

"A brilliant piece on the
political power of music in
the 21st century"

- Everett & Josh

"An undeniably passionate zine
that will make you ponder
what music truly means"

- Politics of Reproduction

"I just couldn't put it down.
I even read it when I was
doing some laps in the pool"

- Karl

"An amazing and interesting teaching
moment"

- Leo & Veronica

WELCOME TO FACTORY FIRE

**THIS IS A ZINE ABOUT MUSIC
AND SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND
THE WAYS IN WHICH THE TWO
INTERACT AND INFLUENCE
EACH OTHER**

Factory Fire is a group of young artists who are invested in social justice. We strive to highlight art that is influential in the social justice movement, using music and other art to make these discussions more accessible to people. Our goal is to create an impact in the social justice community in a way that everyone can understand and enjoy.

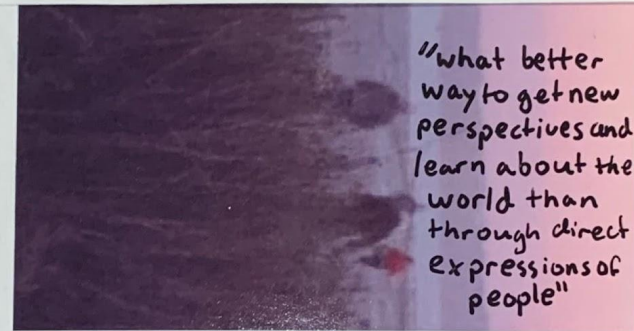
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VISITING OUR WEBSITE AT
FACTORYFIRE.MEOCITIES.ORG**

**HAVE A LOVELY DAY
SIGNED, SKYE & JAJ**

"It's why I love art and think it's so so important", he tells me later. "What better way to get new perspectives and learn about the world than through direct expressions of people".

Crooks is of course also influenced by other artists' works in their communities as well. "Nipsey Hussle was doing a lot of really important work in LA before he died. He was somebody who was really intent on putting the money he made back into his community and he put a lot on education and local business", he tells me. "I have an immense amount of admiration for what he was doing. Really sad he's not here anymore, but the impacts of his work still remain".

Community and collaboration remains a big part of Crooks' personal art. In his newest mixtape, flowers, especially, you'll find a "feat." or "prod." (or both) in the title of almost every track. He is a big advocate for the members of his community and together, they help each other to succeed in their careers.



"What better way to get new perspectives and learn about the world than through direct expressions of people"

William Crooks' attitude towards art sets a paradigm for how to create and experience art in the future. If we think of art as a means to connect with people or understand others, we give ourselves a unique and effective way to discuss issues in our society.

He also has one last message for us to close: "Read!!! If there's something you're interested in or something you want to know more about there's so much incredible & free information available online and at your local libraries! Tap in!!! Thanks for listening."

"[I write] definitely whatever I'm feeling in that moment or whatever I've been ruminating on any given week. I'm not trying to influence anything intentionally, just writing for myself before anything", he says. "With Mosquito I was carrying a lot of anger and needed somewhere to put it. Music has always been a great outlet for those kinds of feelings. I actually wrote the song 'rainbows' as kind of a spiritual sequel to Mosquito — an attempt to find peace with a head full of anger. "

Of course, not *all* of Crooks' music is politically charged, but the parts of it that are have had an impact. "I've received messages from people who said my music changed their worldview and that means a ton", he says.

This isn't super surprising; Crooks' music is genuine and to the point, which probably contributes to people's openness to the messages the lyrics hold. He continues, "Beyond that I know it's a lot of people who feel how I feel and to have people connect with my music because it makes them feel seen makes me feel seen (if that makes sense)! It's a crazy cycle and I'm very grateful to be a part of it".

That idea of giving people who ordinarily get ushered out of the spotlight a way to share their experience is a big part of art for Crooks. "It's a lot of art that gives voices to the voiceless. It's like, 'hey I'm here and I'm feeling and I'm real!'", he says.

CAUTION
HARP BLADE.
ep hands and
gers away.

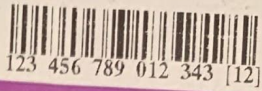
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Hi! I am Skylar, a musician and CIA psyop. I have loved music for my entire life, but I started playing and writing my own music around 5 years ago. Through the years, I have explored many different types of music and, by affiliation, other mediums of art, much of which has impacted my worldview. Specifically, an underground music scene in Chicago which deals a lot with LGBT themes, which spoke to me as a young trans person. Equality and liberation are very important to me, and art helped me access and understand issues which affect these core values in a way other mediums can't. I love art that is unapologetic, sincere, and creative, and I hope to reflect those traits in our zine.

