

THE NEW VOICE

1ST ISSUE

7 DECEMBER



is not tragic
if you lost someone
but found yourself.

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MISSION STATEMENT

Voice

Artistic Activism | (n.) a dynamic practice combining the creative power of the arts to move us emotionally with the strategic planning of activism necessary to bring about social change. Aimed at generating *Æffect*: emotionally resonant experiences that lead to measurable shifts in power.

The Center for Artistic Activism

*By The New Voice
Editorial Team*

The New Voice was created by and for the new generation of entertainment consumers to look critically at the evolving political and social themes within our culture. Our mission is to introduce a new perspective to the conversation around media criticism, a perspective that honors the voice of the consumer and can speak more authentically about the influence media and entertainment have on shaping opinions. Our founding acknowledges that while sometimes media is a reflection of current social and political norms, it is often also a social and political motivator for change. By igniting the conversation among the younger generation to think critically about how media influences the social and political themes of our time,

The New Voice will demystify the relationship between cultural themes of our reality and cultural themes of our media. This magazine values being an active consumer and contributing to the conversation around the creation, production, and distribution of the entertainment our generation consumes, especially in a space where criticism is often dominated by an older generation and within a fairly uniform demographic. *The New Voice* will include reviews, interviews, and critiques that converse directly with music, film, television, podcasts, and new forms of media as they arise to bring together the target consumer and the media in a continued analysis of the politicization of entertainment.

The New Voice is an arts and culture magazine and online publication by youth, for youth | thenewvoicemag.com

WHAT IS LUCA TELLING US ABOUT DISNEY, ABOUT CHANGE, AND ABOUT OURSELVES?

By Grace O'Hare

The Disney franchise has long been a staple in American culture, and the political and social influences of its messaging are undeniable in a space where culture has so much influence on the ways we perceive different people, groups, and ideas. As culture and politics have intertwined over the years consumers have seen themes of political propaganda and social acceptedness influence in Disney media evolve with the changing times. Many early Disney cartoons featured World War II propaganda to increase support for the war with their familiar characters and already-established platform. Despite their perceived positive impact at the time, few of these cartoons continue to be distributed — now recognized as having carried racist images and narratives that shaped the way children perceived our enemies in World War II.

In a recent move to attempt to revise its image as many of these erased cartoons have resurfaced, Disney has made a continued effort to portray all kinds of people, themes, and cultures accurately and positively in recent years. By remaking old films with updated technology as well as updated depictions of certain groups and cultures as well as releasing new films introducing more diverse representations, Disney continues to redefine its position as positive social and political influence on an emerging generation with its platform.



Luca, released in June of 2021, tells the story of a sea monster boy from the Italian Riviera and his complicated relationship with feeling different from everyone else. Luca makes friends with a boy named Alberto and a girl named Giulia on land and in their attempts to win a local triathlon we are introduced to complicated family systems, deep emotions, and diverse characters that are new to the Disney screen. Alberto struggles with reconciling his self-worth after his father abruptly abandoned him by himself years ago. Alberto sublimates this disappointment by fixating on acquiring a vespa and travelling the world on the vespa with Luca, and has to come to terms with what appears to be another abandonment when Luca explains that he thinks he wants to begin attending school. The film closes with an emotional and impactful scene where Alberto sells his vespa to pay for Luca's train ticket to go to school, a serious sacrifice packed with complex emotions of love and abandonment that Disney does not typically address.

Giulia's life also portrays a different kind of family unit and highlights characteristics that are not usually honored on the big screen. Giulia lives with a single, working class father who appears to be a child of the thalidomide crisis as he was born with just one arm; what stood out as particularly valuable about this living situation is that none of these diverse representations had to be a primary plot point, rather they just existed as normalized facts about a character in the film. At the end of the film, Giulia's father adopts Alberto into their family and the three of them appear to fit seamlessly together — Disney does not often portray blended families, especially ones headed by a single father. But this portrayal was nothing but positive and truly captured the progressive nature of characters, families, and themes that *Luca* encapsulates.

