

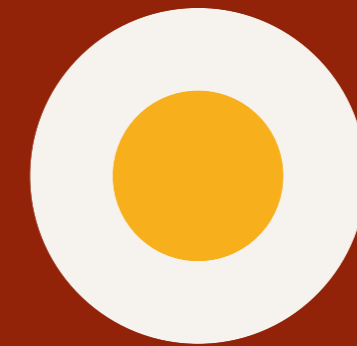
# THE DOZEN

CULTURAL MAGAZINE



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Festivals and Celebrations

Issue 3 2025 November

NOVEMBER 2025

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# ABOUT THE DOZEN

Welcome to the DOZEN, a monthly issue magazine by the student body, for the student body. We were tired of reading the same magazines and newspapers, regurgitating the same information with little to no change so we thought that we would give it a go! Enclosed you will discover a range of articles covering both culture, current events and academic coverage, ensuring that there is at least something here for you.

Autumn: the season of festivals and celebrations. It seems that almost every other day there is a celebration be had, one after another in a constant stream. This week our writers have pulled together articles on a wide range of festivals and celebrations, spanning from well known celebrations to some more obscure ones (read ahead to find out!). Once again, thank you for joining us and happy reading!

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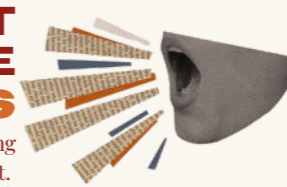


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Firstly, this is a bold claim to make. Five years ago, when the post-COVID reintroduction of live music was being debated in Parliament, festivals were cited as contributing £1.75 billion to the economy and employing almost 200,000 people in 2019, according to UK Music's MBN report. The case put forward back then highlighted the economic, social, and cultural significance of music festivals, and these three factors are, unsurprisingly, still present five years on. Festivals can be the highlight of someone's year, so it's important to get this right. But how did music festivals come about?

Music festivals have been around since the dawn of time, in some shape or form, but they were very different from what we see today. Modern pop/rock festivals emerged in the late 1960s (presumably inspired by jazz festivals, which came to fruition a decade earlier), with Monterey (where Jimi Hendrix set his guitar on fire) and Woodstock being the biggest festival names of that era. This was probably due to the huge proportion of American artists in the charts back then, and that would explain why Britain caught on soon after, as British and American artists dominated the music field back in the 1960s.

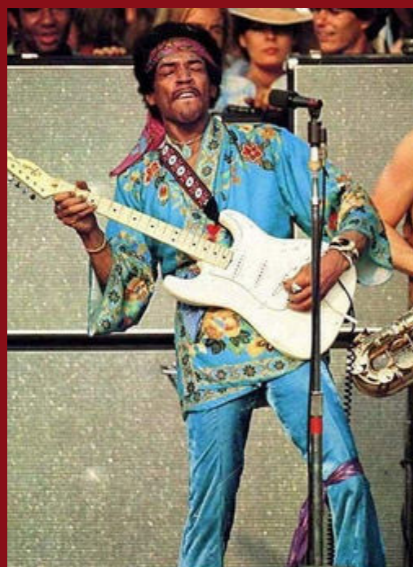
The value of branding has virtually disappeared from today's festivals, giving way to boosting mainstream culture, as that reaches a larger audience, and thus is the most profitable style of festival. There are some exceptions, of course, such as Manchester Punk Festival, which has been hugely successful ever since its launch in 2015. Having a niche, targeted audience allows for a better atmosphere because there is a sense of belonging that you're surrounded by like-minded people with similar interests and lives. Targeted festivals like this make music feel more like a lifestyle instead of just the artists playing live in front of you.

On the other hand, major UK festivals, like Reading & Leeds and Glastonbury, revolve around the idea of having something for everyone, which brings in crowds but limits the appeal to each individual act. Reading & Leeds have tried to combat this by grouping similar artists onto different days, but each day's lineup remains a mashup of genres. Initially, this may seem like a problem, but people's music tastes have generally widened in recent years - today, "mainstream music" ranges from Taylor Swift to Playboi Carti, as opposed to The Beatles and Eric Clapton, for example.

# MUSIC FESTIVALS: OUTDATED?



**JIMI HENDRIX,  
MONTEREY 1967**



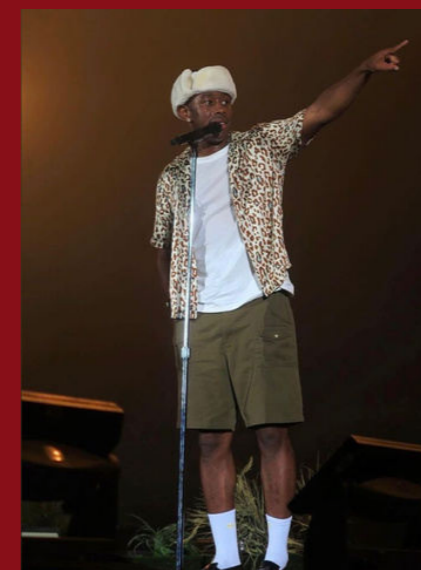
**JIMI HENDRIX**



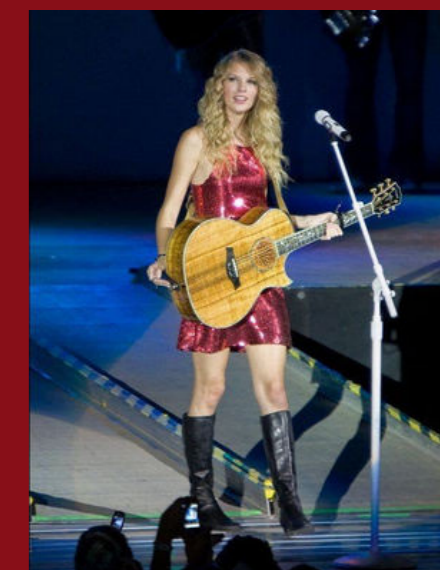
**THE BEATLES**



**PLAYBOY CARTI**



**TYLER THE  
CREATOR**



**TAYLOR SWIFT**

Nowadays, the idea of these huge mainstream festivals remains, but does this fairly represent the changed, broadened music scene of the 21st century? If music has changed so much in the past 60 years, why haven't the festivals? The simplest answer would be that any change costs money, and in an economically driven society, that's true to some extent. But there's something else at play here, and it's best explained by looking at the inspiration behind Glastonbury - Bath Festival of Blues and Progressive Music.

Bath Festival branded itself as a countercultural festival, but that has to be questioned.