- Skye ♡



Art &
Community
w/
William Crooks
(by Skye)

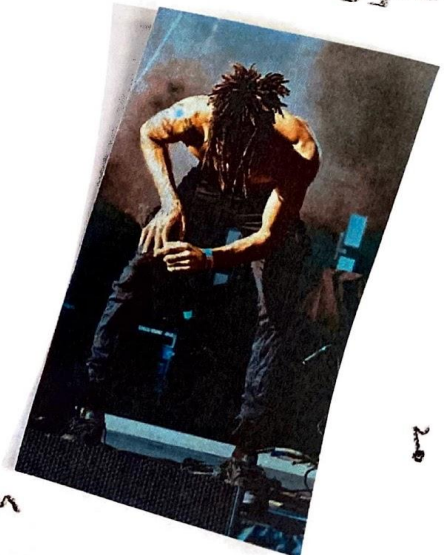
To Georgian rapper William Crooks, art is a way to connect to others and build empathy.

"Art is one of the rawest ways to connect to how another person is feeling or what another person is going through. If the world around me is making me feel a certain way I can put that down in a song today and those feelings are captured forever (for better or worse)", he says.

Crooks' music is an often eclectic mix of emo rap; punk; metal and trap metal; and sometimes even shimmering, emotional ballads. Often, he utilizes this unique style to spread radical messages about equality, particularly economic equality, but this isn't always on purpose.



Hi, I'm Jai. Throughout my life, I have constantly turned to music as a way to relax, cope, or just to feel good. That continues to this day, but I also wish to take that passion and love for music further, and possibly help the world out with it! As a person of color, I am able to connect to many social justice issues. I have learned that social justice is a huge part of our society in 2020, as well as music. I feel passionately about both of these topics, and recently, I have come to realize that I could easily take these two passions that I have, and then use them to hopefully make a small difference in the world. The world has many issues with social justice, and music is so highly accessible to absolutely anyone, and I hope that my unique perspectives can help to make a difference.



Tupac

Enem

Scarbird

Dr Dre

Biggie

T H E



NOTORIOUS

777
Wiley
Riot
Nuthin But A G Thing
Flex
It Has Been Said
C.R.E.A.M.
Lunacy
King
Gospel
Rare Pt 1
Fight the Power
To Pimp a Butterfly
Lost Ones
Look at Me!

Although music is life changing and leads movements, some people think that it can be distracting and can provide children with negative role models. Some people believe that the majority of rap music, for example, contains explicit content that can easily be heard about drinking, drugs and sex, and don't have the knowledge that this type of stuff isn't good for them. Although this is true, I encourage everyone who believes this to take a look at society today, where life is so unpredictable. We live in a world where we have no choice but to stay extra focused on safety to provide for our family, so much that we live in a bubble where it is hard to experience the outside world, especially as a family. Music is a great way to open up and expand your horizons and understand all sorts of different opinions. If we wish to move forward as a society, we have to take time to appreciate the small things in life and understand how music can open up a child's world for the better. I hope that people can come to understand this, and take time to understand how big of a role music plays in our lives.

RIPSAW. Overly Dedicated Gangsta Rap
Shook Goes On Under the Influence Hot em up
Slim Dre Numb Real Slim Shady
Floor 535 NY State of Mind
Bad! DNA
Dear Mama Christ Conscious Gangsta Paradise

B.I.G. - a collage by Jay

Music has led the social justice movements such as anti discrimination and lgbtq rights. Millions of people listen to music every single week, therefore making it an extremely accessible form of information. The reason why music is so effective in the social justice movement is because it allows artists to expand on thoughts or experiences they have had, and put it into a poetic form that not only entices the listener but also informs them and raises awareness. I remember listening to Biggie Smalls for the first time, and thinking, "This man has been through a lot!" Him speaking on how he was forced to do illegal things to make money and how he was always picked on by the police because of his color really made me realize that I'm not the only one who has issues because of race. It even motivated me to be proud of or at least own up to the issues I have faced as a colored person!

The James M Interview

MIND VS SOCIETY

Our Earth is a planet with over seven billion people on it. Despite that, everyone has their own unique story to tell. As a black 16 year old, James has a unique and powerful story that many people can learn from or even relate to.



"I would go to a school full of others who didn't look like me and get called the n-word. Then I would come home and beat myself up for not standing up for myself." This is a common, heartbreaking, occurrence for James.



Throughout his entire life, James has had to deal with discrimination, just because of the color of his skin.



