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My CD Collection

BY WOODY SULLENDER

As the year 2014 marks the eclipse of compact disc sales by MP3s (not to mention 'pirated' downloads), physical audio media are increasingly conspicuous as fetish objects. Why do many of us still need to possess music as a material object?

The following videos, largely found via a [YouTube search for 'my cd collection'](#), depict large scale cataloging and sharing of individuals' compact disc collections. Who is their audience? Are these collections of objects a way to connect with others, or are they a surrogate for them? What is revealed in the details of these stockpiled cultural commodities?

This act of collecting is not about listening, as few of these videos contain the playback of music. Evan Eisenberg confesses in *the Recording Angel*, "When a ten-dollar bill leaves my right hand and a bagged record enters my left, it is the climax. The shudder and ring of the register is the true music; later I will play the record, but that will be redundant. My money has already heard it."¹

Even without a physical object, we can see this type of fetishism at work with digital media. A similar [YouTube search for 'my iTunes collection'](#) brings up a notable number of videos featuring recorded screens of "Album View" in iTunes.

Kenneth Goldsmith states:

I've got more music on my drives than I'll ever be able to listen to in the next ten lifetimes. As a matter of fact, records that I've been craving for years (such as the complete recordings of Jean Cocteau, which we just posted on Ubu) are languishing unlistened-to. I'll never get to them either, because I'm more interested in the hunt than I am in the prey. The minute I get

¹ Eisenberg, Evan, *The Recording Angel* (McGraw-Hill, 1987), 24-25

something, I just crave more. And so something has really changed – and I think this is the real epiphany: the ways in which culture is distributed have become profoundly more intriguing than the cultural artifact itself. What we've experienced is an inversion of consumption, one in which we've come to prefer the acts of acquisition over that which we are acquiring, the bottles over the wine.²

Note that many of the clips below are only single parts of multi-part series. Many of our documenters are creating their own online video collections.

The Links

"Greg's CD Collection pt. 4" by mediocrefilms2

<http://youtu.be/1W3dDLhOkXE>

11:39

"My Cd And Poster Collection" by Raphael Angel

<http://youtu.be/lyVdDYP91v4>

15:01

"CD Boxed sets" by dereckvon

http://youtu.be/G2_p3B50Jdg

11:17

"My CD Collection" by Hopey Junior

http://youtu.be/0uD_Bk5QkM

7:48

"My big CD collection" by TheGuillau11

<http://youtu.be/kbReXCI24WM>

9:13

"~ (ASMR) Close Up - My CD Collection ~" by MissWhisperingMe

<http://youtu.be/BGvfPhMGx0k>

21:05

"My Rock CD Collection Part 1 (150+ CD's)" by FleegalFlargel

<http://youtu.be/2bunlh92pzg>

12:22

"My CD Collection: Reggae Part 1" by Andy Watt

<http://youtu.be/1PJS4GJDAi4>

9:36

"My Psychopathic CD Collection part 2 (ICP)" by WickedJuggalo82

<http://youtu.be/latVBTNsuel>

4:20

"My Heavy Metal and Scream CD Collection" by Cannibal Elvis

<http://youtu.be/c5iJi5qeuhU>

9:39

Here's a similar video for a cassette collection:

"My Cassette Collection" by Adam Nicholls

<http://youtu.be/Xc94lfl4KnU>

9:56

There are even 8-track collections:

"My ENTIRE 8-Track Collection - It's HUGE (August, 2012)" by

The8TrackChap

<http://youtu.be/wTBINYhzWGQ>

1:14:04

Here's a 30 minute tour of an MP3 collection:

"My Music Collection - Over 30,000 Songs!" by Joseph Schocker

<http://youtu.be/3AvRz0qNXM4>

29:00

² Goldsmith, Kenneth, "Epiphany No 4: As a result, just like you, I stopped buying music", *The Wire* (#327, May 2011)

Woody Sullender is an artist based in Brooklyn, NY. His work primarily deals with the socio-political aspects of sound in various arenas such as public space, music, radio, and other media. Recent work includes a disarmed ultrasonic speaker (a technology developed by the LRAD corporation for a variety of sonic weaponry) and a collaboration with Sergei Tcherepnin attempting to push the performance space towards a state of flux, requiring improvisation to navigate social roles and create new structures. Other projects focus on the gesture of erasure as a means to empowerment in the cultural landscape. This has manifested in a range of media including a lathe-cut record of "Smells Like Teen Spirit" with most of the frequency spectrum excised and a series of illegal FM broadcasts of "erased" radio stations. Over the past decade, Sullender has also emerged as a pre-eminent experimental banjo improvisor, exploring a range of identity politics while playing with and against the cultural baggage of the instrument. With technical advising from STEIM and Harvestworks, he has developed an "electro-acoustic banjo", rupturing its rustic identity. Previously, Sullender has worked with pioneering electronic composers such as Pauline Oliveros and Maryanne Amacher (incorporating his banjo recordings into Amacher's "TEO! A sonic sculpture" which won the Golden Nica prize at the 2005 Ars Electronica festival). Among other activites, he teaches new media at various New York institutions and occasionally can be heard on the airwaves at WFMU.

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