The whole purpose of counterculture is to go against mainstream societal ideas and styles, and having mainstream acts like Frank Zappa, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, and Fleetwood Mac at a countercultural festival makes no sense. All 7,000 tickets to the festival were sold out, but 30,000 people still turned up. The countercultural movement in the 1960s was highly successful - so successful that anti-establishment was no longer countercultural by the 1970s. It had already become the new culture. Nonetheless, this presents the idea that the branding of festivals is of utmost importance since 23,000 people turned up ticketless to be part of the anti-establishment crowd.

A potential solution to this disparity would be to hold themed festivals - a grunge festival or an RnB festival, for example. Money wouldn't be a problem - people would pay more for tickets because more of their favourite artists would be there, and merchandise sales would skyrocket. Current festival merchandise clothing is heavily restricted to just the festival name and the headliners printed on the back, with a graphic design on the front. There would still be mainstream names, but they would be more personalised to the audience. And just think of the atmosphere with all your favourite music artists playing together at one festival... now that would be unmissable.



# COSTUME

# COUTURE

## 02



### ORIGINS

It seems that dressing up and disguises have been integral to Halloween, dating back to the ancient Celts. During Halloween's forefather festival Samhain, Celtic villagers would disguise themselves as spirits so that the wandering spirits might assume they were one of their own. The more mischievous would take this anonymity as a chance to trick their peers and engage in tomfoolery, blaming it on the spirits. The tradition continued on into late 15th century England where people dressed themselves in spooky costumes to personify winter spirits or demons and would go house to house reciting verses or singing songs in exchange for "soul cakes" (sound familiar?).

### EVOLUTION

After the Second World War, TV played a central role in changing the nature of costumes; pop culture brought a new wave of characters and designs to the Halloween costumes. Designs moved away from grisly and gruesome themes of death and mortality and began to shift to closer to what we know today: superheroes, comic characters, famous entertainers, and public figures to name a few. No longer primarily revolving around death, Halloween costumes became embodiments instead of disguises.

### THE RETURN OF THE FRIGHTENING

However, costumes hadn't quite lost their edge. Encouraged by the morbid horror movies of the 1970s – Carrie, A Nightmare on Elm Street and The Texas Chainsaw Massacre being particularly notable – they brought back the blood and gore that had lost its place in costume couture. Costumes became more focused on the grotesque and terrifying, emphasising realism, uncanniness, and anything else that would unnerve any passersby.

### THE MODERN DAY

In the battle between the flashy and the frightening, the flashy appears to have triumphed. Scary costumes have hung up their boots and faded into the memory of the festival, overrun by a pop culture takeover. Costumes now are more relatable and relevant than ever before, maximising participation of those who aren't so keen on the scary and just want some fun. In addition, the general calibre of costumes has vastly improved; try comparing the notorious "sheet ghost" of the twentieth century to some of the elaborate costumes you have seen in recent years! Although I, for one, saw far too many Nightwings, Soulja Boys and Tyler Durdens for my liking.

### BEGINNING OF THE END

However, one cannot fail to see the creeping in of some... 'unique' costumes in today's 'Fright night.' Having transformed from 'Trick or Treat' attire to party clothes, the motive behind costumes has begun to shift once more. Some costumes seem to be more focused on breathability for dancing in crowded clubs and parties rather than pop culture references, and this is understandable with the changing nature of the holiday itself. Not to mention, the sheer cost of some costumes will have you experiencing a totally new kind of fear. So, with all things considered, how do you think you will dress next year? Will you embrace the terror, make a pop culture statement, or will embrace the comfortable and convenient?

# THE CHINESE (UNOFFICIAL) HOLIDAY THAT NO ONE MENTIONS, BUT EVERYONE LOVES

Just a couple of weeks ago was the Mid-Autumn Festival (中秋节 zhōng qiū jié), where Chinese families came together to celebrate family unity and appreciation for one another: gazing at the calming full moon and eating delicious mooncakes made just for the occasion. Such a festival brings thoughts of togetherness and joy, celebrating the story of Chang'e (嫦娥 cháng'é) and remembering to be grateful for having one another.

This is an extremely well-known festival, being the second most celebrated Chinese festival after Chinese New Year. However, you'll find that "Singles' Day" (光棍节 guānggùnjie) is very different. You've probably never even heard of it, thinking how could something so trivial be a widely celebrated holiday? But it is! (unofficially, and it has some interesting history!)

## ORIGIN

Singles' Day, also called **Bachelors' Day**, began at Nanjing University in 1993 and was thought to be created as a counterpart to Valentine's Day. Its Chinese name, 光棍节 guānggùnjie, translates literally to bare stick festival, and its date, November 11th, is thought to have been chosen in accordance with this, as 11/11 looks like four lonely ones representing four single people. This also means that the 11th of November in the year 1111 was the most single year so far, which was over a thousand years ago. The closest next "most single day" we can look forward to is in 2111, so only about 80 years of waiting.

**REMEMBER THE DATE! 11.11.25**

Although its exact origin is not known, the most popular legend is that four male students in one dorm, who were single and bored, made up a date where instead of lamenting about it, they would celebrate being single by buying gifts for themselves and having parties. In my opinion, I think this is a good outlet to celebrate ourselves positively and not take life too seriously. However, that's not to say I'd recommend anyone asking for money from their parents because they're single, as they might not take to it very well (not if they don't know about its opportunities!).



**SINGLE LADIES-BEYONCE**

In fact, there was so much network traffic in 2021 that it crashed the shopping app Taobao for 20 minutes, where at its peak there were 583,000 orders being processed per second with an average order of \$38, which equates to around \$22.2 billion in sales. This shows the sheer number of people all trying to get in on the deals, and possibly the huge magnitude of single people as well.

## FROM INSIDE JOKE TO MEGA DISCOUNT FESTIVAL

Just over 15 years after its creation, Singles' Day pivoted from being just a gift day when the then CEO of Alibaba (a shopping website) Daniel Zhang transformed the day into a 24-hour discount day. This change has now led to Singles' Day being the world's largest online and offline retail day, larger than both Black Friday and Cyber Monday combined, where in 2024 sales reached a new record of US\$202 billion.

This year, companies like Alibaba, Tencent, and other consumer goods giants have already begun the discounts weeks before the day itself, so if you're reading this now, its likely the deals may already be gone. However, there may still be some that are running Singles' Day discounts so be sure to take advantage, even if you're not single!

# DIWALI: FESTIVAL OF LIGHT

In recent days, the news of, as well as the literal sounds of Diwali, may have seemed inescapable – after all, it is the largest Hindu festival and one of the biggest celebrations in the world, with over a billion participants. Although those unfamiliar with the significance of Diwali may simply think of it as 'that Indian festival,' Diwali holds great significance, both culturally and theologically, to India and beyond. Yet, while the celebration happens across the nation, the intricacies of the event differ heavily across India, and these differences can easily be seen by comparing Diwali in two regions: the North and the South of India.

## THEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

Before we get into the more tangible differences between celebrations in the two areas, it is important to understand the theological variance between Diwali in the South and the North of India. The legendary story of the Ramayana forms the primary focus of Diwali in the North, and the more famous narrative worldwide. For those unfamiliar with it, here is a short summary: Prince Rama rescues Sita from the demon king Ravana, though the text lacks this concision, with 480,002 words deemed imperative to do the story justice. In the South, the story centres instead around Lord Krishna and his wife, Satyabhama, and their victory over the demon Narakasura. Of course, these different theological foundations do give rise to noticeable differences between the customs of each celebration.

## PRACTICES IN THE NORTH AND SOUTH

The most obvious difference between North and South Indian celebrations is the name! While "Diwali," the Northern name for the festival, is the more common term outside of India, in the South, it is named Deepavali, a more literal term (though both have the same translation: row of lights). Across the world, Diwali is also known as the Hindu New Year, but this is only true in North India; in South India, the New Year is celebrated instead at in March.

**"MAYBE YOU HAVE TO KNOW THE DARKNESS BEFORE YOU CAN APPRECIATE THE LIGHT"**

**-MADELEINE L'ENGLE**

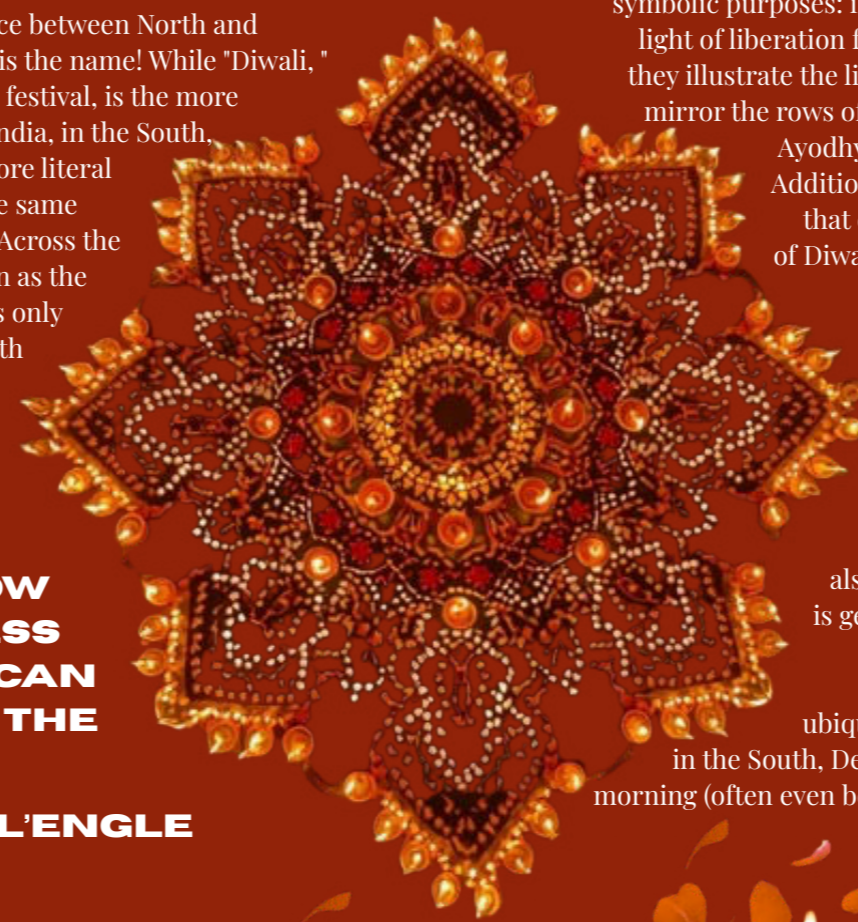
While both Diwali/Deepavali traditions do include lighting diyas, they are for similar but slightly different symbolic purposes: in South India, they symbolise the light of liberation from evil, whereas in North India, they illustrate the light of coming home, as the lights mirror the rows of lamps with which the citizens of Ayodhya illuminated Rama's way home. Additionally, due to the differing stories that come with each, the primary day of Diwali/Deepavali is also not the same between regions, as the South generally celebrates the main day (Naraka Chaturdashi) one day before the North, which celebrates the, main day on the new moon night (Kartik Amavasya), with a Lakshmi Puja. The timing of the celebration also differs – in North India, Diwali is generally celebrated at night, with the familiar crackle of fireworks lighting up the night sky almost ubiquitous across the North, whereas in the South, Deepavali is celebrated in the early morning (often even before sunrise, with a purifying oil bath).

## BEYOND THE DICHOTOMY

While this article presents the celebration of Diwali as having just two variants, this dichotomy is a false one. For example, Western India, in places such as Maharashtra and Gujarat, blends Northern and Southern, resulting in a Diwali uniquely its own. Furthermore, the (very extensive) Indian diaspora celebrates Diwali in diverse ways, influenced by where in India they are from and where they now live. Diwali isn't even just a Hindu festival! Sikhs, Jains, some Buddhists, and even tribal communities have their own adapted versions. Even internally, the North vs South comparison is reductive. For example, there are differences between Deepavali celebrations in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka or Diwali traditions in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

## REFLECTIONS

While it may seem like these are radically different cultural and religious events, the truth is that Diwali is far more unifying than divisive. Diwali, in either context, is a celebration that invites curiosity from the outsider; it is a wonderful, colourful reflection of the faiths that celebrate it, and one that should fill Indians around the globe with pride. The lights of Diwali will always serve as a guiding tool for me and millions of people around the globe.



# THE ART

05

IN

CELEBRATION

THE ART STYLE

THE ART STYLE

CELEBRATION

Art is an endeavor that ever looks towards the future by building on the past. However, sometimes, it seems that the basis of our development is too narrow. I hope that artists of the future can look beyond the usual frame to find inspiration. Art can be found everywhere, and Chinese New Year is a prime example.

### THE ORIGIN OF COLOUR

Many holidays around the globe have strong connections to color. For Chinese New Year, this is clearly red. From lanterns to letters, you cannot escape the day without seeing the color somewhere. The use of red originates in myth, as a method of scaring away the legendary beast Nian, who had a fear of red objects and loud sounds. Thus, the color has developed an affiliation with protection and joy.

### THE CREATURES

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Chinese art is the representation of certain creatures: the lion and the dragon. This depiction is far from that seen in Western art of a similar period and seems far more symbolic and characterised.