Finally, the entire theme of *Luca* centers around this idea that Luca is stuck between wanting to explore his interests and independence on land while still feeling connected to his family and their traditions. This is reflected thematically in his portrayal as a sea monster which, in the regional folklore of Italy, is a metaphor for feeling different. Some have theorized that the story of Luca is subliminally queer based on the intimate relationship between Luca and Alberto while others have interpreted the thematic isolation and confusion as a general



representation of an identity crisis of the pre-teen years. Regardless, the coming-of-age themes in *Luca* addressing cultural ties, independence, and finding yourself that have never been addressed by Disney under such serious circumstances as they are in this film. While recent Disney films such as *Inside Out* (2015) and *Coco* (2017) have begun to address more "taboo" topics for children's films (puberty, mental illness, arguing with parents) as well as incorporating diverse cultural factors, *Luca* has certainly turned the corner on incorporating "outsider" themes and topics from start to finish. This film has not only a beautiful portrayal of what it means to find yourself in a world of possibilities, but it depicted these possibilities as a diverse and accepting cast of characters and passions that mark a distinct change of inclusion in the Disney franchise. Whether or not this is a reflection of an improvement of social norms or a recognition of Disney as a driving force for social inclusion and change remains to be seen, but *Luca* certainly stands out as just how far Disney has come since its early portrayals of people, cultures, and the strict social norm.



THIS IS AMERICA AND CANCEL CULTURE



By Sophia Ellis

Childish Gambino's *This is America* is the epitome of commentary on the politicization of music. If you haven't watched the graphic video or listened to the song yet, you are three years too late.

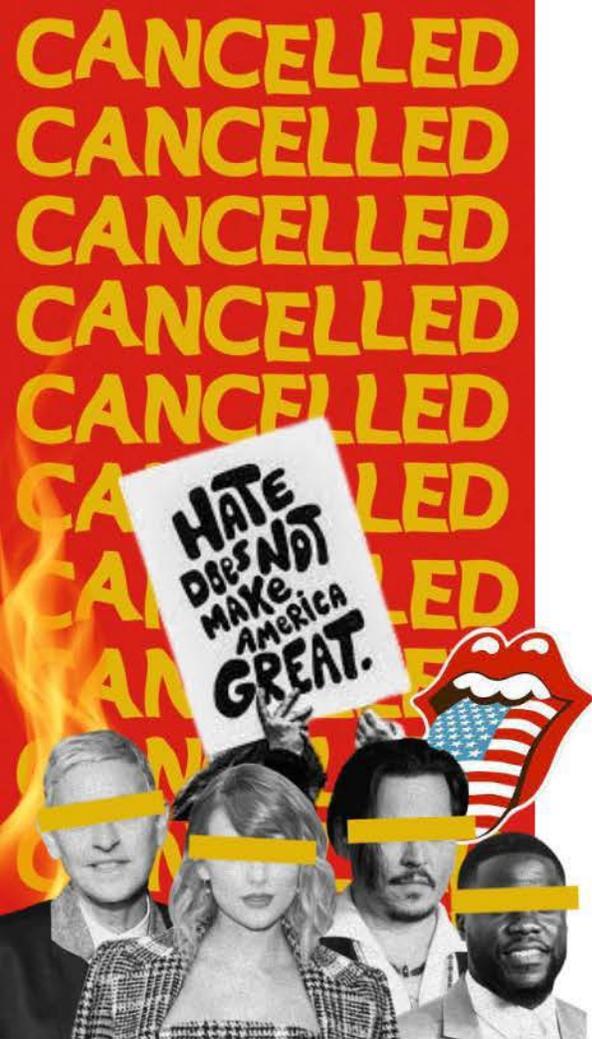
This acclaimed song made headlines for its lyrical and visual metaphors on guns and (cultural) violence, as well as racism and the hypocrisy of entertainment consumption. Music historian Guthrie Ramsey's take on the song perfectly summarizes Glover's message: "It's really a commentary on how much violence and contradictions there are in the consumption of pop culture, particularly in the violent elements of it. With all the conspicuous consumption that global capitalism inspires, part of what we are consuming is this appetite for violence."

Fifty-two seconds into the music video, Glover shoots a man strumming a guitar. A trap beat is then mixed with the background choir vocals, and Glover immediately starts rapping, "This is America, don't catch you slippin' up." He dances with school children whilst chaos ensues in the background with cop cars. He shoots and kills an entire musical ensemble of singers.

These scenes are obvious metaphors for real massacres that have occurred in our country due to the polarization of the American people and enduring gun violence.

Glover's video goes a step deeper, expressing how desensitized we have become to said tragedies. These events have been almost normalized in the United States. Glover ends the video being chased by a crowd in the darkness, fearful for his life, accompanied by the lyrics, "You just a black man in this world." This final criticism of American culture, emphasized by the idea of a black man on the run, shows the dynamic between violence and racial injustice's influence on entertainment versus being a legitimate urgent national issue.





What started as an internet joke in 2014, is now considered a political movement. Holding celebrities accountable for problematic behavior is more rife than ever, so much so that even former President Donald Trump did not escape unscathed. Of course, the subject continues to be a controversy, as does the connected term “politically correct.”