It can sometimes seem impossible to move past these issues. To be a person of color in this day and age is nothing short of a hardship.

"I think it takes mental strength to live in this world, because people can say things that can bring you down... There is never someone there to hold you up but there is always someone there to fold you and cave you in."



Power



Poetry



Justice



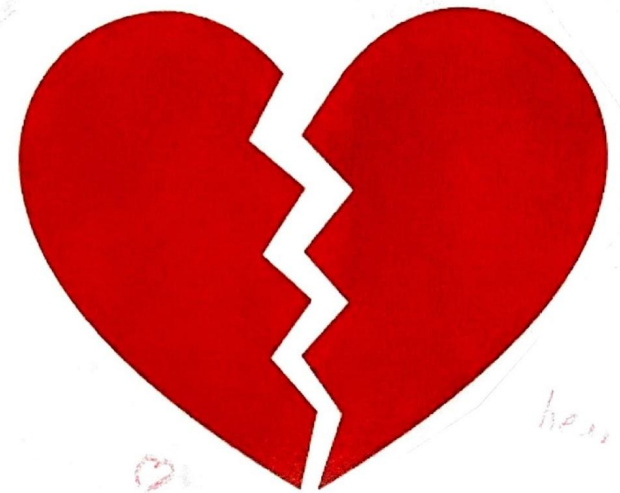
People

"I would come home and beat myself up after not standing up for myself! I would get called these racist slurs and every time, I would just come home in the quiet and think, why am I not stronger?"

It is too easy to beat yourself up over your failures, but it takes so much courage to keep on going and keep living through these hardships.

"How are we supposed to go to school, deal with racism, then come home and deal with mental health issues?! The world is so unforgiving and for the longest time, I felt like it was out to get me."

This is the struggle that James has to deal with on the daily. But in the dark, there is always some light.



Late rapper XXXTentacion says the following in his song "King:" "Leave me alone, I wanna go home, It's all in my head, I won't be upset if, Heartbroken, misspoken, breaking anything I touch, I'm not in love, I won't let you control what I want..." Music allows people to connect to artists when they may not have anyone else to connect with. XXXTentacion has been a huge icon in modern society since his early days in the 2014 Miami underground rap scene. This is because his music allowed others to really feel the pain from heartbreaks, discrimination, and poverty he was going through and connect with it on a personal level, especially in his album "17". 17 allowed people to really connect with him because unlike most other albums of our time as it gave you a look right into his mind and the pain he was feeling. It is hard to explain, but when your heart is aching, 17 is like a drug.



Music is joy to your soul, and peace to the world.

Society is fueled by music. Without it, we wouldn't be able to function. Reagan Seley states the following in her TED Talk: "Rap Gives a kid like me the voice where she might not have the words. There's so many minds hiding under headphones and under beats. It's my creative lyrics versus destructive tendencies... that's what the devils music did for me." This describes how many people tend to lack the ability to articulate what they think in normal words, so listening to or even writing music allows them to express themselves. Although many genres such as rap are often viewed as explicit, music has changed millions of lives, as well as spoken about many different issues we face in society today. For example, over 20 years after the death of Tupac Shakur in 1996, his legacy still continues, with his energy flowing through many black people who feel like his words have empowered them to do great things. In the song "Riot" by XXXTentacion, he speaks on these issues: "What's the justice in sayin' f**k it and grab the pump? Then kill a woman with many children makes you a Chump. I know you got your problems, but brother, they got theirs, this is not a game, quit violence and grow a pair." He gives his view on the killings of African Americans (ex. George Floyd) across America. He speaks out on the officers who abuse their power and use it to discriminate. These lyrics are extremely meaningful to many people today, especially with all of the racial equality movements happening.

Violence



"I think music can change the way you feel and your emotions. First thing I would do coming home after hearing a kid say the n-word right in front of me I would beat myself up over it, by saying, why didn't I stand up for myself? But then, I would hear my dad's jazz blasted through the whole house and it calmed me down."

Although he is facing very tough times, music such as Jazz allows James to calm down. Hearing the jazz music that his dad is playing soothes him and allows him to clear his head.

"I think that music allows people like me to connect back to their cultures, feel related to, or even bring cultures together."

After a day of dealing with issues and struggles, coming home to the peaceful sound of a quiet jazz song coming from the kitchen has allowed James to take control of his mind and put the depression and anger behind him.

"Music can definitely change your life," James says, "Whether you are a person of color, or not, music will make you feel related to and happy on the inside."