The Chinese dragon is a very popular depiction of the creature, with an elongated body, no wings, and often some form of hair or fur in the form of a moustache or mane. Their origin can be traced to 'The Classic of Mountains and Sea', where they are described using the features of other animals, most

surprisingly the head of a camel. Their softer, more rounded features compared to Western depictions are likely a product of their role as guardians, as well as a consequence of the style used. Where the English dragon is considered evil, Chinese dragons are vital to the workings of the world, even being stated to have control over the weather. Though evil dragons do exist in Chinese mythology (such as the aforementioned Nian), they are a subcase rather than the status quo.

The lion is a more interesting case. As a real animal, it is quite surprising that its depiction is far from reality, but there is good cause for this. The design is influenced by Buddhism and is meant more to represent a protector of a location than the real lion. This design has greatly persisted due to the guild system of Chinese art, where many techniques and images are passed down through generations. During the New Year, a lion dance serves to ward off evil spirits, protecting people for the year to come.

The New Year Picture is a form of colored woodblock print that is said to have started during the Tang Dynasty in the printing of door gods, continuing the strong motif of protection that is at the core of Chinese New Year. This art inspired ukiyo-e art in Japan, which is most likely recognised in 'Under the Wave off Kanagawa' by Katsushika Hokusai. Though its use of the color Prussian Blue is rather out of line with a New Year Picture, other aspects of the style are heavily comparable.

The best art demonstrates an awareness of its purpose, and one of the best ways to display this is through an appreciation of a variety of sources of art.

The strong symbolism within the New Year makes it such a great example to be studied. The ideas of safety and tradition developed have managed to spill their way into a variety of cultures and artworks, and it is important that they are carried into modern times, despite the fact that many of the key features (such as the faded colors used) of New Year's pictures are a result of the restrictive media used. All in all, the celebration carries a very iconic image that should be utilised by artists for decades to come.

## THREE STORIES

The 2026 World Cup is already shaping up to be an iconic tournament, with Jordan, Uzbekistan, and Cape Verde having already secured their debut places in the first-ever World Cup to be hosted by multiple nations. Every year, we see a couple of underdog nations that normally scrape through the qualifying playoffs, but all three of these sides have qualified automatically, and there are still 20 places up for grabs for other sides such as the Faroe Islands, who are still in with a chance.

## UZBEKISTAN

Uzbekistan's qualification may not seem surprising after Man City bolstered their defence by signing Khusanov in January, but the harsh truth is that he doesn't accurately represent the level of the team. He might play for one of the best teams in the world, but the next best players play in Iran (at the interestingly named Tractor FC) and in Turkey, hardly hotbeds of footballing prowess. The rest of the team is grafted from the Uzbek side Nasaf Qarshi. Khusanov might be on £50,000 a week, but the average wage of Uzbek Super League players is £4,500 a year. Although this might suggest a gap in talent, never underestimate their motivation. Uzbekistan is backed by fervent local support and needs to rise to the challenge that a debut World Cup presents them - to get past the domestic-foreign league divide and to withstand the constant pressure they can expect to face next summer.



He has managed to lead his country to "the biggest event since independence" (according to Cape Verde's President), keeping his role for five years so far. This stands in heavy contrast to the Peruvian ex-Premier League player Nolberto Solano, who gave his reason for becoming Pakistan's manager last month as enjoying "the challenge of making the team more competitive."

## PAKISTAN

Although his enthusiasm is admirable and his experience and authority can only benefit Pakistan, they have already failed to qualify for the World Cup and they've failed to qualify for the Asian Cup in October after drawing to Afghanistan. Questions must be asked about how much money he's getting paid because the only games scheduled during his one-year contract are qualifying matches for a competition that Pakistan is already out of, and friendlies - showing how foreign managers cannot instantly bring good results to every team around the world, regardless of being treated like a team's 'golden ticket' to success, highlighting how Cape Verde's different approach to investment has played in their favour.

**"THE BIGGEST EVENT SINCE INDEPENDENCE"**

**-JOSE NEVES, PRESIDENT OF CAPE VERDE**

# STARTING FROM SCRATCH

## CAPE VERDE

Cape Verde's story is a little different - one of building things up from scratch. They only played their first game in 1978, a mere three years after gaining independence from Portugal. Their success challenges the tradition of team cohesion - in fact, all their starting eleven ply their trade outside their domestic league, with players in Portugal, the USA, Greece, the UAE, Russia, the Netherlands, Türkiye, Ireland, and Romania. It's clear to see that their success doesn't rely on squad chemistry from a club - so how are they so successful? How has a nation with no grass pitches in 1998 managed to comfortably qualify for the most prestigious football tournament in the world?

Investment has helped advance the world of football everywhere. Their government has invested in the nation's sports scene, with 25 FIFA-approved pitches constructed as of 2021 - a remarkable change after having zero grass pitches as recently as 1998. Yes, they've invested, but they've invested smartly. They haven't jumped on the bandwagon of hiring flashy coaches for a huge wage with no relation to the country - their manager, Bubista, isn't a big name in football. His playing career was nondescript with 28 games for Cape Verde (back when they were ranked 178th in the world), with a career highlight of playing two games for Spanish fourth-tier side Badajoz.

Successful recruitment has also been a key strength for these successful 'minnows'. Recruitment for countries isn't the same as transfer recruitment in a club, and players are allowed to be picked for the side if they have either been born in, have familial links to the area, or lived in a country for a certain period of time (hence leading the authors of this article to check if they had any grandparents from San Marino) - and hence Cape Verde has recruited (in a similar way to Suriname, which was a former Dutch colony) beyond the 15 small islands that make up their nation, finding players (some born and raised abroad) with Cape Verdean heritage. Roberto Lopes is proof that this scheme works.

The 33-year-old switched to Cape Verde in late 2020 after playing for Ireland's U19 side and has made over 450 appearances in Irish football for top clubs such as Bohemians and Shamrock Rovers. His experience in a physical league is invaluable, and he has been a regular starter for the Blue Sharks over the past five years, adding experience and composure to their backline.

Whatever happens next summer, just being there itself is an achievement for these nations, and it will be fascinating to see how they fare in the biggest tournament of all.



# WHERE CULTURE COMES ALIVE

From the bright lights of Diwali to the masks of Carnival, festivals can seem like eternal traditions, frozen in time. But beneath the music, food, and dance there is something much more vibrant. Festivals are not just celebrations of heritage but are living, breathing, transgressive spaces where culture can be performed, but also contested and reconstituted. We learn from the anthropological study of festivals, that they express both unity and conflict, and this is a reminder of the fact that cultures are never static.

