with The Band CAMINO’s

magnetic rhythms, motivated by upbeat guitar riffs and grounding drum patterns. The alternating vocalists for the band, Jeffrey Jordan and Spencer Stewart, each sing in a different way. Stewart’s breathy sound floats over the music, and Jordan’s hyper-enunciated tone is almost conversational. Every song is different, but these differences feel intentional, proof that the group can come up with any idea and execute it completely, making a song that stays exciting no matter how many times it’s been played.

I thought I understood this excitement as I listened to the band’s songs at home. Still, the experience changed when it was shared with a room full of people. Packed towards the front of the venue, countless strangers all shared the same air, the same spot on the floor. Somehow, even from the stage, the band shared the moment with us, too. Jordan and Spencer played to the crowd, the audience stealing the words from their mouths as we all sang along, moving heads and arms to the beat. They played to each other, meeting in the middle with their guitars, playing back to drummer Garrison Burgess, inviting bassist Graham Rowell forward. During the song “The Black and White,” the crowd sang the chorus, Jordan just watching, covering his face as he was overcome with emotion. It was the kind of moment that Spotify could never replicate, but without the streaming platform having exposed me to the band, this moment never could have existed. As my friend Samantha explained, it’s strange to think that the noise of these songs exists solely because of The Band CAMINO. If they had stopped playing during that concert, there would have been no music to hear. They are the life force behind this sound, not an iPhone or a computer repeating soundwaves, but four human beings telling the story firsthand. I’m thankful that Spotify put this song on my Discover Weekly, but I don’t think I’ll ever be able to listen to it the same way now that I know how it sounds live.

In between some of the songs, Jordan reminded me of a concert’s unifying power, the common ground the band extends to the crowd, one that, no matter how far back listeners are in the venue, they can stand upon. It’s like when the group finally played “My Thoughts on You,” my first and favorite The Band CAMINO song. As the chorus hit, it felt as if everyone in the entire room was singing along to these words, relating them to their own lives while simultaneously getting lost in the music. In fact, lots of people just listened, my friend next to me barely knowing any words. Still, we stood together, 1,200 people packed into one echoing room, looking ahead towards these singers who are real, not just an album cover on a screen. And I think back to when I first heard these songs, before I knew who The Band CAMINO was, when it really was just a title on a playlist. I’m glad I pressed play.



As the 2020 Election Looms, This is Why Our Votes Matter

Jillian Lederman, Senior
Editor-in-Chief

On September 17, 1787, a few remarkable men published an idea for a country based on “we the people.” Not “they the government,” not “he the king,” but “we the people.” They willingly relinquished power from their own hands and spread it across a new society: one that encouraged loyalty to the ideas of individuality, personal choice, and natural rights rather than to a leader. The United States was not formed based on geography or ethnicity or an accident of history. It is simply an idea meant to become something more, and it is one that defied all expectations by achieving unprecedented success.

Only the idea of the United States can classify such a diverse mass of people into one group. The racial, financial, and political divisions between our lives often seem so immense that they subvert any possibility of unity. And yet, all of us are undeniably linked by several inherent privileges: in our country we have the right to speak, we have the right to practice our own religion, and, vitally, we have the right to walk into a ballot box and choose the leaders that we have decided best represent our beliefs. We sometimes make the mistake of assuming that all of our rights, especially our seemingly simple right to vote, are guaranteed. They are not.

In Saudi Arabia, where women only just gained suffrage in 2015, no officials at the national level are elected, and any other elections are rare and often delayed. For each district in North Korea, there is only one potential candidate, and it is a name carefully selected by Kim Jong-Un and his party. In Brunei, national legislative elections have been nonexistent for over five decades. In the United Arab Emirates, seven hereditary rulers possess all executive, legislative, and judicial authority. And yet, despite parts of the world that would prefer otherwise, we have the right to vote. So while suffrage may be considered a natural right in our country, we cannot assume that it is invincible, and we must be aware that it has not lasted without cost. We must be aware that our right to vote matters because it is not guaranteed; it exists only due to our soldiers abroad and our citizens at home who have dedicated themselves to protecting and taking advantage of it.

The fact that our leaders’ positions are incumbent on our voting for them is truly remarkable. Throughout September 2019, President Donald Trump’s approval rating has fluctuated between about 40 and 47 percent. These numbers signify a division in our country regarding opinions about our leadership, but it also represents our freedom. As Americans, we are permitted to act as we want, say what we please, and apologize for none of it.

The rights guaranteed by our democracy are fragile, prone to crumble and disappear without the support of those willing to die to keep them alive. Our votes matter because there are victims of dictatorial regimes around the world who are being abandoned by a government that silences their voices. Our votes matter because in our country, our voices have the power to contribute to change, and we have the privilege and obligation to use them. Our votes matter because every time we go into the ballot box, every time we put forth our opinions into society, every time we exercise our right to choose our own leader, we fulfill the idea that the United States was created to be: a home for “we the people.” And, as the 2020 election nears ever closer, regardless of our political opinions or who we will vote for, “we the people” have the right, responsibility, and absolute necessity to act on these ideas at home.



Paving Job Leaves Residents With Chip on Their Shoulders

Lily Morgan, Senior
Reporter

Anybody who drove through Marblehead this summer is aware of the numerous paving projects the town undertook between June and August. This is a common occurrence, as the town receives almost half a million dollars each year to repave damaged roads. However, this year, in an effort to save the town money and pave more streets, the Board of Selectmen decided to try something new: chip seal.

Chip seal is a process of restoring roads that have been paved in the last 10 years by covering them with a layer of asphalt, followed by loose stone chips. This process is much more cost effective than typical repaving methods; whereas milling and repaving costs about \$10 per yard, chip sealing costs only \$2.85 per yard. Also, chip sealing is a much faster process and can be finished in only two to three hours. The town thought they were making the obvious choice by electing to restore roads with an option that is cheaper and faster than typical repaving. But residents had a different opinion on the matter.

The newly “chip sealed” roads by Waterside Cemetery are rough, ugly, and smell, for lack of a better word, weird. Those who live on the restored roads complain that kids can’t bike, mopeds don’t work, and dogs refuse to walk on the uneven stone chips. Driving down Overlook Road last Friday, I was shocked by the unsightly state of the roads. With my windows wide open, I experienced the unpleasant smell of the chip seal and noted that small rocks were being flung at the underside of my car. The seemingly botched results of the paving encouraged roughly 100 residents to show up at the Board of Selectmen’s meeting on August 21st and demand a repave.

The town submitted to the complaints of upset citizens and agreed to fix the chip seal with “cape seal,” a layer of tar that will leave the roads with a smooth, thick topcoat. However, the whole ordeal raises the question of whether the town was in the wrong for testing chip seal in the first place. It definitely seems like a viable alternative to the expensive and time-consuming process of repaving roads. Chip seal is generally used in small neighborhoods, like the roads off of West Shore Drive, because of its cost and time-efficiency. However, was the town genuinely trying to save money on a better alternative, or were they skimping on necessary infrastructural repairs? Do the advantages of chip seal — the price, the ease with which it can be repaired — outweigh the inconveniences placed on residents? Many residents argued that the town was negligent in their quick adoption of chip sealing methods and complained about the lack of communication before the start of the project. If the town had tested the process or asked for community input before commencement, maybe citizens would have been more supportive of the initiative. Because who would argue with a plan to save their town money?

The information included in this article was compiled from the following sources:
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