Our Earth is a planet with over seven billion people in it, and no matter if you are black or white, gay or straight, rich or poor, you have your own, unique story to tell.

Hope



Music



Riots

Love?

Leave an album or song that was influential to you!

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Let's take a moment to look at visual art to observe a similar problem: most people don't pay for art. Although free art can be considered a positive as it increases people's exposure to different types of artwork, it also makes it more difficult for artists to survive and make art because people simply will not buy it.

If you take a look around at art commissions online, people will sell their artwork, some of which can take several days to complete, for an all-time price of around 5 to 10 dollars in order to compete with free art. This ratio of money to time spent is not livable by any means, and if you're an artist who makes minimum wage (also an unlivable amount of money), you simply may not have the time or energy to make art. Poor artists should not have to compete with artists who have the luxury of distributing their work for free.

Tying into this, even when artists do make money, it is regularly sucked up by external bodies. When you buy or stream music, a lot of the time you're actually paying the *label*, who gives a percentage to the artist. This robs artists of money made from their art and lines the pockets of music management officials, who do nothing but leech on the creativity of artists.

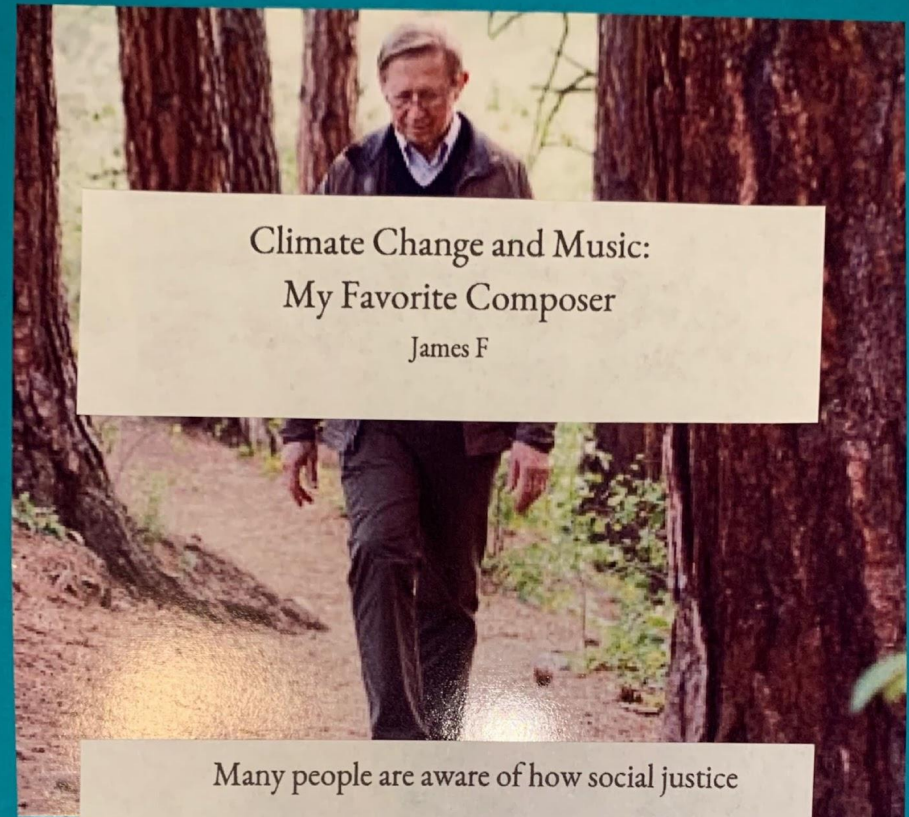
The best way to combat this is to actually buy art! Buy commissions from

artists, buy movies, buy music digitally from Bandcamp on Bandcamp Fridays, anything. You support artists and you get a permanent medium from which to enjoy that art.

Because of many popular musical artists' presentations in videos and other media, there is a common misconception that music is a well-paying job. In reality, being a professional musician pays very little, especially in the current pandemic era when musicians can't tour properly. Musicians get an estimated value of \$.0038 per stream from Spotify, according to The Union of Musicians and Allied Workers. That means that if you get a million streams on a song, you would get approximately \$4891 from that song for your entire career.

It's easy to think that 1 million streams is easy to reach if you look at super popular artists, but if you take a look at average-popularity artists who have been working hard making music for years, you can see that is still a very

substantial milestone to reach. Rapper William Crooks has released 4 albums and a number of EPs in the last 5 years and still only gets about 17,000 monthly listeners. Another producer, Dylan Brady, has released five EPs and has produced dozens of songs for high profile pop musicians over the last 4 years, and still just barely gets over the crest with 1.5 million monthly listeners.