Communities come together and are subject to what Émile Durkheim termed 'collective effervescence', the collective emotional force that cements social unity (Durkheim, 1912). When Diwali is celebrated, families reconnect through rituals that honour light over darkness. In Trinidad Carnival, people from a range of ethnicities dance together.

Music and dance in different genres become a shared practice transforming the streets turn into a place of equality and jubilation where everyone feels loved and part of a greater whole community of persons together. Those times of this scale confirm unity in the community, helping to give us hope that everyone belongs to a community that is bigger than self.

From afar, festivals maintain harmony and tradition. But on closer inspection, festivals also expose underlying tensions. This duality is well described by the anthropologist Victor Turner's idea of liminality. 'In the liminal space of a festival, everyday hierarchies are briefly suspended but they are also exposed' (Turner, 1969). Carnival, for example, began as a space in which enslaved people in the Caribbean mocked colonial authority through costume and performance. What started as an act of

subversion became a national symbol of glory in due course. Pride parades around the world, like many others, similarly celebrate identity and protest exclusion. These instances demonstrate that festivals can be a site of resistance and negotiation, not merely commemorations of unity.

Globalisation has also impacted the significance and meaning of festivals. Today, Halloween and Holi are observed around the world, often bereft of their spiritual or seasonal underpinnings. This phenomenon begs the question: when a tradition becomes global, does it lose cultural specificity? For some, commercialisation erodes authenticity — 'a festival is more money-making than participant-driven' (MacCannell, 1976). For others, adaptation keeps traditions relevant through changing times. In London's Chinatown, Lunar New Year

blends traditional dragon dances with modern floats and pop music, showing how communities that are scattered apart are able to produce and navigate between traditional practices and new identities creatively (Hannerz, 1992). The same festival can conserve the past and create the future at once.

Ultimately, festivals can reflect how societies envision themselves and their self-image. The moment we dance, light lanterns or don costumes, we aren't simply repeating history; we are rewriting it. In this view, the festivals are not static old relics of old ways but instead living conversations between past and present. Celebration is a reaffirmation and a reinvention; it shows that culture and humanity thrive and flourish through it. a reaffirmation and a reinvention; it shows that culture and humanity both thrive and flourish through it.



07

# FESTIVALS THROUGH TIME



Autumn is the season of celebrations, having the most festivals of all the seasons globally by a large margin. Major festivals include the Mid-Autumn Festival in China and Diwali in India. Britain certainly has its fair share of festivals and celebrations in the autumn, with millions celebrating them every year. However, all festivals have their roots in history, and it is certainly interesting to think about their origins and how they were historically celebrated.

## HALLOWEEN

Historically, Halloween was known as Allhallowtide, taking place on the day before All Hallows (All Saints) Day on the 1st of November. All Saints Day originated due to the number of Christian martyrs and saints after Roman persecution. There were so many that it was said there were more saints than days in the year! Therefore, a day was set aside for all of them, and the day after was also used for prayers of intercession for the dead (All Souls Day), which is where the Day of the Dead comes from. It has been theorised that many Halloween customs originated from Celtic festivals, particularly that of Samhain, or that Halloween might be a Christianised version of the festival.



Regardless, Halloween has been celebrated in Scotland and Ireland for centuries, with the name Halloween coming from Lowland Scots. It was spread to America by Irish and Scottish immigrants in the 19th century, and it later evolved into the spooky-themed celebration we know today. Arguably, the most famous Halloween custom, trick-or-treating, has roots in at least the 15th century, mentioned by Shakespeare in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Groups of people would go around "souling" on All Hallows Eve, wherein they would visit houses and receive soul cakes (similar to hot cross buns) in exchange for praying for the dead. These "soulers" would often be the poor and children. Other examples of this were found during similar times in Flanders and southern Germany. The "soulers" would often carry lanterns made from hollowed-out turnips or jack-o'-lanterns, which warded off evil spirits (they could potentially have represented the souls of the dead as well).



## REMEMBER, REMEMBER, THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER, GUNPOWDER, TREASON AND PLOT

### BONFIRE NIGHT

Bonfire Night, also known as Guy Fawkes Night, originated in 1605 after the titular Guy Fawkes was uncovered with 36 barrels of gunpowder under the House of Lords in a plot to kill the king (and all of Parliament). Consequently, Parliament made sure to keep Fawkes and his ideals reviled by the general population to prevent another plot like this; thus, Gunpowder Treason Day was born.

At first, the festival was mandatory and came with a holiday under the "Thanksgiving Act" of 1605. The Privy Council allowed celebrations with bonfires in honour of King James I/VI's continued survival, and the festival rapidly became popular around the country, with the 1607 Canterbury celebration using 48 kg of gunpowder along with military marches and music.



Due to its history, early Bonfire Nights were very intertwined with religious ideas, mainly that of anti-Papist (anti-Pope/Catholic) sentiment. Along with effigies of Guy Fawkes, effigies of the Pope, particularly Paul V (Pope in 1605), would be burned in the bonfires. The largest Bonfire Night celebration in Lewes, England, still involves Pope effigies, along with the burning of other effigies of hated or controversial figures - for example, Osama Bin Laden in 2001. The burning of Popes also became extremely popular in colonial North America, with the day even being known as Pope Day until George Washington condemned the practice after the American Revolution. By the Victorian Period, the practice of children "begging a penny for the Guy" was common. This involved collecting money for displaying their "Guys" (effigies), though this practice fell out of fashion after the 1950s. Due to a large number of riots during the festival, along with worries of the celebrations becoming excessive and inappropriate, the Victorian governments repealed Bonfire Night as a national holiday in 1859 and made efforts to curb the anti-Catholic sentiment associated with the festival. They aimed to improve firework safety as well. This led to the festival evolving into the modern version that we celebrate today.



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# THE STATE

# CURRENT



## THE CURRENT STATE

This edition I would like to draw attention to a success story that isn't from as far out as Cape Verde but one from our very own institution. This month I had the pleasure of interviewing Dhruv Peshkar and Qasim Anwar on the subject of Reading School's up and coming podcast: The Current State.

### Q1: WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE?

*The Current State* is a podcast that explains the economic and political news happening in the world, catering to a young audience between the ages of 13 and 18, who may find the news they receive from the BBC, or other reputable articles, somewhat complex. We try to break it down and explain these issues into what caused them, and how they might impact our generation. We also understand that in the current UK population, there is a very low political literacy rate, and with the voting age being lowered to 16, young people need to be more informed about what is happening in the political world.