Glover’s below public statements are definitely surprising given his aforementioned discography. It is safe to say one would assume that the writer of *This is America*, would support cancel culture given that it is practically the public’s reaction to the politicization of music and film. The tweets, which are interestingly now deleted, showcase how his voice challenges cancel culture within social media. A critical artist like Childish Gambino essentially warning people about the inevitable future of “boring tv and film” begs the question: Is this online phenomenon actually dangerous for great music?

Now, regardless of its significance, this 2018 hit is old news.

However, it returned to spotlight earlier this year, when Donald Glover took to twitter to condemn cancel culture.

With the emergence of social media, music and film are getting more inclusive in terms of representation and topics, *This is America* being a prime example. Though, with that comes cancel culture, the modern form of ostracism and boycotting. Victims of said social phenomenon belong to a wide spectrum, from Ellen Degeneres for a toxic work environment to the *Me Too Movement* with Harvey Weinstein and R. Kelly.



POP IS POLITICAL (EVEN WHEN IT ISN'T TRYING)

AN OPINION PIECE BY NEW VOICE EDITOR
IAN COMMONS

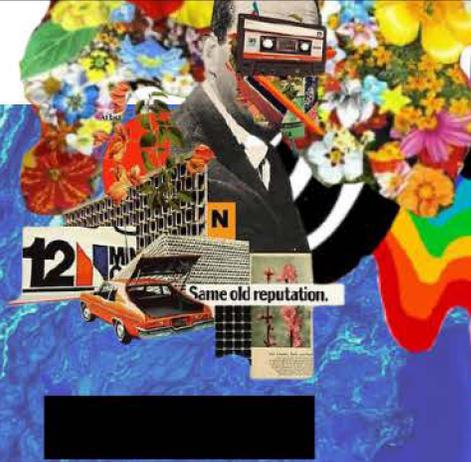
With Trump's presidency and Black Lives Matter taking center stage the past few years, tons of popular artists have used their music to make explicit political statements. From YG's F*** Donald Trump to Lil Baby's The Bigger Picture, political songs from music's biggest stars have played major roles in pop-culture. Despite the recent rise of politicized music, there are also many artists who remain stanceless, with it being impossible for an onlooker to learn anything about their political inclinations. However, this attempt at political indifference, if done with the intent of staying marketable to the lowest common denominator consumer, is actually a strong political stance.

If a popular artist avoids politics like the plague in their music, they most likely do so in order to avoid isolating a section of their fanbase. Making any public statement regarding politics is an easy way to enrage a portion of the public, so some artists play it safe to avoid disturbing their careers. One superstar artist who seems to subscribe to this line of thinking is Drake, as he remains largely a-political in his music. Drake currently has over 56 million monthly listeners on

Spotify, and with so many fans, it's only natural that they constitute a wide range of political demographics. Because Drake has such an array of people tuning in, he risks angering a significant number of his fans with essentially any political stance he takes. Thus, it makes the most economic sense for him to remain largely stanceless. However, this manufactured lack of politicalness is political, as it advances the idea that your marketability and public image take precedent over the actual person you are. It doesn't matter if there are nefarious and manipulative tactics deployed to make Drake's image as profitable as possible, what matters is simply that his image is profitable. Essentially, Drake advances the notion that the product is of more importance than the person who is behind it.

It is a bit presumptive of me to criticise Drake's lack of politics, as it's impossible to know his true intentions. It is entirely possible that Drake simply doesn't care about politics, and thus doesn't give it much airtime in his music. No-one is obligated to use their platform for political purposes, so Drake's lack of political discourse

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The New Voice Opinions

could be an honest expression of himself, an aversion to politics is only problematic if it's manufactured.

Additionally, it's fair to question if it is Drake or his record label that is responsible for his lack of political discourse. Record labels by nature view musicians and music as products, and labels need the public image of their products to be as conducive to sales as possible. Therefore, Drake's record label, Universal Music Group, has a vested interest in him appearing palatable to as many people as possible.

Regardless of the particulars on Drake's political aversion, it's worth considering the extent to which his and other artist's music is made for the consumer's demands rather than from their own originality. In trying to deal with this question, I visualize a scale where at one end is the ideal of a completely original and self-contained work of art, and the other end is a focus-grouped product with any personalness of the artist stripped away. When an artist alters their art for economic success, they reduce the amount that their own self exists in their artistic medium, replacing their own presence in their art with the perceived desires of the "consumer". Thus, it seems that the pursuit of economic success ends up suppressing and eventually eroding the artist's creative, artistic, and personal spirit.