Climate Change and Music: My Favorite Composer

James F

Many people are aware of how social justice influences popular music, such as modern hits like Taylor Swift's 'Calm Down' and the myriad of anti-war songs from the 70's (including the very subtly named 'War: What is it Good For?' by Edwin Star). But what many people don't consider when thinking about social justice or political meaning in music is how it influences classical music just as much as other genres. Classical music, just like any other form of art, has always been influenced by the political ideas around it. Sometimes this influence is decidedly

negative, such as in the case of the famous composer of *The Ride of the Valkyries*, Richard Wagner, who was a nazi, but in many other cases the political drive behind music is one for positive social change. Classical music can be just as easily used as other genres to further social change for the better.

One of the clearest examples of a classical music composer who wrote music for the purpose of social justice is my personal favorite band composer: David Maslanka. Maslanka was a very interesting person, deeply connected with nature and spirituality. He openly spoke about how his dreams and meditations affected his musical compositions, something I learned as a freshman when one band director told me that a piece had been influenced by a “wild buffalo dream” that Maslanka had experienced while writing it.

More than just his spirituality affecting his music, Maslanka also allowed the beauty of the natural world to influence his compositions, following in the

art is dead

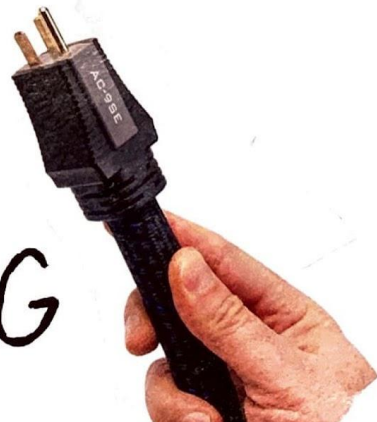
skye b

Art is dead because all the artists are too. What I mean to say by this is that many artists are pushed away from art due to the conditions artists are under while making their works. While a single work of art can take weeks of hard work to complete, artists are often given sub-par rewards for their work, both in terms of monetary compensation and just in recognition and support of their art (when I say "art" here, I really mean any type of art, whether it be contemporary art, animation, music, etc). Although this has always been a problem, it has become especially prominent in the electronic age as smaller or poor artists have to compete with more wealthy artists who can afford to distribute their work for free on the internet. This inability to find compensation in the field makes it hard for artists to continue being artists and restricts diversity from art.

UNPLUG



STREAMING



traditions of other American composers such as Amy Beach, Charles Ives, and Virgil Thompson. After moving to Montana in the 90's, Maslanka started communing with nature in a very real sense, writing that "The mountains and the sky are a living presence. Animal and [native American] spirits still echo strongly in this land, and these elements have found their way into my music."

Maslanka's love for the beauty of nature can be found in much of his musical work, being especially prominent in symphonies 3, 4, and 9. However, the clearest example of Maslanka writing a piece to directly impact social change with regards to the climate crisis was written in 2001. This piece, which the Saline Wind



Ensemble actually performed in the 2018-2019 school year, is a three minute long fanfare entitled *Mother Earth*. It serves not only to depict the grandiose beauty of mother nature, but also her deep pain and rage in response to how we humans treat her. The piece is incredibly fast-paced, dark, and loud. It conveys a sense of undeniable urgency, and is notably a call to immediate action against the human practices that damage the earth. *Mother Earth* was written to awaken audiences to the needs of the planet and, hopefully, to directly instill change.

directly instill change.

Mother Earth, though ultimately not my favorite piece by David Maslanka, is one of the reasons I love him so much as a composer. He cared about significant causes, and actively worked to instill social change through his artistic works. That is something that I, a fellow music-loving tree-hugger, have infinite respect for.

Our Playlist



1. Hit 'Em Up - Tupac
2. Work - William Crooks
3. U Said - Lil Peep
4. WAT O_O - OMNIPONI
5. Burnout - Fraxiom
6. Big Poppa - Biggie Smalls
7. Still DRE - Dr Dre
8. gecgegec - 100 gees
9. 777 - XXXTentacion
10. Outside - Kero Kero Bonito
11. Nuthin but a G thang - Snoop Dogg
12. Toy car - six impala
13. Now or never - Flyboy Tarantino
14. Dog food - 100 gees
15. Riot - XXXTentacion
16. Trustfall! - underscores
17. Without me - Eminem
18. I've been waiting - Lil Peep
19. Gangsta Rap - Ice Cube
20. Floor 555 - XXXTentacion