### Q2: HOW DID IT COME TO FRUITITION?

Qasim: I was minding my business during my homework when I got a message from Dhruv. "Do you want to start a podcast?" I said yes. He'd been planning it for ages, doing lots of research and buying lots of stuff - very prepared. After he asked me, we were ready to go. Over the summer, I started listening to a lot of podcasts. I found the way they conveyed news to an audience very efficient and wanted to try doing something similar.

### Q3: WHERE DO YOU DRAW INSPIRATION FROM?

Dhruv: The main podcast we drew information from was *The Economist*. They essentially explain the news from the day before. We wanted to replicate the way they get their message across. But then Qasim talked to me about how we could try to make it a bit more collaborative, similar to the *Joe Rogan Experience*, where we can invite different guests and hear what they have to say about topics they're interested in. I thought this was a really promising idea, so we decided to implement this from episode two. We took inspiration from *The Economist* in terms of content, but we wanted to modernise it a little bit more. We also wanted to focus on the conversational style of the Joe Rogan podcast or even *Piers Morgan Uncensored*, for example.

### Q4: WHAT IS THE BREAKDOWN OF ROLES BETWEEN YOU?

Qasim: Dhruv is very good at all of the audio stuff; editing for YouTube and Spotify is his job. He's very proficient at it, and he will spend hours doing it - which is needed - and it's his way of showing his commitment. We both do a lot of research for the topics, but I do two topics, and he does one most of the time. I do more research in terms of topics, but only slightly. We're quite collaborative in that way. We try to split it to make the workloads manageable. We present together; that's something we've done quite well so far, and I hope that will continue as we welcome the future.

### Q5: WHAT GOES INTO THE PRODUCTION OF AN EPISODE?

Over the course of the week, we just keep an eye on the BBC or *The Economist* or any interesting podcasts and take inspiration from there. We then talk it over and discuss whether we find these things interesting. We then sort of bounce ideas off each other and see what could work. In the end, we come up with three topics between us, and then we let a guest who comes on decide the fourth topic. Then, we each independently research some of these topics and create a OneNote page with all the information we found, which we then share with everyone so that everyone has the information they need to discuss the topics in full. In terms of administrative planning, we would obviously get the guest or guests sorted around Friday. We do most of the research on the weekend before filming on either Tuesday or Wednesday after school, and we would probably have a call the day before as well, trying to clarify everything: microphones, the room, how long it should take, what to say, how we should convey our tone and so on.

### Q6: CAN YOU SEE THE FOCAL POINT DIVERGING LATER DOWN THE LINE

Yes, we can see ourselves diverging later down the line. I think right now, with the current news and the current political climate, most of the news coming out is economical and political because that's what's relevant. But as we go on, there may be significant scientific news, and there are people who really want to talk about medicine, for example, and they'd be able to come on and explain their views on medicine, or if there's a major sporting event going on, such as the Ryder Cup in golf, or in football, the World Cup, something like that. We'd also bring someone on who's passionate about that to explain what happened. Obviously, we started the podcast for economics and politics because we're interested in that, but we're also interested in a lot of other things. We would definitely be open to expanding our horizons, but of course, we have to get to a certain level first. And that's going to involve, obviously, more people. It's probably going to involve more organisation and more time. But it's something that we would definitely be willing to consider.

**BE SURE TO CHECK OUT THE CURRENT STATE ON YOUTUBE AND SPOTIFY!**



In an economy which is so obsessed with numbers, not everything that counts can be counted. Culture and the arts shape nations and cities, yet, we have no way of measuring so many parts of humanity's creativity. It resists simple valuation, which makes it such an undervalued engine of growth.

### “INTANGIBLE CULTURAL ASSETS”

The value of all assets changes based on how likely they are to stimulate cash flows in the future. However, what makes tracking the value of cultural assets different is their symbolic value – which can cause such assets to resist general trends such as inflationary pressures, going against typical models of asset valuation. This is different to traditional assets, like stocks, which would, according to most analyses, decrease in value during high inflationary periods.

Thus, cultural assets clearly have a distinct, invisible characteristic which divides them from traditional assets. Because of this, conventional ROI (Return on Investment) frameworks consistently undervalue spending on cultural infrastructure by cities or organisations.

The Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence (ESCoE) has an active project exploring cultural assets such as historical buildings and sites, monuments and artefacts. The current value of these assets has little correlation to their cost of production, unlike most modern-day assets which have a far greater relationship between how much it takes to make them, and how much they are valued at.

### FACING THE CHALLENGE

To try and approach this hole in our financial metrics, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) of the UK Government has outlined a framework which highlights that cultural assets can provide two different types of value:

-Use values: the economic benefits of directly interacting with the resource (for example, the money gained from visiting a museum).

-Non-use values: for example, the satisfaction of knowing a species or a historical site exists. While you might not appreciate non-use value at first, just think about what would happen if the Eiffel Tower was taken down one day. Even those who don't interact with the economic side of the site would likely be dissatisfied at the removal of a building which acts as not only a beautiful sight, but also a trademark of Parisian identity. Thus, the models surrounding asset value need to extend beyond cash flows, into sentimental and societal value.