I think that this overall idea of art losing authenticity in order to increase profitability is reflective of a more general theme of people losing part of themselves to their economic aspirations. I definitely see this in myself, as in order to eventually achieve economic success, what I make, do, think, and pursue have all become fine-tuned towards the consumer. Instead of being artists creating works full of character, we become business people producing products and services that are largely soulless. Like Drake, in an attempt to make ourselves marketable and prosperous, we end up disregarding our creative, unique, and personal spirit in order to make room for the perceived desires of the consumer. How important is truly personal and original expression, and how can it be preserved?

Pop is Political (Even When it Isn't Trying)

VOICE





MUSIC & POLITICS

THE BIGGER PICTURE



By Michael Dribe

Today's generation of entertainment consumers looks critically at music for our culture's evolving political and social themes. Many of the media that we are consuming today, even if not intentional, contain political elements of what the artists believe our society is and should be. New, younger performers are coming into the music industry using their influence, expanding to new genres for new generations while expressing their views on how society must change to achieve equality for everyone.

Just out of prison on charges of weapons and drug possession, Lil Baby entered the hip-hop scene in 2016. His first-hand experience with oppression, violence, discrimination, brutality, and injustice underscores the real-world significance of his rap. He is now five years into his career and rose to widely acknowledged fame in 2020 with the release of *The Bigger Picture*.

On June 12th, 2020, in the middle of the Coronavirus pandemic, *The Bigger Picture* elevated the rhetoric beyond incidents to fundamental issues in our society. Racism. Violence. Police brutality. A young man by any measure, Lil Baby's rap deeply resonates as he speaks about the situations facing our society, what people are going through, and where we must go.

The Bigger Picture, which topped Billboard charts and was nominated for two Grammys, including the Best Rap Song and Best Performance of 2020, spoke out against police brutality when Black Lives Matter protests were peaking nationwide. It became the most streamed protest track following the death of George Floyd. When first released, *The Bigger Picture* met with great praise, not just for Lil Baby's undisputed talent but also its meaning. He effectively uses his platform to make political statements





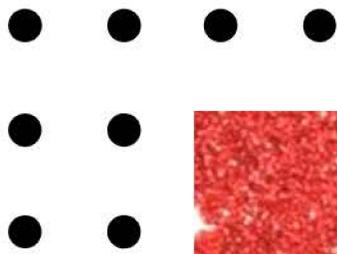
that we should not live in a world of them and us but work together to create solutions. He bridges political polarization by understanding the realities of our differences and the need to value our similarities. He emphasized his message as he took to the national political stage by joining the protests in Minneapolis.

The song begins with bytes from the news detailing the George Floyd protest in Minneapolis. Then, Lil Baby communicates the knowledge of his youth by expressing his familiarity with the unrest within the community, neighborhood realities, the courts, prison time, and survival. His rap captures attention by giving insight and appeals to the hip-hop generation's younger audiences that can effect change. The song is genuine and authentic, "I be judging by mind and heart," and inspires a generation to stand up for what they believe. Instead of focusing only on the tragic death of George Floyd, he expresses the

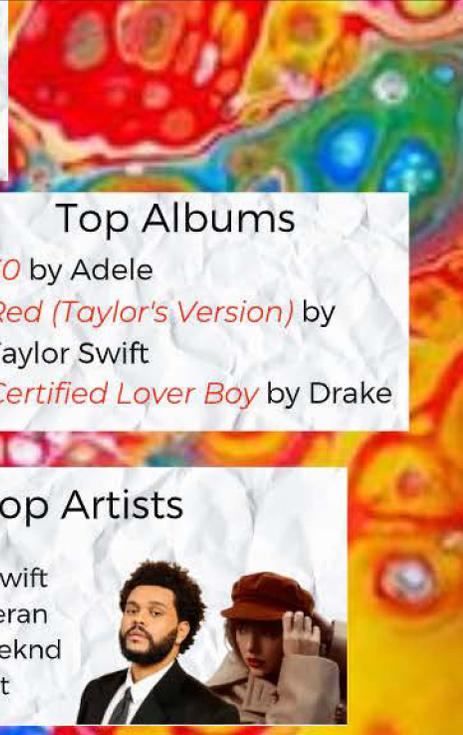
significance of the national crisis with, "it's bigger than black and white, it's a problem with the whole way of life." He says that the problems the protests address are not as simple as many make them. Addressing incidents of brutality and racism are starting points and will require a lot of time and consistent, ongoing change from within. Even in the depths of the Pandemic and the year the world is experiencing, "What happened to COVID? Nobody remember," Baby encourages us that we can correct the madness if we unify. He is keen to point out that including everybody on one side of a situation or the other polarizes instead of agreeing on a better worldview. Not all of one group is bad, he says, "I got power, now I gotta say somethin'. Corrupted police been the problem where I'm from. But I'd be lying if I said it was all of them." Although there are numerous intolerable acts by police, especially against people of color, Baby encourages us to look toward the good in law

enforcement that can help lead the way toward change. We need to sort out the problems in our nation and abolish them. *The Bigger Picture* became a politically charged anthem for change.