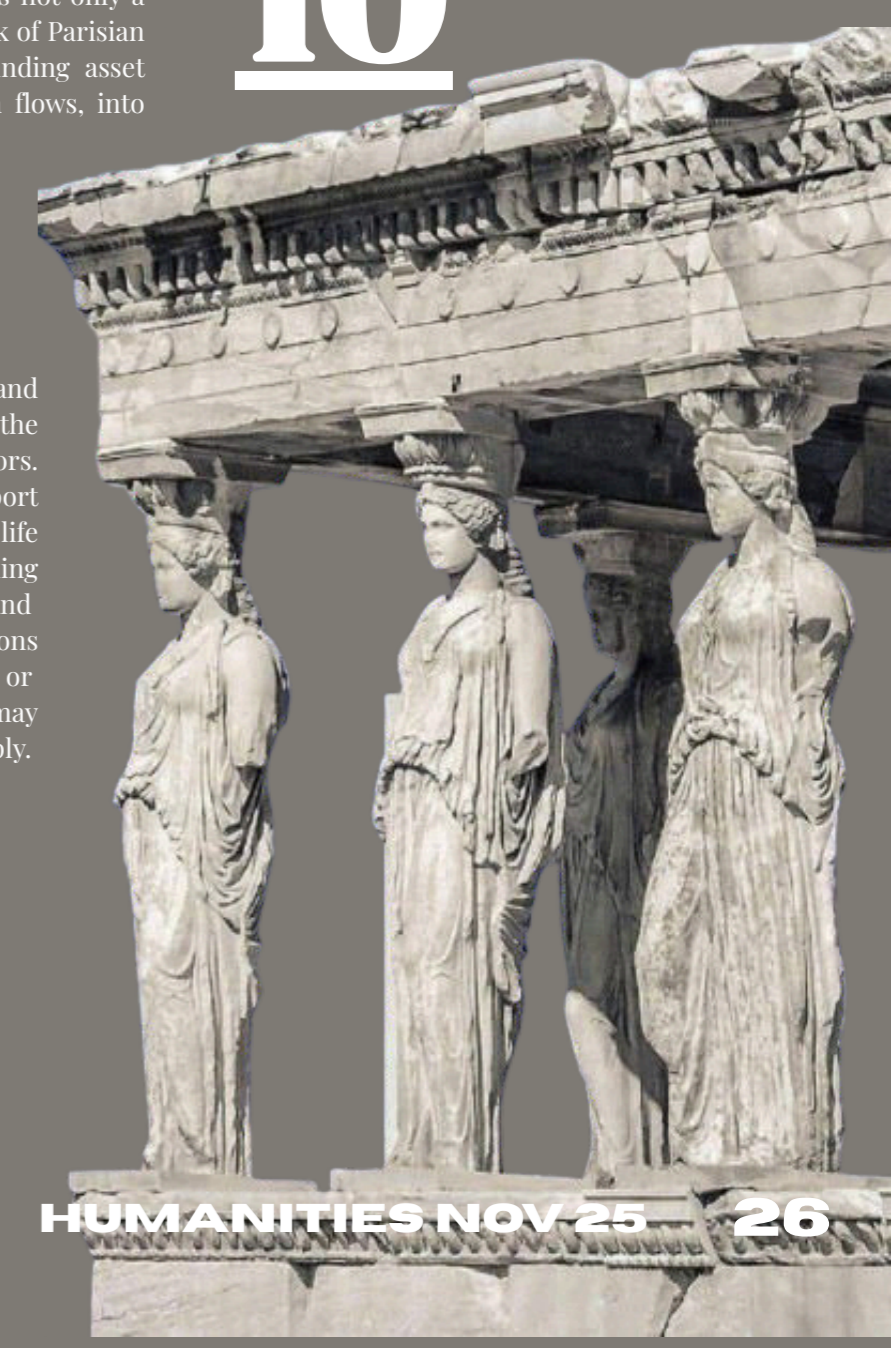
Furthermore, the grey area surrounding the relative value of cultural assets means that concrete market prices aren't readily available for investors, which might decrease their confidence in the investment and thus cause them to miss out on their long term value. A 2024 paper by Trine Bille highlights the benefits of “cultural capital externalities”, which essentially details how cultural consumption can lead to spill over effects on social behaviour, creativity and workforce engagement which are not typically captured in asset valuation models, going to show how much of the true value of cultural investment is under-represented in typical financial analysis.

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### THE LENS OF AN INVESTOR

The maintenance of cultural and artistic sites lies, primarily, in the hands of developers and investors. The guidance in the DCMS report explicitly states that the asset life may be extremely long, spanning decades or even centuries, and as a result standard assumptions about appreciation or depreciation may not apply.

VALUING THE INVISIBLE



# → THE ALGORITHMIC ARTIST

**"YOU ARE JUST A MACHINE. AN IMITATION OF LIFE. CAN A ROBOT WRITE A SYMPHONY? CAN A ROBOT TURN A CANVAS INTO A BEAUTIFUL MASTERPIECE?" -DEL SPOONER, 'I, ROBOT'**

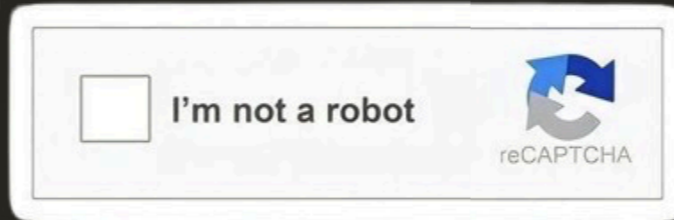
Ever since the outbreak of ChatGPT in 2022, AI has seeped into our lives, leaving, what seems like, a permanent stain on schools, industries, and art. But, in the modern day, AI has progressed beyond a helpful tool into an inauthentic inventor, creating content floods which push laws on intellectual property to their breaking point.

## THE LEGAL DEBATE

A prominent feature of generative AI is the ability to create images and videos from simple prompts. But, to understand where issues arise, it must be understood how artificial intelligence generates responses, pictures and even videos. Put simply, AI is an expert on educated guessing, and in order for an AI to be able to do this so successfully, it must be trained on hundreds of thousands of samples of training data. Here, our first problem presents itself.

Visual artists have complained that AI companies have no right to train models on their original art without permission, as models trained on a piece of art are likely to imitate that art, which artists argue constitutes unauthorised reproduction. On the other hand, tech companies argue that such use of an artist's art falls under fair dealing via the Text and Data Mining exception in copyright law – which, in the name of scientific research and development, essentially allows organisations to use copyrighted material without permission.

An example of such a legal dispute is the case of Getty Images against Stability AI, in which the stock image provider Getty Images accused the company Stability AI of using copyright-protected images to train the Stable Diffusion AI. In this case, Getty argued both Copyright, and Trademark, Infringement due to evidence presented of Stable Diffusion generating copied images from Getty's website, as well as their watermark.



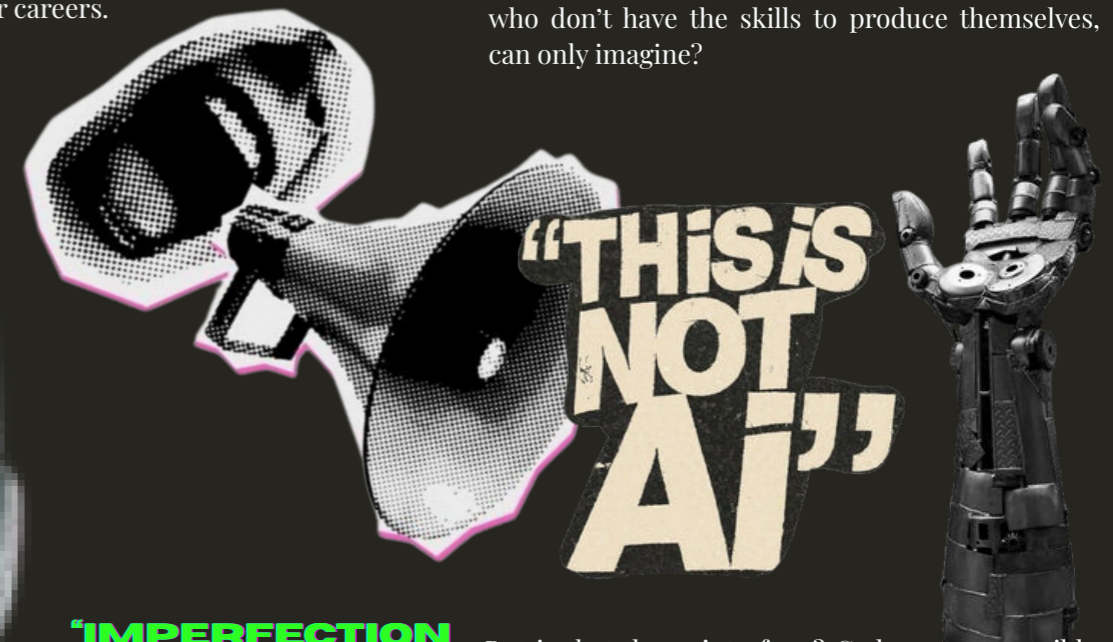
TRUST

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Getty claimed that the authentic, high-quality photography associated with their trademark would be tainted if Stable Diffusion ever generated illegal or adult-themed images with their watermark. Here, the skills of the photographers are being not only copied by artificial intelligence, but their job security is also being harmed, as damage to the Getty brand, because of AI, would have a knock-on effect on their careers.

## A BODY WITHOUT A SOUL

At the core of these debates between artists claiming mimicry, and tech companies and AI sympathisers arguing fair technological development, lies a crucial question: How important is imperfection? It is certainly true that AI can, in seconds, create a perfect illustration, or a beautiful melody, or even a video that seems deceptively real – so what is the need for human input if a computer can create things that most, who don't have the skills to produce themselves, can only imagine?



**"IMPERFECTION IS BEAUTY, MADNESS IS GENIUS AND IT'S BETTER TO BE ABSOLUTELY RIDICULOUS THAN ABSOLUTELY BORING" -MARILYN MONROE**

But is that the point of art? Code cannot possibly mimic the intentional style of a portrait, nor can a perfect arrangement of notes reflect the distinct emotions of a romantic composer. This is what currently distinguishes us from machinery; our slight imperfections and our unique perspectives are a key feature of our humanity, and the art we produce is not just to be admired. It is a tool we use to show the charm behind our faults. So, we should certainly care about the extent to which we allow AI to engulf these creative industries and certainly make sure that shells of creativity do not outshine genuine creations.

# MUSIC: THE MIRACLE DRUG

As the bass echoes in your chest and you nod to the rhythm, you begin to feel better. The music doesn't just move you; it heals. Music is so effective in reducing anxiety that most surgeons listen to their favourite songs before operating and recommend their patients do the same. Medicinal music isn't a new breakthrough; it's been used throughout history to help the ill.

Music activates the brain's reward system, leading to the release of dopamine, spiking pleasure and motivation. Our heartbeat syncs with the rhythm (entrainment), and melodies induce emotions, leading to the calming and joyful feelings experienced when listening to music.

**MUSIC, A REMEDY INGRAINED IN CIVILISATION.**

like those of certain Indigenous American tribes, with striking similarities to the meditation and breathwork therapies used in modern medicine. In ancient Greece, instruments like the flute were played during the Olympic Games to improve athletic performance; this actually led to an athletic improvement of approximately 15%.

**"ONE GOOD THING ABOUT MUSIC, WHEN IT HITS YOU, YOU FEEL NO PAIN."  
-BOB MARLEY**

## MEDICINE FOR



# 12

My favourite example of music used in historical medicine is that the traditional Chinese character for music (yuè 樂) is found inside the traditional Chinese character for medicine (yào 藥), clearly demonstrating how intertwined music was in ancient Chinese healing practices. Doctors used the five-tone system, where five different sounds were thought to be linked to five different organs (spleen, lungs, heart, liver and kidney).

## THE SOUL

### MUSIC IN MODERN MEDICINE

Formal music therapy began in World War II when army hospitals used music to treat PTSD because it provided a safe space for emotional expression. Since then, physicians have experimented with using music to treat a wide array of disorders. Aphasia is a disorder where patients experience diminished communication skills, with many describing it as being unable to "find the right words". Aphasia usually occurs after strokes, brain injuries, and progressive neurological conditions. Excitingly, it was found that many patients could perfectly sing sentences that they could not speak normally. This is especially important because aphasia often is degenerative, so singing can keep regions of the brain linked to speech active, slowing and potentially improving the progression of aphasia.

Furthermore, studies show that dementia patients can recall memories by listening to pieces of music linked to those memories, with the added benefit of reducing depression rates in patients.

However, it is important to be wary about what kinds of music are being used in intensive care medicine. Studies show classical music (especially Bach and Mozart) is the most beneficial for patients before, after, and during treatment of a variety of diseases, including those needing surgery.

The act of communal and personal singing and music has been used all over the world at different times, with practically all civilisations coming to the same conclusion: music is a powerful tool in medicine. Chants were used throughout history to calm the sick and speed up recovery or in healing rituals.

Effective classical music led to improved regulation of blood pressure, stress, pain, etc. Those who receive the greatest benefit from classical music are those suffering from anxiety, depression, cardiovascular issues, pain, stress, or sleep disturbances.

Hip-hop/rap is sometimes recommended to patients due to the rhyming structure and lyrics connecting deeply in many cases, which can help with speech. However, heavy metal can be potentially dangerous for intensive care patients, as it can cause stress and arrhythmias, which can be life-threatening.

In my opinion, it is clear music has an important link to medicine, as seen through its continued use in modern medicine. However, there are still limits to what music can do, and it should not be used as a replacement for treatment.





# Bonus





You can tell a great deal about a person from the kind of films they enjoy; do they like gore and jump-scares or sappy heartfelt moments? This month we thought we would share our top picks!


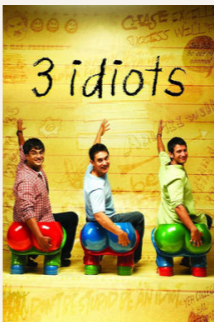


**DANIEL**   **IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE**  **DON'T LOOK UP**  **THEODORE**

**RICHARD**   **WHIPLASH**  **THE HELP**  **YUVRAAJ**

**TOM**   **GOOD WILL HUNTING**  **THE TRUMAN SHOW**  **EVAN**

**JADEN**   **THE PRINCESS BRIDE**  **THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS**  **NANDAN**

**GIL**   **MEMENTO**  **INCEPTION**  **MOUSTABA**

**ABDUL**   **3 IDIOTS**  **THE TERMINAL**  **AMANUEL**

**JAMIN**   **LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE**

# THE DOZEN

CULTURAL MAGAZINE