Lil Baby is not a politician but speaks to politics through his art, the rap that flows from him. He uses his reach for good and authentically communicates the realities of current issues because of what he has lived through. He evokes emotion to support important causes and mobilize his followers to think then act. Lil Baby coming forward with this song and voicing his opinion without regard to public backlash solidified him as a celebrity who is not afraid to take a stand and has opened the door for entertainment, particularly in the music industry, to do just that. The poetry of his rap blows my mind, and I agree with him that it is up to everyone to "I'm a make it count while I'm here."



Global



Top Songs

- *Easy on Me* by Adele
- *All Too Well (Taylor's Version)* by Taylor Swift
- *Oh My God* by Adele
- *Stay* by The Kid LAROI and Justin Bieber
- *Cold Heart (PNAU remix)* by Elton John and Dua Lipa

Top Albums

- *30* by Adele
- *Red (Taylor's Version)* by Taylor Swift
- *Certified Lover Boy* by Drake



Top Artists

- Adele
- Taylor Swift
- Ed Sheeran
- The Weeknd
- Doja Cat



Boston

Top Songs

- *Stay* by The Kid LAROI and Justin Bieber
- *Industry Baby* by Lil Nas X and Jack Harlow
- *You Right* by Doja Cat and the Weeknd
- *Shivers* by Ed Sheeran
- *That's What I Want* by Lil Nas X

Top Songs (BC)

- *00000* by Bon Iver
- *Boston* by Augustana
- *Just a Phase* by The Band CAMINO

New Local Music

- *Turn Page* by LUCY
- *Luuverboy* by MAYA LUCIA
- *Pour Into You* by Dispatch
- *Cenobite* by Camp Blood

Heating Up

Trending Songs

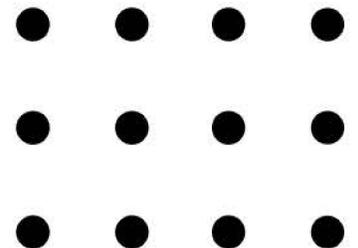
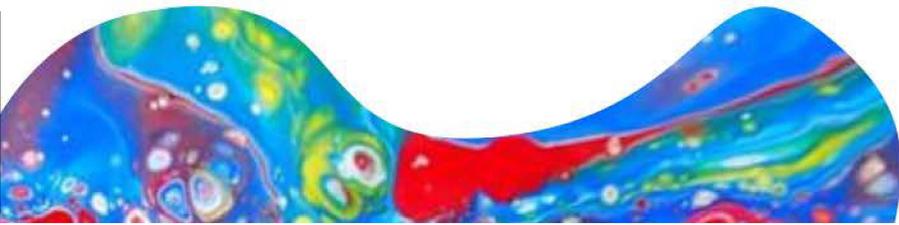
- *abcdefu* by GAYLE
- *Own Brand Freestyle* by FelixThe1st, Dreya Mac, and Finch Fetti
- *Come Over (Again)* by Crawlers
- *Just Friends* by Lily Kaplan
- *Memory* by Kane Brown and Blackbear

Trending Artists

- GAYLE
- Clinton Kane
- Anxious
- Remi Wolf
- Phem
- Talia Goddess
- Arlo Parks

This Week

TOP CHARTS AND TRENDS





- Home
- Search
- Your Library
- Create Play...
- Liked Songs
- Your Episod...

Thank you
so much
for supporting
The New Voice.
Distributed
every Friday.



Upcoming Films @ Coolidge Center

SEE ALL



The French Dispatch
12/7 @ 6:30pm



The Hand of God
12/7 @ 7pm



The Rocky Horror Picture Show
12/11 @ 12am

Upcoming Concerts @ Brighton Music Hall

SEE ALL



Melt (NY Indie-Soul)
12/10 @ 7pm



Intervals (Metal)
12/16 @ 6pm



Michigan Rattlers (Folk Rock)
12/19 @ 7pm

Recently Played

SEE ALL



Caamp
12/3 @ House of Blues



Punk Matinee
12/16 & Thank You
Scientist, Cryotodira



Breathe Carolina
12/3 @ Royale



The New Voice
Grace, Francesca, Ian,
Michael, and Sophia